

Heritage Lottery Fund award prompts a trip to the Powell-Cotton Museum from the Angolan Cultural Attaché

A new display of African artifacts, film footage and photographs funded by a Heritage Lottery grant to the Powell-Cotton Museum has attracted the attention of the Angolan Embassy in London. The Embassy dispatched their Cultural Attaché to visit the important new Angolan exhibit on Wednesday 20th July.

The Powell-Cotton Museum in Quex House has nine galleries devoted to the life's work of Major Percy Horace Gordon Powell-Cotton (1866-1940). The famous Victorian explorer, collector and conservationist, made expeditions to India and Africa, gathering zoological specimens and anthropological artifacts. The scientific recording of his information means that the Museum now holds the largest collection of endangered and extinct African and Asian animals' DNA in the world, that are used internationally for research and active conservation projects.

When Antoinette and Diana Powell-Cotton, daughters of the famous scientific traveller Major Percival Powell-Cotton travelled to Angola it was always with an interest in learning about the culture and lives of the people they were going to meet. They were encouraged by the British Museum to travel to an area little visited by English speaking researchers during the 1930s, a time of great change in the Southern Africa. Collecting over 3000 cultural objects, taking over 3000 photographs and recording almost 4 hours of film they achieved their objective and exhibited their findings in the galleries of the Powell-

Cotton Museum at Quex Park in Birchington. Little did they know at the time that their style of collecting would have such strong visual potential in our multimedia age.

Fast-forward to today and the museum has just won a Heritage Lottery Fund award to redisplay the Angolan collection with a more contemporary feel. A recent event for the Angolan community in London brought Angolan Photographer Joaquim Fortunato face to face with the people of his countries past. After looking through a sample of the images available he proposed returning to the places the Powell-Cottons had visited to take photographs of the way they look today.

“This is beyond the type of response we were hoping for, yet goes to the heart of our objective of making these collections meaningful in a contemporary way,” said Catherine Moore the Co-curator of the Exhibition.

Joaquim then contacted the Angolan Embassy who have proven keen to support his trip. In response Antonio Sampaio the Angolan Embassy Cultural Attaché is made a trip to the museum to examine the collection at first hand and see how links between the two countries can be promoted.

ADMISSION AND OPENING TIMES

Summer 2011 (April-October)

Tuesday - Sunday (OPEN BANK HOLIDAY MONDAYS) 10am-5pm

The House opens from 2pm-5pm

Museum, House and Gardens

Adults: £7.00

Concessions (senior citizens, children up to 16, disabled, full-time students).

Under 5s: Free

Family Ticket: £20.00 (2 adults, up to 3 children)



Editors' Notes: Photos and press passes available

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