



THE FAMILY IN QUESTION
THE WEDGWOOD-DARWINS
WEDNESDAY 10 DECEMBER OR THURSDAY 18 DECEMBER

The Wedgwood-Darwin family are two interrelated English families, descended from the prominent 18th century doctor, Erasmus Darwin, and Josiah Wedgwood, the founder of Josiah Wedgwood and Sons. Starting his pottery business with a sizeable dowry from marriage to a remote Wedgwood cousin, Josiah was aided by the lease from other relations of Ivy House in Burslem, Staffordshire complete with factory and workhouses. Within four years he impressed the British Queen consort Charlotte Mecklenburg-Strelitz, marketed 'Queen's Ware' throughout Europe and moved his family and factory to a substantial estate of 350 acres next to the 93.5 mile Trent and Mersey Canal. In 1780 Josiah turned to his friend Erasmus Darwin for help in running the business. Erasmus Darwin and Josiah Wedgwood first met because of their common interest in science- both were members of the Lunar Society, a dining club and informal learned society of prominent industrialists and intellectuals in Birmingham who met regularly. Josiah's eldest daughter later married Erasmus's son Robert. Robert's inheritance of Josiah's money enabled him to fund his son Charles Darwin's chosen vocation in natural history. Charles Darwin went on to marry another Wedgwood – Emma, Josiah's granddaughter. Subsequently, Emma's double-barrelled inheritance of Josiah's money permitted Charles Darwin the time and resources to formulate his theory of evolution. The family contained at least ten Fellows of the Royal Society, several artists, poets and the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams.

MEET 10:30 am coffee for 11 am lecture at the Art Workers' Guild
ENDS 3:30 pm at the Art Workers' Guild
COST £85 members, £95 non-members, including coffee, light lunch with wine