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Exhibition hits Sheffield to celebrate Darwin's legacy

Students and academics from the University of Sheffield will be taking part in a new exhibition this month (15-30 September 2009) which will take a revealing look at how Charles Darwin's ideas still influence life and research today.

'Darwin Today', a Research Council's UK exhibition on evolution, celebrates the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his most famous work, *On the Origin of Species*.

The exhibition, which will be held in the Winter Garden in Sheffield City Centre courtesy of the City Council, invites people to consider how natural selection impacts on everyday life. It shows how we use Darwin's ideas in breeding new crops, in designing robots that can evolve and even in questioning what life might be like on other planets. It also encourages people to consider the evolution of language, ideas and social structures as well as phenomena such as mass extinctions, biodiversity and the rise of 'superbugs' and new diseases.

Staff and students from the University will be on hand to answer questions during the two weekends of the exhibition, when there will also be interactive stands for people to explore.

Professor Julie Gray, from the University's Department of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, said: "We are delighted that representatives from the University will be assisting with this exhibition and on hand to answer some of the questions addressed in it. Darwin's scientific ideas have had such a huge impact on numerous aspects of everyday life and it is fitting that, during Darwin's 200th anniversary year, we remember this significant contribution."

Professor Alan Thorpe, speaking for the UK Research Councils, said: "It is great that 'Darwin Today' will be visiting Sheffield Winter Garden and we hope that many people take the opportunity to see it. The exhibition brings together evolution research from each of the seven UK Research Councils. The family-friendly displays demonstrate the significant impact that Darwin's scientific ideas about evolution have had on modern research."

Notes for Editors: Darwin Today is a UK Research Councils initiative, which is being led by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC).

Darwin200 is a national programme of events celebrating Charles Darwin's scientific ideas and their impact around his two hundredth birthday on 12 February 2009. Darwin200 is supported by the Wellcome Trust, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and the British Council.

About Research Councils UK:

The seven Research Councils are independent non-departmental public bodies, funded by the Science Budget through the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). They are incorporated by Royal Charter and together manage a research budget of over £2.8 billion a year.

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