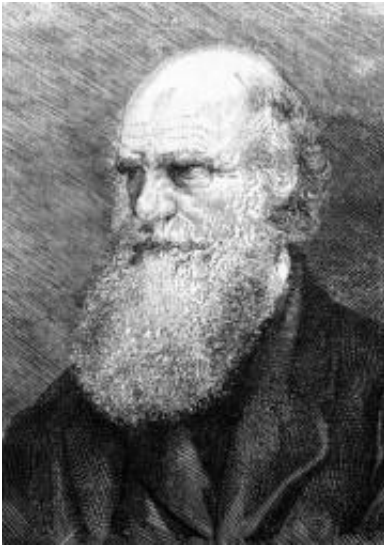


Darwin descended from Cro-Magnon man: scientists

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This undated engraving shows English naturalist Charles Darwin. The father of evolution was a direct descendant of the Cro-Magnon people, whose entry into Europe 30,000 years ago heralded the demise of Neanderthals, scientists revealed in Australia Thursday.

The father of evolution Charles Darwin was a direct descendant of the Cro-Magnon people, whose entry into Europe 30,000 years ago heralded the demise of Neanderthals, scientists revealed in Australia Thursday.

Darwin, who hypothesised that all humans evolved from common ancestors in his seminal 1859 work "On the [Origin of Species](#)", came from Haplogroup R1b, one of the most common European male

lineages, said genealogist Spencer Wells.

"Men belonging to Haplogroup R1b are direct descendants of the Cro-Magnon people who, beginning 30,000 years ago, dominated the human expansion into Europe and heralded the demise of the Neanderthal species," Wells said.

Director of the Genographic Project, an international study mapping the migratory history of the human species, Wells said they took a DNA sample from Darwin's great-great grandson Chris Darwin, 48, who lives on the outskirts of Sydney.

A trace of Darwin's "deep ancestry" showed his forefathers left Africa around 45,000 years ago, splitting into a new lineage 5,000 years later in Iran or southern Central Asia, Wells said.

"Before heading west towards Europe, the next mutation, which defined a new lineage, appeared in a man around 35,000 years ago," he said.

"Approximately 70 percent of men in southern England belong to Haplogroup R1b, and in parts of Ireland and Spain that number exceeds 90 percent", he added.

Chris Darwin, whose great-grandfather was Darwin's astronomer son George, is a tour guide and adventurer in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney.

He migrated to Australia in 1986 and tests of his maternal DNA showed he was likely directly descended from the women who crossed the rugged Caucasus Mountains in southern Russia to reach the steppes of the Black Sea.

"The Genographic Project is incredibly important," Darwin said.

"The project is one way to show us the true story of humanity, of how we migrated across the world and that we are all related, tracing back to a small group of men and women who lived in Africa".

Wells was presenting the findings ahead of the project's annual scientific conference, bringing together representatives from 11 regional teams to discuss their work in Sydney.

There are currently 265,000 members of the public taking part in the project, which is an initiative of National Geographic, IBM and the California-based Waitt Family Foundation charity.

Participation kits can be bought online for 100 US dollars, and proceeds go towards the research and to indigenous language and cultural projects.

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