

Friends of Iziko South African Museum

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NEWSLETTER – JULY 2008

Now that mid-winter is making its presence felt we hope you will find the activities offered here appealing and join us in the coming months.

LECTURES

Tuesday 29 July

Topic: *Songs of the veld and other poems*

Speaker: Martiens van Bart

Time: 18:30 for 19:00

Martiens will share with you a recently discovered anthology, *Songs of the veld and other poems*, containing anti-war poetry by six English speaking South African intellectuals C Louis Leipold, Betty Molteno, Alice Greene, Anna Purcell, Albert Cartwright and Friedrich Carl Kolbe. These poems were smuggled out of the country and published anonymously in England to protect the poets from being prosecuted in accordance with the martial law of the time. Widespread interest led to an anthology of these poems, *Songs of the veld and other poems*, being published in 1902. The anthology was banned in South Africa and till today never reprinted.

Tuesday 26 August

Topic: *Options for renewable energy in South Africa*

Speaker: Prof. Wikus van Niekerk, Stellenbosch University

Time: 18:30 for 19:00

In this talk the various sources of renewable energy available in South Africa for the generation of electricity and the technology to convert it will be explored. The major barriers to the use of renewable energy in South Africa will be highlighted as well as future research relevant in the South African context.

Tuesday 30 September

Topic: *The building stones of Cape Town*

Speaker: Dr Douglas Cole, Council for GeoScience

Time: 18:30 for 19:00

The buildings of Cape Town contain a variety of building stones, which display several geological features, such as minerals and sedimentary structure. Only local stones, Malmesbury Group hornfels, Cape porphyritic granite and Table Mountain quartzitic sandstone were used before 1870, and several of the original quarries can still be seen. Between about 1870 and 1905 limited quantities of limestone from Saldanha and England and granite from Aberdeen, Scotland were transported to Cape Town for use in several buildings, some of which still survive. From 1890 onwards a medium-grained granite of the Cape Granite Suite known as Paarl Grey in the Stone Trade, was exploited from quarries west of Paarl and used extensively in Cape Town. In the remaining period up until the present the source of building stone has widened considerably, being derived from both South Africa and abroad. A total of 45 different stones are now present in the buildings of central Cape Town.

THE BUILDING STONES OF CAPE TOWN – A GEOLOGICAL WALKING TOUR: Saturday 4 October

Dr Douglas Cole will lead a walk around central Cape Town to see examples of the building stones spoken about in his lecture. We recommend that you attend the lecture if you are interested in joining this walk.

The buildings of central Cape Town contain a variety of building stones in which the mineralogy, texture and, in some of the sedimentary rocks, the sedimentary structure can be examined. This walking tour includes the Castle of Good Hope where the local Malmesbury Group hornfels will be seen, the City Hall, which is built of Bath Stone, a beige oolitic limestone from Bath, England. Continuing north along Adderley Street towards St

George's Cathedral, we will see several rock types, including greyish-black iridescent larvikite that only occurs at Larvik on the shores of Oslo Fjord, and a prominent granite named Swedish Imperial Red Granite in columns outside the Pearnies Building. This cathedral is built of local Table Mountain sandstone and some of the street tiles consist of slabs of Malmesbury Group slate with siltstone beds displaying sedimentary structures taken from Robben Island. The Bishop Gray Monument opposite the cathedral is composed of several interesting stones from the United Kingdom and South Africa. Along St George's Mall we will see several South African and foreign stones including conspicuous granites from Finland named Balmoral Red at the Waldorf Arcade, and from Spain named Rosa Porrino at the Woolworths building. The final stretch is along the Heerengracht to the Bartolomeu Dias statue at four sites; we will see a nepheline syenite quarried at Hammanskraal near Pretoria, an attractive red granite from the Bushveld Complex north of Pretoria named African Red at the Standard Bank Centre and the local light grey porphyritic Cape granite at the Bartolomeu Dias statue. This walking tour should take about four hours.

Time: 09:00
Cost: R50.00

BOOKING AND PAYMENT IN ADVANCE IS ESSENTIAL

Tuesday 28 October

Topic: *Back to the future – a sobering reality for the rainbow nation*

Speaker: Clem Sunter

Time: 18:30 for 19:00.

Venue: Whale Well, Iziko South African Museum

The world in which we live is constantly evolving and yet within this, evolution history seems to be repeating itself. This paradox has been driven by our continued use of history as a source of experience to improve ourselves, but also by our remarkable refusal at times to learn from it. Interestingly, our world has remained relatively predictable in one aspect for the last few centuries. The West has been the dominant force in global politics and economics – a veritable superpower apart from the former Soviet Union. Clem Sunter will discuss how the game has changed dramatically in the last three decades, with the emergence of new, and highly influential, players answering to different rules, while tilting the global playing field their way. Join the Friends when we host this popular speaker as he highlights a sobering reality for our rainbow nation.

Cost: Members – R20.00 Non-members – R30.00

LECTURE PROGRAMME FOR 2008: Lectures are scheduled for the last Tuesday of each month from February to November and take place in the T H Barry Lecture Theatre at 19:00 unless otherwise stated. Lectures are free to members on presentation of a current membership card and non-members pay R20.00. Come early and join the committee and members for a glass of sherry.

DAY TRIPS

TIMBUKTU SCRIPT AND SCHOLARSHIP: Saturday 9 August at 11:00

The long-awaited exhibition of the Timbuktu Manuscripts has arrived and the Friends of Iziko South African Museum are privileged to be offered the first option of a guided tour of the exhibition by Lindsay Hooper, a member of the exhibition team. The exhibition is to be in the Granary at the Castle of Good Hope and because of the limited space available and the fragility of the manuscripts numbers will be **strictly limited**.

Cost: Members – R50.00 Non-members – R60.00

INTAKA ISLAND REVISITED: Saturday 27 September at 09:30

Spend an interesting morning with Philke Cakebread discovering the many bird species and indigenous plants in the tranquility of this natural oasis close to the City Bowl. See how a working wetland can exist in harmony with the largest shopping and entertainment complex in Africa. Walk around the ephemeral pans that are associated with sand plain fynbos typical of the Cape Flats of 200s year ago. Bring binoculars and your own picnic lunch to enjoy in one of the two bird hides. Limited to twenty-four participants.

Cost: Members R60.00 Non-members R80.00

FIELD TRIPS

ANGLO-BOER WAR HISTORIC TOUR: 16–17 August 2008

Following the lecture on 29 July a weekend trip has been planned by committee member, John Taylor, and will be lead by Michael Rice. We will visit historic sites beginning with the Smuts Museum outside Riebeeck West and continue on to overnight in Matjiesfontein, returning via Paarl to visit the Cape Rebels monument on Sunday afternoon. Full details are available from the Friends office.

Cost: Members – R960.00 Non-members – R1 150.00 Single supplement – R330.00
Included: Dinner, bed and breakfast at Matjiesfontein.

AARDVARK NATURE RESERVE: 17–19 October 2008

Aardvark Nature Reserve is situated in the Succulent Karoo, a desert biome with the highest diversity of succulent plants in the world. Unique geological processes folded the Earth to create a remarkable mountain range. Over 180 bird species are represented here. Apart from being taught how to recognise the tracks of diverse animals, you will learn about the traditional uses of plants like *kieriemoer*, *ankerkaroo* and *kattekruie*. At Skilpad Dam we will explore some fascinating fossils formed some 400 million years ago. Rock paintings add to the natural history of the Little Karoo, providing a clue to the seasonal movement of the San people surviving in this harsh desert landscape

Cost in the Lodge: 10 Members – R1 725.00 Non-members – R2 070.00

Cost in the Training Centre: 10 Members – R1 005.00 Non-members – R1 206.00

Included: Accommodation and meals

Accommodation is limited and is on a shared basis only

BOOKING AND PAYMENT IN ADVANCE IS ESSENTIAL ON ALL FIELD TRIPS

FOSSIL TRIP REPORTBACK : 21–25 MAY 2008

A group of Friends joined Dr Roger Smith and Georgina Farrell on a three-day fossil excursion in the Three Sisters and Murraysburg area where we stayed at Travalia Guest Farm. With traditional boerekos each day and interesting evening lectures by Roger and Prof Eric Harley. Some of us have become firm friends over the many years of sharing a fascination with life extremely long gone by, but we also welcomed a few new faces such as our youngest guest, the 14 year-old Adam Macgregor from Gauteng. It was indeed the keen eyes of the young and eager that proved the most helpful.

Roger took us to the slopes of a koppie on the Loxton road where some intact skulls of 250 million-year-old mammal-like reptiles such as *Diictodon* and *Prysteradon* were found. The thrill of finding an actual fossil is not the only treat. Listening to Roger explain the formation of various features of the landscape and characteristic layering of the Karoo rocks opens up a whole new world of ancient lakes, volcanoes, floods and meandering rivers were these strange animals once lived and died.

We also explored three koppies in the same vicinity where good specimens of *Prysteradon*, *Oudenodon* and *Diictodon* were found. However, it was one afternoon's find that had everyone in awe when we found Adam furiously brushing away at a large piece of sharply-angled bone. While we kept vigil he charged around the koppie to find Roger who identified the fossil as the lower jaw of a three-metre herbivore *Dicynodont* – probably belonging to *Oudenodon*.

The local farmers of the Murraysburg district treated us to lunch and took part of the group on a sight-seeing tour of the town. The rest of us returned to Loskop and climbed a rather intimidating steep hillside. Again we found many pieces of large bone; Malcolm Cerfonteyn spotted a *Therocephalian* skull and Adam and his cousin, Angus Myburgh, excitedly called us to look at their find of a large *Gorgonopsian* skeleton with the skull and almost the entire backbone intact. This was a wonderful find which made its way straight into the backpacks of the scientists to be prepared in the laboratory.

After an enjoyable braai on the last evening we reluctantly said our farewells and shared our eager anticipation of next year's fossil trip. This one certainly was unforgettable.

WEBSITE: <http://www.iziko.org.za/sam/friends.html> Keep up to date with activities at Iziko South African Museum on the website. This takes you directly to the Friends page where you will find the latest newsletter as well as previous newsletters. A membership application form and a gift membership form can also be downloaded should you wish to give one to a friend. You will find images from previous outings which will give you an idea of the kind of activities enjoyed by the Friends.

ELECTRONIC TRANSFERS: There are an ever-increasing number of unidentified deposits in the Friends bank account. Please ensure when making an electronic transfer or depositing directly into the bank account

that your name and the word 'subscription', or relevant activity, is clearly stated and that you forward a copy of the transaction by fax, e-mail or post to the Friends office so we can trace your deposit.

OFFICE HOURS: The Friends office at the Iziko South African Museum is attended by Maxine on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00–16:00. Should you wish to make contact at other times you may phone Maxine at 072 225 6893 between 10:00–12:00, weekdays, and leave a message. Your call will be returned as soon as is possible. Sadly Melissa has decided to continue with her studies and is no longer able to spend time in the office.

WELCOME TO ALL NEW MEMBERS: It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members who have recently joined the Friends – we look forward to meeting you at our future activities.

Derek Blignaut
Ingrid Blignaut
Zoë Blignaut

Michael Cluver
Estelle Cluver
Fr Mark Pothier

Edward von Witt
Jane von Witt

Maxine Davies
Editor – Newsletter
Friends of Iziko South African Museum