

# **MR JOHN DONE: WHO WAS HE? THE ORIGINS AND ANCESTRY OF DEACON JOHN DONE**

*Report prepared by Derek Done,  
Chairman of the Deacon John Done Research Committee*

## **PART 1 - THE PAPER TRAIL**

### **Research - Pre 2002**

In 1972, Dr Gilbert H. Doane asked the question “Mr. John Done: who was he?” (DFA 1972 Reunion Proceedings). Four years later, he returned to this theme with his report “Clues to the Identity of Mr. John Done” (DFA 1976 Reunion Proceedings), presenting the results of his research into this question and identifying five clues that he considered offered the best chance of finding out more about John Done before he arrived in America.

These clues were identified as:

1. In one deed, there was a reference to John Done, “gentleman tayler”. (Was this the Deacon?);
2. Several places in England are named Eastham or East Ham. (Did the Deacon name the new settlement of Eastham after his birthplace in England?);
3. John Donne of St Benet, Gracechurch Street, London was a puritan pastor whose daughter Mary married John Warren, who may have been the John Warren who was an early settler in Plymouth Colony. John Donne had a son named Daniel. (Does this suggest a link with the Deacon?);
4. The name John Done occurs several times in a series of law suits surrounding the inheritance of a wealthy London property owner – John Done “whitebaker” (Was the John Done who laid claim to his estate the man who later became the Deacon?);
5. In 1635, John Done of Duddon in Cheshire took an oath of allegiance to the King, a step required for those planning to leave the country. (Was this the Deacon, having returned to England to put his affairs in order before returning to the New World?)

In 1986, at the Doane Family Association Reunion in Crete, Nebraska, the Deacon John Done Research Committee was established under the Chairmanship of John H. Baker, and in the 1990 report of that Committee (DFA 1990 Reunion Proceedings), John Baker reported progress in pursuing Gilbert Doane’s clues. His report focused particularly on the third and fourth clues, where he stated that considerable progress had been made and several sources identified as justifying investigation, while the other clues appeared to be less likely to provide leads worth following.

### **The Research Program: 2002 - 2009**

#### *Background*

At the DFA International Reunion 2002, held at the George School, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, the Deacon John Done Research Committee was reconstituted under the chairmanship of Virgil Doan. At its meeting held on 14 August 2002, I reported the results of some preliminary research I had undertaken, still focussing on Gilbert Doane's clues.

The Committee agreed that this research program should continue to pursue these lines of enquiry, including those clues initially assessed as likely to lead to a dead end, and that a report on progress should be presented to the meeting of this Committee due to be held in August 2004. I was asked to continue with this research program in London, near to where I live, and where many source documents were likely to be located. At the same time, Virgil Doan, who had direct access to many records held by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) in Salt Lake City, undertook to coordinate other aspects of the research, especially those where his expertise regarding these records would be of particular value. This report outlines the detailed results of this research program and later research up to the time of the presentation of this report in 2009.

### ***Sources of information***

Potential sources for further study were mentioned in the 1990 report to the Deacon John Done Research Committee presented by Committee Chairman, John Baker. These were identified in more detail by reference to the correspondence that took place between John Baker and Michael Wood, the professional genealogist employed by the DFA, between September 1988 and July 1989. (An outline of this research is attached in Appendix 1.)

Kay Blair, DFA Historian, also sent me a report by Marilyn London Winton, prepared in 1990, that addressed some of the questions posed in Gilbert Doane's fifth clue, in particular, those relating to the identity of John Done, of Duddon in Cheshire. (A brief summary of the main points of this report is attached in Appendix 2.) Other background correspondence and other material has also been sent to me by both Kay Blair and Marshall Doane, and this has also helped to steer the direction the research has taken.

Also, because of the much greater access to many genealogical sources afforded by the advent of the Internet, a more ambitious approach to the analysis of records was adopted, and the research program included a detailed analysis of the English Parish Registers of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries as recorded on the LDS website and elsewhere.

The research program also made use of the following sources:

- a) "Allegations" for marriage Licences issued by the Bishop of London;
- b) LDS records, including the International Genealogical Index (IGI);
- c) Apprenticeship and other records of London Livery Companies - Merchant Taylors, Cordwainers (Shoemakers) and Bakers;
- d) English Parish registers recording details of baptisms, marriages and burials held in the Library of the Society of Genealogists (SOG) in London, in the Family Records Centre (FRC) – part of the UK National Archives (TNA) - and elsewhere. Main records accessed were for:

- St Benet, Gracechurch Street, London;
  - St Botolph, Bishopsgate, London;
  - St Dunstan, Stepney, Middlesex;
  - St Mary Aldermary, Bow Lane, London;
  - St Bartholomew, Crewkerne, Somerset;
  - St Mary, Eastham, Cheshire;
- e) “Citizens of London” records of Percival Boyd and Boyd’s marriage records covering other counties of England held at the SOG;
- f) Chancery Records. Documents of relevance included pleadings (“bills of complaint”, “answers”, “replications” and “rejoinders” collectively known as “Chancery Proceedings”), “evidence depositions”, “decrees” and “orders”. These documents were mainly in English, except for decrees and orders, which were usually in Latin. The main documents accessed were:
- a “bill of complaint” by Richard Evans, Susan his wife and Elizabeth Done, lodged 23 June 1631, and responses by those named in the bill. Elizabeth Done was the infant daughter of John Done “sayler” (= sailor), the nephew of John Done “whitebaker” (= baker using white flour). This bill is the mysterious document - reference code “1/59 – 1631 June 23” mentioned by John Baker in the 1990 Research Committee Report ( the correct TNA reference being “C2 CHASI E1 59”);
  - a “bill of complaint” by Agnes Done, the widow of John Done “whitebaker”, lodged 10 October 1631, and responses; and
  - a replication (a repetition of a complaint) by Elizabeth Done;
- g) The “Index Library” and other indexes of information relating to wills and administrations and their abstracts. This was accessed at the FRC and elsewhere. Records shown here include those collected or created by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC). PCC documents of particular relevance were wills, “grants of administration” and “sentences” (judgments). In general, the wills themselves were in English, and pronouncements of the PCC, such as grants of probate, administration and sentences, were in Latin. Also, complete wills were available online from the TNA and on microfiche/ microfilm at the SOG and FRC. Wills obtained included those of:
- John Done “whitebaker”, dated 5 September 1624. proved initially on 13 September 1624 (subsequent sentences and administrations also obtained) - ***This will must have been made on his deathbed, perhaps one reason why it was contested;***
  - John Done of St Pancras, Soper Lane, London, dated 24 July 1624, proved 5 December 1625;
  - William Done of East Ham, dated 10 May 1627;
  - John Done “sayler”, dated 25 November 1626, proved 29 December 1629;
  - Agnes Done, widow of John Done “whitebaker”, dated 22 July 1633, proved 17 April 1635;
  - John Donne, Rector of St Benet, Gracechurch, London, dated 19 May 1636, proved 17 January 1637 (1636/7); and
  - Other material from abstracts of probates, sentences and administrations in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury 1620 – 1648;

- h) “Acts of Court” books, summarizing proceedings before the Prerogative Court of Canterbury relating to testamentary disputes, were accessed at the main TNA archives at Kew (London). These - in Latin - were a valuable source of information dealing with the family disputes at the PCC. Here we were fortunate in being able to call on the services of a young researcher, Simon Neal, who worked part time at the TNA as a translator and transcriber of Elizabethan material, and who translated most of the documents that were in Latin for a very reasonable fee;
- i) Records created by other bodies analysed here included the administration and inventory of Thomas Done of Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire (father of John Done “whitebaker”) dated January 1595 (1594/5). This record was held in the Worcestershire County Record Office (Henley-in-Arden being part of the diocese of Worcester); and
- j) The “Volunteer Analysis” (Excel spreadsheet). LDS records were analysed online to produce a spreadsheet that listed all individuals with the name Done (including Doan, Donne and other variants) appearing on the International Genealogical Index for the British Isles for the period up to 1650. A team of volunteers (Deacon John Research Committee members and others) then undertook a further analysis to extract other relevant information, such as names of spouses and parents, and record it on the spreadsheet. This analysis was very much helped by Virgil Doan’s specialist knowledge of the LDS source, enabling unreliable records to be eliminated. (Since this analysis was completed, references to records in the name of “Dune” have been added).

### ***Progress in following Gilbert Doane’s clues***

#### **Clue 1 - John Done “Gent Tayler”**

Study of the records of the Merchant Taylors’ Company confirms the earlier findings. The name John Done does not appear on these records, although a musician of that name played the Lute before King James the First at a banquet hosted by the Company.

*Summary: no new information or conclusions*

#### **Clue 2 - The Eastham (East Ham) connection**

Gilbert Doane, in describing the nature of his second clue, referred to the possibility that Deacon John may have renamed Nauset “Eastham” after the town where he may have come from, and listed four towns or villages of that name in England.

##### **a) Eastham, Crewkerne, Somerset**

The Victoria History of the Counties of England, in the volume that records the history of Somerset, mentions that the manor of Eastham, later known as Easthams, was “held in 1066 with the king’s manor of Crewkerne, by Godwin, the king’s reeve”. Eastham(s) was never a major settlement. John Baker reported in the 1990 Research Committee Report that the name John Done did not appear in the Crewkerne parish register “at the right time to identify him with our man”. However, according to the transcript published by W. Phillimore in 1904, the Crewkerne (St Bartholomew) Parish register shows that a marriage took place between John

Dunne and Joane Abbot on 10 July 1587 (Boyd's marriage Index records the marriage as being between John Dun and Joan Abbot), and a search of the microfilm of the parish register held by the SOG showed the birth of a "John Dune" in April 1589, possibly the son of John and Joane Dunne. I also searched the Index of Somerset Probate Inventories for records of wills of Dones (and name variants), but there were none for the relevant period.

I confirmed the findings of Gilbert Doane, as recorded in a letter dated 6 December 1969, concerning:

- the appearance of a John Donne in the Crewkerne "hearth tax" records for 1664/5;
- the christenings (baptisms) of Rachel and Humphrie Done, children of Davie Done, in 1587 at the parish church St Mary Aldermary in London (the former church of John Donne of Crewkerne); and
- the trade of Davie Done. He was a "merchant tayler". However, so were 18 out of the 22 fathers whose children were baptised in the church in 1587. Two of the others were a "shoomaker" and a "mercier" (a trader in silk textiles). St Mary Aldermary was presumably the church for the garment workers of London at that time.

(Subsequently, Gilbert Done probably considered the findings referred to in this letter to be of little relevance, since they were given only a passing mention in his commentary on the five clues published in his 1976 Report to the Committee.)

*Summary: His name, his birthplace and date of birth could make "John Dune" a possible candidate to be the Deacon, but I have found no other link.*

#### **b) Eastham (East Ham), Essex**

Gilbert Doane referred to the will of one Edward Done of East Ham, but I have not been able to trace it. Probably not important - Gilbert Doane found no relevant links.

Michael Wood referred to the will, dated 1627, of a William Done of East Ham, Essex (East Ham is now an inner suburb of London). I looked at a copy of this will at the SOG, and confirmed the findings of Michael Wood, "that the testator was not of the immediate family of John Done the whitebaker of London". It was interesting that the district is today known as East Ham, two separate words, whereas in the will it is spelled Eastham, which certainly today in England would be pronounced as "East'm" i.e. with the accent on the first syllable.

*Summary: little new information gleaned and no evidence of anyone named John*

#### **c) Eastham, Worcestershire**

A search of the TNA records did not reveal any "Done" wills for Eastham residents. The "volunteer analysis" of the IGI records showed no relevant birth or marriage records for Eastham (a parish for which the IGI includes a record of the complete register to 1880). This finding was confirmed by an analysis of the parish register transcripts held at the SOG. Indeed, the only relevant IGI record for the whole of Worcestershire is that of the baptism of John Done

(Donne), born in Alvechurch in 1592 (See Clue 4 below), although, since Eastham is more than 20 miles from Alvechurch, he is unlikely to have had any connection with the village of that name.

*Summary: no new conclusions*

#### **d) Eastham, Cheshire**

I consulted the register for this parish, and confirmed that there were no records in the name of Done (or variants) at the relevant time.

*Summary: no new information*

#### **Clue 3 - St Benet, Gracechurch Street, London**

The IGI appears not to hold a record of the register for this parish covering the relevant period, but I consulted an (incomplete) copy held by the SOG, and confirmed that there **was** an entry for the marriage of John Warren and Mary Donne on 3 August 1626. In that document there were no other entries of interest. I have also produced a transcript of the will of John Donne, Rector of St Benet, written on 18 May 1636 and proved on 17 January 1637. It shows him to have had a grandson, John Donne, who was under 21 years of age at the time the will was written, and who therefore must have been born after 18 May 1615, ruling him out as having been the Deacon.

*Summary: Neither John Donne, Rector of St Benet Gracechurch, London, nor his grandson of the same name, can have been the Deacon*

#### **Clue 4 - The family of John Done “whitebaker”**

All of the six sources listed in the 1990 report of the Deacon John Done Research Committee (p.18 lines 32-41) as needing further study have now been tracked down, and many analyzed, so that some of the earlier questions raised by Gilbert Doane, Michael Wood, Marshall Doane, John Baker and others can now be resolved:

- a) John Done, clearly the “whitebaker”, is listed as occupying the post of “Master”, the senior position in the Bakers’ livery company, in 1603 and 1604. This information appears in a list of holders of that post published in “*A short history of the Worshipful Company of Bakers of London*”, by Sylvia Thrupp;
- b) The Boyd’s “*Citizens of London*” records confirmed many of the relationships between John Done “whitebaker” and his family as reported by Michael Wood - except for the relationship between John Done “whitebaker” and John Done “sayler” (see para c. below);
- c) The Chancery Proceedings were a most valuable source of the background to the “Done v Done” disputes, throwing light on many of the relationships between John Done “whitebaker” and his family. Among other things, it confirmed, contrary to what Michael Wood believed, that John Done “sayler” was indeed related to the “whitebaker” as suggested by Percival Boyd in his

“*Citizens of London*” index. He was his nephew, and named as one of the principal beneficiaries in his will;

- d) Gilbert Doane believed that the John Done who contested the whitebaker’s will, calling himself the next of kin and rightful heir to the estate, was the eldest son of the whitebaker’s eldest brother, Robert (i.e. the nephew who was a sailor). This belief was expressed in the article “Clues to the identity of Mr John Done” published in DFA 1976 Reunion Proceedings (p.40 lines 34-37) and repeated in the 1990 Report of the Research Committee (p.18 lines 6-11). This is **not** so. The claimant was John Done “cordwainer” (= shoemaker), not the nephew (the sailor), John Done “cordwainer” being the son of Nicholas Done, first cousin of John Done “whitebaker”;
- e) The 1990 DFA Research Committee Report (P.18 lines 24 – 26) suggested that there was no evidence that the lawsuit uncovered by Michael Wood was the same as that mentioned in Gilbert’s fourth clue. However, it is now clear that this lawsuit, as recorded in “Chancery Proceedings ChasI/ E1/59” involved many of the same people as were involved in the suit Gilbert Doane was investigating as recorded in the PCC “Acts of Court” books mentioned by Michael Wood (1990 Research Committee Report, p.17 lines 46-50); and
- f) I have looked at a transcript of the parish register of St Dunstan Stepney, but it does not add to what was found by Marshall Doane in 1987 - See 1990 Research Committee Report (p.17 lines 8-12).

*Summary: John Done, “cordwainer”, is the only one of the individuals in the whitebaker’s family who were identified by Gilbert Doane who can be claimed to be considered to be the man who subsequently became Deacon John Doane*

## **Clue 5 - John Done of Duddon, Cheshire**

John Done of Duddon obtained royal permission to travel abroad, but he went to France, not Plymouth Colony.

*Summary: John Done of Duddon is unlikely to have been the man who later became the Deacon.*

## ***Other leads***

### **The Bryant Connection**

One other line of inquiry has been to investigate a possible link between the Deacon and a Stephen Bryant, an individual who members of the Bryant Family Association believe to have been a stepson of the Deacon. So far, only a reference to a “Doane (Bryant)” in a footnote to a particular edition of William Bradford’s “*History of the Plymouth Plantation*” provides clues as to the origin of this story, but following research carried out by committee member Marshall Doane at the library of the New England Historic Genealogy Society (NEHGS), no link has been found between Bryants and Doanes in this or any of the other editions of Bradford's History that he consulted.

Marshall reported that “this document does not mention any details concerning Bryants or Doanes, and any references which do occur must be in added notes by editors.....The most extensive notes for any edition appear in the two-volume set published in 1912 by the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. The only mention of the name Bryant that I found was a rather remote one in the editor's note on Page 271 regarding a meeting of townsmen (Town of New Plymouth) on 16 July 1638: ‘And have thereupon nominated and appointed Thomas Prence, gent, and Gov'r William Bradford and Edward Winslow, gent, and Assistants of the Government, Stephen [Bryant or Doane] John Done [Doane] and Thomas Willett, gent and John Dunhame to have the power and authority for these foure years next to put forth and dispose the said stock of cowes....etc.’ The brackets were added by the editor, who, by them, suggests that the Stephen referred to may be either a Bryant or Doane. Note that the editor also ‘corrected’ the spelling of Done to Doane. I know of no Stephen Doane of this period (1638), so it may make some sense to think that the editor meant to print ‘Deane’ instead of Doane.....I have found no reference in numerous editions of William Bradford's ‘History’ that would support a connection between a Doane and a Bryant, either in the actual text or any accompanying notes. If the reference exists, it must be in some other editor's notes of some other edition.”

*Summary: There is no evidence of any connection between the Bryant family and the Deacon.*

### **The Dwnns of Wales**

This history of this family has been recorded by Martin Done, in his “*History of the Done family of Cheshire*”. His book contains a chapter on the Dones of Kidwelly in Carmarthenshire (in Wales) whose name in Welsh was spelled “Dwnn”.

*Summary: There is no evidence of any connection between the Welsh Dwnns and the Deacon.*

## **Summary of evidence supporting the view that John Done “cordwainer” was the man who went on to become Deacon John Done**

- a) Early research into his background suggested that, immediately before going to America, John Done lived in London. There were not very many people across England at the relevant time who carried the name John Done (including variants of the name), who had connections in London and who were of an educational background that made them likely to have subsequently been honoured with the title “Deacon”. London is a city where much research into parish records has been carried out (e.g. Percival Boyd's index of citizens of London) confirming that, at that time, the city had relatively few families with the name of Done (or Donne). Men carrying the name John Done (or variants) who have been definitely identified as *not* being the same man who became the Deacon are:
  - John Done “whitebaker” (died in September 1624).
  - John Done – son of Thomas Done - Gent who later moved to London, where he was identified as John Done of St Pancras, Soper Lane, London (died between 1624 and 1625)
  - John Done - the nephew of John Done “whitebaker” - also described as John Done “sayler” (died between 1626 and 1629).



- John Done Esq. – son and heir of Sir John Done of Utkinton in Cheshire (died in 1629)
- John Donne – Rector of St Benet, Gracechurch, London (died between 1636 and 1637)
- John Donne - grandson of John Donne, Rector of St Benet, Gracechurch, London (born after May 1615)

However, John Done “cordwainer”, a man who was involved in lengthy law suits with the prominent London family of John Done “whitebaker”, has not been ruled out. He was born in Alvechurch, Worcestershire on 28 May 1592, a date that ties in with the likely age of Deacon John.

***(John Done “cordwainer” is the only one on the list of men bearing the name of John Done who was not eliminated from consideration. He was living in London at the relevant time and had a birth date consistent with that of the Deacon)***

- b) The main disputes surrounding the will of John Done “whitebaker”, arose out of the fact that his widow, Agnes Done, was, under the terms of that will, granted use of the property contained in the estate whilst she lived, whilst many of those who were named as ultimate beneficiaries died before she did. This led to claims against the estate, and against Agnes Done personally, by others such as John Done “cordwainer” (son of Nicholas Done, first cousin of John Done “whitebaker”) and Elizabeth Done, infant daughter of John Done “sayler” (nephew of John Done “whitebaker”). On 30 April 1630, John Done “cordwainer”, appeared in court in person to request that administration of the estate of John Done “whitebaker”, be awarded to him. This followed a continuing court case initiated by him in June 1628 against Agnes Done, the whitebaker’s widow, in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, contesting the validity of the will. However, he did not appear in person at any subsequent hearing. He was granted administration of the estate on 6 May 1630, following Agnes Done’s excommunication for failure to respond to a summons to attend the court.

***(The “Handmaid” sailed for New England on 10 August 1630, three months after John Done “cordwainer” was granted administration of the estate of John Done “whitebaker. Although there is no passenger list for this ship, we know that it was the only vessel to land at Plymouth direct from England in 1630, the year of Deacon John’s recorded arrival.)***

- c) A “Bill of Complaint” was brought against John Done “cordwainer” and others by Agnes Done, the whitebaker’s widow, in the Court of Chancery. In this Bill it was alleged that he had conspired with others to defraud Agnes Done out of her inheritance. He responded to this Bill some time in 1631 or 1632 (document is undated) stating that since Agnes Done had been excommunicated, he had no need to respond, and asking for costs to be awarded to him. This response, unlike that of other respondents, was in handwriting that suggested it had not been written by a professional scribe. Could it have been handwritten by the cordwainer himself, assuming he did not have access to such professional services, and sent by a messenger to the court?

***(Deacon John was in New England at this time, where he may not have had access to the services of a professional scribe)***

- d) Elizabeth Done and Richard Evans also raised a Bill of Complaint against John Done “cordwainer” and others, including Agnes Done, in which they stated that John Done “sayler”, the nephew of John Done “whitebaker”, was the true heir to his estate, but that, following his death at sea between 1626 and 1629, his daughter Elizabeth should have inherited it. The Bill alleged that there was a conspiracy on the part of Agnes Done and the cordwainer to defraud Elizabeth of her inheritance. (Richard Evans, her stepfather, the joint complainant, had married Susan, the sailor’s widow). The Bill makes reference to witnesses who “depart this realm or remayne in foraigne parts”. Although there is no indication that this comment refers to John Done “cordwainer” (the document is illegible at this point) there was clearly a sense that some of the witnesses listed were very likely to have left the country. John Done “cordwainer” did not make a response to this Bill of Complaint, a response on his behalf being made by fellow defendants, John Betteson and Richard Kilvert in October 1632.

***(Deacon John was almost certainly in New England in 1632 and is unlikely to have been able to have attended this hearing in person. He may have been one of the witnesses mentioned as having been “in foraigne parts”)***

- e) the cordwainer used the name “Done”, and he was referred to under that name by others, in all of the legal proceedings in which he was involved, including his suit against Agnes Done and the Bills of Complaint brought against him by Agnes Done and by Elizabeth Done and Richard Evans. At the same time, the Alvechurch (= Alchurch) parish register that records his baptism uses the spelling “Donne”. However, the relationships described both in the lawsuits and in the register itself clearly relate to the same family.

***(Gilbert Doane points out that Deacon John himself always spelt his surname “Done” and that it was only the next generation that used the spelling “Doane”)***

- f) Before her marriage to John Done “whitebaker”, Agnes Done had been married to Samson Leycroft(e) and had a granddaughter, Hannah Leycroft(e), born in London in 1628. In 1650, a Hannah Leycroft married John Mayo in Plymouth Colony. Leycroft(e) was a very unusual name in England at the time. This and the fact that the birth and marriage dates are consistent suggest that these references are to one and the same person.

***(This suggests a strong link between the family of John Done “whitebaker” and the early Plymouth colonists)***

#### **Additional Note**

***In para c) above it was suggested that the document representing the response of John Done “cordwainer” to Agnes Done’s Bill of Complaint may have contained his actual signature. This led to the thought that if such a signature were to match Deacon John’s signature in his will, we would have conclusive proof that the ‘cordwainer’ and the Deacon were one and the same person.***

*Unfortunately, although Deacon John's will exists, a visit made by Marshall Doane to the Barnstable County records office revealed the fact that the will deposited there is not an original, but a handwritten copy made some years after the will was written, the original having been destroyed in a fire. Thus, the purported signature of Deacon John affixed to it is most certainly not his, and is of no use in any comparison with signatures in other documents. We have found no other documents that contain his signature to compare with those on file in England.*

## **Recommendations for further research**

Although the results of this research program indicate a high probability that John Done, “cordwainer”, is the man who later became Deacon John Doane, that does not mean that the research program has stopped. There is always the possibility that further research will cast doubt on this conclusion, and even if it is confirmed, there is still a lot we have yet to learn about the man before he left England.

The future program of research falls into three categories:

- a) Further research into the family of John Done “whitebaker”. This involves the analysis of items such as wills and other legal documents to identify witnesses or other individuals with possible connections with John Done “cordwainer”;
- b) Further analysis of the history and geographical distribution across Britain of the Done/ Donne/ Dwnn families and families of the other early Plymouth colonists;
- c) The Y-DNA testing program (see Part 2 of this report below)

## PART 2 - THE Y-DNA TESTING PROGRAM

### Background

In an attempt to supplement the “paper trail”, we are now trying to find an ancestor of Deacon John through a program of DNA testing. The aim of this project is to establish a link between known descendants of the Deacon in North America - i.e. male Doan(e)s - and men living today who bear the name Done (or variants such as Donne or Doune) who might be descended from a Done ancestor of the Deacon before he sailed to New England. The question to which we are seeking an answer is: “is there a present day Done who has a pedigree that leads back to an ancestor of the Deacon (whether the ‘cordwainer’ or someone else)?” If we find such an individual we will have narrowed down our search for that ancestor.

We have obtained Y-DNA samples from males with the name of Done - or variant spellings - resident in England and Wales, to see whether we can find a match between these samples and the Y-DNA of known descendants of the Deacon in America. This research is based on the fact that the Y-DNA chromosome is passed from father to son in exactly the same way as a surname.

To find such a link we began by obtaining Y-DNA samples from six DFA members. We then obtained samples from men with the name Done, mainly resident in England, but also including Dones resident in North America who are believed not to have descended from the Deacon.

### Results

The results of the Y-DNA testing program based on the 12 marker Y-DNA profiles of the 34 individuals tested so far have been analysed into groups where the “genetic distance” connecting individuals within a group is no more than two. These results show that there are at least eleven such unrelated groups, where the genetic distance between groups is three or more (and in most cases far greater than three). In particular:

- a) ***Of the sample of six Doane Family Association members, five had Y-DNA profiles sufficiently close to each other to indicate that they were descended from the Deacon - as their paper pedigrees suggested.*** A further seven Doan(e)s, six resident in the US, one resident in Canada, also belonged to this group, but ***of the UK Dones/ Donnes tested, there were no matches with the six members of the Doane Family Association sample;***
- b) Four of the UK Dones sampled, together with one US and one South African resident Done, had pedigrees indicating that they belonged to the aristocratic Done family centred on Tarporley in Cheshire. The Y-DNA analysis for these individuals showed them to have the same profile as each other, tending to confirm their view that they were from this Tarporley “tribe”. Unfortunately, this Tarporley profile is very different from that of our DFA sample, indicating that ***it is extremely unlikely that the US/ Canadian Doan(e)s are related to the aristocratic Tarporley Dones;***
- c) Other groups were:
  - a group of five Dones and Donnes, all resident in the UK;

- a group consisting of two Dones, one resident in the UK and one in the US;
- six separate groups consisting of a single individual Doan or Doane – all resident in the USA;
- a group consisting of a single individual Done resident in the UK.

## Some Conclusions

- a) We have yet to find a match between the Y-DNA of descendants of Deacon John and Dones/Donnes resident in the UK or elsewhere outside North America;
- b) In the past, the names Done and Donne may have been used interchangeably by members of the same family. This is consistent with the fact that the cordwainer used the name Done, but the ancestry to which he refers in the relevant legal document is supported by parish records that sometimes have the name spelled Donne;
- c) There are many individuals bearing the name Done who are unrelated to each other in any recent historical timescale. In the UK, this may be because the surname is a generic one that was adopted by different families, although it may also be because of so-called “non-paternity events”, where a child took the name of a man who was not his father (a stepchild or the child of a father who was not his mother’s Done husband);
- d) In the USA, the reason for there being so many separate Doan(e) groups probably includes the non-paternity event explanation, although it could be that some individuals from different Done families who emigrated to America later than the Deacon, adopted the American spelling of the name (although many did not); and
- e) We have so far found no groups that consist of both Doan(e)s and Don(n)es, suggesting that the Doan(e) names are virtually confined to the USA and Canada, whilst the spelling in the UK is almost always Done or Donne.

## Future action

- a) There is an apparent reluctance on the part of Dones and Donnes resident in the UK to sign up to the Y-DNA testing programme. This is probably due to a suspicion that if they are being offered something for nothing, then there must be a catch, or that government agencies may be seeking to increase surveillance over them. Therefore, in an effort to persuade more people to join the project, a letter has now been written that focuses on a possible desire on the part of prospective respondents to research their own ancestry. This will be sent to those with the names Done or Donne, now living in Britain or elsewhere outside North America, or who went to America after the first wave of migration.
- b) It is proposed to start a Done “One-Name Study” through membership of the UK-based Guild of One-Name Studies. This will provide a forum for other Dones/ Donnes to join in the research program and should help to identify potential participants in the Y-DNA testing program.
- c) The possibility of Y-DNA matches with other names will be explored through Y-search, the Y-DNA public database.

## **PART 3 - REFERENCES**

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The Doane Family Association website: [www.doanefamilyassociation.org](http://www.doanefamilyassociation.org)