



KAROO ORIGINS

The Fossil Centre

IN GRAAFF-REINET



June 2026 Newsletter

From research and educational milestones to exciting events and new discoveries, here is a look at what has been happening.

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A remarkable year at Karoo Origins!

Research



Research at Karoo Origins continues to uncover exciting new insights into the ancient life of the Karoo. Throughout the year, our palaeontologists and technicians have undertaken several successful field expeditions, contributing valuable new specimens to ongoing scientific research.

Exciting Fossil Discoveries

A collaborative field trip involving Karoo Origins, Wits University, and the Natural History Museum in London resulted in the discovery of several remarkable specimens, including a new biarmosuchian and a new species of gorgonopsian. These finds highlight the continued importance of the Karoo as one of the world's richest fossil regions.

The newly discovered gorgonopsian specimen is described in detail in this paper:

<https://anatomypubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/ar.70181>



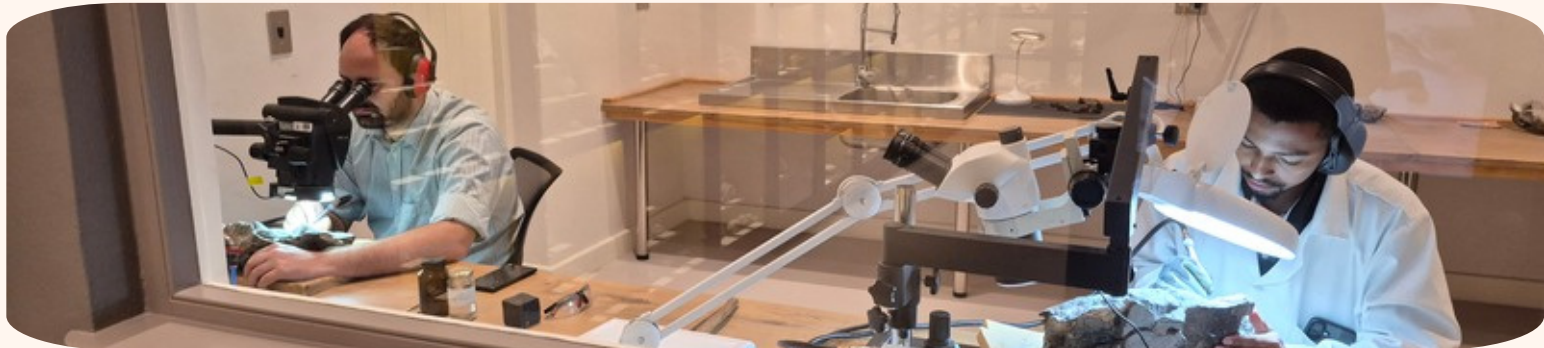
Research



Fossil Preparations

Visitors to Karoo Origins have the unique opportunity to observe fossil preparation in action and gain insight into the important work carried out behind the scenes by our palaeontological technicians.

Currently, fossils collected during a recent field expedition are being carefully prepared by our palaeontological technicians. This important work ensures that the specimens are preserved and ready for future research, helping to unlock even more secrets from the ancient past.



Congratulations, Dr Viktor Radermacher!

We are proud to celebrate a major milestone as Dr Viktor Radermacher successfully defended his doctoral thesis and earned his PhD. Congratulations on this outstanding achievement!

Looking Ahead

With more field trips planned for the remainder of the year, our research team is excited to continue exploring, discovering, and expanding our understanding of the prehistoric world.



Interested in palaeontological research? Visit the Karoo Origins Fossil Centre to learn more about the fascinating work taking place behind the scenes.

The Coffee Shop



Sip slowly and enjoy ☕

Our Coffee shop is a place where you can relax with family and friends. Enjoy a light meal, a cup of coffee or tea or even a glass of wine if thats what you prefer.

Guests have enjoyed our delicious menu, unbeatable coffees, and special seasonal offerings throughout the year, including a fun Valentine's Day special and our comforting Winter Soup Special, perfect for chilly Karoo days.

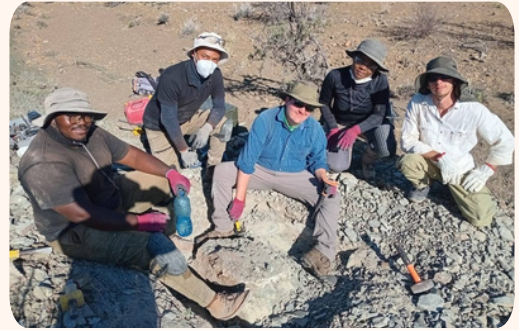
Whether you're stopping in for a quick coffee, a hearty meal, or a sweet treat after exploring the exhibits, there's always something to enjoy.



TIME FOR A COFFEE BREAK!

Did You Know?

The Karoo Basin holds one of the most complete records of land-living vertebrate evolution, spanning over 100 million years. Fossils found here include ancient mammal-like reptiles called therapsids, which are the ancestors of all modern mammals, including humans!



Some of our Favourite Fossils



At Karoo Origins we are big fans of 'The Kitching Fossil Centre'

Located in the charming village of Nieu-Bethesda in the Eastern Cape, the Kitching Fossil Exploration Centre celebrates the remarkable fossil heritage of the Karoo. Named after the Kitching family, who made significant contributions to palaeontology, the centre offers visitors an opportunity to explore the region's prehistoric past through displays, guided walks to look for fossils in the field, and educational programmes.

A must-visit for anyone interested in South Africa's deep history!



HERE ARE SOME VERY IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT OUR TEAM

WE LOVE NATURE



TEA TIMES ARE NEVER DULL



WE LOVE OUR UNIFORMS



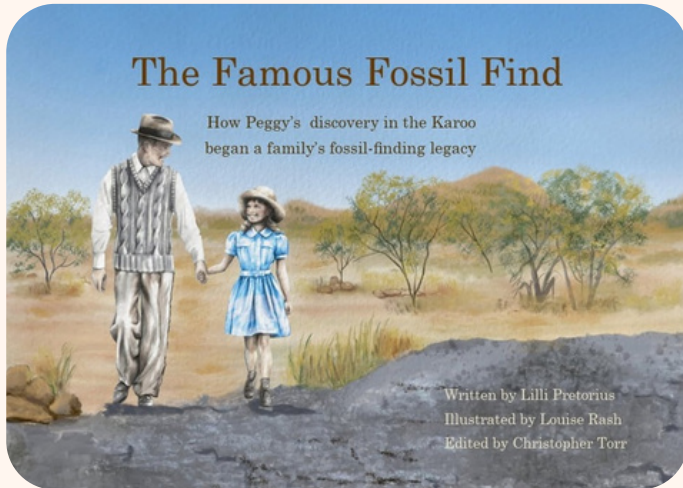
WE WILL MARKET KAROO ORIGINS ANY CHANCE WE GET



Our Gift Shop

The Karoo Origins Gift Shop continues to grow, offering a wide variety of souvenirs, gifts, stickers, and exclusive merchandise inspired by the fascinating world of palaeontology and Therapsids.

THE FAMOUS FOSSIL FIND



We were excited to introduce a new children's book into our gift shop, **The Famous Fossil Find**, written by the Torr siblings, the book tells the remarkable story of the famous Wellwood fossil discovery made by their mother, Peggy Torr, when she was a young girl exploring with her father in the Karoo veld.

This book is so beautifully written and illustrated and is available in English and Afrikaans.

If you would like your very own copy they are for sale for R190 in our gift shop or they can be ordered from Marina Rubidge by sending her an email (marina@fossilcentre.co.za).

We highly recommend that you get your hands on one very soon!



Visitors can also explore some other exciting additions to the gift shop, including handcrafted jewellery by Lance Hawkins, a variety of educational and entertaining books, stickers, children's clothing, and our much-loved African plush toys. These unique items make the perfect gift or souvenir to remember your visit to Karoo Origins.



Come and Explore

Whether you're searching for the perfect gift, a memorable souvenir, or simply a great cup of coffee, the Karoo Origins Coffee Shop and Gift Shop have something for everyone. We look forward to welcoming you soon!

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

This year marked an exciting milestone for Karoo Origins with the opening of our Education Centre. Through the generosity of Philippe Guenat, the education centre has been set up and furnished. Lindsay Kingwill, an experienced Life Sciences Teacher was appointed as the educational officer in January and has already established a vibrant education programme.

Our mission is simple: to inspire curiosity, foster a love of science, and help young people discover the incredible prehistoric history preserved in the Karoo.



What We've Achieved So Far

Since opening our doors, the Education Centre has proudly welcomed a variety of school groups of all ages, non-profit organisations, and private learners. Through guided tours, interactive activities, and educational lessons, children have had the opportunity to engage with science in a fun and meaningful way.

Highlights from the first half of this year include:

- Hosting numerous school and community group visits
- Delivering educational tours and hands-on fossil activities
- Launching our popular Fossil Fridays programme
- Running exciting holiday programmes for young explorers
- Expanding opportunities for learners to engage with palaeontology and natural science



Looking Ahead

We are incredibly proud of what has been achieved in our first 6 months and are excited about all that is still to come. As the Education Centre continues to grow, we look forward to welcoming even more learners and sharing the wonders of the ancient world with our community.

KIDS CORNER

Do You Know Your Therapsids?



Biarmosuchian



Dicynodont



Gorgonopsian



Therocephalian



Dinocephalian



Cynodont

Spot the Difference!

Find ten differences in these two pictures of therapsids



Did You Know?

★ Therapsids lived over 250 million years ago - long before the dinosaurs! Some were as small as a mouse, while others were as big as a hippopotamus. Many fossils have been found right here in the Karoo!



DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THERAPSID?

★ If you ever have any questions, ask our team by clicking on the link and we just might have the answer!

<https://forms.gle/H85rVrQZuF5MuWUMA>



Special guests and exciting moments



One Year of Karoo Origins!

This year we celebrated a major milestone—our first birthday! It has been an incredible journey filled with discovery, learning, and community support. Thank you to everyone who has helped make our first year such a success. Here's to many more years of uncovering the past!

A Special Celebration

We were delighted to celebrate a milestone birthday with our Director, Professor Bruce Rubidge. His passion, leadership, and dedication to palaeontology continue to inspire all of us at Karoo Origins. Thank you for allowing us to share in this special occasion!



New Temporary Exhibit: The Great Karoo Wilderness



Welcoming Future Scientists

It's always exciting to welcome students to Karoo Origins. This year, we had the pleasure of hosting students from Wits University, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, and the University of Johannesburg, giving them the opportunity to engage with our exhibits, research, and the fascinating fossil heritage of the Karoo.



★ Stoeptasting 2026



KAROO ORIGINS
The Fossil Centre

NIGHT IN THE MUSEUM

FRIDAY 22 MAY 2026 17:30 - 19:30 TICKETS R80

Experience the museum after hours and feel the ambience that comes only from being surrounded by fossils of your ancestors.

- Explore incredible exhibits
- Fun pub quiz (all welcome!)
- Snacks included
- Drinks available to buy

REMINDER!
Don't forget - this Friday!

TO RSVP AND SECURE YOUR TICKET scan the QR code or follow the link:
<https://forms.gle/TKCyDmk9MB4wHPbK9>

KAROO ORIGINS
The Fossil Centre

Scan to book!

Good food, great company, and a museum after dark! Stoeptasting 2026 brought visitors together for an exciting Night at the Museum, guided tours, fascinating stories, and plenty of fun.



Media Appearances



Department of International Relations & Cooperation's Ubuntu Magazine

<https://dirco.gov.za/ubuntu-magazine-issue-36-30-april-2026/>



International Spotlight
Karoo Origins featured in a French documentary, sharing our story with audiences abroad.



Karoo Origins: The Fossil Centre

A visit to the centre is a trip back in time to when prehistoric animals roamed the earth.

Karoo Origins: The Fossil Centre is a remarkable palaeontological exhibition centre positioned in Graaff-Reinet, known as the Cradle of the Karoo, which is internationally renowned for its rich history of prehistoric encounters. A feature of the centre is that all the fossils from the remarkable Rubidge Collection, comprising more than 850 fossil skulls, are displayed. A large dynamic diorama

showcases life-size reconstructions of the prehistoric animals which once roamed the Karoo, giving visitors an appreciation of the size and diversity of early life in the Graaff-Reinet area. An international award-winning exhibition, showcasing the international prehistoric animals of the Karoo around an ancient waterhole in the Graaff-Reinet area. A special display on past global extinction events and their effect on biodiversity focuses

on the causes and effects of the end Permian extinction, the greatest extinction of all times which obliterated species from the face of the Earth. This is pertinent as Lindberg Peak 40 km north of Graaff-Reinet, preserves the best record in the world of this extinction event. This was caused by ongoing volcanic activity in Siberia 252 million years ago and resulted in global warming and a prolonged drought causing the extermination of 90% of species in a relatively short time.

Karoo Origins is a living centre actively engaged in research on the fossils and rocks of the Karoo. Visor Rubidge demonstrates palaeontological collecting and excavating



Discovering life before dinosaurs, an
Article in the Daily Maverick

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-03-12-the-karoo-fossil-finder-discovering-life-before-the-dinosaurs-in-south-africa/>

Stellenbosch Visio magazine.

<https://www.stellenboschvisio.co.za/>

THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES

Make sure you check out our website for all these exciting things that are still to come this year!

Monthly Quiz Nights



More Fossil Fridays



Honorary Rangers Palaeontology Tour



School Visits & Educational Programmes



Upcoming Field Trips



New Temporary Exhibits and Research Updates



www.karooorigins.com

Visit Karoo Origins in Graaff-Reinet

Discover. Learn. Explore.

Whether you're a:

- curious traveller
- fossil enthusiast
- family looking for adventure
- school group
- researcher
- lifelong learner

There is something for everyone at Karoo Origins.



Remember to book guided tours!

They are the best way to experience our Fossil Centre!

Contact Us

Phone: 087 093 6135

Website: www.karooorigins.com

Click here to follow us on social media:



Opening Hours

Monday - Saturday: 08:30 - 16:30

Sunday: 08:30 - 12:00

Public Holidays: 08:30 - 12:00

Closed on: Christmas Day, New Year's Day and Easter Sunday

Bookings recommended for groups

[Click here to Join our community WhatsApp group to receive weekly updates about Karoo Origins!](#)