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## Bath Science Café: the evolution of disease

08 December 2009

*What Darwin didn't know: the evolution of disease* is the topic for discussion at next week's Bath Science Café on Monday 14 December.

Professor Stuart Reynolds, from the University's Department of Biology and Biochemistry, will discuss what Darwin did and didn't know about the causes of disease, and go on to present a general theory of disease that Darwin himself might have developed, if only he had known about germs.

Professor Reynolds said: "Darwin considered many implications of the theory of evolution by natural selection, but notably failed to consider the evolution of infectious disease, despite the fact that this may well be one of the strongest forces driving evolutionary change.

"This has lots of implications: I will discuss the co-evolution of hosts and their parasites/pathogens, acquired immunity, epidemics, the evolution of pathogens within their hosts (eg HIV), why immunisation campaigns work, immunological polymorphisms, transplant rejection, and the implications of all this for wildlife conservation. I will even talk about the evolutionary origins of viruses and the idea that sexual reproduction is fundamentally a response to the danger of infection.

"With such a broad canvas, the picture will necessarily be a birds' eye view rather than a minute study of current thinking on this topic."

The talk will be held in The Raven pub in Queen Street in the centre of town. No tickets or reservations are required - just turn up at 7.30pm for an 8pm start.

Organisers will ask for a small voluntary donation to cover travel costs for the speakers.

To register for email alerts about forthcoming Science Café events please contact Rod Scott at [R.J.Scott@bath.ac.uk](mailto:R.J.Scott@bath.ac.uk)



Find out what Charles Darwin didn't know about evolution at the next Bath Science Cafe

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