

## VRIENDENDAG 2011 IN BURGERS' ZOO

Datum: Zaterdag 15 oktober 2011

Aanvang: 14.00 uur - zaal open 13.30 uur

Plaats: Burgers' Zoo / Burgers' Bush / Kilimanjaro Lodge (volg bordjes Safari Meeting Centre)

**Spreeker: Dr Sarah Darwin** met lezing getiteld **Following in Darwin's Wake**

De lezing wordt in het Engels gehouden

Belangstellenden kunnen zich melden bij het secretariaat: tel. 0622462591 en [info@galapagos.nl](mailto:info@galapagos.nl)

### Biography

Dr Sarah Darwin has been inspired and fascinated by plants since early childhood. Her desire to study plants arose during her time in the tropical rainforest in North Queensland, Australia (1991-1994).

Having been trained as an artist Sarah illustrated plants in water colour and pen and ink. She travelled in Australia and South America undertaking illustration commissions. One such commission was to illustrate the plants for a field guide to the Galapagos Islands (1996). While working on the paintings of the Galapagos tomatoes she discovered that there was a mismatch between the tomatoes that grew on the inhabited islands and the Galapagos tomatoes described in the literature.

In 1996 she enrolled on a degree course to study botany at the University of Reading UK. Having graduated with a First Class Honours Degree in 1999 Sarah started work as a research assistant at the Natural History Museum in London. Here, she studied how many species of tomatoes were growing in the Galapagos Islands. In 2000 she embarked on a PhD. Programme at University College London and the Natural History Museum London, graduating with a PhD. in genetics in 2009 and having solved the riddle of the Galapagos tomatoes



In 2009 Sarah joined VPRO Television company on the ambitious project to recreate Charles Darwin's voyage around the world on the HMS Beagle - the 35 episode television series entitled On The Future of the Species. This time, the voyage took one year instead of five and the team was sailing - in style and comfort - on the 76m Tea Clipper - The Stad Amsterdam.

Sarah says "My experience is unique: I share Charles Darwin's passion for nature and a small percentage of his DNA. I am so privileged to have been able to visit many of the very same places that Darwin visited, during his Beagle voyage. I feel a deep connection to these places, their stories and Charles Darwin's discoveries. They influenced him and they inspired me".

Sarah is a great-great granddaughter of Charles Darwin. She lives in London with her husband and two sons.

### **Following in Darwin's Wake** (summary)

Charles Darwin's voyage on the HMS Beagle was instrumental in changing the way how humans see themselves and the world we live in. In 2009-2010 I followed in the wake of Darwin's Voyage nearly 180 years later with the VPRO Television company. We made the award winning 35 episode television series *On the Future of the Species*. Visiting many places that influenced him, I began to know and discover my famous ancestor in new ways.

Many of the places have changed, probably beyond recognition, but they still tell fascinating stories about nature, human quest and folly. I too strolled through the Brazilian rainforest in wonder and awe at the biodiversity, rode with Gauchos across the Argentine Pampas, explored the pristine landscape and met Yagan Indians in Tierra del Fuego and was by puzzled the finches in the Galapagos Islands. I will share my voyage with you and discuss what was so inspirational to Charles Darwin and me.

The Galapagos Islands are often considered to have been the most inspirational place that Darwin visited during his five year voyage. Certainly Darwin's visit put the islands on *the map* and made them one of the most desirable tourist destinations in the world. This has been a double edged sword for the biodiversity and the people of this unique archipelago. Having been lucky enough to travel to the islands many times as a visiting scientist I will have the opportunity to talk a bit about the islands and their conservation.