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Students tread in Darwin's footsteps

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Three students from the University of Greenwich at Medway are off to Australia to participate in an exciting project to celebrate Charles Darwin and use his science to tackle today's environmental challenges.

The three are studying the university's MSc in Environmental Conservation and do much of their research at Downe in Kent, where Darwin lived and carried out his daily studies for 40 years.



Senior lecturer Debbie Bartlett says: "Our students are incredibly lucky because we are the university closest to Darwin's Landscape Laboratory - the site around Downe which is the UK's nominated World Heritage Site for decision in 2010.

"They are carrying out research in the same woods and fields which is helping us understand how climate change is affecting the land and wildlife, and what farming and forestry techniques will best preserve them for future generations."

Now the students, along with representatives from the university and Darwin's Landscape Laboratory, will join fellow conservationists from Charles Darwin University and the World Heritage Site of Kakadu National Park, Australia in September to share their knowledge.

While in Australia the team will

- participate in the Charles Darwin Symposium and the International Evolution and Biodiversity workshops (<http://www.cdu.edu.au/cdss2009/>) (<http://www.evolutionbiodiversity2009.org/>),
- Visit Litchfield and Kakadu National Parks to meet with National Park's managers and indigenous rangers, to learn about the landscape and heritage management of these sites
- participate in research and environmental education workshops with Charles Darwin University staff and students from the School of Environmental and Life Sciences, the School of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, the United Nations University Centre of Traditional Knowledge at Charles Darwin University and the Northern Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance:

Aimee Jones of the World Heritage Team, Darwin's Landscape Laboratory, says: "I am pleased the students value the importance of the local heritage of Darwin's Landscape Laboratory. The research and the work they are participating in will showcase it to international audiences and contribute to its value and importance for future generations."

Debbie Bartlett adds: "This will be a really worthwhile educational experience, widening experience of protected area management and leading to long term collaborations between the London Borough of Bromley's Darwin's Landscape Laboratory, the University of Greenwich and Charles Darwin University, Australia." The project has been

funded by the British Council with a £20K grant awarded as part of the Darwin Now Network.

ends

Photo caption:

Left to right – Dhaval Patel, Jenny Wallace and Nainesh Patel, students at the University of Greenwich tread in Darwin's footsteps

Notes for editors

1. The Environmental Conservation MSc programme at the University of Greenwich attracts students from across the world and focuses on developing professional skills. For more information go to: <http://www.gre.ac.uk/courses/pg/ees/envcons>
2. The MSc is just one of many undergraduate and postgraduate courses taught in the School of Science at the University of Greenwich at Medway. For more information go to: <http://www.gre.ac.uk/schools/science>
3. Darwin's Landscape Laboratory, situated in the London Borough of Bromley, is the 7km² landscape surrounding Charles Darwin's home. This year, 2009, celebrates the bicentenary of Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his seminal work, 'On the Origin of Species'. For more info see: www.darwinatdowne.co.uk

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