



Press release

A gateway to science in Darwin Centre's awe-inspiring entrance hall

In the Darwin's Centre's breathtaking entrance hall, an architecturally inspirational space, visitors can orientate themselves, plan their visit and start to experience some of the cutting-edge science going on around them.

An enormous, airy space full of light, the hall is dominated by the towering cocoon. This curved concrete structure, hand-finished in polished plaster, rises up eight storeys, is 60 metres long, 12 metres wide, 30 centimetres thick and houses the precious botany and entomology collections. On the lower ground level, niches in the cocoon allow visitors to see some of the collections through four-centimetre-thick, fire- and pest-proof glass windows. Rows of sealed, steeled cupboards are housed across five floors of the cocoon, housing 20 million plant and insect specimens in a safe, controlled environment.

Climate Change Wall

An unmissable 12 metre interactive wall of screens displaying films and interactive graphics spotlights Earth's changing climate and how Museum research informs global efforts to understand that change. When visitors approach the wall, sensors respond to their presence with a dramatic transformation of colour, light and sound, encouraging them to reach out and start exploring on-screen case study films.

Case studies include the impact climate change is currently having on British dragonfly distribution and the potential this has for new migrant species from southern Europe alongside research into the extinction of woolly mammoths 10,000 years ago and how this casts relevance on the threat to arctic species today. Visitors will leave the display understanding how they can make changes in their own life and help protect the natural world around them.

NaturePlus

Visitors can continue exploring *Cocoon* and be inspired by its science using a free NaturePlus card. Barcode technology will enable the public to save video clips, images and weblinks throughout their *Cocoon* journey and access them online at home or in the classroom. The NaturePlus area of the Museum's website gives visitors a personalised area to explore their collected content as well as special bonus features, participate in forums and blogs and receive RSS feeds for news, along with updates, events, citizen science surveys and exclusive offers.



department for
culture, media
and sport

From the ground floor, visitors can catch the glass lift to *Cocoon*, the new multi-media public space deep within the heart of the scientists' world. Travelling up through seven storeys of the glass building, the journey to the top of the cocoon starts with dramatic views of the Museum grounds and Wildlife Garden outside.

Visitor information

Dates:	open from 15 September 2009
Opening times:	every day, 10.00–17.50 (last admission 17.30)
Visitor enquiries:	020 7942 5000
Admission:	free
Nearest tube:	South Kensington
Website:	www.nhm.ac.uk

Ends

Notes for editors

- Major supporters of the second phase of the Darwin Centre include the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Wellcome Trust, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Cadogan family, Professor Anthony and Mrs Angela Marmont, GlaxoSmithKline plc, the Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation, the Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation, the Wolfson Foundation and Anglo American plc.
- Selected by *Time Out* in 2007 as one of the Seven Wonders of London, the Natural History Museum is also a world-leading science research centre. Through its collections and scientific expertise, the Museum is helping to protect the extraordinary richness and diversity of the natural world with groundbreaking projects in 68 countries.

For more information and images, please contact the Natural History Museum Press Office:

Tel: 020 7942 5654 email: press@nhm.ac.uk (not for publication)