

The Annual Register and Darwin

Followers of the Darwin 200th year anniversary in 2009 will find a range of fascinating information about the groundbreaking scientist available online. The following search in the online edition under *The Descent of Man* in the *Annual Register Online* allows the user to quickly and easily access contemporary thought about this far-reaching research. Following the publication of *The Descent of Man*, the contemporary reviewer presents an extraordinarily accurate forecast of the impact that this work was likely to have. 'Mr Darwin's work..is one of those rare achievements which effect a transformation through the whole range of intellectual effort. We know..how profound was the influence of Newtonian philosophy over the two or three generations which followed its promulgation; and we may confidently expect that a similar influence will be produced on the generation now beginning its work by Mr. Darwin's theory.' The review of *The Descent of Man* appears in the 'Science' section of the facsimile 1871 edition of *The Annual Register*, available online.

Though Darwin courted controversy during his lifetime, reflections on his funeral in 1882 in *The Annual Register* demonstrate that he was by then firmly accepted by the public and the establishment as a great scientist, 'how thoroughly he had outlived the obloquy of which he had at one time been the object' *The Annual Register* records. 'His funeral..was in the broadest sense a public one, and round his grave were grouped an assemblage such as few warriors or statesmen have ever drawn together, and the recognition of his place amongst Englishmen of all opinions and parties might be traced in the list of the pallbearers.' This obituary appears in full in *The Annual Register Online* April 1882 edition in full-text, and again charts current thinking that is more difficult to access through histories of Darwin's life written subsequently.