

The Emirates Natural History Group in Al Ain Newsletter

Inter-Emirates Weekend



Continued on Page 2

Big Structures (By Verena Davies)

Seven ENHG members and supporters enjoyed a leisurely hike to the Big Structures (on the road from Buraimi to Mahdah) under the leadership of Jodie Healy. This was a short drive towards the small village of Afrathe.

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جمعية الامارات للتاريخ الطبيعي - العين



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Past/Upcoming Events:

Committee Meeting

4 February Islamic Institute 7:30 pm

General Meeting: Wildlife-livestock

11 February Islamic Institute 7:30 pm

Big Structures Hike

14 February Buraimi Hotel 2:45 pm

Inter Emirates Weekend

21 February Abu Dhabi See Timetable

Dresden Choir Outreach

22 February Al Ain Oasis 3:00 pm

General Meeting: UAE Federation

11 March Danat Resort 7:30 pm

General Meeting: Farewell Arabia

25 March Islamic Institute 7:30 pm

From Page 1 : Inter-Emirates Weekend

The end of February was marked by the annual IEW, or Inter-Emirates Weekend; an opportunity to meet, enjoy field trips, workshops and talks. This year the event was hosted by Abu Dhabi and is also the occasion when the parent group, the Abu Dhabi Chapter of the ENHG presents two annual prizes, the Sheikh Mubarak Award, and the Bish Brown Award. Both recipients will be invited to visit the Majlis of HESN (His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan) where he will personally award the prizes later in the year, each together with a cash prize.

The photograph (credits Amer Abu Kuhail) on page one shows the Chairperson of the Abu Dhabi ENHG Keith Taylor on the right bestowing the Bish Brown Award to David Edwards. The Award was given for a significant contribution to promoting wider interest in the objectives of the UAE's three natural history groups, through means such as educational activities, raising public consciousness in the media and playing a leading role in NHG activities. The award was endowed by former Vice Chairman, Terry Adams and former Secretary, Caroline Adams, to commemorate the founder of the ENHG, J.N.B. 'Bish' Brown. The award comprises a silver mounted falcon, to be held for one year by the recipient.



The Sheikh Mubarak bin Mohammed Prize for natural history was given to Dr. Sabah Jassim for a substantial, original contribution to knowledge of the history, natural history, culture, archaeology or paleontology of the UAE, such contribution being reflected through means such as publications and lectures.

The award was instituted by the ENHG Patron, HE Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan, and comprises an inscribed silver dhow. ✕

The Library

The library is housed in our ENHG room in the Islamic Institute. Members and non-members can access the catalog on-line under www.librarything.com/catalog/enhg.

The lending collection is available to members on a short term loan basis. Anyone is welcome to contact Verena (see the contacts information on page six) and she will make the arrangements for book access.

Joseph has a book cart with books for sale in addition to Verena's library. The cart is presently at the Danat Hotel, discussions are under way to find a way to transport it to the Islamic Institute (since the cart is large and heavy, it doesn't fit into a standard 4x4 vehicle). ✕

Carbon Conundrum (by Digby Scorgie)

Following the outline of the climate-change problem in the January issue, it should be of interest to consider the world's response to the problem and the action that should be taken. First let's look at the world's response to date:

The international community achieved little at the climate conference in Copenhagen in 2009. It was at least acknowledged that the increasing concentration of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere was causing the average global temperature to rise. It was also acknowledged that human activities were the cause of most of the emissions of these gases. There were warnings that, if the emissions were not reduced, the warming of the Earth's climate would become so dangerous as to threaten human civilization. Recent world weather events seem to indicate that these warnings are not idle.

It was decided that the increase in the average global temperature should be limited to no more than two degrees Celsius above the average prevailing at the start of the Industrial Revolution. Even so, a limit of two degrees might still be too high. Some research indicates that with this amount of warming the effect on the climate might be more severe than first thought. Other research indicates that the amount of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere is already sufficient to cause two degrees of warming. At least it is commendable that the international community was able to agree on a two degree limit.

Given the requirement to limit the amount of warming, and given the cause of the warming, a plea was made for deep cuts in greenhouse gas global emissions. How these cuts were to be effected was not addressed. Notwithstanding this plea, in the years since Copenhagen there has been no significant change at all in the world rate of emissions of greenhouse gases.

If the international community is serious about limiting global warming to no more than two degrees, then certain consequences inevitably follow. The first and most critical consequence is the necessity for a "Carbon Cap".

To grasp the concept of the Carbon Cap, consider for the moment only carbon dioxide of the different greenhouse gases. Any quantity of this gas released at a particular time into the atmosphere will remain there for several centuries before natural processes remove it. In particular, the carbon dioxide released at the start of the Industrial Revolution remains to this day in our atmosphere or in our seas. It is therefore not the amount of carbon dioxide emitted in any given year that is critical but the cumulative total emitted during the entire course of the Industrial Age. It is this cumulative total that determines the extent of global warming that we can expect.

As the cumulative total of carbon dioxide increases, so does the probability of exceeding the level of two degrees of warming. It has been estimated that, for a 50-50 chance of not exceeding two degrees, the cumulative total of the gas equals roughly 3 700 gigatonnes. But of this total, about 2 100 gigatonnes have already been emitted, which only leaves 1 600 gigatonnes remaining before we strike the limit.

This allowance of 1 600 gigatonnes of CO₂ constitutes the Carbon Cap. It is the maximum that may yet be emitted into the atmosphere before the chances of exceeding a two degree increase becomes worse than a 50-50 proposition.

Continued on the next page.....

Big Structures

From Page 1

An expansive flat plateau spread out after a short steep incline. The hikers followed a clearly marked trail to the remnants of an (not so long ago) abandoned village.



It must have been quite a settlement since it was built above a deep Wadi. The foundations of the houses and their protective walls are still well preserved as can be seen in the following photograph.



As evidenced above, the afternoon sun started casting a glowing light over the hills, so the expedition had to make an extra effort to head back home while there was still some light.

The tired climbers reached their cars just as it was getting dark. ✕

Carbon Conundrum

From Page 3

It is debatable whether 50-50 odds are acceptable. After all, this implies a one-in-two chance of remaining below two degrees, but also a one-in-two chance of exceeding two degrees. Better odds of three in four, say, would require a lower carbon cap of about 700 gigatonnes.

When next the international community attempts to confront climate change, their very first order of business should therefore be to recognize the necessity for a carbon cap and to agree on the magnitude of the cap. It is probably inevitable (knowing politicians) that the highest magnitude will be chosen, assuming there is even sufficient political will to actually set a limit in the first place. The carbon cap will be assumed to be 1600 gigatonnes in the ENHG March issue and the further consequences of this will be discussed. ✕

Who's Who (Alex Schmarr)

Here is the second article in a series that features some of our ENHG members; Alex is the ENHG Newsletter Editor and his picture is on page five.

Alex arrived in the UAE in 1991 for the first time and stayed for a while on the Island Marawah, working as an engineering expert and instructor.

Alex holds a BSc degree in electrical engineering (1975) from the University of the Witwatersrand and an MSc (1985) degree from the same university.

He is currently on a working pension after leaving South Africa in 2008 to work full time in the UAE, after serving 28 years with an aerospace company and three years with Siemens before that. Sadly his wife passed away in Abu Dhabi in 2011. He has three children and two grandchildren.

He has been touring the Al Ain and Dubai area recently, finding various geo caches and placing one of his own i.e. "Circles in the Sand" in Dubai (refer to the ENHG January newsletter to read what geo caching is all about). ✕

Photo Frenzy



The Newsletter Editor Alex Schmarr



White Tiger Placard Al Ain Zoo (Credit: Denis Milton)



Arabian Gazelle Placard Al Ain Zoo (Credit: Denis Milton)



Cape Griffon Vulture Placard Al Ain Zoo (Credit: Denis Milton)

Al Ain Zoo

The three Al Ain Zoo placards to the left are intended to whet your appetite to visit the real thing at the Al Ain Zoo!

There are over 4 000 animals to be seen, it is a center for endangered species conservation.

The zoo was founded in 1968 by the late Sheikh Zayed. ✕

The Al Ain Raceway

If go-carting tickles your fancy then you should take a trip past the Danat resort and visit the Al Ain Go Cart Raceway.



There is a shop and restaurant, the following vehicle is on display:



It is sure to interest the kids! ✕



Danat Resort Hotel

Meeting Locations

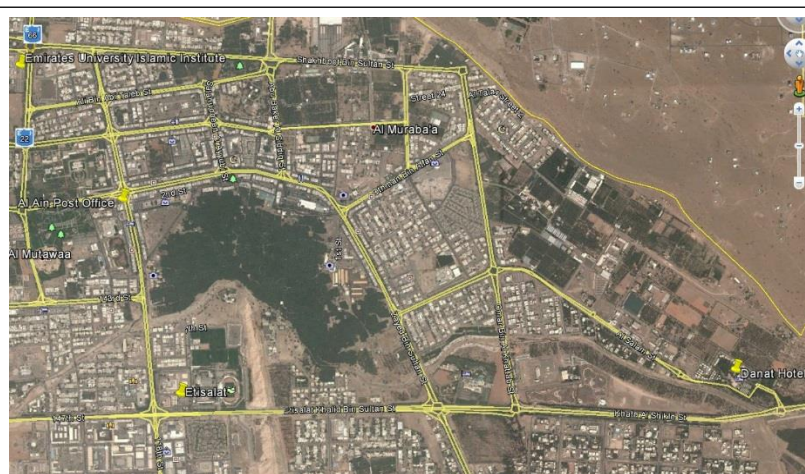
The Al Ain Chapter of the ENHG meets in two locations, the Danat Resort Hotel (at times when this venue is available) and also the Emirates University Islamic Institute.

General meetings as well as committee meetings take place on announced Tuesdays, all members and invited friends are welcome to attend either set of meetings.

Islamic Institute



Location Details (Courtesy of Google Earth)



Danat Resort GPS location : 24 12 29.32 N 055 48 15.69 E
Islamic Institute GPS location: 24 13 44.80 N 055 44 59.50 E

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