**Transcript**

***Dr Andy Herries – Dating Our Earliest Ancestors***

I’m a paleoanthropologist and geoarcheologist which basically means I study ancient human species. So, I spend a lot of my time wandering around Africa digging holes in caves and trying to understand about the diversity of past human species. Today there’s only one of us but in the past there was multiple species and trying to understand a little bit about how those species reacted to changes in climate and how they made stone tools to adapt to those changes through time.

Well, the most difficult thing for us is really getting high resolution sequences so where we can actually directly correlate archaeology with changes in climate as well as other processes such as my particular interest is changes in the Earth’s magnetic field. Every now and then it reverses by 180 degrees and we don’t really know what happens during these reversals but we can use them because we know when a lot of them are to actually date archaeological deposits and fossils.

Well, it’s we’re actually a lot of the data suggest that there will be another geomagnetic field reversal within the next sort of 2000 years so it’s not going to impact us imminently but it would be really good to know exactly what happens during these things. How does climate change? How does vegetation change? Do we see discreet links to speciation? So the creation of species or the extinction of species during these events. Should we be worried about it? They don’t happen instantaneously. They take thousands of years but they’re still likely to have major impact on climate, animals and us.