

December 19, 1941

Dear Dr Oliver,

I have found your letter of December 16th here on my return from Scotland, and am much interested in your suggestion that a good bit of work on your own, and perhaps analogous material, might make an M.D. thesis. I think this is very well worth thinking of.

Grouping data published so far from Ireland are exceedingly weak, being, in fact, I think only about 800 cases in all, of somewhat doubtful provenance, as such early samples are liable to be. We have now, moreover, much more reason than formerly to expect that the Irish returns should be interesting.

1) For Eastern Britain there is a striking gradient in the ratio A:O, as one passes from London to Aberdeen.

2) A similar steeper gradient has been shown to exist in Wales, extending necessarily over a much shorter distance. A similar effect, therefore, very possibly exists in Ireland, where, so far as we know, the blood group complexion may be very like that of Iceland or Scotland in the North, and may or may not be equally deficient in A in the South.

3) North Ireland received a considerable settlement from Britain in the 16th and 17th centuries, and the religious bar may

well have kept this strain more than usually distinct, so giving a contrast between people with predominantly British surnames and others with Southern Irish surnames.

The surnames of Ireland and their distribution by Counties has not been studied so thoroughly as it has been in England and Wales. Guppy found it possible to use local directories to find surname frequencies by counties in the farming population. Something of this kind for Ireland might well show local prevalences, such as Fraser Roberts has recently made use of in contrasting North and South ^{Wales} surnames.

My own effort has been the generalised one of salvaging the scientific value, which might otherwise be lost, from the very extensive blood groupings now in progress. What you propose would fit very well with what I am doing, and I hope you will consider the possibility of submitting Mr Hart's work for publication in the Annals of Eugenics, or otherwise make his data available to us, and of relying on us to lend any assistance which the proper salvaging of the material may from time to time require.

Yours sincerely,

The age distribution in 5 year classes centred on 13, 18, 23, 28 ... is well worth having separately for the eight combinations of size and group
R. A. F.

[Dr J. O. Oliver,
R.A.M.C.
Military Hospital
Holywood, Co. Down.
N. Ireland] - JAB

The question of surnames is an extension, or excrescence, of our original plan which is much more difficult to standardise or codify.

I am enclosing an offprint of a letter to Nature in which we broke the ice on this subject, and I may say that Fraser Roberts, working on Welsh material, has now shown that there is a strong contrast between North and South Wales in the same sense as that between North and South Britain, so that the influence we detected at Slough must be due to North Welsh immigrants.

Guppy's book "The Homes of Family Names" is a systematic study of the frequency of surnames in England and Wales, but does not, I think, cover Ireland. His procedure was to use directories and tabulate the frequency per 10,000 of surnames occurring in the farming population, which he rightly supposed to be more stable locally than urban occupations. If directories exist, the same procedure could be applied to Irish counties, and names in which Northern and Southern Ireland are contrasted will thereby be sorted out. This, of course, is to establish rather laboriously a foundation for the interpretation of frequencies in the populations grouped. Among the Protestants of Northern Ireland one would certainly expect surnames of English, Scottish and Irish origin, and it would be instructive in your material to contrast those which were much rarer in Southern Ireland with others as common, or commoner, as a first indication of a possible racial contrast.

The figures you give tally quite closely with the Scottish samples we have so far, though, by itself, this does not prove a

Ref: NIRA/139/TB
Probably Scottish origin for your Ulsterman, since the frequencies may have been the same before the 17th century settlement.

I am asking Fraser Roberts to send you offprints of his paper when they come out. *Here is a letter of his to Nature, I think not yet printed*

Will you thank Major Oliver for putting me in touch with you, and for his note of ~~JANUARY~~ ^{JANUARY} 8th 1942

Yours sincerely,

Dear Captain Hart,

The basic classification which we have been using so far as possible in recording blood group frequencies involves:

(a) Blood groups in four categories, O, A, B, AB, for the spontaneous antigens, ignoring the subgroups $A_1 A_2$, though it would be specially interesting to get these from a region such as Northern Ireland in which A is rare;

(b) sex, males and females, making with the blood groups an

eight-fold classification, *and (here in doubtful cases, I guess)*

and (c) age, classified in five-year age groups, centred on ages 13, 23, 28, etc, i.e., 11 - 15 inclusive, 16-20 inclusive, 21-25 inclusive, etc, the nominal age being, as usual, the age at the last birthday. In the early months of the blood transfusion work, age was very often not recorded, so that in all large compilations there is a proportion of unrecorded age. A sprinkling of these, of course, still occur in the newer records, so that, if 14 age classes cover the range of recorded ages, one adds a 15th column for those of unknown age, and, finally, a column for the total of all ages. I enclose a form of record sheet which you may find ^{useful} ~~useful~~ to follow.