

Darwin documents are released online

From Reuters

LONDON — The first draft of Charles Darwin's "On the Origin of Species" is among a wealth of papers belonging to the intensely private man who changed science that have been published on the Internet for the first time.

Comprising about 20,000 items and 90,000 images, the release on *darwin-online.org.uk* is the largest in history, according to the organizers from Cambridge University Library, which holds all the Darwin papers.

"This release makes his private papers, mountains of notes, experiments and research behind his world-changing publications available to the world for free," said John van Wyhe, director of the project.

"His publications have always been available in the public sphere, but these papers have until now only been accessible to scholars."

The collection includes thousands of notes and drafts of Darwin's scientific writings, notes from the voyage of the *Beagle* — when he began to for-

mulate his theory of evolution — and his first recorded doubts about the permanence of species.

It also contains photographs of Darwin and his family, newspaper clippings and reviews of his books.

Giving a more personal insight, there is also his wife Emma's cookbook, including recipes for delicacies such as Ilkley pudding and a rudimentary recipe for boiling rice, written by Darwin himself.

Other papers include caricatures and notes with his boyhood musings on birds.

Publication in 1859 of "On the Origin of Species" established Darwin, already known to the public after the publication of "The Voyage of the *Beagle*," as a leading scientific thinker.

It also sparked a major public debate and a bitter denunciation by the Church of England, which regarded the book as heretical.

"Darwin changed our understanding of nature forever," Van Wyhe said.

"His papers reveal how immensely detailed his researches were."