

Notes brought to Meeting on 14 January 2013 by David Hamilton

The starting point last week was to meet Jenny Chivers in the shop, and talk to Lorna Unsworth at the Museum. They spoke of Steve Jones at Waterlooville library and Russell Cleaver in Winchester, and of Daniel Willets involvement at the time of the restoration of the greenhouses, and of Chris Bailey, Head Horticulturalist Staunton Country Park. And Chris talked of Jodi Eastbery at Alverno College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin USA.

The books I have been reading;

- An authentic account of an embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China by Sir George Leonard Staunton (2 volumes with a volume of maps and pictures).
- The Collision of Two Civilisations by Alain Peyfitte (originally in French)
- Leigh Park A 19<sup>th</sup> Century Pleasure Ground by Derek Gladwyn.

Two books I found last week in Petersfield;

- Photographs of Imperial China
- The Opium War Brian Inglis

The subject of my research these last two years has been George Leonard Staunton, the writer of the account, which is a very important and readable book and his son George Thomas Staunton who studied Chinese on the boat from the interpreters and later worked for the East India Company in Canton. He can be considered one of the founders of Hong Kong. There is a Staunton street in mid-levels. When he came back to England he bought the Leigh Park Estate and was a member of Parliament, and advised Palmerston, also an MP for Portsmouth, on Chinese affairs.

I am also interested in the empire of Emperor Qianlong. This year (2012) in May I visited Chengde also called Jehol and the garden and park there, and in Beijing I went to Yuan Ming Yuan the Old Summer Palace where the Embassy stayed. In July 2012 I visited Mongolia, including the temple built by Emperor Qianlong and his predecessor on the Mongolian-Russian frontier called Amarbayasgalant Khiid. IN May 2011 I visited Xinjiang Aksu and Kashgar (this used to be called Eastern Turkestan and was the western most extent of Qianlong's empire.

JH working at Aichi University in Nagoya. It is famous in Japan for Chinese studies (language, literature, economics, history, politics) and living at Lordington House, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 9DX. Telephone 01243 375862.

In China from 1/27 – 2/2 and Japan from 2/2 – 2/16  
Back in the UK from 2/16 – 4/5

I hope to work at Aichi University for the next 5 years.

Proposal for the future based on just one week of thinking about it. The Staunton Country Park seems to me to consist of the Park (with lake and follies and beautiful and interesting trees) the garden (with fine greenhouses and plants) the zoo and the stable block with tea rooms, and the Gothic Library. The weak point is the Gothic

Library. George Thomas Staunton's books all went to the Royal Asiatic Society in London and some of them are still there.

#### Project at low cost

The library building should be tidied up inside (maybe painted white. My view I don't think the original gothic interior needs to be restored).

In it there should hang some pictures – the Portrait of Staunton (the pictures would cost almost nothing).

- the meeting with the Chinese Emperor
- examples of Staunton calligraphy
- picture of the ship which went from Portsmouth to Tianjin – Lion or Huidostan
- map of the journey
- map of the journey of the Embassy in China (names in characters and pinyin)
- picture of the Great Wall
- a picture of Staunton Hexaphilla
- a list with map of all the plants and trees in the garden and park and where they came from
- a picture of Hong Kong

I think there should be a Staunton website, maybe a Staunton Institute Educational Activities Relating to China.

The institute could have exhibitions with Chinese themes – Chinnery's paintings, dance performances by minority peoples, Chinese cooking classes, Chinese language classes, opera...all based in the Gothic library, at present not much used.

The place should be on the map to welcome Chinese visitors to Havant. It could be an outpost of the Royal Asiatic Society selling their books (very helpful Helen Porter Assistant Librarian 0207 388 4539)

Last week I was given a list of books etc. The George Thomas Staunton Collection, held in the RAS library May 1998. Also copies of letter from Lord McCarthy translated into Chinese.

#### People and Possible Help

There are many people who would be interested in this. There is David Willets MP for Havant who already knows about it. There should be links to Chinese Universities. The library of the University of Hong Kong (Edith Chan) has the only 5 Volume Account of the Embassy in the world (which is an e-book)and many other materials. Another is the National University in Beijing. At the end of January I will be seeing Prof. Zhang Haiyang of the Graduate School there and will tell him about it. Also I will be visiting Nankai University in Tianjin. Also it should be linked in to Southampton University locally.

There is Alex Pearson who runs the Bookworm in Beijing (internet café, library and bookshop). There are branch shops in 3 or 4 other Chinese cities. Her mother and father live in Emsworth.

There is Martyn Rix who could give botanical help particularly with regard to the Chinese plants and trees. He is the best person in England on this subject.

Locally there is the Stansted Foundation (next door) and the Portsmouth Dockyards Museum (the Victory etc) and Brian Dawson (he lives in Emsworth or Southbourne), the architect, who would make sure the Gothic library is properly repaired and restored (but not to the original form (my view)).

The thing is that the world had changed and Havant should welcome China and this would be an interesting and very low cost way to do it, at least to start doing it. It would be good for people in Havant too.

#### Sunday afternoon with Chris and Tatiana Bailey

1. Chris brought some very good photographs:
  - The picture of GTS with his mother and a Chinese boy (on the net).
  - A watercolour of the Lion and the Fort Saluting at the entrance to the Canton River.
  - The McCartney Rose Rosa Bracteata
  - Lovely paintings of Leigh Water with its Jollies, also photographs of the garden in beautiful lights. (These would all make good postcards for the shop).
  - Picture of Nicholas Maclean, the Chinese Ambassador and David Willets MP etc at the opening of the greenhouses.
  - Gardeners (one in a bowler hat) photographed with the Areca Palm.
  - The Amazon Water Lily, beautiful but with vicious thorns on the backs of the leaves.
  - The ornate interior of the Gothic Library, as was.
2. We talked about the Asian Water Buffalo, Mr Plum, which had been in the zoo.
3. He showed me the gardeners Chronicle 1845 with an article about the greenhouses and plants in them.
4. He also pointed out the Staunton Rose Garden which is now a maze. (Maybe this should be resurrected on another site. The China Rose transformed rose breeding in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century... All David Austin's roses have Chinese ancestors).
5. We looked at internet printouts of Chinese gardens outside China in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and talked about 'friendship' Gardens and Twinning.
6. We talked about the Opium War which Staunton supported. I think the best thing for us British to do now is to apologise for what happened and say we are sorry and at the Country Park we should make up for it by welcoming Chinese people. It is not so simple as this but we should leave the analysis to historians and move on.

## Agenda Item 5: Document 5b

(I thought of Zhou Zheny Yuan, one of the great gardens in Suzhou, 5 hectares of bridges and pavilions, bamboo groves, lotus ponds, great carp, cobbled paths, beautiful rocks....with all their literature and historical associations....it is like a dream).