



ANNUAL LECTURE

# HOMO SAPIENS AND THE NEANDERTHALS

Professor Chris Stringer FRS

Research Leader in Human Origins, Department of  
Palaeontology, The Natural History Museum, London

**The Linnean Society,  
Burlington House, Piccadilly, London**

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007, 6pm  
(following AGM at 5pm)

**The meeting is open to visitors  
Wine will be served after the lecture to members and guests**

**Abstract:**

The nature of the relationship between Neanderthals and modern humans has been a focus of debate for 150 years. While many workers accept that Neanderthals represented a distinct species *H. neanderthalensis*, there is still much disagreement over the reasons for their disappearance and the part played by our species in this event. Explanations have ranged widely from suggestions of disease or warfare through to economic competition from early modern humans, and even climate change has now been proposed as a significant factor. However, despite the continuing focus on events in western Europe 35,000 years ago, this was only the endpoint of much longer and more widespread potential overlap between the evolving Neanderthal and sapiens lineages. With increasing data and the imminent arrival of a complete Neanderthal genome, we may finally be close to an understanding of our relationship to these enigmatic relatives.