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The cultural history ceilidh at Aberdeen. See images at www.abdn.ac.uk/ch/images/conference/.

we as cultural historians do – particularly with regard to practice and theory. This conference provided an ideal environment for such discussion, and closed with the promise that these questions would be further considered by the creation of an international society for cultural history and plans for a subsequent conference in Ghent.

Don Leggett, University of Kent
Michael Brown, University of Manchester

Darwin's World

Charlotte Nicklas went to the Brighton Festival to report on 'Pathways into Darwin's World'.

With the support of the British Society for the History of Science and the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Fern Elsdon-Baker organised a stimulating event to explore historical and contemporary approaches to the work of Charles Darwin. Held on 23 May 2007 at the Friends Meeting House in Brighton, 'Pathways into Darwin's World' was part of Brighton Festival's cultural programme.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, John van Wyhe, director of Darwin Online, was unable to attend this event. Elsdon-Baker stepped in at the last minute and briefly introduced the audience to this important project, the largest Darwin publication in history. The facsimile scans, authoritative bibliography, and supporting material make Darwin Online an unparalleled resource for both scholars and the general public. The popularity of this site indicates the familiarity with and interest in the figure and works of Darwin.

Elsdon-Baker explored the themes in Darwin's work which account for this sustained

attention. Darwin's skilful amalgamation of existing knowledge from different fields to theorise the history of life spoke, and continues to speak to, many different popular and academic communities. Although the theory of evolution of species was widely accepted by the end of the 19th century, great debate persisted concerning the mechanisms by which evolution occurs; to some extent these debates continue today. The sustained revisiting and reinvention of what Darwinism represents means that its history holds an enduring appeal for historians, scientists, artists, and members of the public alike.

Shirley Chubb, artist and lecturer at the University of Chichester, discussed her recent project, *Thinking Path*, inspired by Darwin's daily ritual of walking the same path at Down House in Kent, his family home for forty years. Darwin's walks provided a vehicle for reflection and long-term observations of his

environment and Chubb used her research at Down House to explore his life, work and legacy. She recorded her own walks on the 'thinking path' (also known as the Sand-walk) on four significant anniversaries in Darwin's life: his date of birth, the return of the Beagle expedition, the publication of *The Origin of Species*, and the date of his death. Stills of video footage taken on these walks were juxtaposed with historic and contemporary images related to these specific events as well as images addressing birth, voyaging, knowledge and death more generally. When installed at different museums across the UK, Chubb also selected relevant objects, such as a piece of Grinshill sandstone with fossil ripple marks. The resulting combination of images and objects transformed historical experiences into artifacts for modern museum visitors.

Artist Jamie Shovlin also engaged with Darwin's work in his recent exhibition *Aggregate*. Interested in the way books function as social objects, not only as sources of knowledge, Shovlin offered university libraries a new copy of *The Origin of Species* in exchange for one read by generations of students. The revisions Darwin made to *Origin* during his life underscore that science is a fluid process, not a fixed idea, making this pivotal book an appropriate choice for this project. With the library books he received, Shovlin displayed every page flat on a large board. He blacked out every word which had not been annotated or underlined—all text not deemed important by readers was erased. By seeing how the whole book has been read, Shovlin explored how individual and collective knowledges of science coexist.

The pieces of Chubb and Shovlin provide



An image from Shirley Chubb's project Thinking Path, inspired by Darwin's regular walk at Down House.



Jamie Shovlin's installation *The Origin of Species*.

two cases of contemporary artistic practice using Darwin's life and writings. With the success of projects such as Darwin Online, these examples highlight the continued importance and contemporary relevance of Darwin's work.

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Science and Religion

Rachel Steele, C. J. Bosanquet and Yvonne Twomey were in Lancaster.

In July approximately 160 delegates from almost 20 countries within many academic disciplines gathered at Lancaster University. The conference, sponsored by the BSHS and the Templeton Foundation, was held to mark the retirement of Professor John Hedley Brooke, holder of the first interdisciplinary Andreas Idreos Professorship of Science and Religion within the Faculty of Theology at Oxford. Brooke was formerly Professor of the History of Science at Lancaster University, and taught there for thirty years before moving to Oxford in 1999 and it was therefore fitting that Lancaster should be the conference venue. The international provenance of the delegates was itself a tribute to his career and the quality of his teaching.

Delegates giving papers repeatedly emphasised the seminal contribution of Brooke to the understanding of the historical relationship between religion and science and to his prolific writings, particularly *Science*

and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives (1991), a work which will undoubtedly be familiar to readers. The consensus at the conference was the importance of recognising the complexity of the historical relationship between science and religion. Certainly there have been conflicts but, as Brooke argues, it is better to discard simplistic notions of inevitable and long-standing conflict between science and religion, both mistakenly conceived as discrete and unchanging entities, and to instead appreciate the importance of individuals and their social and intellectual contexts.

The various papers offered by historians, scientists, theologians and philosophers provided a wide range of historical and contemporary perspectives. The central plenary sessions provided especially stimulating and varied topics. Those on the first day welcomed delegates and surveyed Brooke's contribution; and provided a session on the challenge of modernity. The following day, delegates were offered two discussions; on Darwin's personal theological views and on design



John Brooke with plenary speaker Willem Drees of the University of Leiden.

and natural theology, including the Intelligent Design Movement. On the penultimate day, the contribution of social sciences to the study of religion was examined along with the theology of Bruno Latour; the second plenary focused on new the challenges within the history of science and religion in the modern world; while a third offered a global perspective on science and religion, including the applicability of the 'complexity thesis' to America.

The final day concluded with a plenary, chaired by Brooke himself, which comprised Willem Drees' discussion of the varying approaches of scholars depending on their academic disciplines. Brooke's work was also extensively discussed by Noah Efron who argued that the implications of his writings are more radical and demanding than is commonly imagined; specifically that the stress on the complexity of the relationships between religions and sciences casts doubt on the extent to which a single science and religion dialogue exists. The implications of Brooke's work will undoubtedly continue to be considered by future scholars.

As well as these plenary sessions, participants were offered a plethora of parallel sessions reflecting the variety and broad nature of the expertise of delegates. Evening entertainments were also provided, including Craig Baxter's *Re: Design*, a dramatisation of the correspondence between Charles Darwin and Asa Gray; an imaginative commission by the Darwin Correspondence Project.

Another highlight was the formal conference dinner on the penultimate day. Brooke's major contribution was celebrated by Stephen Pumfrey of Lancaster University, who presented Professor Brooke with a gift of an edition of Richard Watson's *Chemical Essays* (1781); by Frank James, President of the BSHS; and Ronald L. Numbers who offered witty remarks on John Hedley Brooke's career. Brooke himself offered some engaging and humorous remarks and displayed his customary modesty and self-deprecation.

Space does not permit further mention of the plethora of individual papers or study areas involved. Suffice to say that this was an extremely stimulating and convivial occasion marking the retirement of a scholar who has contributed enormously to the study of the historical engagement between religion and science.

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