

CREATION

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Journal of the CREATION SCIENCE MOVEMENT

Genesis Expo news

The Genesis Expo is now closed while the extension is built.

In January we signed a contract to double the area of the present exposition by building a mezzanine floor above the current displays. The steel deck will have a toughened glass balustrade and will be approached by a steel staircase. The plans were approved by the city planning office and building regulators. The Genesis Expo will remain closed to the public while this first stage of building work is done, but should reopen around Easter. If you plan to come from a distance it would be prudent to phone to check we are not still closed.

The CSM office is unaffected by the building work, so we can continue to be contacted by post, phone 02392 735610 and e-mail. The website is also available.

This doubling of the area will be a great opportunity to tell visitors why Creation is the only scientifically viable explanation of the living world and the physical universe. The media and education system are implacably against the idea that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The Genesis Expo presents a way for the general public to hear the arguments in favour, not from the Bible, so precious to

Christians, but from the scientific principles that they are told support evolution. This in turn leads to respect for the Scriptures that are able to make us wise to salvation. With such a small proportion of the population attending churches, and even many of those churches preaching that God used evolution, the CSM exhibition is a vital tool for 'pre-evangelism'. The visitors' comment book daily tells us of Christians having their faith strengthened and others thinking things through for the first time.

Later we have planning approval for further extensions to the rear of our premises. Please pray that the work may be done safely, that the exhibitions may put the ideas and explanations across well and that the One who sits over against the treasury will supply the necessary finances. We are grateful to the many members who send in gifts, both small and large.

Direct Debit Debacle

Having told us that the best way for members to pay subscriptions is by Direct Debit, the CSM bank now explains that a charity account cannot offer this option. So if you are one of the many who returned

D/D forms, you will find that we have returned them in this mailing. Please either send us a cheque or set up a standing order for a minimum £10-00 UK membership, payable to Creation Science Movement's Lloyds TSB Cosham branch 77-25-02 account no. 86265960. Please arrange for your name and postcode to appear with your payment on our bank statement, so that we can credit you. You can also ask us to deduct your subs from a credit/debit card by posting or telephoning the card number, security code and expiry date.

We recognise that you are being inconvenienced, as we ourselves are, and tender our sincere apologies. Thank you to the many who add a donation with their subscription renewal.

As in Adam ... even so in Christ

Increasingly we are invited to debate theistic evolutionists – Christians who believe that God used evolution to make everything. At the Moriel Creation conference at the Swanwick Conference Centre at the end of November, it was suggested that we needed to have a conference that tackled theistic evolution.

Our church leaders and their flocks believe passionately in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation. However, many dismiss the biblical story of a historical Adam, whose disobedience loosed the safety catch, allowing death and disease into a perfect Creation.

The apostle Paul, writing that great chapter on the resurrection, I Corinthians 15, linked Adam, the first man who is of the

earth, and Christ, the second man who is the Lord from heaven. “And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Paul’s whole argument here hinges on Adam not being a mythical figure, but the curse being an historical incident. Otherwise Christ’s resurrection is also mythical and we are yet in our sins.

Expelled – No Intelligence Allowed – the DVD

We recently reported the case of Prof Michael Reiss, a theistic evolutionist, who was hounded from his job as Director of Education for the Royal Society because he suggested that creationism might be discussed in school science classes if the subject was raised by pupils. In America there are a great many instances where lecturers have not had their contracts renewed and where research funds have been withdrawn from those who admitted to belief in Creation / Intelligent Design theory. At a recent Moriel creationist conference at Swanwick in Derbyshire with Jacob Prasch, John MacKay, Prof Andy McIntosh, Dr Rich Oliver and CSM’s Dr David Rosevear, we were treated to a showing of the new film *Expelled – No Intelligence Allowed*, with telling interviews with several scientists who have lost their jobs because of their creationist sympathies. The film was premiered in London recently. It is so well made that we have decided to purchase copies for sale at £10-00 plus £1-00 P&P. This is cheaper than the Amazon or EMI price, but we want you to see the extent of what we creationists are up against. Our DVDs also carry interviews of particular relevance to

the British creationists and are formatted for playing in the UK. The film became the number one documentary in America in 2008 and is released as a DVD in January 2010.

Shrewsbury's "Quantum Leap"

At the end of November the town council of Darwin's birthplace took delivery of a monument to celebrate his bicentenary. A 'crowd' of 23 watched the ceremony. Comments on the local newspaper's website were uniformly unflattering, likening the concrete structure to a giant woodlouse. There was outrage that it cost the taxpayers nearly half a million pounds, £100,000 being extra because of a mistake in locating the 'monstrosity'.



The 200 tonnes monument "Quantum Leap".
Image: J. Tandy, www.Flickr.com, under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic licence.

Cuttings & Comments from *New Scientist*

by Dr David Rosevear

3 October p.17 Feathered dinosaur is older than the earliest bird

Anchiornis huxleyi, claimed to be a Jurassic feathered dinosaur, has been unearthed in China, in Jianchang Province. It appears to have **"well-developed feathers on all four limbs"**, and is claimed to be older than *Archaeopteryx*. Archy has been shown by CT scan to have a fully avian brain, and its minor reptilian features are shared by some living birds. **"It is unclear, however, whether *Anchiornis* could fly. It has unusually long legs, suggesting it might have been able to run fast, though the long leg feathers could have made rapid movement difficult."**

Six years ago *National Geographic* published an article on *Archaeoraptor*, a fossil also from China, and hailed as a feathered dinosaur. Shortly afterwards, examination showed it to have been parts of two fossils stuck together. Fossil bird expert Alan Feduccia wrote in *Discover*, February 2003, that **"*Archaeoraptor* is just the tip of the iceberg. There are scores of fake fossils out there, and they have cast a dark shadow over the whole field... I heard there is a fake fossil factory in northeast China..."**

The three claws of dinosaurs develop in the embryo from digits I, II and III of the pentadactyl limb, whereas those of birds come from digits II, III and IV. Again, Feduccia says that **"As a result, it's almost inconceivable that one group derived from the other."** *New Scientist* 01 November 1997, p.20.

On 29 January 2000, *New Scientist* quoted Storrs Olson of the Smithsonian Institute to *National Geographic* saying **“There is not one undisputed example of a dinosaur with feathers. None. The public deserves to know this.”**

Reptiles are cold-blooded whereas birds have a fast metabolism. Birds’ lungs are unique in that there is a one-way flow of air through them. There is also a difference in the way their thigh bones are designed. Scales and feathers come from different layers of the skins from which they sprout. *Microraptor*, a fossil discovered in 2003, was claimed to have feathers, but in fact only had filaments called ‘dino-fuzz’.

The discovery of *Ida* the fossil lemur was held back to be released during the Darwin bicentenary as a primate-to-human missing link. *Ida* then sank into obscurity. Is *Anchiornis huxleyi* doing the same?

Quote from *Scientific American* August 2009: “If the detractors are right, *Ida* is irrelevant to the question of anthropoid – and thus human, origins.”

All the hype in May of this year about *Ida* being the ‘Holy Grail’ of human evolution, was just that – hype.

10 October p.13 Evening breast is best for a good night’s sleep

It is well known that mothers’ breast milk is a nicely balanced food, better suited to babies’ nutritional and immune system’s needs than artificial milk formulations. The ingredients change from that needed by newborn babes to that more desirable for rather older infants. Now it has been discovered that milk varies in content by day and night. There are three nucleotides that are strongly associated with sleep and sedation: 5’UMP, 5’AMP and 5’GMP (guanine mono-phosphate etc.). The researchers sampled milk from 30 healthy

nursing mothers at eight intervals round the clock.

“They found that concentrations of 5’AMP were highest in the evening, while levels of 5’GMP and 5’UMP increased as the night wore on. These sedatives were found at much lower concentrations in milk expressed during the day.

“Sanchez suggests that 5’AMP in breast milk might be fuelling the release of the sleep promoting neurotransmitter GABA, while 5’GMP is involved in the secretion of melatonin, which helps regulate the body’s natural clock. 5’UMP is known to encourage both REM and non-REM sleep.”

Is it feasible that these circadian cycles that help families to get a good night’s kip evolved by chance over time? Until the whole system of sedatives, neuro-transmitter, and clock were fully functional they would not be subject to natural selection. The phrase ‘fearfully and wonderfully made’ springs to mind.

10 October p.14 *Dino ballerina* takes a bow in Gobi desert

“The largely intact skeleton of *Alioramus altai* was excavated from 65-million-year-old rocks in the Gobi desert in Mongolia.”

Although classified as a tyrannosaur, it nevertheless had weak jaws and a slender body about 8 metres long. **“*Alioramus* had air sacs running through the vertebrae in its neck and spine which it used for ultra-efficient breathing. Modern birds which are descendants of the order of dinosaurs to which tyrannosaurs belong, are similarly designed. Air fills these cavities when birds inhale. This means that the lungs have a constant stream of fresh air and can extract up to two-and-**

a-half times as much oxygen per breath as a mammal.”

Evolutionists assume that birds are descended from reptiles, as suggested by T. H. Huxley 150 years ago. When they find a bone design (their word!) common to both types, this reinforces the assumption. But it remains an assumption.

10 October p.17 Our ancestors walked tall.

The fossil of a ‘4.4 million-year-old hominid’ given the name *Ardipithecus ramidus*, was found in Ethiopia in 1994 by Timothy White (not the pharmacist), but was only revealed to the world last week. **“Her first act: to force a rethink of our links with modern primate cousins... Crucially, though, she walked upright on two feet (pictured) – unlike chimpanzees and gorillas, who lean on their knuckles as they walk...much of what we think we know about human evolution will have to be rethought.”** The accompanying photo of Ardi’s right foot shows an opposable big toe at about 70 degrees to the next toe. This ape was designed to swing through the trees.

Nature on 22 September 1994 reported on 17 fossil bones in Ethiopia, said by this same Dr White to belong to an ancestor of man. But *National Geographic* in March 1996 reported that White has since found an almost complete skeleton that shows it to be chimp-like and not an ancestor of man. How reliable is White’s assessment of *Ardipithecus ramidus*?

17 October p.38 The cradle of life

What was the common ancestor of all life like? **“Think about the properties of that common ancestor, however, says Bill Martin of the University of Düsseldorf in Germany and you come up with a very strange beast indeed. He starts from the**

assumption that traits found in both the archaea and bacteria are most likely inherited from the common ancestor of all life – though a few have clearly been acquired later by gene exchange. Traits that are distinct presumably evolved independently.

“There is no doubt that the common ancestor possessed DNA, RNA and proteins, a universal genetic code, ribosomes (the protein building factories), ATP and a proton-powered enzyme for making ATP. The detailed mechanisms for reading off DNA and converting genes into proteins were also in place. In short, then, the last common ancestor of all life looks pretty much like a modern cell.”

But such a cell could not have arrived complete, and until it was able to reproduce, natural selection could not have helped to build it. So the first cell (not a common ancestor, since things reproduce according to their kind with their seed within themselves) could not have arisen by chance because of the interdependence of irreducibly complex constituents. Moreover, it would have required all the components of a present-day cell, which seems to rule out evolution. Further, the universal genetic code requires an intelligent Coder. Clearly, in the beginning God created all living things.

24 October p.7 Missing-link claims under fire

In the September *Creation* journal (p.10) we commented on the claims made for the fossil lemur named Ida – scientific name *Darwinius masillae*. She was claimed to be the common ancestor of monkeys, apes and humans that could change everything about our ancestry. The BBC made a television programme fronted by Sir David Attenborough to explain Ida’s importance.

In addition, the *History* TV channel made a documentary extolling Ida even before she was reported in the scientific literature. The whole thing was choreographed to make a splash during Darwin's bicentenary. **“That conclusion was hotly contested at the time, and is contradicted now by Erik Seiffert at Stony Brook University, New York. His team recently found a 37-million-year-old primate jawbone fossil in Egypt from a new genus named *Afradapis*. Their study claims that both *Afradapis* and *Darwinius* sit firmly on the lemur branch of the evolutionary tree.** So it is no longer thought that Ida was on an evolutionary branch leading to humans. Hominin research is littered with such false hopes.

24 October p.14 Evolution is alive and well in modern women

Here is yet another case of variation within a kind being claimed as evolution.

Despite modern medical treatments allowing the survival of the unfit, it is claimed that human evolution is still continuing. Not that it ever started. A study of medical records of 2238 women over three generations in the town of Framingham, Massachusetts since 1948 showed that shorter, heavier women tended to have more children. By passing on their genes for short and dumpy, the average stature changed over the generations. The researcher extrapolated for ten generations assuming the trend of larger families continued. This predicted that ladies would become 2 cm shorter and 1 kg heavier.

Why not continue the calculation for 1,000 generations and forecast females who were spherical or worse? Of course 61 years is not statistically significant. Inevitably some of these vertically challenged ladies will fall for tall chaps and offspring may inherit paternal genes. There will be limits

on the extent to which the genes for shortness will express themselves with the generations. What is of mild interest is why short fat women should tend to have more babies (not the same as more fertile). But one thing should be obvious; it has nothing to do with supposed evolution.

31 October p.7 Cloning scientist verdict
“A South Korean court has found disgraced cloning scientist Woo Suk Hwang guilty of embezzling government funds and breaching the country's bioethics law.” His suspended sentence leaves him free to continue his privately funded work on animal cloning.

31 October p.7 Deniers on the rise
“The proportion of Americans who believe global warming is caused by human activity has dropped from 47 per cent to 36 per cent in the last 18 months... Fewer saw global warming as a very serious problem: 35 per cent today.”

31 October p.18 Birds navigate by ‘seeing’ magnetic field lines
“Birds that navigate using the Earth's magnetic field rely more on their eyes than on the magnetic particles in their nostrils, an experiment on robins suggests.” The experiment that involved cutting a nerve from nostrils to brain in one group of birds and removing part of the brain involved with visual signals from another group, observed the groups' reaction to artificially rotating a magnetic field by 120 degrees. The group without the brain-to-nostril nerve were not fazed, while the ones without the eye connection were. The birds were ‘seeing’ the magnetic field to enable them to navigate.

31 October p.19 Why a boy's paternal grandma may love him a little less

“Why women evolved to live so far beyond their reproductive years is a mystery long debated. Now there is new evidence backing the ‘grandma hypothesis’ – that they stick around to invest in their grandchildren, safeguarding the genes they share.”

Since the majority of grannies worldwide over the millennia wouldn't know about Dawkins' selfish gene theory, we must assume that they do not deliberately prefer and nurture those grandchildren with more of their own genes, the children of their daughters (XX) more than those of their sons (XY). Longevity studies of boys who grew up in the same communities as their grandmas support the idea that granny did invest more resources in the well-being of their daughters' sons. Such studies however have lots of variables so may not be conclusive. Why wouldn't grandpas take an interest in preserving their genes?

What is interesting is the evolutionist view of the value of women once they have passed child-rearing age. It seems that according to evolution theory, it might be a waste of resources for them to evolve to live into old age. However, helping grandchildren who share their genes is the justification for women surviving into old age. Such a view of life is chilling.

14 November p.16 Suite of chatterbox genes discovered

A master-switch gene called *Foxp2* has been discovered that controls the suite of genes that enable us to talk. When inactive, this master-switch gene causes severe speech and language problems in humans. There are two small differences in the protein that the human *Foxp2* gene produces compared with that of other creatures such as the chimpanzee. Has the

gene evolved these changes, or were we created in the image of a God who speaks (and indeed spoke us all into existence)?

Neuroscientists grew human brain cells lacking *Foxp2* *in vitro*, and added the human gene to some and the chimp *Foxp2* to others. **“Out of the hundreds of genes controlled by *Foxp2*, they identified 116 that responded differently to the human version of *Foxp2*...Many control brain development or have been linked to cognition. Others are involved in controlling body movement and guiding the development of facial and laryngeal tissues that are essential for articulation.”** So, did two small chance mutations cause the evolution of apes to humans? This is assumed by the German anthropologists, and is described by them as **“really amazing”**. Or did a specially designed master-switch controlling hundreds of genes involved in language expression give humans our unique ability to speak?

28 November p.7 Smashing Success

After a year of repairs, the Large Hadron Collider is back in action, looking for the Higgs Boson or god particle. Soon it was accelerating streams of protons to energies of 1.18 teraelectronvolts (TeV). The beams will have collided although no data was collected as the detectors weren't switched on. (see *NS* 5 December p.7)

28 November p.7 Baby immunity

“Breast milk contains stem cells that may help to shape infants' gut and immune systems. One type of stem cell develops into epithelial cells and another into immune cells.”

28 November p.11 Hacked archive provides fodder for climate sceptics

“Climate scientists are reeling this week from the discovery that someone has

hacked into the e-mail archive of one of the most prestigious research centres, the Climate Research Unit (CRU) of the University of East Anglia, UK, custodian of the most respected global temperature record.

“Climate sceptics (note: as opposed to ‘climate scientists’) have gleefully blogged that the e-mails, now widely published on the internet, reveal extensive data manipulation and expose a conspiracy behind global warming research.” *New Scientist* finds that it shows persistent efforts to suppress work by climate sceptics. **“In it, Jones discusses using ‘Mike’s Nature trick’ to ‘hide the decline in temperatures.’** Not that anyone caught out by this year’s white Christmas would find it plausible to blame global warming. The e-mails show that researchers tried to prevent critics gaining access to the CRU’s raw temperature data. **“For instance, an agreement with the UK’s Met Office seen by *New Scientist* limits access to ‘bona fide researchers working on agreed scientific programmes’.”**

[In a later article ‘How our brains build social worlds’, 5 December p.32, the writers opine with all the certainty of the deeply prejudiced: **“But there are also greater possibilities for false models, in the shape of deception, propaganda, or genuinely held but dangerously wrong-headed ideas – creationism, the denial of global warming, take your pick.”**]

5 December p.48 Homosexual selection

“Not long ago, the news was full of reports about two male Humboldt penguins at a zoo in Germany that adopted an egg, hatched it and reared the chick together. It seems like every time you turn around, the media spotlight has fallen on another example of same-sex liaisons in the animal

kingdom.” The article wonders why same-sex behaviour would evolve at all when it runs counter to evolutionary principles. Belgian researchers found that damselflies kept in an all-male group preferred to court other males, **“though this preference could be reversed simply by housing them with females”**. Yet surely these penguins and damselflies are simply enjoying the company of their own kind, whether in a zoo or a lab where they are unnaturally deprived of mates. Male penguins in Antarctica play a vital role in raising a couple’s chicks.

Some creatures avoid accidental same-sex behaviour. Locusts minimise these encounters by releasing large amounts of a pheromone called phenylacetone nitrile to **“prevent same-sex mounting”**.

It takes two albatrosses to raise a single chick. When males are scarce, two female birds who have each laid a fertilised egg will dump one egg and combine their efforts to raise the remaining chick.

The article admits: **“Neither can you necessarily infer anything about sexual orientation from same-sex behaviour... Why would individuals expend time and energy in activities that fail to increase reproductive success?”** Despite this statement, the piece concludes: **“More daringly, could understanding the evolutionary consequences of same-sex interactions in animals help us understand our own evolution?”**

12 December p.11 Lost Amazon forest lays bare ancient civilisation

The felling of trees in the Amazon has revealed hundreds of giant avenues, ditches and enclosures now visible from the air and by satellite. These complex societies pre-date the 15th century arrival of the Spanish and Portuguese. **“The geoglyphs are formed by ditches up to 11 metres wide**

and 1 to 2 metres deep. They range from 90 to 300 metres in diameter and are thought to date from around 2000 years ago up to the 13th century...Many of the structures are oriented to the north, and the team is investigating whether they might have had astronomical significance.” The civilisation that left them are apparently not related to Inca or Nasca cultures.

If theories of human evolution were true, we would not expect to find these advanced cultures springing up all over the world only after the time of the Flood.

12 December p.12 Mega-Flood filled the Med in months

“Eat your heart out, Noah. A flood of biblical proportions filled the present-day Mediterranean Sea in a matter of months...Now a new analysis shows that the bulk of the water arrived in less than two years, pouring down a long, shallow ramp.” Borehole and seismic data reveal the size and extent of the channel carved out rapidly at the Straits of Gibraltar. They talk of tectonic activity over 5my ago.

A creationist explanation would be that following the Flood of the aforementioned chagrined Noah, volcanically heated oceans led to increased evaporation. The loss of the vapour canopy (waters above the firmament in Genesis 1:7) allowed radiation of the earth's heat into space, particularly at the poles. This would have created a build-up of polar ice and consequent lowering of the sea level, isolating the Med. When the ice rapidly melted at the end of the ice age, sea levels rose and land bridges were quickly eroded. The same thing has been found at the Straits of Dover, with deep submarine trenches gouged out by large boulders driven along by fast currents. This possibly happened in the days of Peleg, the fifth generation from Noah ‘for in his

days was the earth divided’ Gen 10:25. (Noah was still living into the time of the Patriarchs.)

The end of 2009 was covered by a bumper edition of *New Scientist*, **19/26 December & 2 January 2010.**

p.3 Science past, science future

“The decade [the ‘noughties’] was perhaps best defined by the ups and downs of Big Science. With the advent of the new millennium, hopes were high that huge undertakings – notably the Human Genome Project [HGP] and the Large Hadron Collider [LHC] – would deliver revolutionary advances in our understanding of ourselves and the cosmos we inhabit. But science rarely delivers what scientists set out to find, and so it turned out.

“The expectation was that the HGP would deliver ‘the book of humanity’, in the shape of 100,000 or so genes that would reveal how our bodies work... In fact the book contains far fewer words than anticipated and is much more difficult to read – but the HGP still opened the door to huge advances in our understanding of human genetics.

“It also hammered home just how complex the workings of genes can be, and the need to understand gene expression [via the previously labelled ‘junk DNA’], RNA and epigenetics as well as the genome itself.”

‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My [the Creator’s] ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts’ (Isaiah 55:9).

“Expectations for the LHC were, if anything, even grander. It would deliver answers to enduring questions such as where mass comes from, how the universe’s building blocks are arranged, and the identity of the mysterious dark

matter that we think makes up 23 per cent of the universe. In the event, of course, the project was plagued by delays, verging on the farcical when it had to be shut down for repairs just days after finally firing up.”

One other bit of Big Science is mentioned in this editorial on the passing decade – “The result is an overwhelming body of evidence that human activities are warming the planet.” So much so that this week’s Christmas rush to travel by road, rail and air was delayed by snow and ice. Global warming throughout the noughties has been all downhill.

p.4 Declare or defend

This short paragraph discusses freedom of information issues over climate change data (see also **28 November p.11** above). A ‘denier’ asked for detailed climate data, but Mann, a Penn University climatologist e-mailed his associate: “**This crowd of charlatans...look for one little thing they can say is wrong, and thus generalise that the science is entirely compromised...Best thing is to ignore them completely.**’ Trenberth disagreed: **‘I don’t think you can ignore it. The response should try to somehow label these guys as lazy and incompetent.’** The director of the Climate Research Unit at University of East Anglia, Tom Wigley e-mailed saying, with hindsight, **“it would have been easier to admit the data’s shortcomings. ‘Why, why, why did you not simply say this right at the start?’”**

So much, then, for the myth that scientists are dispassionately following where the evidence leads. Creationists know this very well.

p.8 DNA’s guardian gene found in placozoans

“A vital gene that defends us against cancer has been found in one of the simplest of animals – placozoans. The finding shows that *p53*, sometimes described as the ‘guardian of the genome’, has been around for over 1 billion years.

“Placozoans’ millimetre-long bodies are just three cells thick and have no muscles, nervous system or organs. Yet they have a version of *p53* that is strikingly similar to ours...

“In humans, the protein it codes for, *p53*, detects and deals with damaged DNA that could trigger cancers. Faulty or inactive copies of the gene greatly increase the chance that a cell will become cancerous.

“However, human and placozoan versions of *p53* share key features, including regions that allow it to attach to DNA and other proteins. This suggests it has interacted with a similar network of partner genes since the dawn of the animal kingdom.”

Creationists interpret this finding as showing that a caring God designed this mechanism to fight cancer in a fallen world. We also note that mutations in this *p53* gene give a *p53* protein that is unable to defend against cancer. Mutations plus natural selection are the means of evolutionary progress, according to neo-Darwinian theory. Rather, design by an intelligent Creator is corrupted by mutations.

p.26 Total recall

Here is a 2 page summary of highlights of the year 2009 as covered by *New Scientist*. Under February it simply reports that **“arguably no other scientist received as many column inches in 2009 as Charles Darwin.”** No surprise there!

In May, under Missing Link we read: **“The fossil skeleton ‘Ida’ is controversially**

claimed to be the common ancestor of all primates. It later turns out to be an ancestor of modern lemurs." Hope springs eternal!

p.29 One minute with Richard Wrangham

This author reckons that discovering how to cook food **"allowed us to lose a third of the large intestine and significantly expand our brain size."** Humans have a gut only 60 per cent of the size it would be if we were one of the great apes. Imagine a group of apes sitting around a camp fire socialising, eating baked beans on toast as their guts got smaller and their hat size increased. Just So, O my best beloved! And they reckon creationist ideas are 'dangerously wrong-headed' (see **5 December p.32**).

p.62 The secret that makes religion

NS points out that it is hard to get away from Christmas rituals at this time of the year. But, **"where would the holidays be without rampant consumerism, drunken partying, over-indulgence and family feuds?"**

But Christian rituals lack the high drama of tribal faiths. Being baptised by immersion isn't as traumatic as scalp biting and fire dancing.

"In recent years, several researchers have developed the idea that religion taps into intuitive ways of thinking. Even as young children we seem predisposed to believe in the supernatural, which probably explains why we develop beliefs in spirits, an afterlife and gods as we get older." The experts' explanation for Christmas is: **"Feel-good annual events tend to be a feature of doctrinal religions... Happy or euphoric experiences are not remembered in the way traumatic ones are, so you can have**

the occasional knees-up to boost motivation without undermining doctrine... Which at this time of year is probably good advice for anyone of any religious persuasion, or indeed none at all."

The significance of Christmas was prophesied way back at the beginning of time (Genesis 3:15) and the promise of the coming Seed of the woman repeated many times in history. Micah's revealing of the location, and Daniel's giving of the time both predate the Septuagint translation and hence also predate the event that they foretold. Supernatural prophecies are not easy to explain. By deliberately ignoring the historical basis of Christmas, these *NS* experts on religion reveal that their own faith is in atheism. On the close of this festive edition (**p.108**), *New Scientist* concludes: **"We wish all our readers an enjoyable holiday break and a happy new year."** However, it is Christmas that divides Time into BC and AD - when the fulness of time was come, God sent... (Gal. 4:4); thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift (2 Cor 9:15).

Quote

"Overwhelmingly strong proofs of intelligent and benevolent design lie around us... the atheistic idea is so non-sensical that I cannot put it into words."

Lord Kelvin [William Thomson]

Erratum

In the December journal the image of Egyptian coins was mistakenly attributed to Dr Bill Cooper. It is a public domain image from the Internet.

Noah's Ark - Circular Arguments

Barely had the annual celebration ended of the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, when the *Guardian* online was questioning the veracity of the biblical account of Noah's ark - even though the Lord himself affirms its reliability by indicating that it is a forerunner of another Judgement yet to come (Matt. 24: 37-39).

The *Guardian's* article (accessed 02 January 2010) discusses a clay tablet with cuneiform writing reckoned to be about 3,700 years old. It was found in the Middle East by Leonard Simmons, a self-educated man with a passion for history which he indulged in during service in the RAF in 1945-1948. The tablet was inherited by his son, Douglas, who has recently arranged for the writing to be translated by Irving Finkel, an expert at the British Museum.

The writing is in ancient Babylonian and tells the story of the Sumerian king, Atram-Hasis, and his family who were saved from the wrath of God by constructing a floating vessel - but made of reeds and circular in shape! This curious

construction is entirely different from the shape and dimensions of the ark as meticulously recorded in the Bible. It would not have survived the huge waves and torrential rain of the Flood, but it is typical of the kind of vessel still made even today for navigating quiet waterways in Iraq (see image below).

According to the article, Finkel claims that the biblical account is a corrupted version of the Babylonian account, which the Jews learnt during their captivity in Babylon and incorporated in the Torah. This viewpoint fails to realize that it is the Babylonian account that is corrupted from an earlier oral history, and that Moses under the inspiration of God countered this corruption by recording the true story.



A guffa, a traditional small circular boat used in Iraq. Made of pomegranate branches and reeds covered in asphalt, guffas may have a diameter of up to five metres. Image: CSM.

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