

Dioscorida Notes

ISSUED BY FRIENDS OF SOQOTRA

أصدقاء سقطرى

an occasional publication for Members of Friends of Soqatra

Sewing Machines for Soqatra

FoS is delighted to announce a fund raising campaign for its first major practical project. We are aiming to raise £1000 to buy and deliver 10 sewing machines (including simple maintenance kits and auxiliary tools such as scissors) to communities across the island. The women who will be given the machines will be selected by their communities, and will be given training in their use and maintenance in Hadibo. They will agree to train at least five other women in their community to use the machines; as more funding becomes available in the future these women will in turn be given machines and will train additional women to cascade the training and use across communities. SCF/SCDP will identify the women, arrange for the training, deliver the machines to the communities and provide updates on progress of the scheme. Whenever FoS members visit the island we hope that the projects can be visited and photographs taken to bring back reports to the membership on the women's progress.

Why sewing machines? Resources to buy ready-made clothing are obviously limited, and ready made clothes are expensive and often of poor quality or inferior materials. By providing hand-operated sewing machines women will be able to sew clothing for their own families and to provide a small income. This is a common request by women on the island. By providing training and appropriately 'low tech' equipment that can be easily maintained it is hoped that this project will be sustainable and can cascade through a number of communities. It can grow as more funding becomes available to provide for more communities, and the concept of 'each one teach five' will help to strengthen bonds within and between communities.

This pilot project will be run with FoS providing the money and SCF/SCDP providing the practical delivery and monitoring on the island. If successful we hope to not only continue and expand this project, but to raise funds for other projects identified by the local communities.

Please do help us to deliver some practical assistance to Soqatra. Send your donation to: Friends of Soqatra, c/o 49 Carnbane Road, Lisburn BT27 5NG.

Why not include your subscription on the cheque?

Have a question or wish to let others know of your activities?

Contact us: Sue Christie, 49 Carnbane Road, Lisburn, BT27 5NG, Northern Ireland. Phone: +44 (0)2890 314 944 or +44 (0)2892 682770 Fax: +44 (0) 2890 311558. Email: drsuechristie@aol.com



Current Political and Social Issues for Soqatra

FoS AGM and Annual Meeting

This event will look at the Soqatra Archipelago from the social and political perspective, with speakers having recent experience of the islands' issues and how they are being addressed.

The event will take place on 17 - 18 September in London, with the venue to be confirmed. We will look for a venue where we can have lectures and discussions on Saturday, a nice meal and discussions on Saturday night and the AGM on Sunday. Any ideas most gratefully received — watchwords are convenient and inexpensive!

Roads Construction

There continue to be environmental problems with the construction of roads; the Ditwah lagoon threat appears to have been alleviated, but Eriosh archaeological site has been damaged and other areas are being heavily impacted by the roads programme. The real need for improved access to goods and services which the roads provide should proceed in harmony with environmental protection. Unfortunately, this is not always the case on the ground. See the report on the FoS Website:

WWW.FriendsofSoqatra.org

Fauna of the Socotra Archipelago – Field Guide by Wolfgang Wranik, 2003.

This excellent guide to the fauna of the archipelago, fully illustrated with beautiful colour pictures, is a must for all those interested in the islands. At just under 550 pages with 760 colour photos illustrating some 1000 species it is the definitive guide to the animals of the Archipelago. The book also includes contributions by Omar Al-Saghier, Simon Aspinall and Richard Porter (Birds) and Herbert Rosler (reptiles). For your copy write to Universitätsdruckerei Rostock, Zum Laakkanal 20, 18109 Rostock, Germany. Alternatively you can contact them by emailing: uni-druckerei@verwaltung.uni-rostock.de. The book summarises Wolfgang's research on the Archipelago from 1982 to 2001, and an article on the book will feature in the next *Dioscorida*.

Tourist Booklets

We are looking at producing a series of booklets on specific areas or species (or groups of species) for Soqotra. The initial target will be tourists. An initial draft booklet has been prepared for the native plants of DeHamri Protected Area (see FoS Website shortly). We are looking for volunteers to prepare similar booklets on other areas/groups. The booklets will be provided to the Soqotra Ecotourism Society for sale; profits will be used to conduct practical projects on the islands, administered jointly by FoS and SCF.

Environmental Education

A project designed to use material gained from the last few years of scientific work on the island to construct innovative, exciting and activity-based education materials for use in Soqotran schools has been submitted for funding to the Darwin Initiative. It is a partnership between FoS members and SCF/SCDP, with Roderic Dutton of Durham University as lead UK partner.

If successful this could be a most exciting project to bring environmental education and training in traditional land management practices into the school system. It is hoped this could be a pilot project for other areas of Yemen, and part of the project is to introduce a requirement for environmental education into the Curriculum.

Subscriptions

Your subscriptions for 2003 – 2004 are now due – thanks to all those who have paid, and if you have not yet renewed, please send your subscription (£20) to Neil Oakman, West Lodge Park, Cockfosters Road, Hadley Wood, Hertfordshire, EN4 0PY, cheques made payable to Friends of Soqotra. Please, cheques in £ sterling only please. For those of you in other countries, please pay to your local representative (see website). We're sorry, but we have been unable to determine any alternative easy way to deal with multiple currencies without incurring prohibitive bank charges.

Please note: we will be unable to continue paper mailings to those who have not paid their subscriptions, as this is a considerable cost to the organisation.

Soqotra Exhibition, Summer 2005 The natural and cultural heritage of the Soqotran islands

Work continues on developing the programme for this Exhibition at Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh for summer 2005. We hope to have a series of ancillary events during the entire year, including film shows, cultural events, lectures and a symposium. Let us know any suggestions you have for inclusion. Fundraising is proceeding apace, and we have had a most positive reception for the Exhibition from all with whom we discussed it in Yemen.

Soqotra in Japan

In addition to the Soqotra Exhibition at the RBGE in 2005, it is hoped that Soqotra will be a central theme in the Yemen Exhibition at the Japan Expo that same year.

Dioscorida

We held discussions with Socotra Conservation Fund about the desirability of having a single newsletter which covers all things Soqotran. We are negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding, and things look promising. We hope that the enlarged, improved and totally bilingual Newsletter will be produced in May/June.

Please let Sue have any articles for inclusion by 1 March to allow time for translation and printing.