



Burchell's Travels: The Life, Art and Journeys of William John Burchell | 1781-1863

Susan Buchanan

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In November 1810, a thirty-year-old Englishman named William John Burchell landed in Cape Town after several years as a naturalist on St Helena island. The following year he embarked on an epic journey through the Cape Colony, lasting four years and covering 7000 kilometres, mainly through unexplored terrain. During this time he collected over 50 000 plant and animal specimens and built up a vast collection of sketches and paintings. He went on to travel in Brazil, and after many years back in Britain, he took his own life at the age of eighty-two. Burchell's Travels recreates the life and journeys of a remarkable explorer, naturalist, botanist, writer, artist, cartographer, ethnographer and linguist, who is best known for his two-volume Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa, his extraordinary map of the country, and for the many species of animals, birds and plants that are named after him. Drawing from the rich source of Burchell's writings, and beautifully illustrated with over 100 of his sketches and paintings, this book is a fascinating account of travel 200 years ago, and a celebration of the life, art and vision of an extraordinary man.

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