

u3a Talk, 8 January 2026 (note 2nd Thursday)

**Captain Robert FitzRoy, Charles Darwin and the Voyages
HMS Beagle**

Dr. James Taylor, FRSA

Robert FitzRoy commanded HMS Beagle on two remarkable voyages and for the second (the main focus of the talk) Charles Darwin served as his gentleman companion and naturalist. The evidence that Darwin collected led to the publication of *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. FitzRoy paid for two artists, Augustus Earle and Conrad Martens, to paint the people and places encountered, and these images underpin the subsequent seafaring stories. 2026 marks the 200th anniversary of the first voyage of the Beagle.

The speaker Dr James Taylor is a former curator of pictures at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich and author of *The Voyage of the Beagle – Darwin's extraordinary adventure aboard FitzRoy's famous survey ship* published in 2008.