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The Rough Guide to Evolution **Darwin's big idea that changed the world**

The coming year, 2009, marks the bicentenary of Charles Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of first publication of his masterpiece *The Origin of Species*.

The perfect primer to all things evolutionary, *The Rough Guide to Evolution* is published on 2 January providing an accessible introduction to an idea that changed the way we think of life on Earth, including a pithy one-page summary of *The Origin of Species*.

Featuring a detailed analysis of the evidence for evolution, from feathered dinosaurs to molecular biology, and the low-down on natural selection, including sexual selection and why we even have sex, *The Rough Guide to Evolution* contains a complete and concise guide to evolutionary theory.

"Darwin's influence has never been more pervasive in popular culture, although most people are unaware of it" says author Mark Pallen, Professor of Microbial Genomics at the University of Birmingham. "Darwin and his theory permeate our society. From cult TV shows like *The Simpsons* and *Heroes* to the British £10 note, evolution is everywhere."

The Rough Guide to Evolution includes...

- **The evidence for evolution** - from the fossil record to molecular biology, in layman's terms
- **A brief history of life** - from the origin of life to mass extinctions
- **The evolution of evolution** - where did the idea come from?
- **Human evolution** - no longer seen as a tidy ladder but as a branching 'human-ape' tree
- **Natural selection** - including sexual selection, the evolution of sexual organs and why we have sex
- **Annie Darwin** - the tragic loss of Darwin's 10 year old daughter; the focus of a new film in 2009
- **Creationism vs the Constitution** - courtroom clashes: can a Christian believe in evolution?
- **The miseducation of a clergyman-naturalist** - Darwin's Christian upbringing and clergyman training
- **Debunking the Darwin myths** - fear delaying publication, dedication by Marx, deathbed conversion
- **Darwin in the UK** - the man and his places from Cambridge to Kent
- **Music, films, TV, books** - from nineteenth century poetry to what may have been on Darwin's iPod

Exploring what Darwin was really like, from stammering young boy to devoted family man and celebrated scientist, *The Rough Guide to Evolution* follows the journey that led to *The Origin*, including Darwin's famous voyage on HMS *Beagle*.

A fascinating story of one of the most influential scientists in history, the Rough Guide explores the ideas, the science, and the man. A one-stop shop for all things Darwinian, *The Rough Guide to Evolution* is essential evolution reading.

Evolution-influenced TV...

Heroes

Steeped in references to evolution, albeit a near-magical distortion. Mohinder contrasts human evolution with that of cockroaches. In a dream sequence, Charles Deveaux says Peter Petrelli is a Darwinian, while Claude Rains later compares Peter to Darwin's pigeons. The theme tune is entitled 'Natural Selection'.

The Simpsons

In *The Monkey Suit*, Lisa holds secret evolution classes, only to face trial in "Lisa Simpson vs God", and Marge becomes so engrossed in *The Origin of Species* she is caught reading it in the shower. In *Homerazzi*, the opening sequence details the evolution of Homer Simpson with a parody of the Disney film *Fantasia*.

Sopranos

A creationist tells Tony that humans and dinosaurs co-existed and that "evolution is just Satan's way of coming between man and God." One of Tony's associates is doubtful; "No way. *T.rex* in the Garden of Eden? Adam and Eve would be runnin' around all the time, scared shitless." (*The Fleishy Part of the Thigh*: Season 6, Episode 4)

Friends

When Phoebe announces she doesn't believe in evolution, Ross weighs in with: "Evolution is not for you to buy, Phoebe. Evolution is scientific fact... like gravity," to which Phoebe responds: "Oh, okay, don't get me started on gravity... lately I get the feeling that I'm not so much being pulled down as I am being pushed!" (*The One Where Heckles Dies*: Season 2, Episode 3)

South Park

Forced to teach it against her wishes, schoolteacher Garrison derides evolution as "five monkeys having butt sex with a fish-squirrel". Richard Dawkins, hired to provide balance, wins Garrison over intellectually and sexually. (*Go God Go*: Season 10, Episode 12)

Rough Guides have teamed up with the Natural History Museum to offer 20% off entrance to the Darwin exhibition with *The Rough Guide to Evolution*

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

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Author notes

Mark Pallen is Professor of Microbial Genomics at the University of Birmingham. Having obtained his medical education from the University of Cambridge and the London Hospital Medical College, Mark completed his specialist training as a medical microbiologist at Bart's Hospital in London. In the mid-1990s, while completing a PhD in molecular bacteriology at Imperial College, London, Mark led a team of students to victory in the BBC2 quiz show *University Challenge*. In 1999, he took up a chair in microbiology at Queen's University Belfast, before moving to his current position in Birmingham in 2001. Pallen blogs at: <http://roughguideto evolution.blogspot.com>

For author interviews, review copies, giveaways and extracts for *The Rough Guide to Evolution* contact:
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