

Darwin, Art and Literature

FEB 12, 1809
Charles Robert Darwin born in Shrewsbury, Shroashire

1811
The poet Percy Bysshe Shelley is expelled from Oxford after admitting writing a pamphlet on atheism and questioning the existence of God

1812
The first definitive collection of fairy tales is written by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. Throughout history the stories have to teach children about difficult moral issues

1814
Jane Austen's satirical novel *Mansfield Park* is published. The novel explores issues of slavery and English society by having a plantation owner as a central character and questioning his use of slaves and inferring the wealth they enjoy are the profits of slavery

1818
Mary Shelly's novel *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* is published. The plot follows the story of scientist Victor Frankenstein who creates life and in the form of a being with no moral understanding or education. The story can be read as a comment on the expansion of man in the Industrial revolution

1831
The Hunchback of Notre Dame by the French writer Victor Hugo is published. The novel explores the Gothic themes of passion, religious fanaticism and social injustice

1838
Charles Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist*, the story of an orphan boy's progress in early Victorian society, is published in three parts. *Oliver Twist* was the first novel published in English to have a child as its main character. The novel examines the treatment of children and the poor by society and is highly critical of the Poor Law

1814
Britain's first purpose built public art gallery, Dulwich Picture Gallery opens. It is founded on the collection of the painter Sir Francis Bourgeois who left the paintings to Dulwich College

1819
Francisco Goya, a Spanish artist, paints a series of disturbing and dark images known collectively as the *Black Paintings*, including *Saturn Devouring His Sons*, in reaction to civil conflicts in Spain at the time and his own mental state

1824
The National Gallery in London is founded to house the governments newly acquired art collection bought from the Russian banker John Julius Angerstein. The collection includes paintings by Renaissance artist Raphael and British painter William Hogarth

1839
The Long, Low Black Schooner, a play based on the events on the Spanish schooner *La Amistad* which saw the attempted take over of the ship by the black slaves it was transporting, opens in New York

1847
Charlotte Brontë's first and most famous novel *Jane Eyre*, is published under the pseudonym Currer Bell. The novel follows the story of a young woman's life as told by herself. It deals with many social, moral, gender and religious issues as well as including many gothic themes

1852
Uncle Tom's Cabin, the anti-slavery novel by American abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe, is published. The plot centres around the loyal black slave Uncle Tom and examines the treatment of slaves and the prejudices of others towards black people

1853
Charlotte Brontë's third novel *Villette* is published under Charlotte's own name. *Villette* follows the story of a young female protagonist, Lucy Snowe, who travels alone from England to France after a family tragedy. The novel is celebrated for its portrayal of Lucy's psychological development and, as in *Jane Eyre* as a narrative of female self-discovery

1859
The author Mary Ann Evans' first novel *Adam Bede* is published under the pseudonym George Eliot. Evans decides to use a male name as she is worried that if people know she is a woman they will not take her work seriously

1863
The Water-Babies is a children's novel by the social reformer and early supporter of Darwin's theories on evolution the Reverend Charles Kingsley. The novel deals with many social issues such as child labour, poverty, moral and academic education and Christian values and goes some way to show support for Darwin's theories of natural selection

1864
Jules Verne's science-fiction novel *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* is published. Verne was inspired by Charles Lyell's scientific work *Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man*. Lyell's text deals with geological findings relating to how long humans have been on Earth and Darwin's theory of evolution by Natural Selection. The story, which involves Professor Von Hardwigg's journey to discover the origins of man reflects the unease felt in the wake of Darwin's theories as we began to question our history on Earth

1840
The British artist J. M. W. Turner's dramatic painting, *The Slave Ship or Slavers Throwing overboard the Dead and Dying — Typhoon coming on*, is exhibited in London at the Royal Academy. The painting depicts an 18th century practise of throwing 'human cargo' from the ship. Turner used the exhibition of the painting to provide support and argument for the abolitionists

1841
Punch, a weekly satirical magazine which satirises contemporary politics and society is first published

1848
The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood is formed by William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais and Dante Gabriel Rossetti in reaction to the un-realistic art being produced which they regarded as mechanistic and formulaic. Their main aim is to produce works which are true to life and nature which require close studies of their subjects and which express and inspire their ideals

1851
John James Audubon, the French-American ornithologist, naturalist and painter, dies. His seminal work *Birds of America* accurately depicts nearly 500 species of birds on hand-coloured copper plate illustrations. Darwin refers to Audubon's work in *On the Origin of Species*

1865–1866
Dante Gabriel Rossetti paints *The Beloved* which shows a bride surrounded by her bridesmaids. Every woman shown has a different skin tone suggesting that it is Rossetti's desire to depict many diverse examples of female beauty

1870s

The work of the French Impressionists comes to prominence. This group of artists begin to paint in a style which represents what the viewer sees or feels when looking at a subject rather than a copy of the subject itself. French Impressionists such as Claude Monet, and Paul Cezanne read and supported Darwin's theories on evolution and the natural world. Many of their works examine themes of the primal nature of earth, and our similarities to other animals

1870–1880

Edgar Degas, a portraitist closely associated with the French Impressionists, begins to examine his subject's appearance in relation to the context he paints them in. Along with their clothes and surroundings Degas also focuses on their physical appearance and begins to represent his subjects as having facial features which relate to their personality

1881

Edgar Degas' wax sculpture *La Petite Danseuse de Quatorze Ans (The Little Dance of Fourteen Years)* goes on display in Paris and receives mixed reviews. Comments focus on the girls monkey like appearance and, partly due to it being displayed in a glass case, it's resemblance to a medical specimen

April 19, 1882
After several months of seizures and heart problems, Charles Darwin dies at about 4:00pm at his home Down House, surrounded by his family. Though they originally want him to be buried in their local village of Downe, he is eventually buried in Westminster Abbey

1886

Robert Louis Stevenson's novella *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is published. The plot centres on Dr Jekyll and his dual personality Mr Hyde and is seen as allegory for the conflict in humanity between good and evil. Stevenson's examination of a dual personality pre-dates Freud's work on the conscious and the unconscious mind

1891

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde. Highly controversial at the time of publication, this story follows the hedonistic life of the title character after he sells his soul to remain young and beautiful forever

1893

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's short story *The Adventure of the Final Problem* is published. It is in this that the great detective Sherlock Holmes comes face to face with his arch-enemy Moriarty. On seeing Holmes Moriarty says "You have less frontal development than I should have expected" which demonstrates an understanding in phrenology, a Victorian pseudoscience which stated that certain character traits could be 'read' in the shape of a person's skull

1894

The Jungle Book by Rudyard Kipling is published. The collection of stories set in the Indian Jungle, and using animals as key figures, contain strong contemporary moral lessons

1897

In 1891 the Post-Impressionist painter Paul Gauguin moved to Tahiti, an island in the Pacific Ocean, in search of a simpler way of life. He often sides with the native Tahitians opposing the colonial rule of the time and it is here that he produces his best known work *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?*

1900

The Interpretation of Dreams, Sigmund Freud's seminal book on psychoanalytic theory, is published. Here Freud introduces his theories on the unconscious and the conscious mind whilst discussing dream analysis. Freud will go on build a body of theories that help us understand how the mind functions and behaves

1913

George Bernard Shaw writes the play *Pygmalion*, later produced for Hollywood as the film *My Fair Lady*. The story of a poor flower girl who rises through the rigid social structure as she is taught to speak and behave 'appropriately' among the upper class

Charles Darwin, His Life and Work

FEB 12, 1809
Charles Robert Darwin born in Shrewsbury, Shropshire

SPRING 1817
Darwin is sent to Mr Case's grammar school, Shrewsbury

JULY 15, 1817
Darwin's mother, Susannah, dies when he is eight years old

JUNE 17, 1825
Darwin's father, Robert, removes him from Shrewsbury school due to poor grades – his father thinks him idle and directionless

OCTOBER 1825
Darwin is sent by his father to the University of Edinburgh to study medicine with his brother Erasmus

APRIL/MAY 1827
Darwin has had enough of medical school and decides to leave. His father is not pleased and arranges for Darwin to study for the clergy at Christ's College, Cambridge University. While there, Darwin joins the 'Glutton Club' which likes to dine on "Birds and beasts which were before unknown to human palate"

MARCH 1830
Darwin and his girlfriend, Fanny Owen, end their relationship as he is more engaged with entomology and she is attracting other suitors. In September 1830 Darwin is told of Fanny's engagement to another man and he is upset.

1822
Darwin and his brother Erasmus organise a chemistry lab in the garden shed – Darwin begins to learn about the set up of research

1826
Darwin is taught how to stuff animals by John Edmonstone, a freed slave from Guyana in South America. John tells Darwin about the tropics. Darwin's taxidermy skills are later invaluable aboard the HMS Beagle

1827
A Scottish zoologist named Robert Grant befriends Darwin and introduces him to the work of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, who wrote of the 'inheritance of acquired characteristics' and early evolutionary theory

1828
Darwin meets the Reverend John Stevens Henslow, Professor of Botany at Cambridge. His lectures highly enthuse Darwin and point him towards a life in natural science

1831
Darwin passes his university exams with fine scores and decides to plan a voyage to explore the Canary Islands with his friend Marmaduke Ramsay. Ramsay suddenly dies and a despondent Darwin does not make the voyage

FEBRUARY 28, 1832
HMS Beagle arrives in Brazil and Darwin witnesses terrible treatment of slaves. He is disgusted and quarrels with Capt. FitzRoy who tries to justify slave ownership. Darwin disagrees and FitzRoy, in a temper, forbids Darwin to share his dinner table

JANUARY 23, 1833
The Beagle is in Tierra del Fuego, a large group of islands off the coasts of Argentina and Chile. Revd. Richard Matthews stays to run a mission with three anglicised Fuegians called Jemmy Button, York Minster and Fuegia Basket. Eventually the Fuegians are left to run the mission alone

SEPTEMBER 1834
Darwin has been in Valparaiso, Chile, for some months. He has been very ill with a bad fever for many weeks and will not fully recover until the end of October. He writes to his family to tell of his latest finds and of his illness, which distresses them

OCTOBER 2 1836
After nearly five years at sea, Darwin and the crew of the Beagle are pleased to return home to England. Darwin heads straight home to see his family who are ecstatic

AUGUST 1831
Darwin receives a letter from Revd. Henslow that will be a turning point in his life. It was an invitation to be the naturalist aboard the HMS Beagle on its two year survey of South America. Darwin's father is against the idea

DECEMBER 27, 1831
After earlier convincing his father (with his uncle Josiah Wedgewood's help) to approve of his trip, Darwin embarks on his journey with Captain FitzRoy of HMS Beagle from Plymouth, Devon

NOVEMBER 24, 1832
Darwin sends a shipment of specimens to Revd. Henslow back in Cambridge for study. His collection included snakes, lizards, crustaceans, dried plants, fish and many species of one of Darwin's great interests, beetles. He also sends fossil specimens, like the possible head of a Megatherium, or Giant Sloth

FEBRUARY 20, 1835
The expedition has moved on to Valdivia, Chile. Darwin is at the epicentre of a huge earthquake and upon studying the aftermath he notices that in some areas the land has risen by several feet, which confirms his idea that the Andes mountains are very slowly rising above the ocean and that the earth is very old. Years later he gives a well-received lecture at the Geological Society of London on the subject

SEPT-OCT 1835
HMS Beagle reaches the Galápagos Islands in the Pacific Ocean. Darwin writes of the dark volcanic rock on the shore, and the equally dark Galápagos Marine Iguana, the only lizard that can live and hunt in the sea. During this time Darwin studies the giant tortoises, and collects animal species, plants, rocks and insects. Eventually 18 giant tortoises are brought on board for their meat

NOV 1835-JULY 1836
Darwin and the Beagle travel to Tahiti (which leaves Darwin in wonder of its tropical plants), New Zealand and Australia. In Australia Darwin marvels at the different animals, in particular the platypus which he finds very odd. From Australia the crew begin to head back to England, but stop at the island of Mauritius, Cape Town (South Africa) and the Azores (off the coast of North Africa) among others. Darwin studies the landscape in each place

JANUARY 29, 1839

Darwin marries his cousin Emma Wedgwood. They receive a dowry and investments towards their marriage of £15,000, worth nearly £700,000 in modern money. This allows Darwin to completely focus on his scientific work. Darwin and Emma will go on to have ten children, but only seven will survive until adulthood

SEPTEMBER 14, 1842

Darwin and Emma move to Down House in Kent, where they stay for the rest of their lives. It is also where Darwin does much of the research for his groundbreaking evolutionary theory

APRIL 23, 1851

Darwin and Emma's beloved first daughter Annie dies at the age of ten, possibly from tuberculosis. Darwin is devastated – he keeps a box of her things until the day he dies

APRIL 19, 1882

After several months of seizures and heart problems, Darwin dies at about 4:00pm at his home Down House, surrounded by his family. Though they originally want him to be buried in their local village of Downe, he is eventually buried in Westminster Abbey

MARCH 1837

Darwin moves to 36 Great Marlborough St, London. John Gould, a respected ornithologist, has been studying the birds Darwin brought from the Galapagos. He recognises that they are all species of finch with differing beak sizes, not different birds altogether, as Darwin had thought. After some research, Darwin realises that each bird is from a separate island with different types of food and have evolved beaks to adapt

MID-1837–1838

Darwin works on his famous series of journals regarding his thoughts on transmutation, or the changing of species in different environments over time. His 'B' notebook includes the 'tree of life' image with the words 'I think'. He is wary of discussing his theory due to its impact on his reputation and society as a whole

JULY 5, 1844

After beginning work in secret on an essay outlining his theory on evolution by natural selection, Darwin instructs his wife to publish it in the event of his death saying "if it be accepted even by one competent judge, it will be a considerable step in science"

MAY 1856

After finally completing an eight year study of barnacles, Darwin starts to write what will become his most famous work *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*

JUNE 18, 1858

A letter and paper arrives from Darwin's friend and fellow scientist Alfred Russel Wallace, describing how he has been working on his own theory of natural selection in Indonesia. Darwin is in shock. Eventually the men agree to present their papers to the scientific community together on July 1, 1858 at the Linnean Society of London

NOVEMBER 24, 1859

On the Origin of Species is published by John Murray in London. It sells out and a second edition is immediately begun. The reactions are mixed; some scientists back Darwin and his theory, others, like the religious Richard Owen of the British Museum (now Natural History Museum), are outraged and feel it may be dangerous to society

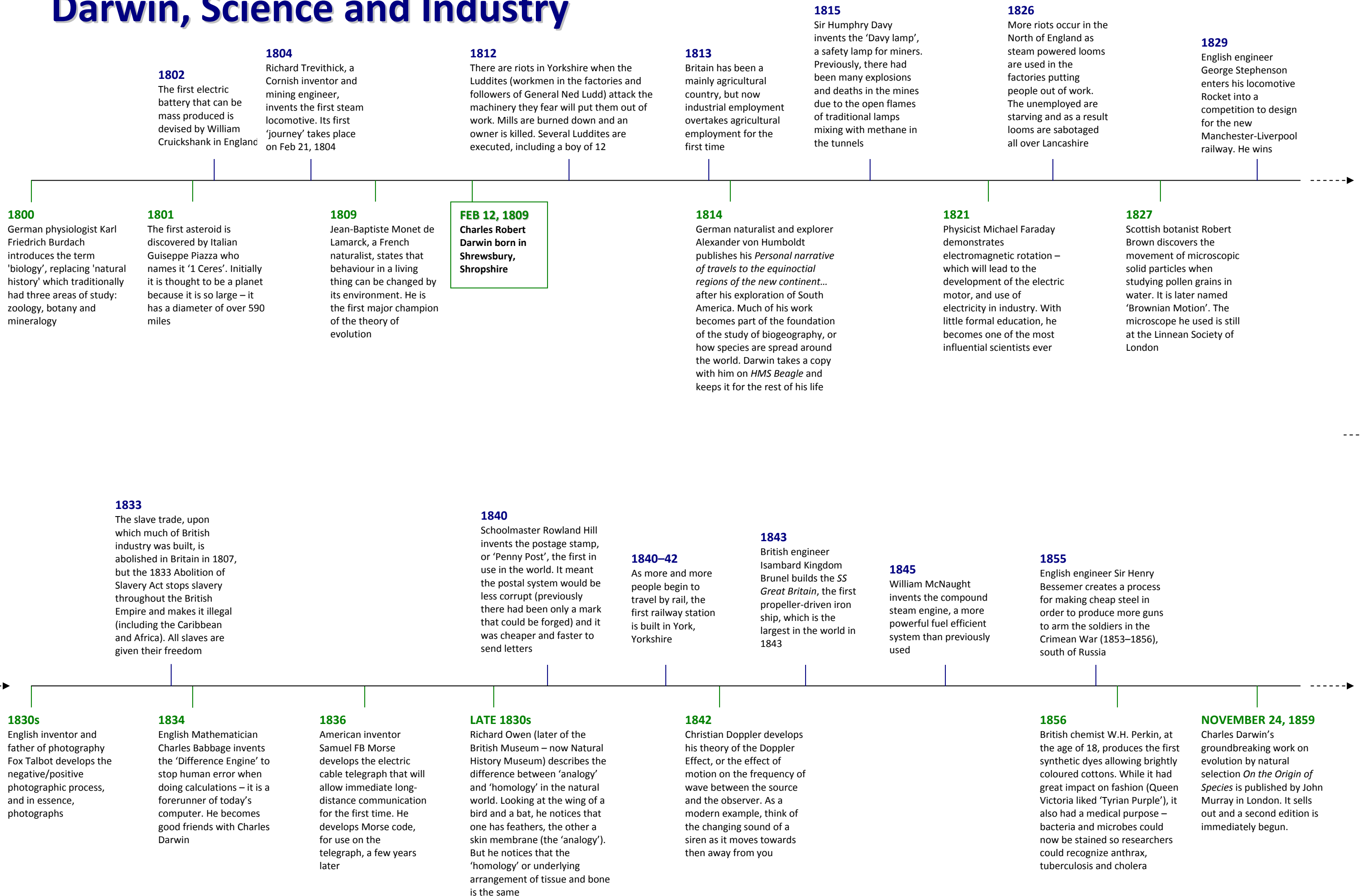
JUNE 30, 1860

A scientific meeting takes place at Oxford University regarding Darwin's evolutionary theory. Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, who believes in creation, attacks Darwin's theory. Two prominent scientists of the era, Joseph Hooker and Thomas Huxley, defend it. Both sides believe they have won the argument. Darwin is too ill to attend

MARCH 1871

The Descent of Man is published in two volumes, in which Darwin brings man into his theory of evolution and 'descent'. It is also a success, but this time there is little criticism from other scientists and the church

Darwin, Science and Industry



1865

Isambard Kingdom Brunel's great steam ship, the *SS Great Eastern* plays a huge role in laying the trans-Atlantic telegraph cable that will make communication easier...and the world a bit smaller

1875

The Channel Tunnel Company is formed and begin to do preliminary trials to set up an Anglo-French link under the English Channel. It would not be a reality until 1994

1876

Scottish inventor Alexander Graham Bell patents the "electrical speech machine", or the telephone

1884

The first skyscraper in the world is being built in Chicago, USA. When completed in 1885, it will be ten stories tall and made from a skeleton of steel beams when other buildings are built entirely from bricks

1885

German engine designer Benz develops and puts into production the first gasoline-powered automobile to run on an internal-combustion engine

1896

Italian electrical engineer Guglielmo Marconi patents the wireless telegraph. It is using one of Marconi's transmitters that the Titanic sends its distress signals in 1912

1860

The University of London is the first university to admit a student to the degree of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.). Previously all scientific degrees had been included under the term B.A. (Bachelor of Arts)

1867

Swedish engineer and inventor Alfred Nobel develops dynamite, the first explosive that can be handled safely. When he dies in 1896 he leaves a huge endowment fund and an award is given in his name every year to a person whose work has helped humanity

MARCH 1871

The Descent of Man is published in two volumes, in which Darwin brings man into his theory of evolution and 'descent'

1879

Thomas Edison invents the first light bulb (incandescent lamp) that can be produced on a mass scale successfully

1881

Godalming in Surrey is the first town in the world to have a public electricity supply. London does not receive electricity until 1882

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1887

German physicist Heinrich Hertz discovers radio waves and whose work became the foundation of modern radio transmission

1899

German chemist Felix Hoffman looks for a way to help ease his father's arthritic pain and develops a stable form of acetylsalicylic acid, named aspirin. It is sold in powdered form by prescription

Darwin, Social and Black History

1792

Mary Wollstonecraft writes *A Vindication on the Rights of Women* to show that women are not inferior to men, just that the same education is not available to them. Her work is later praised by the Suffragettes

1800

The Act of Union of 1800 establishes the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Parliament in Dublin is dissolved and Ireland becomes governed by Parliament in Westminster

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1812

There are riots in Yorkshire when the Luddites (workmen in the factories and followers of General Ned Ludd) attack the machinery they fear will put them out of work. Mills are burned down and an owner is killed. Several Luddites are executed, including a boy of 12

1813

Elizabeth Fry, an English social reformer, fights to improve conditions for female prisoners after learning of their torment in Newgate gaol. Her social reforms were so successful they even spread throughout Europe and today she can be seen on the £5 note

1789

William Wilberforce, a British politician, became famous for his efforts to abolish the slave trade. It was in 1789 that he first addressed Parliament regarding the abolition of slavery

1807

Slavery is abolished in Britain with the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act but those already in enslaved are not freed. Many slave traders bypassed this Act regardless

1810

Britain negotiates with Portugal for the abolition of the South Atlantic slave trade

1814–1815

The Congress of Vienna takes place in order to settle differences over the Napoleonic Wars. The boundaries of European countries are redrawn and it becomes the model for the modern day United Nations. Britain uses the Congress to put pressure on France, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain to put an end to their slave trades

1820

In the US, the act of trading slaves becomes punishable by death under the 1820 Law on Slave Trade. The law states that any 'such citizen or person shall be adjudged a pirate'

1828

In 1800 the population of London had reached 1 million, but this figure then doubles every 50 years. The main source of water is from the Thames, though it also acts as London's main sewer. The population begins to worry about the polluted waters and the Thames is nicknamed 'Monster Soup'

1831–1832

The first cholera epidemic arrives from mainland Europe and sweeps through England, resulting in the deaths of over 22,000 people

1834

A new Poor Law is passed which introduces the idea of the workhouse. Previously the poor had been able to receive handouts from the Church and the wealthy, but now the poor are expected to enter the workhouse. The conditions are purposefully appalling to put people off wanting to enter it, but it is the only form of help for some

1845

Phytophthora infestans, a type of mould also known as 'potato blight', causes the vast potato crops in Ireland to rot and fail. The potato is a main crop in Ireland and for some it is their only source of food. Over 1 million people starve and die, and a further million leave Ireland to avoid the famine, altering the population of Ireland dramatically

1846

Outrages in the Victorian workhouses of Andover, including bullying and starvation, lead to amendments in the Poor Law. Charitable assistance starts to become available in response to the scandal

1826

University College London is set up and becomes the first university to accept students of all races, classes and religions. Previously, a university education was reserved for white Christian men

1831

Samuel Sharpe, a slave-turned-Baptist minister, leads a slave revolt in Jamaica after incorrectly believing slavery had been abolished throughout the British Empire. The slaves burn the crops but do not attack the white inhabitants. Eventually the rebellion is stopped by the Jamaican military and the leaders of the revolt are hanged

FEBRUARY 28, 1832

HMS Beagle arrives in Brazil and Darwin witnesses terrible treatment of slaves. He is disgusted and quarrels with Capt. FitzRoy who tries to justify slave ownership. Darwin disagrees and FitzRoy, in a temper, forbids Darwin to share his dinner table

1833

Due in part to the events in Jamaica in 1831, Parliament passes the Abolition of Slavery Act which frees all slaves in the British Empire. Though the Act was passed in 1833, it did not start coming into effect until August 1834

1839

The Spanish schooner *La Amistad* takes over 50 slaves from Havana to another port in Cuba, which violates a treaty between Spain and Britain banning the slave trade. The slaves on board mutiny and kill the ship's captain, and attempt to steer the ship to Africa. The remaining crew members sail *La Amistad* to the US instead and the slaves are captured and put on trial. Abolitionists, including President John Quincy Adams, fight to free them. It is eventually ruled that it was illegal to transport them and the slaves are freed. They return to Africa in 1842

1851

The Great Exhibition takes place in Hyde Park, London. It celebrates the British Empire and its colonies by displaying inventions and products of industry and culture. 6 million people visit and see exhibits from Africa, India and the West Indies. The Koh-i-Noor, the largest diamond in the world, is on display after being taken from India against the wishes of its protector Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It is 'given' to Queen Victoria and is still kept in the Tower of London

1854

British physician John Snow discovers that the cholera virus killing many people in the Soho area of London is spread by water, not air, as previously thought. He traces the disease to a contaminated public water pump on Broad Street and after convincing the authorities to shut the pump down the cholera epidemic goes into decline

1858

The disgusting smell coming from the Thames in the summer of 1858 causes the time to be named 'The Great Stink'. The Thames is almost solid with waste and English civil engineer Joseph Bazalgette devises a revolutionary new sewer system for London which helps to clear the river and reduce disease that is rife in areas of the city

NOVEMBER 24, 1859

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1861-2

University College London becomes the first university to accept women. Some have noted the start date as 1848 but the first female students were officially registered during 1861

1862

The Races of Man is published by ethnologist John Beddoes. After Darwin's theory of evolution suggests man's descent from apes, ethnologists study phrenology, or the skull shapes and features, of different people. Though to modern eyes it seems an unrealistic way to define people, Beddoes' book revealed that he thought geniuses had receding jaws

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1891

The Free Education Act makes it possible for poorer children to attend school and have an education. The government funded up to 10 shillings (or £30) a week to a child's schooling. Previously it had been more common for a poorer family to send their child out to work to contribute money to the family

1903

Emmeline Pankhurst forms the Women's Social and Political Union to fight for votes for women. Known as Suffragettes, they heckle politicians and use militant tactics like causing public unrest and spitting at police. After arrest, many go on hunger strike against the terrible conditions of prison. They are violently force-fed, and Pankhurst is shocked by the screams of fellow prisoners. Women partially receive the vote in 1918

1852

Uncle Tom's Cabin, the anti-slavery novel by American abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe, is published. The plot centres around the loyal black slave Uncle Tom and examines the treatment of slaves and the prejudices of others towards black people

1855

Mary Seacole, a Jamaican nurse, goes out to support the Crimean War efforts after her services are rejected by the British war office. She goes to the front anyway and sets up the British Hotel, or hospital, with her own money. Unlike Florence Nightingale, Mary often treats soldiers whilst under fire. Being of mixed race, with a Caribbean mother and Scottish father, she experiences racism from both black and white people

1865

President Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation in the US in 1862-3, bringing freedom to thousands of slaves. However, many see the emancipation as a goal of war (the American Civil War 1861-65) as slavery has still not been made illegal. In 1865, the thirteenth amendment to the United States Constitution officially makes slavery illegal, almost 32 years after the abolition of slavery in the British Empire

1896

Homer Plessy, a mixed race man in the state of Louisiana, USA goes to court against Judge John Howard Ferguson over his ruling that Plessy, categorised as an African-American, should not ride in a 'whites-only' train carriage. The court-ruling of "separate but equal" highlights a culture of segregation

1903

Arthur Conan Doyle, author of the Sherlock Holmes stories, hears about the case of George Edalji, the son of the first Indian vicar in Britain and his Scottish wife. Edalji is accused of mutilating horses during the night in Great Wyrley, Staffordshire. Conan Doyle studies the case and notices Edalji's terrible stigmatism of the eye, commenting he could not have seen in the dark to commit the crime. He proves the police wrong and guilty of racial harassment, clearing Edalji of the mutilations