Travels of a **Darwin Groupie** *Miscellany*

Saddleback tortoise stud Diego at the Charles Darwin Research Station, Santa Cruz Island

Land iguana on North Seymour Island

Blue-footed booby on North Seymour Island

Marine iguana at Punta Espinoza, Fernandina Island

Sea lion pup awaiting its mom at Las Bachas, Santa Cruz

León Dormido

Colorful Place Names in Cambridge

Jesus Lane, Maids Causeway, Midsummer Common, Mud Lane, Parsonage Street, Drummer Street, Christ's Lane, Lion Yard, Trinity Street, King's Parade, Trumpington Street, Magdalene Street, Christ's Pieces, Bridge of Sighs

A Colorful Reaction

In response to Robert Chambers's anonymously authored *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, geologist Adam Sedgwick wrote, "I cannot but think the work is from a woman's pen. . . . [It] leaps to a conclusion, as if the toilsome way up the hill of Truth were to be passed over with the light skip of an opera-dancer. This mistake was woman's from the first. She longed for the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and she must pluck it, right or wrong."

Recommended Reading

Charles Darwin: *Charles Darwin: Voyaging* and *Charles Darwin: The Power of Place* by Janet Browne, *Darwin and the Barnacle* by Rebecca Stott, *Darwin and the Science of Evolution* by Patrick Tort (suitable for young readers)
Erasmus Darwin: *Erasmus Darwin: A Life of Unequalled Achievement* and *Erasmus Darwin and Evolution* by Desmond King-Hele, *Erasmus Darwin* by Patricia Fara, *The Lunar Men* by Jenny Uglow
Other topics: *40 Years of Evolution* by Peter and Rosemary Grant, *The Prometheans* by Max Adams, *Scenes from Deep Time* by Martin Rudwick, *The Man Who Found the Missing Link* by Pat Shipman, *The Tragic Sense of Life* by Robert Richards, *Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man Who Knew Everything* edited by Paula Findlen, *Chrysalis* by Kim Todd, *The Devil's Doctor* by Philip Ball, *The Seashell on the Mountaintop* by Alan Cutler, *London's Leonardo* by Bennett, Cooper, Hunter and Jardine, *The Eye of the Lynx* by David Freedberg, *The Dark Lady of DNA* by Brenda Maddox, "Being the World Eternal" by Ivano Dal Prete in *Isis*

Timeline

610-425 BC-Philosophers Thales, Anaximander, Pythagoras, Xenophanes and Herodotus propose that marine fossils found inland lived in the sea.

c.860-Al Jahiz describes some 350 animal varieties in his *Book of Animals,* and mentions their "struggle for existence."

c.1500-Leonardo da Vinci proposes that fossil marine shells have not been carried to their present locations by a global deluge.

1616-Italian philosopher Lucilio Vanini suggests that humans descended from apes.

1619-Italian philosopher Lucilio Vanini is burned alive for suggesting that humans descended from apes.

1650-Archbishop James Ussher calculates the date of creation, based on the ages of biblical prophets. Using his work, theologians will name the date of creation: October 26, 4004 BC.

1669-Niels Stensen (Steno) publishes his finding that sediments are deposited in horizontal layers.

1731-Johann Jakob Scheuchzer publishes *Sacred Physics* based on the Old Testament including a description of what he believes is a fossilized biblical flood victim.

1778-Buffon publishes *Les Epoques de la Nature*, asserting that the Earth is 74,832 years old, and has existed long before humans.

1799-William Smith maps rock formations in the vicinity of Bath, England, making perhaps the world's first geologic map.

1810-Mary Anning's brother discovers the world's first recognized fossil ichthyosaur. She will collect it the next year.

1811-Georges Cuvier identifies Johann Jakob Scheuchzer's "biblical flood" victim as a giant salamander.

1820-1821-Mary Anning excavates the world's first fossil plesiosaur to be correctly identified.

1824-William Buckland publishes *Notice on the Megalosaurus* (first recognized dinosaur).

1825-Gideon Mantell publishes *Notice on the Iguanodon* (second recognized dinosaur).

1831-1836-Charles Darwin sails on the *Beagle*.

1841-1842-English anatomist Sir Richard Owen proposes the term *Dinosauria* ("terrible lizards").

1851-1854-Charles Darwin publishes monographs on cirripedes (marine invertebrates including barnacles).

1853-1854-Under Richard Owen's supervision, Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins constructs sculptures of prehistoric life in Crystal Palace Park.

1856-The first recognized fossil human, a Neanderthal, is discovered near Düsseldorf.

1858-Darwin's and Wallace's papers are read at the same Linnean Society meeting.

1859-Charles Darwin publishes *On the Origin of Species*.

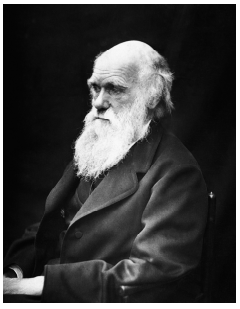
1871-Charles Darwin publishes *The Descent of Man*.

1894-Eugène Dubois publishes his monograph of *Pithecanthropus erectus*, (the first *Homo erectus* fossil).

1953-James Watson and Francis Crick describe the molecular structure of DNA.

1953-Fiesel Houtermans and Clair Patterson publish independent estimates of the age of the Earth, both over 4.5 billion years.

Charles Darwin



Born: February 12, 1809

Died: April 19, 1882

Areas of interest: Beetles, barnacles (until he got sick of them), chemistry, volcanoes, fossils, geology, expression of human emotions, botany, migration of plants and animals over long distances and open water.

Theories and discoveries: Natural selection, coral reef formation. Predicted the existence of animals such as the naked mole rat and a really long-tongued moth (and vindicated on both counts).

Worst nemesis: Perhaps Sir Richard Owen. Darwin got the posthumous laugh, being buried in Westminster Abbey, and commemorated with a statue on the main staircase of the Natural History Museum, London (the museum that was Owen's baby).

Potential sources of illness: Chagas disease, Crohn's disease, gallbladder disease, ulcer, diverticulitis.

Reflections on the divine: "I feel most deeply that the whole subject is too profound for human intellect. A dog might as well speculate on the mind of Newton."

Selected writings: *The Voyage of the Beagle, The Origin of Species, Descent of Man.*

Erasmus Darwin

Born: December 12, 1731

Died: April 18, 1802

Areas of interest: Women, expanded suffrage, universal education, the abolition of slavery, the French Revolution, the American Revolution, poetry, women, fossils, geology, botany, translating the works of Linnaeus, sanitation, vaccinations, temperance and women.

Inventions and discoveries: A speaking machine, a copying machine rivaling modern photocopiers, a carriage steering system later used in automobiles, a model of the atmosphere not bettered until the 1950s, the identification of sugars and starches as the byproducts of plant "digestion," and the importance of nitrates and phosphorus in sustaining vegetation. Predicted the existence of leaf stomata many years before their actual discovery.

Scandalous motto: *E conchis omnia*, or "Everything from shells." An early proponent of evolution, he kept the phrase in his bookplates but removed it from his carriage after he found himself satirized in verse by a local clergyman.

Selected writings: *The Botanic Garden, Zoonomia*, multiple poems to woo his second wife.

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