



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust



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A Tangled Bank

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Posted: Monday 29th June 2015 by [30DaysWild2015](#)



A reflection on 30 Days Wild on my penultimate blog entry.

A Tangled Bank

I remember sitting in Primary School listening to a 'Schools' Broadcast' (Anyone else remember those?), more interesting than the usual ones, this was about Earth's history. A 'reporter' went back in time, cue swooshing and eerie noises, and ended up on the swampy banks of a river watching fish crawl out and grow legs. The image has stayed with me but it must have been the worst introduction to evolutionary ideas ever! It certainly put me off and I dismissed the idea for the rest of my childhood. Until, at exactly the right moment in my education, probably 17 years old, my fabulous biology teacher, John Taylor, explained the process clearly and in stages exactly like Charles Darwin's book: *On the Origin of Species* did. To me it was a revelation, it was all so obvious and tied together so many other aspects of biology. I am a firm believer of leaving teaching certain things until the mind is ready to receive them.

Charles Darwin finished the first edition of his book with the following piece of writing. I've always found it inspiring, the theory adds to the wonder of the natural world and makes me think about all the connections so thoroughly evolved and so easy for us to damage. I've been thinking a lot about this sort of thing over the last 29 days. The discipline of having to do this blog every day has certainly focussed my mind on how much the natural world has to give us and how precious it is. We must fight to preserve it because, unfortunately we have developed to a stage

It is interesting to contemplate a tangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent upon each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us.



These laws, taken in the largest sense, being Growth with reproduction; Inheritance which is almost implied by reproduction; Variability from the indirect and direct action of the conditions of life, and from use and disuse; a Ratio of Increase so high as to lead to a Struggle for Life, and as a consequence to Natural Selection, entailing Divergence of Character and the Extinction of less improved forms. Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone circling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved."



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