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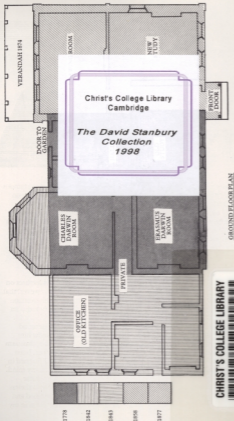
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Charles Darwin



Charles Robert Darwin, whose name as a naturalist is among the most famous in the history of science and of human thought, was born at Shrewsbury on February 12th 1809 and died at Down House on April 19th 1882.

His early education was gained at a day school in Shrewsbury and at the age of nine he was sent to Dr Butler's Boarding School only a mile or so from his home. At this period of his life he was not only interested in collecting insects but, with his brother Erasmus, carried out experiments in a chemical laboratory they set up in a toolshed in the garden, thereby earning a reprimand from their headmaster for wasting time in such useless pursuits. In 1825 Charles joined his brother at Edinburgh to begin the study of medicine. Charles seems to have disliked his studies and he mentions particularly Dr Monro (Alexander Monro *Tertius*) who 'made his lectures on human anatomy as dull as he was himself'. He always regretted, however, that he had not persevered to overcome his dislike of dissecting, for this aversion and his lack of skill in drawing was, he remarked many years afterwards, 'an irremediable evil'.

It was in Edinburgh that he made the acquaintance of Robert Edmond Grant, later to be Lecturer in Zoology at University College. 'I knew him well', says Darwin, 'he was dry and formal in manner, with much enthusiasm beneath his outer crust. He one day, when we were walking together, burst forth in high admiration of Lamarck and his views on evolution. I listened in silent astonishment, and as far as I can judge, without any effect on my mind. I had previously read the *Zoonomia* of my grandfather, in which similar views are maintained, but without producing any effect on me. Nevertheless it is probable that the hearing rather early in life such views maintained and praised may have favoured my upholding them under a different form in my "Origin of Species".'

After two years in Edinburgh, Darwin went to Christ's College, Cambridge, where he spent three sessions. It being apparent that he had no taste for medicine, his father proposed that he should become a clergyman; but, says Darwin, 'during the three years which I spent at Cambridge my time was wasted, as far as the academical studies were concerned, as completely as at Edinburgh and at school'. He did, however, gain his B.A. and benefited much from the friends he made, these including the Professor of Botany, John Stevens Henslow (1796-1861), the Rev. Adam Sedgwick (1785-1873), the geologist, and J. M. Herbert, later County Court Judge for South Wales. Nor did he neglect his earlier interests, particularly the collection of beetles. 'It was the mere passion for collecting', he says, 'for I did not dissect them and rarely compared their external characters with published description, but got them named anyhow . . . I was very successful in collecting and invented two new methods; I employed a labourer to scrape, during the winter, moss off old trees and place it in a large bag and likewise to collect the rubbish at the bottom of the barges in which reeds are brought from the fens, and thus I got some very rare species.'

Shortly after leaving Cambridge at the end of the May Term in 1831, Darwin received a letter from Professor Henslow to say that Captain Robert Fitzroy was willing to give up part of his own cabin to any young man who would volunteer to go with him without pay as naturalist on the voyage of H.M.S. 'Beagle', the main object of the expedition being to make a survey of the South American coast. Darwin was eager to accept this offer but his father strongly objected to the project and said that if he could find any man of common sense who advised it he would give his consent. The 'man of common sense' proved to be his uncle, Josiah Wedgwood II; and so it was all settled. Darwin himself regarded this venture as the most important event in his life and one that determined his whole career. The voyage took almost five years and even before his return to England his name was known in scientific circles, for the specimens he sent home had aroused considerable attention and some of the letters he wrote to Professor Henslow had been printed for distribution among members of the Cambridge Philosophical Society.

During the two years after his arrival home he finished the 'Journal of the Voyage', read several papers before the Geological Society, began preparing his 'Geological Observations' and arranged for the publication of the 'Zoology of the Voyage of the Beagle'. In addition he began to collect the data which, twenty years later, resulted in the publication of his theories 'On the Origin of Species'.

On January 29th 1839, Charles Darwin married his first cousin, Emma Wedgwood and for more than three years they continued to live in London, at 12 Upper Gower Street. He went into society more at this period of his life than at any time later. One of his new friends was Charles Lyell whose 'Principles of Geology' had been of such good service to him during the 'Voyage' and he considered Lyell's theories to be more acceptable than those advocated in any other works on the subject. He became acquainted with Friedrich Heinrich von Humboldt, the scientist and traveller, Lord

Macaulay, Lord Stanhope and George Grote, the historians, Sydney Smith and Thomas Carlyle, the essayists; and he attended the meetings of several scientific societies as well as acting as secretary to the Geological Society.

It was on September 14th 1842 that Mr and Mrs Darwin and their two children, William and Anne Elizabeth, moved into Down House. For some years afterwards he made regular visits to London to attend meetings and meet his friends, but the remoteness of the village in those days—the nearest stations were Croydon or Sydenham—and his increasing ill-health after a time made these excursions more and more infrequent. There is no doubt that the seclusion that he found at Down House and the freedom from financial worries which was ensured from the first by the generosity of his father, enabled him to work out the theories that made him famous.

During the forty years of his residence at Downe, Darwin wrote and published the results of his researches into the formation of Coral Reefs (1842); on Volcanic Islands (1844) and on the Geology of South America (1846), before settling down to his work on Barnacles which occupied the seven years from 1847 to 1854. In 1862 appeared the result of his enquiries into the Fertilisation of Orchids, which was followed by 'Variations of Animals and Plants under Domestication' (1868), 'Descent of Man' (1871), 'Expression of the Emotions' (1872), 'Movements and Habits of Climbing Plants' and 'Insectivorous Plants' (1875), 'Cross and Self Fertilisation' (1876) and finally his work on the Formation of Vegetable Mould through the Action of Worms, investigations for which he had begun as soon as he settled at Down House.

Although he had already made a name for himself through his earlier writings, it was his work 'On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection', published in 1859, that ensured his lasting reputation. And yet it was almost a matter of chance that it came to be published—or at least that it was completed just at this time. Four years earlier the work of Alfred Russel Wallace had been brought to his notice which, somewhat to his consternation, showed that this young biologist was working on lines similar to his own. In 1857 he received a letter from Wallace who was then in the Celebes, the contents of which proved without doubt that they had arrived independently at the same conclusions about the process of evolution. Darwin was persuaded by Charles Lyell and Joseph Hooker to prepare an abstract from his manuscript and it was arranged that this and Wallace's essay should be communicated at a meeting of the Linnean Society held on July 1st 1858 (J. Proc. Linn. Soc. 1858, p. 45). Wallace was still abroad and Darwin did not attend because of the distress occasioned by the death of his youngest son (Charles Waring, b. December 6th 1856, d. June 28th 1858) from scarlet fever. In his autobiography he remarks: 'our joint productions excited very little attention and the only published notice of them which I can remember was by Professor Haughton of Dublin whose verdict was that all that was new in them was false and all that was true was old'. Nevertheless, Darwin now decided that he must make known in an abridged form the main results of his

twenty years' research on this subject and so in 1859 'The Origin of Species' was published.

Whatever may be the future estimate of his theories, the interest and speculation, indignation and even ridicule that they aroused a hundred years ago can never be entirely forgotten; the book will always remain one of the most influential of the century. The whole world of scientific thought was influenced by the results of the patient researches involved in its preparation, researches carried out in a quiet country house in the peaceful English countryside. Few houses indeed can boast such a record, for the inspiration was carried to the next and later generations of the family. Sir George Darwin (1845-1912), F.R.S., mathematician and Plumian Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge, and Sir Francis Darwin (1848-1925), F.R.S., the distinguished botanist, were both Presidents of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Sir Horace Darwin (1851-1928) was well known as a designer of scientific instruments; and Major Leonard Darwin, R.E., scientist and philanthropist, was for seventeen years President of the Eugenics Society. In the next generation, Sir Charles Galton Darwin (1887-1962) was the fifth in a succession of father and son to be elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, a unique record; and Bernard Darwin, C.B.E. (1876-1961) was a distinguished writer and authority on sport.

Charles Darwin's final years were full of happiness and prosperity. The sense of urgency of work to be accomplished gradually departed and he even took occasional holidays. In 1881, however, he was saddened by the death of his brother Erasmus, for they had always been the closest of friends, and his own health failed markedly during the following months until his death on April 19th 1882.

Emma and Charles Darwin and their seven surviving children lived in an atmosphere of the greatest affection. A wise, true man, fame never altered the essential simplicity and nobility of his character and to his friends and family alike he was a delightful companion. A member of the family has given the following appreciation of him: 'When he was excited with pleasant talk his whole manner was wonderfully bright and animated, and his face shared to the full in the general animation. His laugh was a free and sounding peal, like that of a man who gives himself sympathetically and with enjoyment to the person and the thing which have amused him'. To his wife and her constant care of him he owed more than can be told and the world's debt to her can scarcely be less than to him, for without that care his work could not have been accomplished. She died in 1896 at the age of 88.

Down House

The earliest knowledge of the Down House property dates from 1681 when a Kentish yeoman family acquired most of the land and probably built a farmhouse there; but the central block of the house as it now stands appears to date from the later years of the 18th century. In 1842 when the Darwin family moved there it was said to be dull and unattractive—'a square brick building of three storeys, covered with shabby whitewash and hanging tiles. The garden had none of the shrubberies or walls that now give shelter; it was overlooked from the lane, and was open, bleak and desolate'. One of the first improvements made was to lower the level of the lane and build a flint wall. The house was made to look more attractive by the building of bow windows extending up through the three storeys. The drawing room was added in 1858 and the new study in 1877.

After the death of Mrs Darwin in 1896 the property was let by the family first to a Mr Whitehouse and then to Miss Olive M. Willis who used the premises as a girls' residential school. In 1922 Miss Willis moved her pupils to Newbury and Down House was rented to Mrs Ram, who also conducted a school there. In the year 1927 the British Association for the Advancement of Science held its Annual Meeting in Leeds and, during the proceedings, Sir Arthur Keith, the President, mentioned that Darwin's home was for sale and urged that steps should be taken for its preservation as a memorial to this great man. On reading this in the newspaper on the following morning, Sir George Buckston Browne, a distinguished London surgeon, at once sent a telegram to Mr O. J. R. Howarth, Secretary to the Association, to say that he would provide the funds necessary for the preservation of Down House as a national memorial. It was opened to the public on June 7th 1929 and the donor desired the property to be regarded as a gift in custody for the nation. He devoted himself during the remaining years of his life (he died in 1944 at the age of 94) to restoring the ground floor rooms of the house to their condition during Darwin's lifetime, so far as this was possible, and in this he obtained willing co-operation from members of the family and from admirers of Darwin and his work both in this country and abroad.

Towards the end of 1952 the property was offered to and accepted by the Royal College of Surgeons which has now assumed the task of maintaining Charles Darwin's home as a memorial. The rooms open to the public are on the ground floor. The Old Study where most of his work was done is decorated and furnished almost as he knew it. The Drawing Room has been restored as closely as possible to its appearance when the family were in residence and indeed much of the furniture, pictures and many of the other exhibits are those in use during Darwin's lifetime. The former Dining Room is devoted to items relating to Charles Darwin himself and his work, and in

the room opposite are displayed manuscripts, published works and other articles belonging to Erasmus Darwin.

THE HALL

*The Arundel Prints — in the Hall Passage

These were issued by the Arundel Society, founded in 1849 in memory of Thomas Howard (1585–1646), 2nd Earl of Arundel, Earl of Surrey and Norfolk, who was the first to form any considerable collection of art in Great Britain. The object of the Society was to promote a knowledge of art by copying and publishing important works of ancient masters. Represented here are paintings of Pinturricchio (Bernardino di Betto) 1454–1513; Masaccio (Tommaso Guidi) 1401–1429; Francia (Francesco Raibolini) 1450–1517; Ghirlandajo (Domenico Bigordi) 1449–1494; Raphael, 1483–1520, and his father Giovanni Sanzio; and Luini (Bernardino) 1470–1535. The dates in brackets in the following list refer to the year the print was issued by the Society.

1. Pinturricchio Christ among the Doctors. Spello. (1857)
2. Sanzio Virgin and Child with Saints; Resurrection of Christ. Cagli. (1859)
3. Luini St Catherine buried by Angels. Milan. (1858)
4. Masaccio The Tribute Money. Florence. (1861)
5. Francia The Burial of St Cecilia. Bologna. (1862)
6. Francia The Marriage of St Cecilia. Bologna. (1862)
7. Ghirlandajo The Death of St Francis. S Trinita. Florence. (1860)
9. Raphael The Poets on Mount Parnassus. The Vatican. (1873)

Vase made from Derbyshire Spar—'Blue John'.

Enlarged photograph of Charles Darwin, formerly belonging to his grandson, W. R. Darwin.

Portrait of Robert Emmet (1778–1803). Early English School.
A 'United Irishman'; a connection of Sir Buckston Browne's family.
He was a friend of the Irish poet Thomas Moore.

**Objects which belonged to Darwin himself or were directly associated with the house and the family are indicated by an asterisk.*

Collection of birds and butterflies made in about 1840 by Sir John William Lubbock, 3rd Baronet, of High Elms, Downe. Presented by the Hon. Maurice Lubbock and Mr Eric Lubbock (later Lord Avebury) in 1965.

*Nature Study in oils, painted by Trajan Hughes in 1723, presented by a patient to Dr Robert Darwin, father of Charles Darwin.

Portrait of Sir George Buckston Browne, F.R.C.S., by Robin Darwin, great-grandson of Charles Darwin.

Bust of Charles Darwin, by Charles L. Hartwell, R.A. It bears the inscription:

Presented by Dr Joseph Leidy II of Philadelphia, to the British Nation in memory of those American naturalists who came to the support of Charles Darwin upon the publication of 'The Origin of Species' in 1859.

Joseph Leidy (1823–1891), uncle of the donor of this bust, was a noted American naturalist and palaeontologist, who worked mainly in the University of Pennsylvania and in Swarthmore College near Philadelphia, his birthplace.

*'Pumpkin', at one time attributed to George Stubbs. Presented by Sir George Buckston Browne.

Cartoons and verse from *Punch* (October 22nd and December 6th) after publication of Darwin's work on Worms; and poem on Darwin's death (April 29th 1882); cartoon from *Vanity Fair* (September 30th 1871) by 'Spy'.



Grandfather clock, by Joseph Bosley, London, in George II lacquer case.

Portrait of Dr Erasmus Darwin, Charles Darwin's grandfather.

Photograph of Joseph Hooker of Kew.

Charles Darwin and Richard Owen: cartoons from *Vanity Fair*.

Two views of Down House, one showing the north and the other the east side. c 1820-1830.

Alfred Russel Wallace. Photograph.

Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913) O.M., F.R.S., naturalist, visited the Amazon with Henry Walter Bates (1825-1892) during the years 1848 to 1852, and the Malay Archipelago from 1854 to 1862. The main subjects of his research were zoology (notably zoogeography) and botany, and he suggested a theory for the origin of species similar to and contemporaneous with that of Darwin.

Postcard written by Charles Darwin to Wallace:

Down, Beckenham, Kent, March 3rd.

Will you send me a card telling me whether the Bagis are Malays. I suppose (as they speak a distinct language) they form at least a distinct sub-tribe from the Malays of Malacca. M. F. Geach speaks collectively of Malays and collections of Bagis.

C. Darwin

THE NEW STUDY

Darwin used this room as his study from about 1879 and the furniture from the Old Study was moved into it. In 1966 it was entirely replanned and now demonstrates, largely by means of mural paintings, the various stages in the process of evolution of living things and brings to notice those scientists and philosophers who contributed to the gradual formation over the centuries of the theories which led Charles Darwin to publish in 1859 his own views on this subject. The story illustrated is, briefly, as follows.

From swirling masses of gas about four thousand million years ago, lowly vertebrate forms emerged and from these developed a multitude of fishes and other marine fauna, remains of which have been found in the Proterozoic (beginning of life) and Paleozoic (ancient life) rocks. When living things freed themselves from the restriction of an under-water life, plants grew in abundance. Giant tree ferns, some of which were over a hundred feet high, of orders and classes now vanished from the world, provided shelter for the first insects; there were dragon-flies with a wing span of twenty-nine inches, according to the evidence provided by the Belgian coal measures. Reptiles and Amphibia also grew to enormous proportions. The largest and most diversified group of these Mesozoic creatures were the herbivorous Dinosaurs whose size has never been exceeded. The *Diplodocus carnegii* measured eighty-four feet and the *Gigantosaurus* more than a hundred feet in length. One special development of the dinosaurian type of reptile was a light

hopping climbing group of creatures that developed a bat-like web between the fourth digit and the side of the body, which was used in gliding after the fashion of the present-day flying squirrels. These were the Pterodactyls. The Mesozoic period was the heyday of reptilian life; for the most part no descendants have been traced, in spite of the fact that there was no hint of an enemy or competitor to them in the relics found of their world. This apparently abrupt ending of the reptiles is the most striking revolution in the whole history of the earth before the coming of mankind. Change of climate was the most probable cause. Both the birds and the mammals which escaped whatever destructive forces made an end of the Mesozoic reptiles had a far more effective protection against changes in temperature and they had a particular care for their eggs, the bird by incubation and the mammal by retention. By comparison with the early forms of life, the development of the special characters of the higher apes and man has occupied a much shorter span.

In a display case in the centre of the room, the stages by which the Darwinian theory of evolution has been reached through the centuries are demonstrated by means of brief biographical accounts, in chronological order, of those who contributed to the elucidation of the problem. The story begins comparatively recently in world history. Thales of Miletus (c 600 B.C.) was possibly one of the first to speculate about the origin of the world and its inhabitants. His ideas were handed down through his and their pupils, and became modified and altered by the great philosophers and thinkers such as Aristotle, Democritus, Hippocrates and others. With the coming of Christianity, the belief in a Creator and in the creation of fixed and individual species, with man as the highest, became firmly established. For centuries these beliefs removed the necessity for further enquiry into the origin of life until the renaissance of a spirit of adventure and re-assessment caused doubts as to the validity of such an explanation. The estimate of the length of time that the earth had been in existence, carefully worked out by the Archbishop Ussher (1581-1656) from Biblical records, was proved, after much argument, to be entirely wrong; the idea of a flood so disastrous as to destroy practically all living things on the globe was shown by the geologists to be completely without foundation. Although for centuries it had been assumed that the earth was the centre of the universe, it was now realised that it held but a minor rôle among the heavenly bodies. As more of the earth's surface was explored and more varieties of plants and animals were found, the zoologists and botanists contributed their part of the story by attempting to classify and name the thousands of living forms. Carolus Linné, John Ray, Georges Cuvier and the Count de Buffon made it increasingly obvious that to postulate such a number of separate 'creations' did not seem reasonable and that, in the major divisions of living things at least, the individuals had a common ancestral form. It was Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace

who realised that this tendency was a general principle and that all living things had probably evolved from a common origin, varieties being perpetuated and extended during the progression of millions of centuries by the influence of environment and the necessity to adapt or perish.

In the lower part of the central show case are displayed a series of birds collected by Professor C. J. Patten to illustrate Darwin's studies (especially c 1856) with regard to gradual changes in breeds and points of variation under domestication; corresponding types of plumage variations among individual species of domestic and wild birds.

Professor Charles Joseph Patten (1870-1948), a graduate of Dublin, was appointed Professor of Anatomy in Sheffield in 1901. He is better known, however, as a naturalist than as an anatomist, and his particular interest was the study of bird life. Of his many publications on this subject, his "Aquatic Birds of Great Britain" (1912) is a standard work. He was a devoted disciple of Charles Darwin and an ardent exponent of his theories.

Half size plaster model of Darwin, seated, by Boehme dated 1883. This is the model for the marble statue in the Natural History Museum.
Small bronze of Darwin, seated, by H. Montford.

THE DRAWING ROOM

The appearance of this room, which was added to the house in 1858, is as nearly as possible as it was in Darwin's lifetime; on the grand piano* Mrs Darwin used to play to her husband. The couch*, chairs* and bureau* are part of the original furnishings.

The fire screen, fire stool, four lamps and plates have been kindly donated by Sir Hedley and Lady Atkins.

Pictures

South Wall: to the left of the door

Sir Francis Sacheverel Darwin (1786-1859), by an unnamed artist. Traveller, antiquarian and naturalist; godfather to his nephew, Francis Galton; he was one of the seven children of Erasmus Darwin and his second wife, Elizabeth Pole.

Wedgwood Plaques depicting Sarah Wedgwood, 1734-1815, grandmother of Charles and Emma; Dr Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles; Linnaeus; Erasmus again and Thomas Byerley. Bequeathed by Sir Robin Darwin.

*Down House garden seen through an archway formerly on the site of this room. Painted by Julia Wedgwood, a niece of Charles Darwin.

*Down House Garden in 1886, painted by Julia Wedgwood.



*Two paintings of Down House presented by Lady Barlow in 1968. The artist was Albert Goodwin.

The East or fireplace wall

Charles Darwin, after the portrait by George Richmond, R.A. 1840.

Emma Darwin, a colour reproduction of the portrait by George Richmond.

She was Emma Wedgwood (1808-1896), daughter of Josiah Wedgwood of Maer, and married Charles Darwin, her cousin, in 1839, in which year the portrait was painted.

Elizabeth Wedgwood, mother of Emma Darwin. From the painting by George Romney at Leith Hill Place, Dorset.

Sophie, Lucy and Margaret, three nieces of Josiah Wedgwood, by James Holmes (1777-1860), miniature and water colour painter. This picture was painted in 1849.

Miniature of Erasmus Darwin.

Three miniatures of Robert Darwin.

Miniature of Catherine Wedgwood (1774-1823), daughter of Josiah Wedgwood I.

In a letter to her sister, Mrs Josiah Wedgwood II speaks thus of her sister-in-law:
"Kitty was our housekeeper and a busy time she had with us, for we were a pretty round

party when we were joined by the Darwins. The more you can penetrate through the reserve of Kitty's character, the more you will see the beauty of it...'
A Century of Family Letters. 1904. p. 109. (Edited by H. E. Litchfield).

*The Mumbles, by John Syer, of Bristol. (1815-1885).

North Wall - Above the Piano

*The Itchen, by Albert Goodwin. Painted 1876

Down House; north front, c 1820-1830. The wing of which this room forms part was added by Darwin in 1858 and 1877.

The 'Beagle': reproduction from a painting by Conrad Martens.

Sepia print of Bessie Allen (Elizabeth Wedgwood), mother of Emma Darwin.

Josiah Wedgwood I on his celebrated Arab stallion 'Membrino'.

Aquatint from a painting by George Stubbs.

Wedgwood family group in the grounds of Etruria Hall, 1870.

Two Watercolours by Russian artists. 'Early Spring' and 'Late Autumn'.

Show Case

Nature studies by Elizabeth Hill Darwin (c 1818), a second cousin of Darwin.

Tureen given by Josiah Wedgwood to Joseph Wright's daughter.

*Brooch which belonged to a sister of Darwin.

Notebook kept by Emma Georgina Elizabeth Darwin (1784-1818) showing a list of classes and orders of plants.

'Lady's Companion' which belonged to Annie Darwin, the daughter who died in childhood.

*Brooch containing a lock of Annie Darwin's hair.

Small book made by Annie Darwin for her cousin, Hope, afterwards Mrs Godfrey Wedgwood, bound in a piece of material from a dress of Mrs Darwin.

*A lock of Mrs Darwin's hair.

*Mrs Darwin's workbox.

*Mrs Darwin's watchstand.

Letters from Susannah Wedgwood, Darwin's mother, written 1774.

*Pewter teapot

Another smaller pewter teapot, of similar design, presented in 1968 by Mrs Cruwys of Brighton.

*Wedgwood plate from dinner service.

Two fans, showing paintings of some of the plants mentioned in Darwin's works; presented by Sir Geoffrey Keynes.

*Mrs Wedgwood wife of Josiah I a plaque in Old Wedgwood Biscuit Ware; by Mohn Flaxman, R.A.

*Family Bible presented by Mr George Darwin in 1968. Teapoy.

THE CHARLES DARWIN ROOM

This was the Drawing Room when the Darwin family first moved into the house. After the extension was built in 1858 it was used as the Dining Room.

Pictures and Photographs

To the left of the door:

*Erasmus Alvey Darwin (1804-1881), elder brother of Charles Darwin. By George Richmond, R.A. (1850).

*Dr Robert Waring Darwin: engraving by Thomas Lupton, after a portrait by James Pardon.

*Photographs of Charles Darwin and his family.

*Charles Darwin: pastel sketch by Samuel Laurence. (1853).

Portrait of Sir Francis Galton, F.R.S., another grandson of Dr Erasmus Darwin through his second wife, Elizabeth.

Show Case 1

*Emma Darwin: photograph taken in the drawing room shortly after the death of her husband.

Photograph of a drawing in chalk of Charles Darwin, aged 6, holding a potted plant; and his sister Catherine.

Two photographs of The Mount, Shrewsbury, Darwin's birthplace.

Photograph of Darwin's rooms in Christ's College, Cambridge (Front Court, Staircase C, First Floor).

Show Case 2

Model of H.M.S. 'Beagle'.

*Hats belonging to Charles Darwin.

*Hygrometer.

*Barometer used by Darwin on the voyage of H.M.S. 'Beagle'.

Show Case 3

Photograph of a drawing of H.M.S. 'Beagle' in section, showing Darwin's accommodation.

The 'Beagle' in the Straits of Magellan.

*List of officers and men of the 'Beagle', dated October 1836, i.e. on completion of the voyage. Darwin's name is at the top of the left hand column.

Vice-Admiral Robert Fitzroy (1805-1865).

Stamps issued by the Government of Ecuador in 1935 in commemoration of Darwin's landing in the Galapagos Islands a hundred years previously. The

unusual fauna of the islands provided much of the foundation for Darwin's views on evolution.

*Notebooks kept by Darwin during the voyage, from which was written the Diary.

*Pistols.

*Life preserver, or cosh.

*Telescope.

*A Promethean Match. These were invented in 1828 and consisted of a small quantity of chlorate of potash and sugar rolled up tightly in a piece of paper inside which was placed a small glass bulb containing sulphuric acid. On breaking this the paper would ignite.

List, in Darwin's handwriting, of specimens preserved in spirit of wine (3907 in all).

The case was placed on loan to Down House in 1958 by kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum (Natural History Section).

Fireplace Wall

On each side of the fireplace are shown various photographs of Down House and grounds.

General Rosas, friend of Darwin in Argentina (See: 'Charles Darwin and the Voyage of the Beagle', edited by Nora Barlow, 1945).

A copy of the portrait of Charles Darwin by the Hon. John Collier, commissioned by Sir George Buckstone Browne.

Portrait of Emma Darwin presented by Lady Barlow in 1968.

Weighing machine possibly used by Dr Robert Waring Darwin at Leith Hill (see weighing book in show case 11).

Show Case 4

In the case to the left of the fireplace may be seen the original manuscript copy of Charles Darwin's journal of his voyage on H.M.S. Beagle from December 1831 to October 1836.

The main purpose of the voyage was to survey the coasts of South America for the Admiralty, and Charles was taken on as the ship's naturalist. It was his discovery of fossil remains in South America, and the varieties of life, particularly of finches, on the Galapagos Islands, which led him to ponder the problems of evolution resulting in the publication some twenty years later of his work on the origin of species by means of natural selection.

The journal was first bound by Sayer and Wilson of Cambridge in 1876 but the present binding was made by the Cambridge University Library in 1979. At this time it was discovered that the ink which Darwin used had started to eat through the paper. The pages were de-acidified and individually laminated between sheets of heat-set tissue to prevent any further deterioration.

Show Case 5

Photograph of the title-page of 'Das Kapital'; and letters relating to it from Charles Darwin to Karl Marx.

Charles Darwin's copy of Charles Lyell's 'Elements of Geology' separated into two parts for convenience, with annotations by Darwin.

*Copy of 'The Origin of Species' presented by Charles Darwin to his friend Sir Charles Lyell. The book was given to Sir George Buckstone Browne in 1928 for exhibition at Down House by Anne Perta, a niece by marriage of Charles Lyell.

*'Physical Geography', by Sir John Herschel, the copy presented to Darwin by the author.

Show Case 6

*Snuff jars, containing some of the snuff that Darwin used. The jars were kept in the Hall in order that he might check himself from excessive use by having to fetch it.

*Microscope presented by Darwin to John Lubbock, afterwards the first Lord Avebury. He was an anthropologist, President of the Royal Society in 1881, President of the Institute of Bankers, Chairman of the London County Council; and as M.P. instituted statutory bank holidays. Darwin once wrote to him:

"If ever you arrive at any definite conclusion either wholly or partially for, or against, Pangenesis, I should very much like to hear; for I settled some time ago that I should think more of Huxley's and your opinion, from the course of your studies and the clearness of your mind, than that of any other men in England."

*Scales and a candle lamp.

Packets of seeds from experimental collections, with a letter from Alphonse de Candolle (1806-1893), a Swiss botanist.

*A Gyroscope. This instrument, designed to demonstrate the rotation of the earth, was invented by Jean Bernard Leon Foucault (1819-1868), French physicist. Of it Sir H. Holland writes:

"The gyroscope of Foucault shows to the eye in a few minutes, by the angular deviation from its plane of rotation, the movement the earth has made in this short space of time"

*The 'Worm Stone' measuring instrument designed by Sir Horace Darwin in 1877, together with a paper written by him 'On the small natural movements of a stone laid on the Surface of the Ground'. The original worm stone is still to be seen on the lawn — see Garden Plan.

Show Case 7

Family pedigrees, one showing descent from Charlemagne.



Show Case 8

- *First and presentation editions of Darwin's works.
 - *Album presented to Charles Darwin by men of science in Holland on his birthday in 1877 (February 12th).
 - *Illuminated address from the Birmingham Philosophical Society, offering its first honorary membership to Charles Darwin.
- MS books containing lists of Swedish and Swiss subscribers to the Darwin Memorial.
- *Album presented to Darwin by men of science in Germany on his birthday, 1877
- Memorial volume presented by the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union to mark the coming-of-age of 'The Origin of Species'.
- Commemorative Medal issued by the Soviet Union in 1959 to mark the centenary of the publication of 'The Origin of Species'.
- Medal issued in connection with the Darwin-Wallace celebration by the Linnean Society, July 1st 1908.

Pictures and Photographs

To the right of the door:

- Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895), F.R.S.; copy of the original portrait by the Hon. John Collier, commissioned by Sir George Buckston Browne.
- Paintings presented by Dr. Alexander Eric Kohts (Coates), curator of the Darwin Museum in Moscow. These show Darwin in his study, Alfred Russel Wallace, Darwin with Lyell and Hooker, and others.
- A photograph taken in 1938 of the family and grandchildren of Sir George Darwin.
- Genealogy of the Darwin family.

Show Case 9

- Letters and papers relating to the unveiling of the statue of Darwin at the Natural History Museum, London, in 1885: letters were received from:
- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Matthew Arnold | Lord Lister |
| Sir Richard Owen | Cannon Farrar |
| Sir James Paget | Sir Edward Poulton |
| Sir Edwin Ray Lankester | J. Romanes |
| Sir Philip Magnus | Rev. Adam Sedgwick |
| Herbert Spencer | |
- Papers relating to Darwin's funeral in Westminster Abbey on April 26th 1882.
- A page of manuscript of the sermon delivered by Harvey Goodwin, Bishop of Carlisle, in Westminster Abbey on the Sunday after Darwin's death.

Show Case 10

- *Handkerchief, snuff box, razor, paper-knives, ruler, dust and paste brushes, used by Charles Darwin.
 - *Mirror, which was fixed outside a window of the Old Study so that visitors could be seen as they approached the entrance.
- Candle snuffers.
- *Charles Darwin's geological hammer, scientific instruments, etc., including home-made field magnifying glass.
 - *Case containing beetles collected at various times by Darwin.

Show Case 11

- Downe Coal Club; subscriptions, 1841-1876 inclusive.
- *Private ledger.
 - *Cheques.
 - *Darwin's reckoning of receipts from sales of his books. The total at the end of the year 1881 is £10,248.
- Notes on health and weight.
- *Prescriptions; notebooks with prescriptions for the children; nature notes.
 - *Catalogue of Down House specimens.
 - *Notes on plants on the lawn at Down House and seeds in the Sandwalk.
 - *Notes on the well at Down House.
 - *Notes on his will; letters from his son, William Erasmus Darwin, on the estate.
 - *Charles Darwin's address book.

Centre Table

- The announcement of the theory of evolution.
- Photograph of a letter from Thomas Henry Huxley to Charles Darwin.
- Copy of some of the 58 letters written by Charles Darwin to Fritz Müller, Blumenau, Sta Catarina, Brazil; photostatic copies of these were presented to Down House by Henry Fairfield Osborn on June 3rd 1929.
- Copy of a letter from Charles Darwin to Richard Owen.
- Maps of South America showing the route taken by H.M.S. 'Beagle'.
- Photograph of the office copy of the Fire Policy for Down House, dated 9th October 1844.
- The skull of a deer found in the roof of Down House; of unknown origin.
- A section of the skull of a Megatherium; part of a specimen found at Punta Alta, Bahia Blanca, Patagonia, presented to the Royal College of Surgeons by a grandson of Charles, Sir Charles Darwin.
- Bronze of stag by Barye (1795-1875).

Erasmus Darwin

Erasmus Darwin, who lived from 1731 until 1802, was by profession a physician, widely acclaimed as the finest doctor of his time in England but he refused King George III's repeated requests to become royal physician. By nature Darwin was a large and powerful looking man, cheerful and healthy, and despite a stammer, a witty and rather domineering talker. By inclination he was extremely sociable and inventive. With Matthew Boulton and William Small, he founded the Lunar Society of Birmingham, which was the chief intellectual driving force behind the Industrial Revolution in England and hence the modern technological world. Encouraged by his Lunar friends, especially James Watt and Josiah Wedgwood, he produced working inventions ranging from a speaking machine to a horizontal windmill, and dozens of designs on paper. He won most applause, however, in a quite different sphere: his long poem *The Botanic Garden* took the literary world by storm in the early 1790s. Coleridge called him 'the first literary character in Europe', the Napoleon of literature, as it were.

Today Erasmus earns most credit among scientists for recognising and describing biological evolution, analysing plant nutrition and photosynthesis, and explaining the main process of cloud formation. And the literary critics honour him not so much for his poems as for his immense influence over the English Romantic poets, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats. (Quoted from 'Doctor of Revolution — The Life and Genius of Erasmus Darwin' Faber and Faber, 1977, by kind permission of the author Desmond King-Hele.)



Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles, born 12th December, 1731, died 18th April, 1802. He was poet, philosopher, inventor, and doctor of medicine. Author of many works including 'The Botanic Garden', 'A plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools' and his famous 'Zoonomia' published in 1794. He invented, among other things, a horizontal windmill and a canal lift. Erasmus Darwin was a founder member of The Lunar Society.

THE ERASMUS DARWIN ROOM

This was the Dining Room when the family came here in 1842. It was used as a billiard room from 1858.

Pictures

The Rev. Thomas Seward, M.A., by Joseph Wright.

Canon Residency of Lichfield, Prebendary of Pipe Parva and Rector of Eyam. Father of Anna Seward, the poetess and a friend of Samuel Johnson. He is buried in Lichfield; Walter Scott wrote his epitaph.

Breadsall Priory. Artist unknown. Figures probably Dr and Mrs Erasmus Darwin.

Two sepia drawings of Breadsall Priory, home of Erasmus Darwin at the end of his life. He died there on April 18th 1802, aged 70.

Colour reproduction of George Stubbs' painting of a Horse attacked by a Lion.

Joseph Wright, A.R.A. of Derby; a self-portrait.

Mrs Pole, Dr Erasmus Darwin's second wife, by Joseph Wright.

Dr Erasmus Darwin, F.R.S., by Joseph Wright.

Horse surprised by a Lion, after George Stubbs. 1769.

The Artists

Joseph Wright (1734–1797). This now famous artist was known in his lifetime as 'Wright of Derby' to distinguish him from Richard Wright, a marine painter of the same period. He was born in Derby and educated at the local Grammar School after which he received tuition from Thomas Hudson, the artist who had taught Joshua Reynolds. He soon gained a reputation for his skill in depicting light and shade and of the thirty-one pictures exhibited by him from 1765 to 1773 more than half show candlelit or firelit scenes. Among his friends were several members of both the Wedgwood and the Darwin families, Richard Arkwright and William Hayley, the poet.

On the Wall

An octagonal frame, once in Dr Sibson's collection, containing ten Blue and White Jasper Medallions (Wedgwood). These are of figures of putti and classical subjects; the others include Josiah Wedgwood, Thomas Bentley (Wedgwood's partner), Admiral Keppel, William Shakespeare and also a very rare one of an old man. Miss Meteyard in her 'Handbook of Wedgwood Ware' says: 'In the Sibson Collection is the very able portrait of an aged man. On the base of the head, finely written with a point while the clay is soft, we see "William Hackwood 1779" and on a trowel, prettily modelled in the blue field beneath, the letters "E.B.", the initials of Edward Bourne, an old bricklayer long employed by Wedgwood. The signature of the modeller is so very rare that we are not aware of more than three instances ...'

Show Cases

Dr Erasmus Darwin's prescription book.

Honorary Membership of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, presented to Dr Erasmus Darwin in 1784.

A Poem written to Mr Price, a Master of Lichfield School, by Charles Darwin, oldest son of Erasmus Darwin, when he was about 14.

Dr Erasmus Darwin's 'The Botanic Garden—a Poem'. Parts I and II. 1799. (Fourth) and other editions.

Dr Erasmus Darwin's 'Zoonomia or the Laws of Organic Life' (1796). (Second) and third editions.

French translation of 'The Botanic Garden', by J. P. F. Deleuze, entitled 'Les Amours des Plantes'.

Dr Erasmus Darwin's 'Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools', 1797.

Dr Erasmus Darwin's 'Phytologia or the Philosophy of Agriculture and Gardening', 1800.

Books from Dr Erasmus Darwin's Library:

Tragedies of Seneca.

Six Comedies of Terence.

Novum Linguae Graecae Compendium, by L. du Mitand (1782).

Synopsis nosologiae methodicae of William Cullen, translated by John Thomson (1814).

Dr Erasmus Darwin's visiting cards and cardcase.

Letter from Dr. Erasmus Darwin to Josiah Wedgwood.

'The Life and Works of Joseph Wright, A.R.A.', commonly called 'Wright of Derby'; by William Bemrose. London and Derby. 1885.

Family tree prepared by Dr Erasmus Darwin and others.

Engraving of Miss Anna Seward, poetess, daughter of the Rev Canon Thomas Seward, and biographer of Dr Erasmus Darwin.

Letter from Dr R. W. Darwin to Miss Seward on her biography of Dr Erasmus Darwin.

Ode on the 'Folly of Atheism', by Dr Erasmus Darwin.

Dr Erasmus Darwin's Commonplace Book.

Rockingham Vases (Spill-holders).

Examples of Derbyshire Spar. This is an amethystine fluorate of lime, found only at Castleton in Derbyshire and now almost exhausted.

Two Chippendale Chairs and a two seater from Brocket Hall, Hertfordshire.

Toilet Cabinet (18th century)

Wine Cooler (18th century)

Grandfather clock by Thomas Wright, Swaffham, Norfolk, in Chippendale mahogany case.

*Window glass from pantry at Elston Hall, Newark, on which are written with a diamond the names of Susannah and Erasmus Darwin.

Bronze of Erasmus Darwin from a portrait bust by William Coffee.

Copies of Portraits of:

Jane, wife of William Alvey Darwin, aged 30. 1746–1835.

William Alvey Darwin, 1726–1783. A brother of Dr Erasmus Darwin,

Painted by Wright of Derby.

Richard Wedgwood, 1701–1780. Father-in-law of Josiah.

Painted by George Stubbs.

Elizabeth Darwin, 1702–1797, the mother of Dr Erasmus Darwin.

Painted in 1779.

*Silhouettes: Dr Erasmus Darwin and his son Erasmus playing chess (c 1780); Mrs Pole, second wife of Erasmus Darwin. The dog is supposed, by family tradition, to be Dr Erasmus himself, being led a dance!



Over the fireplace are pictures of the three men who probably affected Darwin's life more than any others: Joseph Hooker the botanist, Charles Lyell the geologist and his uncle (and father-in-law) Josiah Wedgwood II.

*Many of the books which fill the shelves and cupboards are from Darwin's own collection. His library was bequeathed by his son, Sir Francis Darwin, F.R.S., to the Professor of Botany in the University of Cambridge and the works shown here are placed on loan by the department.

The microscope in the window was made by Cary of London. It is most probably the one to which Charles referred as 'my new microscope' in a letter to his sister Susan dated 6th September 1831. (Life and Letters, Vol. I pp. 110; 145-148)

The Old Study

This room was Darwin's study until the later part of his life when the north wing of the house was built. Here by far the greater part of his work was done and the appearance of the room is as it was in his lifetime, for almost all the furnishing is original. The restoration was made possible by photographs taken by Major Leonard Darwin while his father was still alive.

*The central table was his worktable and the round table with revolving top held specimens in the drawers. Darwin wrote sitting in the iron-framed armchair using the cloth-covered writing board. Across the chair is his walking-stick. The low seat in the window, previously his father's or grandfather's, was used by him when at work with the microscope on the window-shelf. The ink-pot, and some of the bottles on the table were his. The fender stool and spittoon stood where they now are. The other armchair belonged to his father, Robert Waring Darwin. Near the fireplace is a lavatory enclosure.

The Garden

Outside the house, much of the garden remains as Darwin knew it. In the biography of Emma Darwin, written by her daughter, Mrs Litchfield, is the following passage:

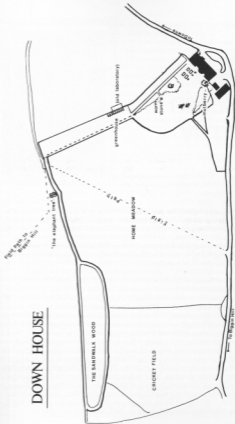
'Many gardens are more beautiful and varied but few could have a greater charm of repose and nowhere do I know one where it was so pleasant to sit out. The flower-beds were close under the drawing-room windows, and were filled with hardy herbaceous plants, intermixed with bedded-out plants and annuals. It was often untidy but had a particularly gay and varied effect. On the lawn were two yew-trees where the children had their swing, and behind a bay-tree there was a large heap of sand for them to dig in. Beyond the row of lime-trees was the orchard, and a long walk bordered with flowering shrubs led through the kitchen-garden to the 'Sand-Walk' This consisted of a strip of wood planted by my father with varied trees, many being wild cherries and birches, and on one side bordered with hollies. At one end there was a little summer-house and an old pit, out of which the sand was dug which gave it its name. The walk on one side was always sheltered from sun and wind, the other sunny, with an outlook over the quiet valley on to the woods beyond, but also windy when it blew from the south or west, sheltered from north and east. Here we children played, and here my father took his daily pacings for forty or more years. My mother loved this wood and took pains in later years to make it a sort of wild garden.'

Of the lime trees few remain and the orchard beyond is now a private garden but the yew trees are still to be seen, as is the mulberry thought to have been planted in 1609 and mentioned by Gwen Raverat in 'Period Piece'.

Although the sand has washed away from Charles's 'thinking path' you may still follow in his footsteps through the 'Sandwalk Wood'. On your way up the path to the top of the garden you will pass Darwin's greenhouse which retains the original Victorian ironwork.

The work of restoring the house and grounds to a condition fully representative of Charles Darwin's life, his achievements, family and environment, is by no means completed. To make this, his home for forty years, a fitting memorial, it is necessary to ensure that funds should always be available to plan and maintain the building and its contents at that high level of perfection and completeness necessary to demonstrate and perpetuate for all time Darwin's outstanding contribution to scientific knowledge.

A contribution box will be found by the front door.



The Darwin Family



Charles Darwin
by George Richmond, 1840

The family can be traced to a William Darwin who lived at the beginning of the sixteenth century in the village of Marton, near Gainsborough. Richard Darwin, his great-grandson, bequeathed in his will, dated 1584, 'the sum of 3s 4d towards the setting up of the Queen's Majestie's arms over the quearie (choir) doore in the parish church of Marton'. Richard's son, William, described as 'gentleman', owned not only the estate at Marton but, through his wife, acquired another at Cleatham, near Kirton in Lindsey. In 1613 he was appointed by James I to the post of Yeoman of the Royal Armoury of Greenwich, which brought him an income of £33 per annum though the duties were probably nominal. He died in 1644 and his son, also William, was able to redeem the family estate during the Commonwealth by payment of a large fine. This William Darwin was a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, married the daughter of Erasmus Earle, serjeant-at-law, and held the office of Recorder of the city of Lincoln. His son William, born in 1655, married the heiress of Robert Waring, a member of a prosperous Staffordshire family, who inherited the manor of Elston, near Newark, by reason of her connection with the Lascelles (or Lassells) family. They had two sons, William who succeeded to the Cleatham property and Robert, a barrister, who received the Elston estate. This Robert Darwin of Elston had four sons and one daughter, Susannah, who died unmarried. The oldest son, Robert Waring, inherited the estate at Elston and died at the age of 92, a bachelor. The second son was William Alvey (1726-1783); the third, John, was rector of Elston, the living being in the gift of the family; and the fourth, born on December 12th 1731, at Elston Hall, was ERASMUS DARWIN.

At the age of ten, Erasmus Darwin was sent to Chesterfield School where he remained until 1750 when he went with his two older brothers to Cambridge. Although his studies there were mostly confined to mathematics and the classics, he spent one term in London attending the lectures of William Hunter and doubtless met John Hunter also, who was then assisting in the Anatomy School in Covent Garden. Darwin won the Exeter Scholarship at St. John's which was of the value of £16 a year and in 1754 graduated as Bachelor of Arts, the head of the Junior Optimes. In the autumn of the same year he began his medical studies in Edinburgh and gained his medical qualification at Cambridge in 1755. After a few months of general practice in Nottingham, he settled in Lichfield where he spent the next twenty-five years. In December 1757 he married Mary Howard, then aged about 18 years, and at the time of her death, thirteen years later, he was well established and earning over a thousand pounds a year. In 1781 he married again, his bride being Elizabeth, widow of Colonel Edward Sacheverel Pole of Radburn Hall. For two years they lived at the Hall then moved to Derby and finally to Breadsall Priory where he died on April 18th 1802.

Erasmus Darwin was a man of great generosity, well known for his benevolent acts of kindness, and his skill as a doctor may be estimated by the fact that George III is said to have remarked that if only Darwin would come to London he would have him as his physician. He showed his public spirit by founding a dispensary at Lichfield and he was the leading spirit in the Lunar Society there which included among its members Matthew Boulton and James Watt, the engineers; Thomas Day, author of 'Sandford and Merton'; Richard Lovell Edgeworth, author (father of Maria Edgeworth, the novelist); Joseph Priestley, theologian and discoverer of oxygen; James Keir, chemist and geologist and Josiah Wedgwood, the potter, all of whom became his close friends. In 1766 he met Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the Swiss-French philosopher, at Wootton Hall near Ashbourne, Richard Davenport's residence. Here Rousseau was wont to spend much of his time 'in melancholy contemplation' but he was attracted to Darwin by their mutual interest in botany and they corresponded for many years afterwards.

Erasmus Darwin's first published work consisted of two letters written to the President and Fellows of the Royal Society in 1757 (*Philosophical Transactions* p 240), pointing out the errors in a paper by Henry Eeles on the subject of 'The Ascent of Vapour'. Much of his early writing was in the form of poetry, a form of expression which gave him great pleasure. In 1778 he bought eight acres of land near Lichfield and his experiments there led to a lengthy dissertation in verse, 'The Botanic Garden', published in two parts: 'The Economy of Vegetation' in 1789 and 'The Loves of the Plants' in 1790. Although the poem has perhaps little intrinsic merit, the notes to it reveal much penetration and foresight, referring to such subjects as the application of steam, flying machines and the care of the insane.

Darwin's chief scientific work, entitled 'Zoonomia' or 'The Laws of Organic Life', published in 1794, attracted a great deal of attention and was

translated into several European languages. It is a treatise on generation of great importance in the history of evolutionary theories, for it deals with the problems presented by such things as rudimentary organs, domestication of animals and protective coloration, in an original and comprehensive manner. He remained, however, the philosopher rather than the observer and so failed to draw from his investigations the conclusions that made his grandson famous, though each made use of much the same subject matter. Erasmus Darwin really had no interest in the origin of species; he was more concerned in speculations on the 'life-force' and his views to a certain degree foreshadow those of Goethe. The 'Zoonomia' was almost entirely overlooked by the next generation and indeed it was not until his grandson became famous that interest was re-awakened in Erasmus Darwin and his work, in particular to trace the resemblances between the two lines of thought.

Erasmus Darwin had fourteen children in all including four sons and one daughter by his first wife; four sons and three daughters by his second. His oldest son, Charles, born in 1758, studied medicine in Edinburgh and died in his twenty-first year from a wound received while dissecting Erasmus, born in 1759, died by his own hand at the age of forty. He had unusual tastes, such as the study of genealogy and statistics and the collection of coins. When he was a boy he endeavoured to estimate the population of Lichfield by counting the number of houses and finding out or estimating the number of persons resident in each. When the first official census was made, his results were found to be remarkably accurate.

The third son Robert Waring Darwin, [born in 1766], at the age of thirty married Susannah, daughter of his father's friend Josiah Wedgwood of Etruria. Like his father he entered the medical profession and, after studying in Edinburgh, gained the degree of Doctor of Medicine at the University of Leyden with a thesis, now at the Royal Society of Medicine, entitled 'De spectris seu imaginibus ocularibus coloratis exhibentibus'. He established himself in practice in Shrewsbury where, after a few years, he moved to 'The Mount', a residence built to his own design, standing at the top of the bank of the river Severn. By the side of the river is a long walk, still known as 'The Doctor's Walk', with a Spanish chestnut nearby in which, as children, Charles Darwin and his sister Catherine each had their favourite seat.

Robert Darwin was about 6 feet 2 inches in height and very corpulent. As well as being an extremely successful and popular doctor he was also a good businessman so that at his death in 1848 he was able to leave his children well provided for.

Charles Robert Darwin, born in 1809, was the fifth of his six children.

