

# Introduction

F. Watkins

In 2009, the Ashmolean Natural History Society of Oxfordshire held a dinner at Wolfson College to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin. (See the invitation below.) The Fritillary Board decided to dedicate this volume of Fritillary, volume 6, to Charles Darwin, in honour of this birthday. The board would like to record its thanks to Dr Alison McDonald who did much work on setting up this volume.

The dinner was preceded by a lecture given by Dr Kenneth McNamara in which he discussed the concepts of paedomorphosis and peramorphosis. This lecture is summarised in this volume of Fritillary. At the dinner Serena Marner provided a small exhibition of some of the Darwin memorabilia from the Oxford Herbaria and her description of them in this volume makes fascinating reading. Also in this volume are some light-hearted verses by Andrew Lack which he recited at the dinner. They describe Darwin's study of the Galapagos finches and his own father's subsequent work on them.

Otherwise, in this volume, Fritillary pursues its mission of publishing papers and lists relating to the natural history (in the widest sense) of the three counties, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. John Campbell gives us two more useful invertebrate lists and Stephen Pickles tells us what he has been able to discover about our local populations of Marsh Helleborine and, surprisingly, how much we still do not know about them.

To prove that we do not confine ourselves strictly to natural history, we have an informative paper on our local place names by Anne Cole in which she relates them to plants and to land forms. Finally, Roy Overall gives us a description of his life looking after the swifts in the tower of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History.

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## The Ashmolean Natural History Society of Oxfordshire



60 Miles

Cordially invites you and your guest to

A celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of

**Charles Darwin**

Saturday, 7th March 2009 at Wolfson College, Linton Road, Oxford.

Dress, smart casual

£30 per head

RSVP. Please send a cheque made payable to ANHSO to Christopher Hoskin, 56 Cranmer Road, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2QF to arrive no later than 28th February. Please let us know if you or your guest require a vegetarian meal or have any special dietary requirements. All enquiries to [president@anhso.org.uk](mailto:president@anhso.org.uk)

This event is financially supported by a generous bequest from the late Alan Hall, one time committee member.

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### Programme

6.00 – 7.00 pm *Shapes of Time - Fossils, development and evolution*

**Dr Kenneth J. McNamara**

Darwin, famously, was concerned about how the imperfections of the fossil record made the palaeontological record less than supportive of his theory of the origin of species by natural selection. Dr McNamara's talk will show how not only does the fossil record illuminate the patterns of evolution, but by looking at the relationship between developmental changes and evolution, the processes of evolution can also be unravelled.

Dr McNamara is a lecturer in the Department of Earth Sciences, Cambridge, Acting Director of the Sedgwick Museum and a Fellow of Downing College.

*Drinks will be served*

7.15 – 9.00 pm

*Dinner*

Dr Andrew Lack will offer some reflections on 'Darwin's Finches' and the work of his father, ornithologist David Lack, between the main course and pudding.

*Coffee will be served*

9.00 – 9.30 pm

*Darwin memorabilia*

**Serena Marner**

Serena Marner is the Manager of the Fielding-Droce Herbarium, University of Oxford.

If you are unable to attend the dinner and evening events, but would like to come to the lecture only (6-7pm) it will be £3 on the door.

Watermark: Galapagos Archipelago, a sketch from *A Naturalist's Voyage Round the World* by Charles Darwin