

Friends of Iziko South African Museum

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NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2009

Winter has settled in and to help lift your spirits the Friends have put together a diverse programme of lectures which includes some of your favourite speakers to draw you away from your home comforts and into the museum. Read on!

LECTURE PROGRAMME: Lectures are scheduled on the last Tuesday of each month from February to November and take place in the TH Barry Lecture Theatre at 19:00 unless otherwise advertised; drinks are served from 18:30. Lectures are free to members on presentation of a current membership card and non-members pay R20, unless otherwise advertised – see below.

Tuesday 30 June 2009 at 19:00 in the TH Barry Lecture Theatre

Speaker: Rob Erasmus, Manager: Operations & Training of the Volunteer Wildfire Services

Investigating wildfires: Fact vs Fiction

Investigating runaway fires is a field that is rapidly being explored, particularly in the Western Cape due to its high fire-risk habitats. The importance of being able to locate the origin of a wildfire, and then to determine the cause, has been recognised as an important component in the new approach to Integrated Wildfire Management. Armed with this previously unknown information, plans and strategies can be put into place that can both assist in the reduction of future fires, but also to play a part in apprehending those responsible for intentional and malicious fire setting acts.

Cost: Members – Free; non-members – R20

Tuesday 28 July 2009 at 19:00 in the Whale Well

Speaker: Dr David Klatzow, Forensic Scientist

The Helderberg disaster

When SAA Flight 295 crashed into the sea off Mauritius on 28 November 1987 an endless round of enquiries, speculation, intrigue and unanswered questions emerged. Well-known forensic scientist, Dr David Klatzow, was involved in the investigation of this still-unsolved mystery. In this talk he will discuss the fact and fiction surrounding this mystery which will not go away.

This talk may well be of interest to those who have been following the reports of the recent Air France disaster.

Cost: Members – R30; non-members – R50

Tuesday 25 August at 19:00 in the Whale Well

Speaker: Clem Sunter, well-known scenario planner and popular speaker.

South Africa in 2010: A scenario update

This talk looks at the ever-changing landscape in South Africa and the world as politics and the recession influences every sphere of our lives.

Cost: Members – R30; non-members – R50

NB: The July and August lectures will be held in the Whale Well at Iziko South African Museum

Tuesday: 29 September 2009 at 19:00 in the TH Barry Lecture Theatre

Speaker: Dr Gavin Maneveldt, Department of Biodiversity & Conservation Biology
University of the Western Cape

Botanical encounters of the marine kind

Many ingredients in our foods and household products come from the sea and from seaweeds. They are therefore both directly and indirectly valuable to humans. Seaweeds assimilate minerals directly from the sea and are thought to be the single most nutritious foods that you can eat. Rich in trace elements and vitamins, many of these foods may contain more protein than meat and more calcium than milk. This talk is aimed at introducing you to the common seaweeds of the Cape Peninsula and to highlight their importance and uses in household, medicinal and industrial applications.

OUTINGS PLANNED FOR 2009

BEHIND-THE-SCENES AT THE HUGUENOT TUNNEL: 20 June 09:30–12:30

Join the Friends for a behind-the-scenes look at the operations systems of the Huguenot Tunnel. We will look at the main control centre and at the escape routes and vehicular connection within the tunnel. You will also have an opportunity to see the second tunnel which runs parallel to the main tunnel and is used in emergency situations. The group will be lead by David Gray, an air-conditioning engineer who was involved in the original construction of the tunnel, as well as an on-duty member of the staff member.

Cost: Members – R120; non-members – R150

Booking and pre-payment is essential and numbers are limited.

ROBBEN ISLAND: A geological perspective: 24–25 July

The Friends have arranged a unique experience for members. This excursion to Robben Island includes an overnight stay and a geological tour of this World Heritage Site. This will provide a completely new perspective on an historically important and unique area. Our tour guide is Dr John Rogers of the Department of Geological Science at UCT, an acknowledged expert in the area. He has lead a number of similar excursions and he has supervised Honours degree students who conducted research projects on the Island. Numerous geological features of interest will make this a rewarding experience at reasonable cost.

Accommodation is in two dormitories, one for men and one for women, at the Medium Security Prison, which has been upgraded: this includes kitchen facilities. This is a self-catering trip, and weather permitting, there will be a bring-and-braai on Friday evening.

Moderate fitness is a prerequisite, as we will be walking almost everywhere. A desire to learn and experience something new is an essential requirement!

Itinerary: Depart on Friday 24 July 2009 at 17:15 from the Nelson Mandela Gateway and return on Saturday 25 July on the 16:00 ferry, arriving Cape Town about 17:00.

Cost: Members – R600; non-members: R800

Reservations will only be secured with payment in full. Contact Munro Bloch on 082 570 1000 should you have any further queries.

Fossil-hunting with Dr Roger Smith: 19–23 August

The 2009 fossil-hunting trip will be in the Victoria West district with accommodation at Melton Wold. The days will be spent searching for fossils on the slopes of this fossil-rich area. Participants can look forward to illustrated talks each evening on some of Roger's adventurous fossil-hunting field trips from the Antarctic to the southern Sahara.

The cost covers four nights accommodation and all meals, including a picnic lunch and morning and afternoon teas in the field.

Cost: Members – R2 200; non-members: R2 500

THE GRYSBOK TRAIL – A MORNING HIKE
Saturday 29 August 2009: 09:30 – 13:30

Join popular leader, Philke Cakebread, on this picturesque trail in the Koeberg Nature Reserve. The Grysbok Trail includes a stretch along the beach and passes a salt marsh which is rich in bird life during the winter months. The group will skirt around the reactor towards the beach on the Cape Town side following the dune ridges and winding down to the sea past a small saltpan.

Cost: Members – R 60; non-members – R70

SPRINGTIME HIKE IN THE ORANGE KLOOF AMPHITHEATRE
Sunday 6 September 2009: 09:00 – 14:00

Join experienced mountaineer, SAN Parks honorary ranger and committee member, Erik Kiderlen, for a four-hour, seven kilometre hike in the Orange Kloof Amphitheatre. It should be a good time to enjoy the spring flowers in this beautiful setting. There may also be the possibility of taking a side excursion to the Disa tunnel along the way.

Cost: Members – R60; non-members – R70

Book early as numbers are limited to 12 so don't delay and be disappointed.

CLANWILLIAM AND THE LANTERN FESTIVAL: 12–14 September

Spend a weekend in Clanwilliam, which includes a day with popular archaeologist, Siyaka Mguni, a visit to the Living Landscape Project and joining in the celebration of the Lantern Festival on the Sunday evening. Before returning home on Monday morning it may be possible to still see the last of the spring flowers at your leisure en route. Further details will be available soon.

Cost: Members – R1 250; non-members R1 500

Two nights accommodation and evening meals are included. Lunches are for your own expense, or bring a picnic lunch.

INTAKA ISLAND: Saturday 3 October 09:30 – 14:30

Explore this ever-changing wetland area with Philke Cakebread. Discover 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.

Cost: Members – R60; non-members – R70

BOOKINGS FOR ALL OUTINGS ARE ONLY SECURED WITH PAYMENT OF A 50% DEPOSIT AND FOR DAY TRIPS PAYMENT IN FULL

AFRICA'S WEALTH – EXPLORATION, USE AND CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

5 June – 15 October 2009

Should you be looking for something interesting to do during these cold, wet days, take some time to visit this exhibition on display at Iziko South African Museum. It was first shown at the Zoological Research Museum Alexander Koenig in Bonn and attracted wide interest. The exhibition showcases Africa's wealth and the work of BIOTA Africa in its research supporting sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity in Africa with emphasis on the main problems of mankind in 21st century – that of stopping the loss of biodiversity and combating desertification. For more information on BIOTA visit: www.biota-africa.org, but do go and visit the exhibition first.

PRINCE ALBERT REPORT-BACK by Munro Bloch

Eighteen Friends recently spent a magical weekend in Prince Albert where they not only visited interesting places in and around the town, but also enjoyed interaction with the friendly local people.

The weekend began with visits to Gays dairy, where they sampled Gay's award-winning cheeses, the Barella mineral collection and the well-run and interesting Fransie Pienaar Museum where they got a glimpse into early life in the Karoo.

The historic Swartberg Hotel was 'home' for the weekend. The first evening provided the opportunity for the group not only to enjoy an excellent dinner, but also to get to know each other by sharing a 30 second 'show and tell'. This show was stolen by one 'has dean' (retired Dean of UCT Medical School, Professor J-P van Niekerk) who also entertained all with his rendition of the 'third National Anthem' (Daar kom die Alabama) on his mouth organ. Dr Judy Maguire, our guide for the weekend, rounded off the evening with a fascinating talk on the time she spent as a young girl living with the Bushmen in the Kalahari.

Although Saturday dawned to the sound of heavy rain, this intrepid group set off with Judy to see the Dwyka tillite deposit behind the town. Imagine the sight – 18 people standing in the rain looking at rocks! Fortunately the rain stopped and the group could drive up the Swartberg Pass where Judy explained the history and geology of this remarkable 19th century engineering feat.

Other highlights that day were a visit to an olive farm and an evening of homemade soup and bread around a campfire at Scholtzkloof, Judy's farm. This was followed by local music, poetry and story telling by Poem, the elected chief of the Attaqua Khoisan, and Alsa Tudhope.

There was time on Sunday morning to visit the nearby succulent reserve and Abrahamskraal for tea and muffins before saying goodbye to Judy and heading home.

NIGHT SKY: For those interested in the night skies and in the interesting programmes showing daily at the Planetarium, you can keep informed by clicking onto the Iziko website:

<http://www.iziko.org.za/planetarium/resources.html>

IZIKO WEBSITE: Keep up to date with the activities at Iziko South African Museum by visiting the website at <http://www.iziko.org.za/sam/friends.html>. 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 from this site 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.

BIODIVERSITY WEBSITE: A website which members might find interesting is Iziko's Biodiversity Explorer website which features the biodiversity encountered in southern Africa, from viruses through to mammals. There are over 5 000 pages and 4 000 images on the site. It has grown steadily in popularity and currently each day an average of about 3 100 pages are downloaded by 1 290 different people. Have a look at it and discover more about this fascinating country in which we live. <http://www.biodiversityexplorer.org>

ELECTRONIC TRANSFERS: I continue to receive 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.

OFFICE HOURS: The Friends office at the Iziko South African Museum is attended on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00–14:00. 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. .

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

John Bradley
Isabel Hancock
Sylvia Hayes

Gillian Jensen
Jocelin Kagan

Paul Roux
Adelbert Stigling

Maxine Davies
Editor – Newsletter
Friends of Iziko South African Museum

