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CAPE POINT

Activist's legacy lives on

RACINE EDWARDES
@RaeEdwardes

An almost 30-year-old passion project is now the living legacy of a man who will be missed by many an animal lover across the country.

Shaun Bodington, whose dedication to protecting animals was beyond measure, served as the chief inspector at the Cape of Good Hope SPCA for many years.

Working across Cape Town, he implemented a number of campaigns to save animals, including the cart horse protection unit and the anti-fireworks campaign to ban the use of fireworks in residential areas.

Shaun and his wife of 26 years, Tracey, met at the SPCA and opened the famed snake park at Imhoff Farm near Kommetjie.

There they rescued, rehomed and rehabilitated snakes but as their time at the farm came to an end, they decided to reach out to their friends at the Cape Point Ostrich Farm.

"I said to Shaun, we have two choices.

"We could either throw in the towel – that which we've worked for, for over 20-odd years.

"Or try and find another place," Tracey says.

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Tracey Bodington shows off her angulate tortoises. PHOTOS: RACINE EDWARDES



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“Managers at the ostrich farm, Catherina and Alistair Bairnsfather-Cloete’s daughter, Ella, was actually at the Imhoff farmhouse a long, long time ago. Little Ella fell in love with me – and I had no idea. Then they said that, if ever we needed a place for the animals, just to let them know.”

The deal came together last year in November, around the same time Shaun was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer. Just two months later, on Sunday

12 January, Shaun succumbed to his illness, but Tracey says his legacy lives on in what they’ve built at the ostrich farm with the business partners who now feel more like family to her.

At the ostrich farm, they built two enclosures for tortoises – more than 10 of which were rescued from an owner ill-equipped to keep them.

They also built a 15m enclosure – decked out with a 2m deep pond – for their three crocodiles and one alligator as well as a snake sanctuary where they still rescue, re-

home and rehabilitate a range of snakes.

“The Bairnsfather-Cloete, and their parents, Dr Ernst and Angelika Coelle, who own the ostrich farm have been our biggest sponsors. We’ve all come together as a family to build on our passions.”

Tracey says support has played a big part in keeping her spirits up during this difficult time. Ashley de Beer, Will de Meyer, Peter Chiswani, David Fellows and Nathan Christian have been instrumental in keeping the reptile sanctuary going by working with the animals and cleaning the snake enclosures; some permanently and some on a voluntary basis.

What to see and do

A visit to the ostrich farm is a fun outing for the entire family. Buy a packet of feed for the ostriches and snap away as perfect photo opportunities present themselves.

At the Hatchery, a restaurant that complements the serene farm environment, visitors can taste delicious meals made from ostrich eggs. Only the infertile ones that did not produce chicks are used.

The curio store also offers a number of items which are sustainably made and serve as mementoes of the day out.

Tours are conducted through the ostrich and snake farms and all the proceeds are put back into the sanctuary.

▶ Visit the websites capepointostrichfarm.com or www.minimoshows.org for more information.



The reptile sanctuary keeps snakes born and bred in captivity or those who have been rescued for rehabilitation. Wild snakes are re-released into the wild.



Ostrich chicks live with others similar in age until they are large enough to roam in the pens.



Ostriches enjoy 65ha of sprawling space at the farm.