

Press Release:

Angolans across Britain flock to the Powell-Cotton Museum. September 2011 The Powell-Cotton Museum and the Lord Mayor of Margate host an HLF funded open day for the Angolan community at the museum.

Few people realise that the Powell-Cotton museum holds the largest collection of Angolan material in Great Britain. With over 3000 objects, 3000 photographs and over three hours of archive film showing life in the 1930's in Angola. This is an important resource so far largely inaccessible to those whose history it is. Much of it has remained stored in cupboards or as undeveloped film without seeing the light of day for nearly eighty years, this will all change on the 17th of September.

With support from a Heritage Lottery Fund grant the museum will for the first time in its history host a visit by the Angolan community in the UK. This oversubscribed event will see over 70 Angolan community members travel from all over the country to discover the unique collection of Angolan material held by the museum.

The material was collected by Diana and Antoinette Powell-Cotton the daughters of the founder of the museum, the two sisters travelled to Southern Africa in the late 1930's to collect evidence of cultures they feared were about to disappear for ever through modernisation and colonisation.

Since May 2011 the museum has been forging relationships with various Angolan organisations including the Angolan Embassy, the Angolan Cultural Foundation and Welwitschia. Various events held in London over the summer now culminate in this visit to the museum where community members will be given exclusive access to the hundreds of objects usually held in storage.

Catherine Moore, co-curator of the project says,

"It is wonderful to think that we can re-unite these objects with the descendents of their creators, these are their history as well as being part of Thanet's history through the amazing story of the Powell-Cotton sisters. We want to invite the Angolan community to become involved in the way the story of the collection is told and we're sure this will lead to some exciting developments at the museum in the future."

Having heard about the project the Mayor of Margate was keen to become involved and will host lunch on the day with the help of the Friends of the museum.



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