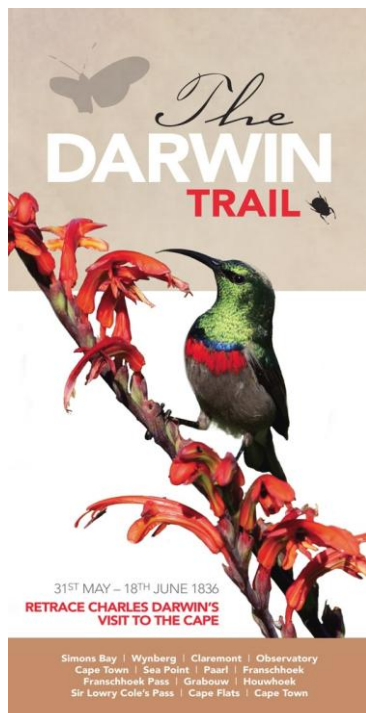


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NEWSLETTER Issue # 4

August 2009

THE DARWIN TRAIL



You will now be able to follow the route that Charles Darwin took when he visited Cape Town aboard the HMS Beagle. In 1836 Charles Darwin spent 18 days in and around Cape Town. In 2009, the year that we are celebrating his Bicentennial, the importance of his visit to the Cape aboard the HMS Beagle is being reassessed. The actual route he followed has been plotted and forms what is now designated as the Darwin Trail.

The HMS Beagle anchored in Simon's Bay on 31 May 1836 and the small settlement did not impress Darwin. *'The little town of Simon's Bay offers but a cheerless aspect to the stranger'* he recorded in his diary. On 1 May he set off through Constantia to Wynberg, Claremont, Observatory to Cape Town.

Side one of the Darwin Trail, takes you along this route with information on what Darwin saw and observed. There are also some suggestions on what he might add to his itinerary if he were visiting the Cape today. His trip into the hinterland is recorded on side two. You can follow the path he took, accompanied by an English speaking Khoi groom. They travelled to Paarl to visit the granite outcropping – Paarl rock. From there they journeyed along the Burg River to Franschoek. They crossed Franschoek Pass and over-nighted at the Toll House on the Eastern side of the pass. There was another stop over at Houwhoek before journeying back over the Sir Lowry Cole's Pass, across the Cape Flats and back to the city.

The Darwin Trail provides a wonderful journey through some amazing landscapes and to a range of significant sites and sights. It also provides an opportunity for re-assessing what Darwin's visit contributed to his work and ultimately to his major contribution to modern science. The printed Darwin Trail will be available from Cape Town Tourism from end August 2009 and can also be found on their website (www.capetown.travel) or on the website of the Genome Institute (www.africagenome.com).

TEACHING BIOLOGY PROJECT (TBP)

The TBP Evolutionary Biology Conference ran from 13-16 July at Bishops in Rondebosch. Ian McCallum set the scene with a fascinating talk on the *Evolution of the Triune Brain* and its effect on human behaviour. Delegates enjoyed learning about evolutionary biology from experts and valued the practical examples of classroom practice and the opportunity to increase their computer skills and develop work programmes. The TBP website was mirrored on the Bishops' Intranet and teachers were given access to wonderful resources, including stunning Power Points from the Biozone, a New Zealand based company. Cheryl Douglas, the programme director, created resources and webpages and teachers are able to access these on the Internet (www.teachingbiologyproject.co.za) or they can use the DVD they were given at the end of the conference. Registration for the third conference in September is now open and we are targeting teachers from outside Cape Town.



Jurie van den Heever - Deep Time practical

MICROSOFT INNOVATIVE TEACHERS FORUM

Cheryl Douglas, the TBP programme director, was the Innovation in Collaboration winner at the recent Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forum Awards. Cheryl, along with three other category winners, now goes through to the Pan African finals to be held in Mauritius in early September.

"THE FUTURE OF BIOFUELS LIES IN GENOMICS" by Gavin Chait

In 1998, the ordinarily placid world of biology and genetics was torn apart when a gauntlet was thrown down. [Read more... http://www.africagenome.com/the-future-of-biofuels-lies-in-genomics.html](http://www.africagenome.com/the-future-of-biofuels-lies-in-genomics.html)

"SA NEEDS OWN FLU VACCINES" [24 July 2009 press release]

South Africa must build its vaccine production capacity if it wants to be prepared for influenza pandemics such as the current "swine flu" outbreak, a think-tank of virologists heard in Cape Town yesterday.

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