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## British teacher finds long-lost relative: 9,000-year-old man

*By The Associated Press*

LONDON -- Using DNA from a tooth, scientists have established a blood tie between a 9,000-year-old skeleton known as "Cheddar Man" and an English schoolteacher who lives just a half mile from the cave where the bones were found.

Oxford University scientists announced Friday that Adrian Targett, 42, a history teacher in the town of Cheddar in southwest England, shares a common ancestor with Cheddar Man.

It is the longest human lineage ever traced, the team of scientists from the university's Institute of Molecular Medicine said.



"They would have shared a common ancestor about 10,000 years ago, so they are related -- just not very closely," said Dr. Bryan Sykes, leader of the research team.

Mr. Targett was startled by the news.

"I am overwhelmed, a bit surprised," said Mr. Targett, whose ancestry was revealed during the filming of a documentary for the TV station HTV, which commissioned the study.

"I was just about to say I hope it's not me."

Mr. Targett suggested that if more people were tested, researchers would find other relatives of Cheddar Man.

Dr. Larry Barham, a Texas-born archaeologist at Bristol University, said the finding "adds to the evidence that Britons came from a race of hunter-gatherers who later turned to farming because they found it was to their advantage." Archeologists believe Cheddar Man, who lived during the Stone Age, was a hunter-gatherer.

Opponents of this theory argue that Britons are descendants of Middle Eastern farmers.

To get the DNA, scientists extracted cells from a tooth of Cheddar Man.

They compared the mitochondrial DNA -- which is inherited unchanged on the maternal line -- with samples of mitochondrial DNA from the cheek cells of 15 pupils at the Kings of Wessex school, where Mr. Targett teaches, and five adults from old Cheddar families.

Prof. Chris Stringer, a researcher at London's Natural History Museum, said one problem with the research "is that we don't know that Cheddar Man had any children. This is mitochondrial DNA that is only inherited through the maternal link, so this would come from Cheddar Man's mother or his sister."

HTV said the discovery came when a television director was researching a series on archeology. In search of information on whether cannibalism was practiced by Stone Age man, scientists took a sample

of cells from the jaw of Cheddar Man, HTV said.

That led them to wonder if there could be modern-day relatives of the ancient man, who was discovered in 1903.

The network of underground caves at Cheddar, 130 miles west of London, is believed to have been home to a community of Stone Age people. Many artifacts have been found there.

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*Photo by The Associated Press*

Dr. Chris Stringer of the Natural History Museum in London holds the skull of "Cheddar Man," who shares a common maternal ancestor with a 42-year-old history teacher living near the place where the skull was found, according to DNA "fingerprinting."

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