

Historical Beagle/Clipper Stad Amsterdam that follows in the footsteps of Charles Darwin is to arrive in Cape Town

150 years after the publication of Darwin's book 'On the Origin of Species' the Clipper Stad Amsterdam, by request of the Dutch Broadcaster VPRO, sailed around the world following the route of the Beagle. Stad Amsterdam will be visiting South Africa for VPRO's Beagle re-enactment voyage, Cape Town is the last harbour of this adventure. A Dutch film crew, guests and scientists will be on board and press are invited on board the ship at Waterfront Jetty 2 on Monday 26th April from 9 to 11am.

Sarah Darwin is assessing the future of species

Charles Darwin's observations during his journey around the world, which he made on board the HMS Beagle 178 years ago, later led to his publication of 'On the Origin of Species'. His theory of evolution drastically changed the former visions of mankind, and he can therefore be called one of the most influential persons in history. The international scientific Beagle Project is re-sailing this famous voyage, this time attempting to determine the future of species. One of our most prominent guests on board, **Sarah Darwin**, Charles Darwin's great-great-granddaughter and biologist, is hereby following in her forefather's footsteps. Created in the Darwin year, the 35-part TV documentary *Beagle, On the Future of Species* marks Charles Darwin's 200th birthday and the 150th anniversary of his publication 'On the Origin of Species'.

The Beagle Project

The three-masted *Clipper Stad Amsterdam* (76 meters long), has been carrying an international crew of scientists, philosophers, historians, artists and biographers on a voyage around the world. Since September 1st, 2009 this exciting expedition has sailed Holland to Great Britain, Spain, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Tahiti, Australia and Mauritius. The Clipper's final destination is Cape Town, completing the voyage by the end of April and having roughly covered 27,000 nautical miles. Along the way our hosts were joined by internationally acclaimed scientists from a range of disciplines carrying out various types of research. Fossil hunters, DNA researchers, geologists, oceanographers and other scientists have conducted in-depth researches to evaluate the earth's current condition.

Research on board the Clipper Stad Amsterdam

The historical *Stad Amsterdam*, was originally built in 2000 with the initiative of global recruitment & HR services for the company *Randstad* and the *City of Amsterdam*. The Clipper normally operates as a cruise ship, but has been modified to fit the needs of a sailing TV studio. It has been equipped with two complete editing studios, satellite domes and webcams. These were installed to allow continuous contact with the public. Throughout the voyage we have conducted research in the *smelling ability* of humans on five different continents as well as gathered *plankton using the CPR* (Continuous Plankton Recorder), provided by the British SAHFOS Institute and a plankton indicator. *Argo floats* were launched in every ocean along the voyage as part of an international project called *Argo*. The instrument is used to measure the ocean's salinity and temperature. The ocean-skater *Halobates*, the unique insect found on the open-seas, was also a subject of study during the Tahiti to Sydney leg. *Plastic gyres* was the last research conducted on board from Perth to Cape Town. Several scientists, including the first Dutch astronaut **Wubbo Ockels**, have collected samples in order to determine the seriousness of plastic in the ocean and looking to come up with a feasible solution for this problem.

Main characters

Sarah Darwin is Charles Darwin's great-great-granddaughter and biologist. She is following in her forefather's footsteps and fulfils the historical part of the project. She is continuously trying to unite her research with that of Charles Darwin.

Redmond O' Hanlon is a British travel book author and a Naturalist. He is no stranger to extreme landscapes and adventure. He has been on board the entire voyage hosting the series.

Dirk Draulans is a Flemish/French Biologist, specialized in Zoology and also a TV presenter. He has written several books on the theory of evolution; the most recent being *'The Success of Bad Sex'* that explores in what ways Darwinist evolution influences humans. His main focus is to make science accessible for a broader audience, and he works to intertwine the theory of evolution with everyday events.

Anthony Smith is the youngest Beagle character on the ship, he is also known as *'the Clipper's Artist'*. He has been on board during the entire voyage documenting events by means of photography and drawings. His passions involve both science and art.

Cross Media

The Beagle project has created a 35-part television series broadcast by Dutch and Flemish Public Broadcasting Channels, but it is not simply a television series. It's one of the most comprehensive cross media projects, using the latest multimedia technologies available. The discoveries and life on board can be followed live via *webcams, weblogs, widgets, videos, photos, mobile, Twitter* and other *social networks*. This project is an interactive experience for an international community, visible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and will last for 10 months.

'Beagle, on the future of species' in Cape Town

The Clipper, carrying her 25-person crew, the TV crew and guests **Wubbo Ockels, Herman Ridderinkhof*, Hans Fels*, Redmond O'Hanlon** and **Anthony Smith** left Mauritius on April 7th and is enroute to Cape Town. The Stad Amsterdam is due to arrive at Waterfront Jetty 2 on Sunday, April 25th at 4 pm.

On April 25th around 11:30 am, the Clipper will be welcomed into Hout Bay with a 6-gun salute from a VOC battery under Chapmans Peak, manned by volunteer gunners in VOC regalia. Upon leaving the bay there will be a second salute. The vessel will then sail to Cape Town where it will be welcomed by a number of vessels and a performance by the famous *Capetonian Minstrels*.

During the stay in Cape Town the crew will shoot the final episode *'Retrospective'*, which will recap all the events since September. On May 2nd the Clipper will sail off to Europe and will return to its regular cruising program.

International Round Table

On April 26th, from 9am to 5pm, the round table *'Stimulating Skills & Excellence in the Educational System'* will take place on board. Guests of this round table are, among others, **Helen Zille**, Premier of the Western Cape, **Naledi Pandor**, South African Minister of Science and Technology and **Pascal Smet**, Flemish Minister of Education and Formation, Youth, Equal Opportunities and Brussels. A large Dutch-Flemish delegation of education specialists, teachers, and students will visit the Western Cape to follow into Darwin's footsteps. In close collaboration with the *African Genome Institute* they will visit several projects and initiatives that stimulate youngsters to pursue a career in the natural sciences and technology.

Press on board

On April 26th, from 9 to 11am, at the ship's berth at **Waterfront Jetty 2** press members are welcome on board, where Sarah Darwin, Dirk Draulans, Redmond O'Hanlon, Hans Fels, Wubbo Ockels and Captain Andi Manser will be available for interviews. This will also be an opportunity for the press members to tour the Stad Amsterdam.

Only press members who have RSVPed with Cleo Ferreira and who hold a photo ID are allowed on board. Full names and ID numbers must be communicated in advance via email to c.ferreira@vpro.nl. Note that the dates and times may be subject to change.

Schedule Cape Town

April 25th	11:30 am: sail into Hout Bay and 6-gun salute from a VOC battery under Chapmans Peak	4 pm: arrival at Waterfront welcomed vessels and by famous Capetonian Minstrels
April 26th	9 am – 5 pm: Round Table <i>'Stimulating Skills & Excellence in the Educational System'</i>	9 – 11 am: press welcome on board
May 2nd	Departure Clipper (time t.b.d.)	

Skype interviews before arrival

It is possible to interview the guests on board - Wubbo Ockels, Herman Ridderinkhof, Redmond O'Hanlon, Dirk Draulans and Captain Andi Manser. Interviews with Sarah Darwin can be done via telephone. Please, contact Cleo Ferreira to have this organized (see note to the editor).

For the public

Due to a very busy schedule, unfortunately the Stad Amsterdam will not be open for public visits. It would be very appreciated for local yachts and sailing clubs members to escort the Stad Amsterdam into Cape Town. Please feel free to forward this invitation.

*Short guest biographies:

Hans Fels: Beagle project creator and initiator, cameraman as well as TV director in the program.

Herman Ridderinkhof: Director of Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ).



Stad Amsterdam, Dirk Draulans, Sarah Darwin and Redmond O'Hanlon

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On your mobile: <http://m.beagle.vpro.nl>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/VPRO-Beagle/43671859683> (in English)

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/VPROBeagle>

Twitter: http://www.twitter.com/VPRO_Beagle

VPRO: <http://www.vpro.nl>

Clipper: <http://www.stadamsterdam.com>