

# Friends of the South African Museum

A component of the Iziko Museums of Cape Town

**Postal address:** P O Box 61 Cape Town 8000 South Africa

**Physical address:** 25 Queen Victoria Street Cape Town South Africa

**Phone:** 021 481 3913 **Fax:** 021 481 3993 **Cell:** 072 225 6893 **e-mail:** [samfriends@iziko.org.za](mailto:samfriends@iziko.org.za)

## NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2006

As we reach the mid point of 2006 we can look back on a number of successful activities and look forward to many more interesting events for you to enjoy in 2006 – read on and see what the Friends have been doing and what you can still enjoy in the months to come.

### **OVERBERG TEST RANGE** near Arniston 12–14 May 2006. Bryan Williams reports .....

The Overberg Test Range (OTB) is an easy two and a half hours drive from Cape Town and the Friends were privileged to have been allowed into this area for the weekend. The Herberg's accommodation was good and their cuisine excellent. After dinner on Friday, Ferdie Pieterse, gave an interesting presentation on the Test Range's history, its arms testing activities and its rehabilitation and management of the natural environment.

On Saturday, the group visited the ghost villages of Ryspunt and Skipskop, from where we explored the coastline with its plethora of flotsam, Khoisan fish traps and a shipwreck. Graham & Margaret Avery gave field lectures on archaeology and natural history, and Graham's evening lecture on the area's archaeology was very informative.

Sunday morning was spent in the eastern area close to De Hoop. Graham felt certain middens were unimportant archaeologically, but a beaked whale carcass, a coconut & paper nautilus shells were a bonus. The OTB has prolific wildlife. There were numerous sightings of eland, bontebok, mountain zebra, springbuck and birds.

Our thanks to Richard Borden, Maarten Mauve, Graham Avery & others for organising this rewarding outing. This trip should become an annual event, especially in spring.

### **DISCOVERING THE TANQUA KAROO WITH DR JOHN ALMOND** 16–18 and 23–25 June 2006

The unusually wet and green Tanqua Karoo provided a new and interesting experience for two separate groups of Friends in June. Situated between the Cederberg mountain range and the Roggeveld Escarpment west of Sutherland it is not an area visited by many people, but it proved a popular destination for forty of our members: Waterfalls, mountains, flat rocky Karoo landscape, crystal clear rivers, dramatic starry skies and much, much more all added to that special Karoo magic. Who could have imagined it would be necessary to cross two rivers in flood in this normally dry desert region?

Led by the always popular Dr John Almond members discovered convincing evidence of glacial activity originating three hundred million years ago and including an impressive boulder bed along with a number of rocks bearing distinct striations left by glacial movement. The contrast of finding fossil specimens of a primitive land plant, *Haplostigma irregularis*, and stromatolites amongst the fresh new flowers emerging after the recent heavy rains was AMAZING. A magnificent example of banded ironstone attracted much interest as did frequent evidence of San occupation in the stone tools scattered in the veld. The recent heavy rains have turned the normally dry and empty Tanqua into a wonderland of green grasses, *Heliophila*, *Tritonia*, yellow daisies, ice plants and bulb plants with corkscrew leaves. In a drier area there were a number of specimens of *Hoodia*, the cactus-like plant which has been used for centuries by the San to stave off hunger and thirst on long hunting trips and is currently undergoing scientific research as a possible natural appetite suppressant resulting in, hopefully, a benefit-sharing agreement between the San and commercial growers. The Karoo provides an endless source of fascination and wonder and it is a real privilege to be able to explore it frequently and discover new treasures each time. A special thanks to Dr John Almond for his meticulously planned and presented trips such as these.

**FORTHCOMING LECTURES:** All lectures take place on the last Tuesday of each month at **19:00** in the T H Barry Lecture Theatre at the South African Museum and booking is not necessary unless otherwise advertised. Lectures are free for members and guests pay R20,00. A donation towards the drinks provided would be appreciated.

**Tuesday 25 July 2006**

**Speaker: Quinton Martins from the Cape Leopard Trust**

**The Leopard: Conservation and Ecology of the Cape's apex predator**

The leopard currently fills the role of apex predator in the Cederberg and the rest of the Western Cape. However, its conservation status remains uncertain. The current work of the Cape Leopard Trust includes several research projects involving leopards in the Cape and elsewhere in South Africa, including a comprehensive conservation genetics project on leopards from across South Africa. In addition there is a leopard population density study being conducted in the Cederberg and an on-going Population and Habitat Viability Assessment for leopards throughout South Africa. The CLT has recently initiated a fourth research project entitled: "Determining the home-range and behaviour of leopards with the use of satellite tracking equipment in the Mountains of the Western Cape".

**Tuesday 29 August 2006**

**Speaker: Prof. Pippa Skotnes**

**People are different: The legacy of Bleek and Lloyd**

In the 1870s and 1880s Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd assembled an archive of narratives given by !xam and !kun men, women and children. Many were prisoners at the Breakwater Convict Station and most were part of communities that were disintegrating as a result of poverty, dispossession and colonial oppression. For more than 100 years the archive lay in obscurity, all but forgotten, the notebooks thought to be lost. By the 1990s almost no one had heard of Bleek and Lloyd and the people who told them their stories. Ten years after the first democratic elections, however, the language of the !xam articulates our new South Africa's mottos and the archive supports an industry of books and articles, poetic pieces and performances. It is recognised as a United Nations site of the Memory of the World. So how and why did this archive emerge from pre-democracy obscurity to become a global treasure and the source for the country's new motto - its extinct language embodying the hopes of all South Africans - and what does this mean for the Bushmen or San of South Africa today? This talk will look at the legacy of Bleek and Lloyd.

**Tuesday 26 September 2006**

**Speaker: Prof. Trevor Gaunt**

**Electric power systems - confidence, confusion and concerns.**

Trevor Gaunt is a professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering at UCT. His specialisation is in power systems: He has over 30 years experience in this field in several countries. He has expressed concerns about the state of electricity supply in South Africa, and he will discuss some aspects of the electricity industry and its achievements, problems and future.

**DAY TRIPS**

**Saturday 22 July 2006**

**Huguenot Tunnel**

Many people are not aware that when the Huguenot Tunnel project was instigated, provision was made for a second tunnel to be built parallel to the one we now use. Members have the opportunity to go behind-the-scenes and discover the complexities of building the tunnel, the history of the project and the economic implications. Visit the control centre as well as the second tunnel which is nearing completion.

**Cost: Members only – R75.00**

**Wednesday 6 September 2006**

**Groote Schuur Estate**

Join the curator, Alta Kriel, as she shares her love for this historic home and the artworks, furniture and old silver collections it contains. Listen to stories of some of the characters who have occupied the residence and enjoy tea on the verandah with vistas stretching across the gardens and up towards the mountain.

**Numbers strictly limited to 20 participants**

**Cost: Members – R50,00 Non-members: R65,00**

## Saturday 14 October 2006

### Paarl Nature Reserve, Paarl and Bretagne Rock and the Taal Monument

Join Dr Herbie Klinger and explore the history and geology of these sites. Learn about the history and architecture of the Taal Monument and the nearby amphitheatre from a local guide and visit the indigenous garden. The energetic and adventurous will have the opportunity to climb Bretagne rock using the chains provided along the route or simply enjoy your picnic (bring your own) in the nature reserve.

**Cost:** Members: R85.00 Non-members: R100.00

**Bookings for all day trips will only be secured once payment has been received**

## OUTINGS IN 2006

**OVERBERG TESTING RANGE (A repeat): 11-13 August 2006** A repeat of this popular trip has been arranged for all those who were unable to get a place on the first trip. Members already on the waiting list will be given preference. There will be a shift in focus this time as hopefully the veld will be at its prime and the group should be able to see Strandveld fynbos, limestone fynbos and historic floodplain areas, giving every one a good idea on the different types of vegetation found in a "relatively small" area. All areas should be good birding sites with larks and sunbirds dominating the fynbos areas. .

**Cost:** Members – R 975,00 Non-members – R 1 120,00.

This includes 2 nights accommodation, two dinners and two breakfasts only – lunch is not included.

### WEST COAST AMBLE: 19–21 September 2006.

Join Elmara Willis and discover the best kept secrets of the West Coast as she shares her love of this often overlooked area. This is a mid week excursion for all those who are able to take time out during the week. The group will explore a bit of the West Coast virtually on our doorstep and discover the charm of an "empty and boring, desolate area", with the aim of enticing you to go back there again and again. From Cape Town we drive all along the coast, popping in here and there to look, photograph and explore. We overnight in Velddrift by the river and go for walks, look at birds, the sea and salt. Visit St Helena Bay, Paternoster, Tietiesbaai, a lighthouse, Saldanha and Langebaan. Enjoy long walks, eat fabulous seafood, drink local wines and do what we are good at doing – having fun!

**Cost:** Members – R720.00 Non-members – R870.00

This includes accommodation at the Riviera apartments and dinner each night at a local restaurant. .

### CEDERBERG NATURAL HISTORY LONG WEEKEND WITH DR JOHN ALMOND: 22–25 September 2006

This long weekend trip for broad-minded nature-lovers will be based in the eastern Cederberg at Mount Ceder, with its spectacular setting of mountains and river. Shared accommodation is provided in well-appointed, self-catering chalets. Participants provide all their own meals. The programme will involve an eclectic mixture of geology, palaeontology, landscape evolution, and vegetation, introduced through veld walks and *al fresco* talks at sites of interest *en route*. The Cederberg has enjoyed good rains this year, after several years of drought, so the vegetation should be in good form (Please note, however, that this is *not* a spring flower tour!). This is a three-day, three-night excursion, starting at 11h00 on the Friday and finishing after lunch on Monday afternoon. Time will be set aside to relax at Mount Ceder, and sundowner opportunities are on the plan. Although *no* strenuous walks are involved, all participants *must* be sufficiently fit and experienced to walk in rocky terrain (with some uphill sections) for several hours to complete the full programme. High clearance vehicles are recommended, but are not a pre-requisite.

**Cost:** Members – R980.00 Non-members – R1 100.00 this includes three nights accommodation only

**Bookings for all trips will only be secured once a 50% non-refundable deposit has been received.**

**WELCOME TO ALL NEW MEMBERS:** It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members who have joined this year – we look forward to meeting you at activities during the year.

Rayda Becker  
Joe Brenner (USA)  
Anne Carter  
Anne Creasey  
JCMD du Plessis  
Stephen Eyden  
Graham & Merle Futter

Fred Hearn (USA)  
Willem Hefer  
Anne Kleu  
John & Lucille Levin  
Adré Marshall  
Wendy Morkel  
Siphon Ndabambi

Fairuz Parker-Jardine  
Bernd & Ariane Rohloff  
Karin Stephen  
Caroline & Stephen Voget  
Pieter Voorhoeve  
Krystyna Waligora  
Murray & Colleen Wilson

Maxine Davies  
Editor – Newsletter  
Friends of the South African Museum

**Include:**

- 1. Notice of AGM**
- 2. Nomination form**
- 3. Motivation to join committee**