

NETWATCH

edited by MITCH LESLIE

ARCHIVE

Into the Limelight

Most people today know the English naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913) as the second person to conceive of natural selection, forever eclipsed by Charles Darwin. But at this biographical site, Wallace emerges from Darwin's shadow as a pioneer of the field of biogeography, an eloquent essayist, a plucky adventurer, and, overall, one of Britain's foremost Victorian scientists. He also embraced spiritual-

ism, opposed vaccination, and defied Darwin by arguing that natural selection could not explain the complexity of the human mind.

Curator Charles Smith, science librarian at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, presents the story of this complex scientist through a thoughtful bio, contemporary interviews and obituaries, and Wallace's own words. FAQ pages address questions such as whether Darwin conspired to rob Wallace of credit for natural selection, as a few scholars contend. (Maybe, Smith says, but the evidence is paltry.) Along with a huge bibliography of works about Wallace, the site holds more than 100 of his original writings, including the 1858 essay on natural selection that spurred the dithering Darwin to finally publish his own work on the subject.

www.wku.edu/~smithch/home.htm

paper explains the science and intellectual property issues behind the transformation of plants using the *Agrobacterium* system—the first intellectual property hurdle agricultural researchers need to clear.

www.cambialP.org

LINKS

All About Earth

Want to find out how global warming might affect the climate of your state? Or how many earthquakes rattled Earth today? Try this handy roundup of earth science and physical geography links. Mark Francek of Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant began compiling the list in 1997 to give his students a single source of high-quality sites. Francek organized the more than 700 annotated links in the order that the topics are normally covered in introductory earth science classes, and he adds three or four new sites a week. Among the scores of categories are climate and weather, glaciers, plate tectonics and

earthquakes, oceanography, water pollution, mapping, vegetation distribution, and energy.

personal.cmich.edu/~Franc1m/homepage.htm

TOOLS

Ag Patent Primer

Agricultural biotechnology researchers venturing into the ocean of patent databases now have a new navigational tool. An Australian nonprofit group called CAMBIA has launched a site that provides free and friendly access to agricultural patents from three major world databases: the European Patent Office, international patent applications provided under the Patent Cooperation Treaty, and the U.S. Patent Office. The site also offers some helpful information for novices, such as a tutorial on how to read a patent. And a white

FIELD TRIP

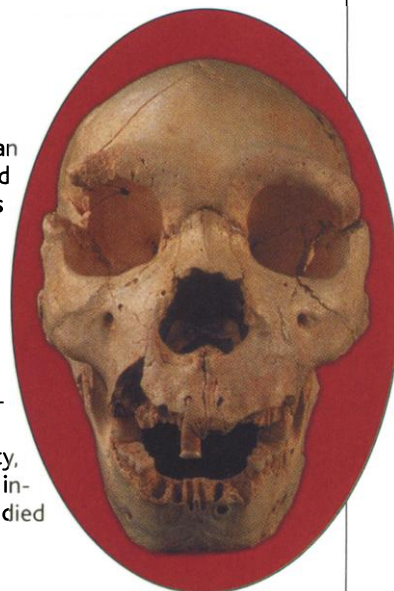
A Cave With a View

In 1994 archaeological digs on the hill of Atapuerca in northern Spain revealed a possible new human species, *Homo antecessor*, that some scientists argue is the common ancestor of modern humans and Neandertals (*Science*, 30 May 1997, p. 1331). Learn more about the Atapuerca excavations and this provocative find at the new English version of a Web site sponsored by the Universidad Complutense de Madrid in Spain.

Since 1978, three locations at Atapuerca have yielded a wealth of tools and thousands of animal and human bones spanning more than half a million years. Along with background text, the Web site's 1400 pages feature some nifty multimedia—including panoramic views that transport you to Atapuerca and three-dimensional reconstructions of fossils. More than 20 film clips let you scramble into caves with the researchers and highlight finds such as this rare complete skull of the 300,000-year-old *H. heidelbergensis* (right), the species that may have given rise to the Neandertals.

The bones tell some juicy tales, suggesting that life for these early Europeans was sometimes nasty, brutish, and short. Cut marks on some 800,000-year-old *H. antecessor* bones found in one cave, for instance, show that the inhabitants were feasting on human flesh. And the individual at the right, who died from an infection that spread from the teeth, had survived 13 solid blows to the head.

www.ucm.es/info/paleo/ata/english



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