

# The Emirates Natural History Group in Al Ain Newsletter

## Oman Revisited (By Leslie Butler)



It's still there. Off the main road to Sohar, there are still peaceful, pristine valleys, silent but for the occasional bee or bird.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Hili Oasis

Why not visit the Hili Oasis in Al Ain? This newsletter presents this picturesque environment to investigate. The entrance to the site is depicted for you, as well as some pictures of historic buildings and restoration in progress. 24°17'5.56"N 55°46'14.22"E

*Continued on Page 4*

جمعية الامارات للتاريخ الطبيعي - العين



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### Past/Upcoming Events:

#### Wadi Nahyan Walk

18 April Green Mubazzarah 8:00 am

#### Can Conservation Programs Ever Work?

22 April Islamic Institute 7:30 pm

#### Wadi Towayya Field Trip

3 May Towayya 7:30 am

#### Infinity Pools Hike (Wadi Fey Rd)

9 May Buraimi Hotel 15:15 pm

#### Al Ain Oasis to Danat Walk

23 May Palace Museum 4:00 pm

#### General Meeting: Over-fishing

27 May Islamic Institute 7:30 pm

From Page 1: Oman Revisited



Isn't it time that you considered taking a hike down that track above? Wadi Nahyan is another prospect. After the hike you might enjoy a visit to the flowering prosopis tree just downstream of the Mosque. There are many arthropods (mostly hymenoptera) on the flowers and a Great Reed Warbler will probably serenade you while you are looking. Take a look at "Rock Art" in the "Photo Frenzy" section for more. ✕

## 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](http://www.librarything.com/catalog/enhg).

The Al Ain Natural History Group has received several book donations from former members expressing their gratitude for the interesting times they had while living in Al Ain.

This newsletter reviews several of these books, readers are encouraged to speak with our Librarian Verena Davies if you wish to borrow a book.

*Continued on page 4, please refer to the "Book Review" article.*

## Carbon Conundrum Continued (by Digby Scorgie)

### Regulating fossil-fuel production

The story so far: The international community would like to limit the amount of global warming to no more than two degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial average. This implies that a carbon cap is required -- probably 1 600 gigatonnes. In other words, for the foreseeable future at most 1 600 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide should be emitted into our atmosphere.

A cap of 1 600 gigatonnes is much less than the 2 800 gigatonnes that would be emitted if existing reserves of fossil fuel were fully exploited. This has two consequences: Firstly, a limit must be placed on the amount of fossil fuel that may be extracted from existing sources.

Secondly, all searches for additional sources must cease immediately. Regarding production, it will be necessary to reduce output gradually to zero (or near zero) over an agreed period.

Of course, no fossil-fuel producer will voluntarily countenance a steady decrease in annual production over a mandated period, let alone cease production at the end of the period. And no producer will voluntarily refrain from searching for additional sources of fossil fuel.

The international community will therefore need to establish a powerful body -- a Fossil-Fuel Regulatory Authority, say -- to enforce compliance.

The regulatory authority would need to dispatch teams all over the world to monitor continuously every fossil-fuel producer on the planet. To confer the necessary legitimacy, representatives from every region of the world would have to be included in each team.

Collectively, the teams would police all production of fossil fuel, issuing producers with permits for their annual production quota. The authority would also need to ensure compliance with the ban on exploration for new fossil-fuel resources.

No other regulatory scheme is practicable. Voluntary pledges have proved worthless. Of the various taxation schemes proposed, all have one fatal flaw: They would make fossil fuel increasingly expensive but, as the global economy adjusted, would not prevent the carbon cap from being exceeded.

No, the only workable solution is a deliberate world-wide phasing out of fossil-fuel production.

Although it is absolutely essential to phase out fossil fuels, readers may judge for themselves the likelihood of such an outcome. And this is all without considering the other greenhouse gases and the other sources of these gases, a topic that will be discussed in the next issue.

*To be continued in June/July.....*



## Book Review

**Seashells of Eastern Arabia by Donald Bosch, Published 1995 by Motivate Publishing.**

Accurate, concise and beautifully illustrated, this is the definitive book on the fascinating and unique seashell fauna of Eastern Arabia. The book is intended for both scientists and laypeople. More than 1,000 shell species are described in non-technical language and illustrated with original color photographs, scanning electron microscope images and line drawings (Publisher's information).

**Oman's geological heritage by Michael Hughes Clarke, Published by Petroleum Development, Oman.**

For the geologist, amateur no less than professional, Oman holds endless fascination. Its territory presents extraordinary contrasts: the dramatic arid massifs of the northern Jabal and the rolling upland pastures of Dhofar, the sand sea of Ar Rub al Khali, the vast salt pan of the Umm al Harasis, the wild beauty of its promontories and rockscapes. And mark the detail of it all - not merely the visual impact of the rock landscape but the information locked within or between the rocks - the fossils of marine life high in the mountains, or the oil deep underground, or the brilliantly elaborate crystal forms of its geodes, each of them carrying evidence of the drama of Oman's geological forming eons ago. This second edition of Oman's Geological Heritage, with its wealth of pictures and diagrams, places this absorbing and important field of knowledge within the reach of every reader (Publisher's information). *Continued on the next page.*

## Who's Who

Here is another article in a series that features some of our ENHG members; Joseph Mansour is the ENHG Treasurer.



Joseph has been in Al Ain since 2007 and works as a Senior Database Administrator in an IT outsourcing company. He joined the ENHG in early 2009, becoming a committee member later that year and then taking on the positions of Treasurer, book sales and administering the ENHG website. He is a keen hiker and has regularly organized clean up events for the ENHG. ✕

## Hili Oasis

*From Page 1*



The image above depicts what greets you when you arrive at the Hili Oasis. Take the plunge, drive in.....

**Snakes of Arabia; a field guide to the snakes of the Arabian Peninsula and its shores by Damien Egan, Published 2007 by Motivate Publishing.**

This first-of-its-kind field guide provides comprehensive and illustrated descriptions of all fifty-five species and subspecies of snakes indigenous to the Arabian Peninsula and its waters. With detailed information on how to identify snakes, as well as on the treatment of snakebites, *Snakes of Arabia* is a handy book for anyone active in the great Arabian outdoors. (Publisher's information).

**Travelling the sands: sagas of Exploration in the Arabian Peninsula by Andrew Taylor. Published 1995 by Motivate Publishing.**

The Arabian Peninsula has always held an intense fascination for travelers and was the stage on which some of their most poignant dramas unfolded. Using their first-hand accounts as a primary source, the author evokes the hardships they endured and explores the motivation behind "Travelling the Sands"

Illustrated with Victorian oil paintings, portraits of the explorers and a map of their various routes across the peninsula. (Publisher's information)

Although the above books are not new, they are new to our library and can be borrowed by any interested NHG member.

All books are held in the Islamic Institute Room book collection. Please ask Verena Davies for assistance (her contact details are on the last page of this newsletter).

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[www.enhg.org](http://www.enhg.org)

#### More Hili Oasis.....



*Hili Oasis Historic Buildings*



*Hili Oasis Mud Bricks for Restoration*



*Hili Oasis Restoration Scaffolding*

## Photo Frenzy



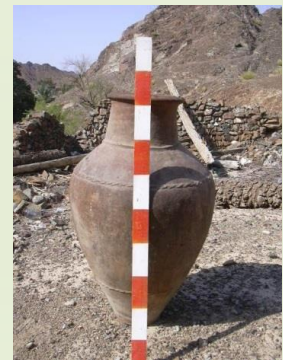
*Wadi Nahyan Rock Art (Credit:Leslie Butler)*

### A Plea

The Editor is always in need of articles and/or pictures to place into our newsletter and is convinced that many readers are hiding interesting artifacts in this class! If you have some copy that you would like to share, then please don't be shy. Email your contribution to the email address on the last page of this newsletter. Thank you in anticipation. ✕

### Jazira Date Storage Pot

*By Brien Holmes, Brigitte Howarth and  
Barbara Reimer*



Many years ago, when the Al Ain Natural History Group first visited Jazira, there were three date storage pots that were photographed.

Two were in a small open-sided shed behind the upper house where the laborers lived.

One was in the storage room, one of the two rooms of the new cinder-block addition to the original two-room stone house.

*Continued on the next page.....*



## Jazira Date Storage Pot - Reminiscences of a Time Gone By *Continued from page 6*

The storage room is in the building that was on the upper level of the housing area; there was a concrete manamah between the house and the hill, the shed was between the house and the field of aloe vera covering the cemetery.

Brien used to drag the pot out into the courtyard for folks to admire, enjoy and photograph before putting it back into the storage room. This article's introductory photograph on page six was taken by Brien and shows the unbroken pot.

After several years of enjoying the pots -- and after Jazira became a popular weekend destination -- the two pots in the shed disappeared and the shed was removed. The third pot (our date storage pot) was still hidden in the storage room.



*The Pot in Situ – Credit Bob Reimer*

However, on another visit the pot was not there and the party were sure it had been taken by someone other than the family still maintaining the oasis. However, as they moved around the settlement area, they found the pot beside a wall of the large house near the mosque, unfortunately broken into dozens of pieces.

As many of the pieces as could be found were gathered and Brien took the pieces to the museum (Al Ain National Museum). At the time, a Polish woman was working there; with Ibrahim's help, she put the pot back together again. Only a few small fragments were missing after this restoration.

From Brien's discussions with Ibrahim, it was concluded that the pot was not very old -- probably no more than 100 years old. The color of the pot was rather distinct; it was unlike any of the light beige pottery of Bahla and other major pottery centers of Oman.

Brien suspected it came from one of the mountain potteries of the UAE, most likely Ras al Khaimah, but it may have been from one of the potteries in Wadi Ham or Wadi Qor.

The color of the pot does not always reflect the color of the clay used, as clay usually changes color significantly in the firing process. The only reddish clay deposits ever seen were in the area of Wadi Bon, a few kilometers upstream from Wadi Hatta on the old Hatta mountain road--the unpaved section just before the painted hills.

Today the repaired pot is in the proud possession of the ENHG, a reminder of both the fragility of the items we see that are connected with the history of the UAE and the role we play in protecting and preserving that history to the best of our ability. ✕

**Under the patronage of H.E. Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan**

## Meeting Location

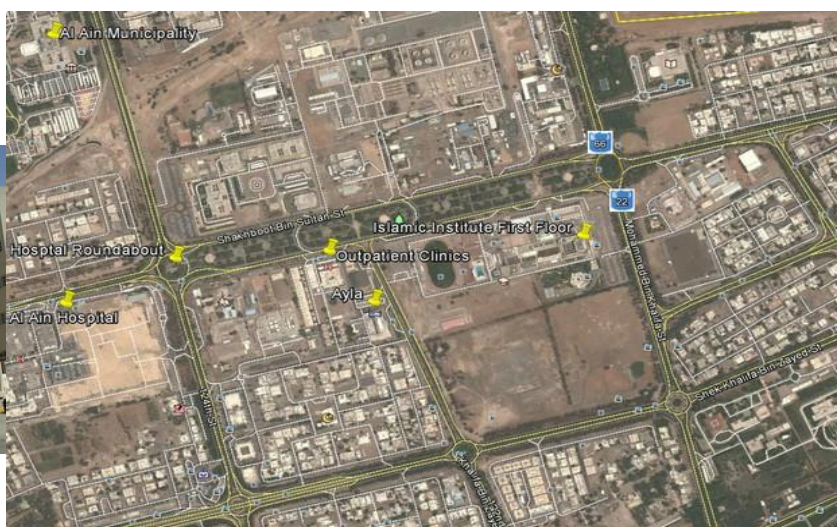
The Al Ain Chapter of the ENHG meets at the Emirates University Islamic Institute.

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

## Location Details (Courtesy of Google Earth)



*Islamic Institute*



Islamic Institute GPS location : 24 13 44.80 N 055 44 59.50 E

[www.enhg.org](http://www.enhg.org)

### Committee Members:

#### **Chairperson**

Brigitte Howarth [Brigitte.howarth@gmail.com](mailto:Brigitte.howarth@gmail.com) 050 619 7316

#### **Vice Chairperson**

Leslie Butler [Lesiebutler@yahoo.com](mailto:Lesiebutler@yahoo.com) 050 112 1637

#### **Treasurer**

Joseph Mansour [Josephmansour@yahoo.com](mailto:Josephmansour@yahoo.com) 050 130 4660

#### **Library**

Verena Davies [Verena.davies@gmail.com](mailto:Verena.davies@gmail.com) 050 583 4049

#### **Newsletter Editor**

Alex Schmarr [newsletter@enhg.org](mailto:newsletter@enhg.org) 055 834 5079

**Under the patronage of H.E. Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan**