

G.B.'s Darwins Fossils Identified

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by David A. Detrich

George Rohrer and I independently sought definitive identification of the fossils on the Great Britain 19p Charles Darwin issue. (February 10, 1982, Scott No. 968) George contacted the Design Division of the British Post Office. With the assistance of the British Post Office, I contacted David Gentleman, the set's designer. We received slightly different but complementary information. To this George has added some additional comments. I have combined these below.

On the left of the stamp is shown *Australopithecus boisei* (or *Zinjanthropus boisei*). The latter term was given to the skull by Louis Leakey after Mary, his wife, had discovered the fragments in Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania in 1959. The former term is the more acceptable today.

George indicated that this representation of the 1.7 million year old skull is "very strange looking" to him. In part this may result from the fact that Gentleman did not work directly from the skull but from photographs in such places as the Natural History Museum, London. These did include the original record pictures.

The skull on the right is Rhodesian Man from the Broken Hill mine in Zambia. The British correspondence places the age at about 100,000 years for this skull. George indicates that Loring Brace dates it to about 130,000 years. There is general agreement that this represents a transition between *Homo erectus* and *homo sapiens neanderthalensis*. In this representation Gentleman worked directly from the skull which is in the Natural History Museum, London.

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