Body and mind: Charles Darwin, natural selection and modern human evolution

Professor Richard Roberts
University of Wollongong

Tuesday, November 24th 2009, 11.30am - Meet and Greet the speaker - talk at 12 noon
Queensland Museum Theatre

ADMISSION FREE. Since seating is limited please register your intention to attend by emailing Sally Mather at Griffith University on s.mather@griffith.edu.au.

Light refreshments will be served after the talk. Paid parking is available at either the State Library or Queensland Museum/Art Gallery carparks. The Cultural Centre Bus Station is nearby, as is a CityCat stop and South Brisbane Station.

The book carefully avoided elaborating on human evolution, remarking only that “light would be thrown on the origin of man and his history”. Twelve years later, Darwin published The Descent of Man, in which he presented his arguments that humans had evolved by the same processes of natural selection as other species.

Over the last 150 years we have gained a wealth of archaeological and genetic knowledge of man’s prehistory and evolution. Many fossil precursors, so called “missing links”, and extinct species once contemporaneous with Homo sapiens have been found. The latest of these was Homo floresiensis, (the “Hobbit” from Flores, Indonesia), research on which species Professor Roberts made major contributions.

In this talk, he will explore some of the recent scientific findings on the process of ‘becoming human’, focussing on the emergence of the attributes of the mind that – as Darwin recognised – have played a pivotal role in the evolution of our species: “Through his powers of intellect, articulate language has been evolved; and on this his wonderful advancement has mainly depended”.

You will be brought up to date on exciting developments in this ‘hot’ topic.