

Minutes of a meeting about the Chinese Project

Location: Staunton Country Park

Date: Monday 14th January

Time: 2pm

Present:

- o Tim Speller – Estates Manager QECP/SGSCP (tim.speller@hants.gov.uk)
- o Kerry Bailey – Education Officer QECP/SGSCP (kerry.bailey@hants.gov.uk)
- o Chris Bailey – Head Horticulturalist SGSCP (chris.bailey@hants.gov.uk)
- o Stephen Jones – Librarian at Waterlooville Library, former keeper of Havant Museum (stephen.jones@hants.gov.uk)
- o Mark Pitchforth – Archivist at the Hampshire Record Office (mark.pitchforth@hants.gov.uk)
- o Tracey Viney – Project Officer at Portsmouth Water (T.viney@portsmouthwater.co.uk)
- o Gareth Siu – Community Engagement Officer for Hampshire Countryside (gareth.siu@hants.gov.uk)
- o John Hamilton – (hamiltonsasashima@g.mail.com)
- o Tara Fisher – Member of Multicultural Society Fareham and Gosport (tara.fisher9@gmail.com)
- o Angela Qiu – Member of multicultural Society Fareham and Gosport (xuechunqiu@yahoo.co.uk)

The meeting began with a short slide presentation from Chris Bailey which introduced the history of the estate and its Chinese connections.

There followed a general discussion on the subject with various key points and contacts raised (1) and suggestions as to the way forward (2);

1.

- Jodi Eastburg – Associate Professor of History and Anglo-Chinese studying at Alverno College, USA was currently writing a biography of George Thomas Staunton.

A summary of this work would be attached to the minutes. Jodi recently visited SGSCP and gave a presentation to staff/friends.(A)

- Jenny Wong – coordinator of the Manchester Chinese Archive (www.mchinesecentre.org.uk) had put details about the project on the MCA newsletter. 3 students had been in touch to offer help. All would be sent a copy of the minutes.
- The Hampshire Record Office (www.hants.gov.uk/archives)
- The Royal Asiatic Society (www.royalasiaticsociety.org)

George Thomas Staunton donated about 3000 Chinese books and manuscripts, stored in the Gothic Library, to the R.A.S.
These are catalogued although not all remain at the Society.

- SGSCP Stained Glass Project

K.B had obtained HLF funding for a project which would replace the plain leaded windows of the Gothic Library with stained glass.

- New Business plan and a management plan

Were being drawn up for SGSCP. As part of this process the management of all the historic buildings and remains was being reviewed.

- The Staunton Archive

Exists in part at the Havant Museum, in the HCC Record Office in Winchester and at the Royal Asiatic Society. Limited information is held at the Country Park Gardens. This will become a reservoir at same point in the future.

The project would be put on the SGSCP website.

- The Gothic Library

Currently this building has informal use as an open space for events and educational activities.

2.

T.S - To make the core part of the Staunton archive accessible both to staff, academics and the general public.

- The Gothic Library is in need of a future.
- The two aims could be combined as a cultural/interpretational centre.

C.B – Botanically/horticulturally and culturally the Chinese project is very relevant to the Park.

- G. Staunton sponsored key plant hunters of the time (i.e. Robert Fortune). The borders surrounding the Gothic Library could be planted to reflect the many introduced species.
- The introduction and development of tea drinking is a key theme. G. Staunton was the real 'Earl Grey'.
- The year long expedition to China in the 1780s with its 5 volume written record (e-link to be attached to minutes).(B) This is kept in the Hong Kong Library. The connections with the locally based H.Q of the East Indian Company and the historic Portsmouth Dockyard are all key links.

K.B – the Park receives 12,000 school visits each year. The G. Staunton Story, particularly the travels of an 11 year old to China could be inspirational to local children. The Gothic Library could become an interpretational hub for the Park.

- A themed language or plant trail would be a small scale start-up project.
- A Chinese reference/icon/logo could be introduced to the Parks' Suite of promotional/informational literature.

T.V – As the Portsmouth Water Reservoir Project develops interpretation of the historic landscape over the longer time scale would be important.

From a previous consultation it had become clear that the local community was keen for a low intensity recreation rather than a 'water park'.

S.J – The whole story of Leigh Park, including Garrett, Staunton and Store, was important. A resource centre where people could access this information would be a great project.

M.P - The HCC Record Office has the facilities for digitalising its archive.

There is quite a lot of Staunton material present as well as Chinese reference works. The R.O can help with the decision on what sources ought to be included and the best way of presenting them.

The R.O can also offer advice to community groups as to the best way to access relevant archives.

G.S – 4 levels of project are possible;

- Community members visiting the Park as part of the 'walk on the wildside' Project (ends in September).
- Academic links with the archive in Havant Museum, the Record Office, the Park, and with China.
- To build on the 'walk on the wildside' Project with workshops involving a craft element, i.e. Chinese painting.
- Larger public events for all the wider communities to build a sustainable relationship with the Park.

J.H – John handed out his key points and thoughts for the future. These will be attach to the minutes.

A.Q – Start with a small project for all communities for example Kite making and build up from there.

Language/communication problems remain the big issue for inter-cultural projects if they are to be accessible to everyone.

Links to Chinese gardens, cities (possibly with Havant) or institutions were raised by several of those present.

Conclusion

After a very successful first meeting the minutes and links would be circulated for further thoughts/comments.

The Park team would then recommend a series of actions to move the project forward.

This response would be circulated before the end of February to be followed by a second meeting on April..... at 1.30pm at Staunton Country Park.