

# MYSTERIES OF THE TINY PEOPLE – MORE ON HOMO FLORESIENSIS

When I was studying anthropology at Cambridge back in the late 70s, Alan Bilsborough, my academic advisor, got me to buy a children's book on human evolution – Bernard Wood's "Evolution of Early Man". Not an undergrad's text book. Reason – it was the most up-to-date account of a field that changed almost by the month, because a new find of a fossil human could have a tremendous impact on our understanding of even the broad shape of human evolution.

I explained in my reaction to the discovery of the hobbit hominid homo floresiensis (nb not *floresensis*) [blog link] why I do not think this is such a discovery. My understanding is that we should expect not a single phylogenetic line of human species leading to the present, but many different hominid species through most of our evolution.

Still, this doesn't detract from the fascination of these remains on a remote Indonesian island. Were they descendants of an Asian species of Homo Erectus, or much more closely related to us? And what of the small brain size? Because they seem to have been quite smart, though I have had some difficulty finding detailed evidence for this (early days I suppose). These points of debate are well covered in an article from the New York Times and also at Technology News.