

Dioscorida Notes

ISSUED BY FRIENDS OF SOQOTRA

أصدقاء سقطرى

an occasional publication for Members of Friends of Soqatra

Tsunami on Soqatra

The news is relatively good – the main power of the wave passed to the south of the island. However, one small child was drowned and some 27 fishing boats and 60 outboard motors were damaged, mostly in the Noged area, particularly at Mafirihin. 204 houses and 44 stores also suffered damage.

We have also heard that there were floods on the island during November/December during which some 200 people were displaced; no further information is available at this time, but we will update you on this in the next *Tayf*.

More information and pictures are available on the website.

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Soqatra Nomination as a World Heritage Site

Work has begun on nominating Soqatra as a World Heritage Site on both natural history and cultural heritage grounds. We have offered the assistance of FoS and its members in this endeavour, which could provide a much higher profile and improved protection for the island's cultural and natural heritage.

Soqatra Exhibition Delayed to Summer 2006

The designer for the Soqatra Exhibition at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh has come back with some exciting plans for a really wonderful exhibition. In order to be able to realise these plans fully (i.e. to raise the requisite amounts of money required to deliver them) we have decided to put the Exhibition back to the summer of 2006. The Exhibition will include a Soqotran house and stories presented in a variety of interesting media about Trade, Aloes, Goats, Biogeography and Current Development Issues. We are still interested in hearing what artefacts and materials FoS members may be willing to contribute (contact Miranda at: Miranda@mirandamorris.com) and most especially any ideas people might have on fundraising. RBGE is still working out final figures, but we figure we'll need close to £50,000 to deliver the full Exhibition.

We are still planning on running a series of auxiliary events, including a scientific seminar and film/slide shows during 2006 in Edinburgh and its surroundings. Any ideas for contributions to this gratefully received (contact Sue at: drsuechristie@aol.com).

Questions or Comments?

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

Tayf

More information on all of these items, plus additional articles and pictures, will be available in the second bilingual edition of *Tayf* – which we hope to distribute during April.

The next edition of *Tayf* is in preparation – if you have any articles or items you would like to have included please send them to me (drsuechristie@aol.com) by the middle of February. We hope to produce the next edition in April; it will again be fully bilingual, but will not be quite as long as the last edition.

Annual General Meeting and Conference

The FoS AGM and annual conference were held in London on 18 – 19 September of this year. Attended by over 25 people, the Conference looked at current social and cultural issues in the afternoon, with talks by Neil Orr looking back at his trips to Soqotra in 1952 and 2002 and the many changes on the island in that time, by Edoardo Zandri and associates from SCF on their current activities on the island and by Peter De Geest on the work of the Soqotra Karst Team on caves and their potential as a water source. In the evening Miranda Morris provided a fascinating glimpse of the culture with recordings of poems and songs and explanations of their meanings and contexts. Full text of the contents will be available on the website shortly. The AGM took place the next day and involved a full discussion about future FoS activities, particularly the RBGE Exhibition (Annual Report 2003-4 and AGM minutes available on the website or by request).

Sewing Machines for Soqotran Women

Miranda Morris has been working on the delivery of the first ten machines to Soqotra during her current visit to the island. The machines have arrived, been checked and labelled as from Friends of Soqotra. Work is now underway to identify recipients, who will own the machines after they have received training in use and maintenance and trained six other women in how to use the machines. The machines will be distributed by the Biodiversity Project Office during January. Thanks to all those who donated funds for machines. If this first phase has been successful we hope to continue to expand this project.

Environmental Education

Darwin Project Passes First Hurdle

The Education Project, designed to produce education materials to support delivery of environmental education through the curriculum on Soqotra plus providing teacher training and support, has again been accepted through the first screening round by the Darwin Initiative. A full application is being prepared during early January by Roderic Dutton under the auspices of Durham University. We are hopeful that the project will receive funding to allow delivery over the next three years.

Edoardo goes to Cape Verde Islands

Edoardo Zandri, who has been working with the SCDP programme for many years on Soqotra, has now moved to the Cape Verde Islands. We would all like to extend our best wishes and our thanks to him for all the work and many successful outcomes he has delivered for Soqotra over the past few years. He remains in touch, and continues to help Soqotra from his new position.

Subscriptions Please!

It is now time for your 2004 – 2005 subscriptions. Please arrange payment as soon as possible so that we can continue our work (i.e., print *Tayf!*). Subscriptions are £20 sterling, E30, or \$40 and may be paid by cheque (made out to FoS in UK£ or to your country representative in other currencies) or via PayPal on the web (see FoS website for details – FriendsofSoqotra.org)

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.

Email Addresses

It is much easier – and infinitely cheaper – for us to communicate with you by email. If we do not have an email for you, but you are 'online' could you please send us your address? (contact John Farrar at John@soqotra.info).