

8th Austin Roberts Memorial Lecture

*"Evolution of Africa's
deserts and mammal
fauna since the early
Miocene"*

presented by
Martin Pickford





8th AUSTIN ROBERTS MEMORIAL LECTURE

“Evolution of Africa’s deserts and mammal fauna since the Early Miocene”

by

Martin Pickford, Collège de France, Paris

WHEN: Tuesday, 18th October, 2011

WHERE: Main Auditorium, Ditsong National Museum of Natural History (ex-Transvaal Museum), Paul Kruger Street, Pretoria

TIME: 18h30 onwards

PARKING: Safe parking is available in the museum parking area (Minaar Street)

REFRESHMENTS: Drinks and light snacks will be served after the lecture

COST: Entry is free, but booking is required

RSVP (by 14 Oct): Greg Davies, greg@ditsong.org.za or 012-322-7632

MARTIN PICKFORD

Dr Martin Pickford is one of the most distinguished and productive mammal palaeontologists active today. A specialist on the evolution of the Suoidea (pigs and pig-like animals), Hyracoidea (hyraxes), Tubulidentata (aardvarks) and Hominidae (hominids), he obtained his PhD in Geology from the University of London in 1975, studying the sedimentary deposits of the Tugen Hills, Kenya. Since 1993, he has been based at the Collège de France, Paris as Senior Palaeontologist. Pickford’s palaeontological research has taken him to Uganda, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa and Egypt, amongst other countries in Africa and Eurasia. Since the early 1990s, he and his colleagues have been especially active in the Namib Desert, culminating in major monographs on the geology and palaeobiology of this desert system. Their Namib Desert research allowed for the accurate dating for the onset of desert conditions in the Namib and the discovery of numerous fascinating fossil mammals such as giant hyraxes, dwarf elephantoids, primitive bovids, strange giraffoids and many others. In this lecture, Pickford reviews much of this and other research, elucidating the origins of the Namib, Sahara and other deserts and what we have learnt about the remarkable fossil histories of the animals which populate them.

