

Friends of Iziko South African Museum

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NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2008

As 2008 draws to a close we can look back on another successful and interesting year. Thank you all for your support and enthusiasm for the lectures and outings the committee planned for you during this year.

Tuesday 25 November

HARPSICHORD TALK AND RECITAL FOR VIOLIN AND HARPSICHORD

Presenters: Quenton Crida and Grant Brasler

Venue: Whale Well, Iziko South African Museum

Quenton Crida and Grant Brasler of *Generations into Baroque* will present a slide show and talk on the construction of the harpsichord and the organ in concert. The talk by Quenton Crida will be interspersed with musical examples played by Grant Brasler. They will perform works for violin and harpsichord, showing the different styles of writing for harpsichord. Composers will include JS Bach and HI Biber.

CANCELLED

REPORT BACK

SANCTUARY AT CENTURY – as experienced by Cynthia Querido

Last year, Philke Cakebread led a large and eager group of Friends on a tour of Intaka Island which, despite the inclement weather, was so well received that it was revisited this September. This time, however, the 'waters parted', allowing a crisp, clear day for the five-hour ramble around our very own 'Walden Pond'.

The amazing thing about an Intaka day-trip is that it's so filled with contradiction. In the midst of a nature sanctuary, one is surrounded by urban sprawl: omnipresent yet un-invasive. Towering cranes (man-made variety) and signs of development are everywhere but the air is alive with the buzz of insects and birdsong. And being with 'Friends', there are as many experts who can tell a rodent from its droppings as there are rookies marvelling at the sight of a weaver bird at work.

Intaka is therefore a wonderful destination for those who know and love nature, for those who'd like to know her better – and for those who want an introduction.

In an e-news article last year, Maxine enthused about the thriving flora and fauna of Intaka – 'remarkable variety of indigenous flowering plants'. Since then, wetlands and property development continue to co-exist harmoniously and the abundant bird and plant life are alive and well. So it might be apt to spare a word or two for the fabulous Philke.

As much a mentor as a guide, Philke loves to share her knowledge, but she's also keen to learn; in the 'spirit of ubuntu', she invites participants to share their knowledge with the rest of the group. Every query and comment is welcomed with 'good question!' or 'good comment!' so that everyone feels awfully clever and comes away a little more worldly-wise – certainly in terms of the natural world.

The tour ended on a novel note: a 20-minute walk in 'great silence' at the end of which we were more than ready to voice our thoughts. For most it was a sensory experience, of smell, sight and sound; for some, surprisingly, silence was not an unfamiliar phenomenon.

So whatever takes your fancy – whether it's hiding out in the bird-hide, or crushing a leaf and delighting in the unexpected smell of chocolate or just imbibing nature, come next September, be sure to tag along to Intaka.

A GEOLOGICAL WALKING TOUR: THE BUILDING STONES OF CAPE TOWN

A group of members interested in learning about the variety of stones used in some of the buildings in central Cape Town joined Dr Douglas Cole in a geological tour of the city centre in October.

The walking tour went from the Castle of Good Hope to the City Hall, St. Georges Cathedral, the Centre for the Book and down St. Georges Mall to the statue of Bartolomeu Dias on the Foreshore. They discovered limestone from Bath, granite from Scandanavia, iridescent larvikite from the shores of Oslo Fjord, Swedish Red Granite, Table Mountain sandstone, Malmesbury slate, granites from Finland and Spain, Pretoria and the Cape. Even the fossil enthusiasts could find traces of crinoids in the Bishop Grey Monument. This was a geological walk of a different kind. If you missed this outing you can find it all in the book, *The building stones of Cape Town* written by Dr Cole and published by the Council for GeoScience.

AARDVARK NATURE RESERVE

Most of us had never heard of Aardvark Nature Reserve so it was a new and interesting adventure for two groups, on different weekends, to explore with owner and well-known field guide and trainer, Johan Fourie. Set in the Klein Karoo between Riversdale and Ladismith, the reserve offers many interesting natural features of this area. There are several quartz fields with a variety of succulents thriving in the cooler atmosphere, 10° below, created by the sun reflecting off the quartz at ground level. Plants varied from the deliciously plump bababoudjies to the thorny *Euphorbia Stellispina*, the kerrie plant, the colourful *Aridaria splendens* or donkie vygie and those clever plants that thrive under the protection of their larger neighbours.

Whilst the aardvark themselves were not evident, we were able to follow fresh overnight tracks and see evidence of their recent digging. Tortoises always attract attention and we did see a tent tortoise and a small leopard tortoise as well as new tracks of a larger one.

A small rock art site led to much speculation as to the significance of the paintings as well as the choice of an unusual site such as this one. For the fossil enthusiasts there was an opportunity for potential discoveries. Unfortunately we didn't find anything of great significance – but it is always a challenge to search in anticipation!

Johan and Jane Fourie and their daughter, Jana Malherbe, were gracious hosts and not only showed us fascinating aspects of the Klein Karoo, but Jane provided us with excellent meals which included a much enjoyed picnic in the bush.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS: Members will have already received information regarding renewal of subscription, new rates below.

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| 1. Students and Seniors | R100.00 with e-mail | R150.00 without e-mail |
| 2. Individual membership | R150.00 with e-mail | R200.00 without e-mail |
| 3. Family membership | R250.00 with e-mail | R300.00 without e-mail |

If you are going through the festive season problem of gifts for friends and family why not give a gift that keeps on giving throughout the year with a Gift Subscription.

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 already a number of unidentified deposits in the Friends bank account. If you do not receive your new membership card please let me know when you made your deposit. 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.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTION: This is the time of year when many of us are probably trying to think of what gifts to give our nearest and dearest. Why not give them a gift subscription to the Friends? A Gift Membership was included with the last newsletter and is available for download on the website. This is a gift which will last the whole year and give the recipient many options to choose from in 2009.

HELP US PLAN FOR 2009: Whilst the hard-working committee has a number of ideas for future lectures and outings, this is your organisation and we would like to receive suggestions from you. Please let us know if there are interesting places you would like to visit or good speakers the members might like to hear.

The 2009 programme is being prepared with new and interesting speakers as well as weekends to new venues. The always popular fossil trip with Roger Smith will be in mid-August, details to be advised in 2009.

THANK YOU to all the following people who play a vital part in the success of the Friends.

- ❖ The committee members Munro Bloch, Richard Borden, Bertha Blackwood-Murray, Medeé Rall, Melissa Stander and John Taylor for all their support and hard work in the planning and running of the programmes this past year.
- ❖ Jill Franks who assists me in the office whenever extra help is needed.
- ❖ Cynthia Querido, the Iziko Press Officer, who publicises our activities far and wide.
- ❖ Theo Ferreira, the Planetarium Manager, who attends to all our audio-visual needs for lectures.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS: On behalf of the committee may I wish you all a wonderful festive season and safe travelling.

OFFICE HOURS: The Friends office at the Iziko South African Museum is attended on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00–16:00. Should you wish to make contact at other times you may phone me on 072 225 6893 between 10:00–12:00, weekdays, and leave a message. Your call will be returned as soon as is possible.

The Friends office will be closed from 12 December 2008 and will reopen on Wednesday 15 January 2009.

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.

Lyn Burnham
Anthony Jones
Karen Koch

Johan Louw
Jon Rohde
Marina Stander

Liane Swift
David Wolfaardt
Shirley Penny

*Maxine Davies
Editor – Newsletter
Friends of Iziko South African Museum*

