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Contributors

Porter, Dorothy, 1953-
Royal Mail Group (Firm)

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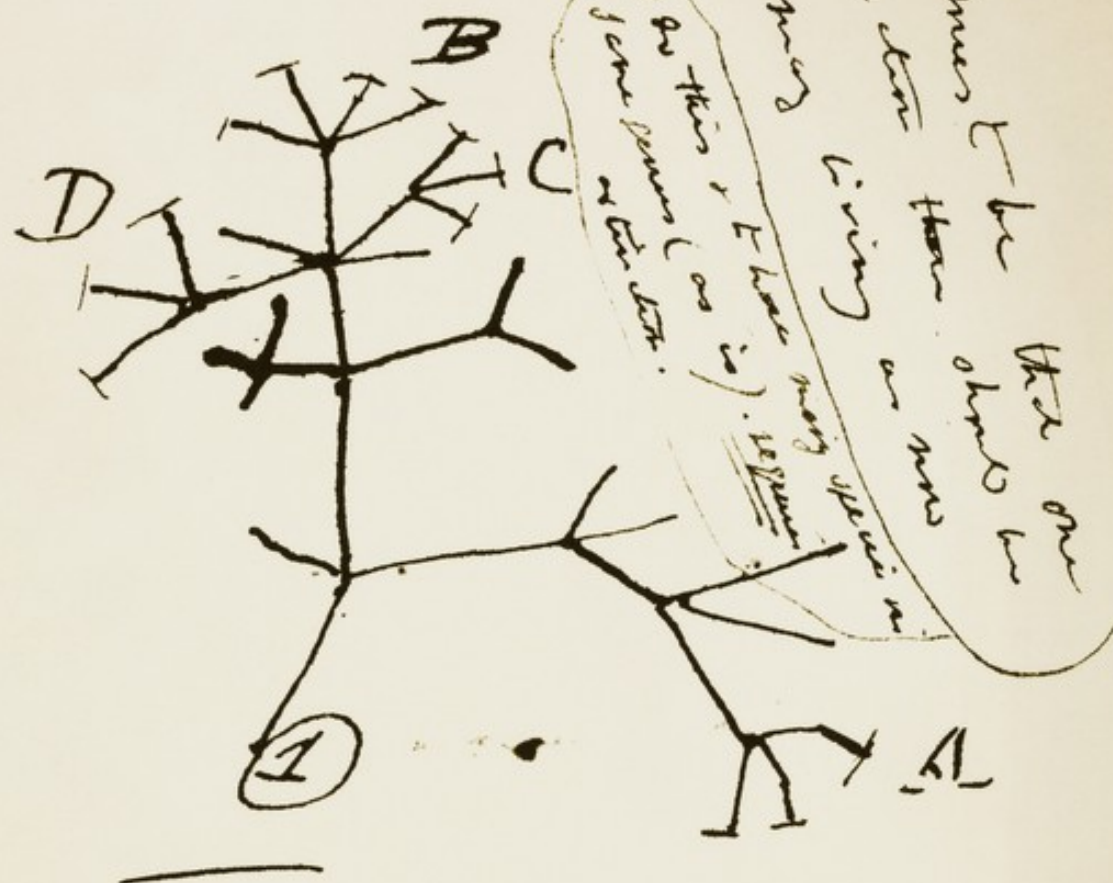
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collection**

Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

DARWIN

I think



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Darwin's Tree of Life

Charles Darwin used the metaphor of the tree of life to communicate the branching mechanism of the evolution of species. This symbolically countered the 18th-century conceptualisation of the order of nature as a linear, teleological 'great chain of being'. A simple tree diagram was the only illustration Darwin included in *The Origin of Species*. It allowed him to show parallel survival and decay of species as ancient boughs with budding evolutionary offspring and withered twigs fallen into the fossil record. Above all, his 'simile', as he termed it, allowed Darwin to illustrate genealogical descent from common ancestry driven by 'fatal competition' and protected habitats.

Darwin's extensive scientific interests are reflected in the diverse range of images featured in the stamps on this cover. His presence on HMS *Beagle's* hydrographic voyage (1831–36) provided him with a unique opportunity to research the flora and fauna across the South American mainland and the Galapagos Islands. There he studied a host of different creatures – from iguanas and giant tortoises, to finches and mockingbirds – and researched the formation of coral atolls. After the birth of his son William, in 1839, Darwin made comparative studies of the facial expressions of the boy and Jenny, an orang-utan from London Zoo. Darwin later turned his attention to the study of orchids.

DARWIN – This cover is available with a choice of either the six Darwin stamps or the Galapagos Islands miniature sheet **Date of issue:** 12 February 2009 **Printer:** De La Rue Security Print, Dunstable LU6 1BJ **Darwin stamps** – **Number of stamps:** six **Design:** hat-trick design **Acknowledgements:** Charles Darwin, finches and bee orchid © 2009, The Natural History Museum, London; Cocos (Keeling) Islands © Karen Willshaw – Undersea Reflections, Cocos (Keeling) Islands; marine iguana © Tui De Roy, Roving Tortoise Nature Photography; orang-utan © Frans Laning/Corbis **Process:** gravure **Format:** landscape **Size:** approx. 35mm x 33mm including jigsaw knob **Perforations:** die-cut **Number per sheet:** 25/50 **Phosphor:** background screen **Gum:** self-adhesive **Galapagos Islands miniature sheet** – **Number of stamps:** four **Design:** Howard Brown **Acknowledgements:** Galapagos Islands map © Crown Copyright. Reproduced by permission of the UK Hydrographic Office; images of the flightless cormorant, giant tortoise, cactus finch, marine iguana and Floreana mockingbird © Tui De Roy, Roving Tortoise Nature Photography **Process:** lithography **Sheet size:** 115mm x 89mm **Stamp size:** 41mm x 30mm **Format:** landscape **Perforations:** 14.5 x 14 **Phosphor:** bars as appropriate **Gum:** PVA **Stamp designs** © Royal Mail Group Ltd 2009 **Cover design:** hat-trick design **Words:** Professor Dorothy Porter **Acknowledgements:** Darwin's 'tree of life' diagram reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library **Cover design** © Royal Mail Group Ltd 2009. Further details about British postage stamps and philatelic facilities may be obtained from: Royal Mail, FREEPOST, Edinburgh EH12 9PE or visit our website: www.royalmail.com/stamps. Royal Mail and the Cruciform are registered Trade Marks of Royal Mail Group Ltd © Royal Mail Group Ltd 2009. All rights reserved.

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