

Powell-Cotton Trust



Appointment of CEO

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An introduction from the Chair

Thank you for your interest in the position of CEO of the Powell-Cotton Trust. I am delighted to share details of this position; a tremendously exciting and significant role for the Trust.

The Trust consists of three unique elements:

1. The Museum which houses the collection of the Powell-Cotton family, including unique natural history dioramas of African and Asian animals and wildlife, culturally significant and meaningful world-culture objects and, local archaeology from the Thanet coastline;
2. Quex House, a Grade II listed building of the Powell-Cotton family; and,
3. 10 acres of woodland, garden and a highly productive kitchen walled garden.

You will be joining the Trust at a truly unique moment as we are about to receive a very significant inheritance that will provide us with the financial platform to allow us to develop and grow.

As you will see from the information provided, we have an ambitious 5-year strategy to grow all that we do. You will be responsible for overseeing and shaping these exciting outcomes.

We are committed to increasing access and growing our visitor numbers, both in person and online, through a new digital engagement strategy, so that we have local, national and international access and appeal, making us an attractive attraction as well as a recognised important source of research and knowledge. The natural history collections have a relevance for international scientific research.

We will grow our community engagement, as a learning-based charity with a unique set of resources, and build on the work we have started to support disabled, disadvantaged and socially excluded groups, especially through therapeutic horticulture, providing unique, inclusive opportunities and events to inspire, engage and inform across the Trust's activities.

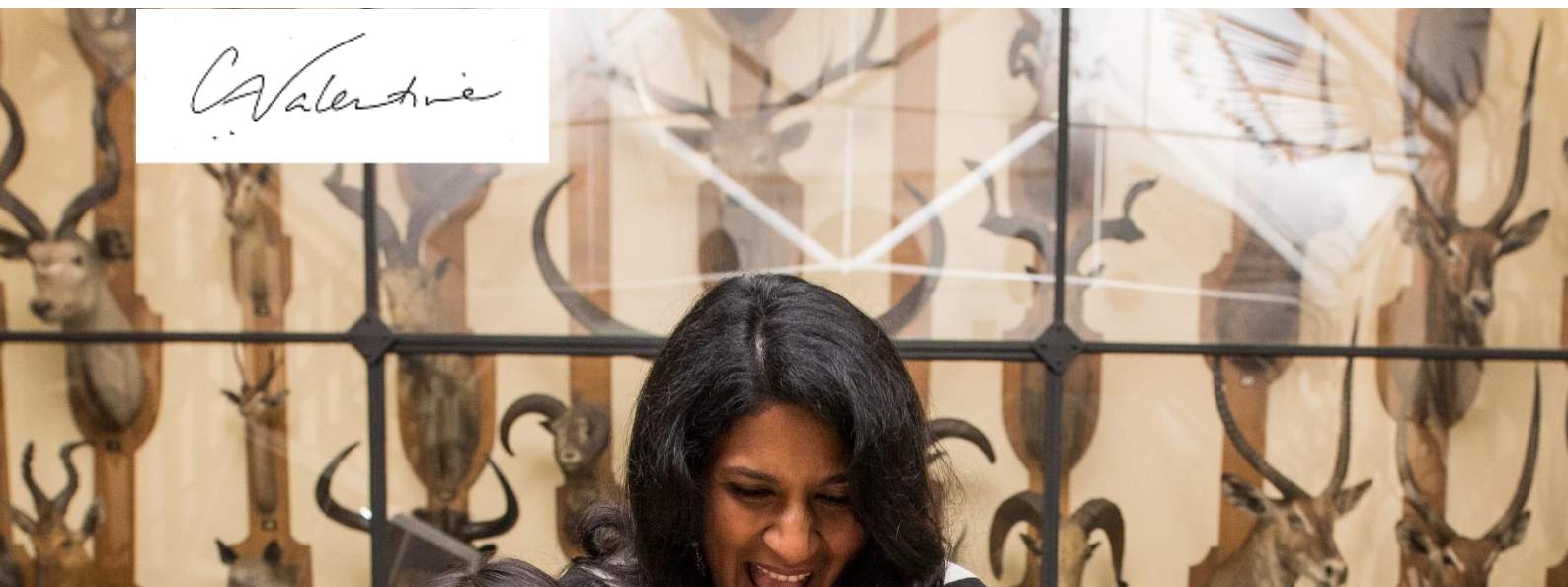
You would be providing leadership and direction for the Trust as a whole in a transformative period, as well as managing and developing the senior management team, reporting to the Board of Trustees. We are a small, highly committed team of professionals, passionate in the curation and management of our collection, engagement of our audiences and stakeholders, and working with our community.

We need someone to help us achieve our ambition and grow all that we do for our local community and wider audiences. Come join the team.

Yours sincerely,



C. Valentine



About the Powell-Cotton Trust

The Powell-Cotton Trust is an independent charitable trust founded in 1924 and based in Birchington, Kent, which is made up of three distinct but linked elements:

- **The Powell-Cotton Museum**, which has a diverse collection, built up by the Powell-Cotton family and their associates, largely between 1890-1940. Today, the collection includes over 6,000 mammal specimens, 20,000 ethnographic objects, 8,000 archaeological objects, firearms, fine art and furniture, and an extensive library and archive including documents, photographs and film. It also houses some of the world's best dioramas depicting animals in a natural setting.
- **Quex House**, the former Powell-Cotton family home; a Georgian manor with extensive Edwardian alterations. The house contains family possessions which are part of the museum's collection and is included in tours.
- **The gardens**, consisting of the extensive garden that belongs to the house as well as the walled kitchen garden. The latter is used to grow a wide variety of plants, vegetables and fruits. The gardens allow the Trust to engage with local groups to provide horticultural therapy-based activities to a wide range of disadvantaged and disabled groups from the local community.

The museum, gardens and house are run by the Trust (PCT) and are situated in Quex Park which is owned and managed independently of PCT and has been developed to include several other commercial and educational enterprises. The wider estate continues to operate arable farms and a commercial and residential property portfolio.

The Powell-Cotton Museum

The Powell-Cotton Museum at Quex Park was established in 1896 to house natural history specimens and cultural objects collected by Percy Powell-Cotton on his expeditions to Asia and Africa. Powell-Cotton was a pioneer in the use of the diorama to display mounted animals against backdrops of their usual habitats. Today, these natural history dioramas are unique and outstanding examples of a form of display that is increasingly rare.

The Museum evolved from a single diorama within the original pavilion, to eight dioramas contained within three galleries today. The first diorama was started in 1896, and the final diorama was completed in 1955. The Museum was developed over a long period from 1896 and it opened to the public from the early 1900s. Various phases of expansion and construction took place over the subsequent years including the creation of additional galleries and opening parts of Quex House in the early 1970s.



The Collection

The Collection can be broken down into nine categories: Natural History, World Cultures, Archaeology, Ethnobotany, Weapons, Fine and Decorative Arts and Furniture, Social History, Archives, Photographs and Film.

The strength of the natural history collection is in mammal material – around 6,500 animals from Africa and India, collected between 1889 and 1940. The collection is supported by a wealth of data including accurate dates and localities, field notes, and correspondence.

The Museum also houses an internationally significant primate collection including lowland gorillas and chimpanzees representing all developmental stages, monkeys, galagos, and pottos. The collection also includes birds, reptiles and amphibians. The Museum displays some of the oldest and largest taxidermy habitat dioramas in Europe.

The Museum's collection also includes over 20,000 ethnographic objects, collected between 1891 and 1966, that focus on Africa and Asia. Prominent collections include those from South Sudan, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Uganda. The bulk of the collection is attributed to Percy Powell-Cotton, however, significant collections were contributed by Fred Merfield (Gorillas and Chimpanzees), and by extended Powell-Cotton family. Diana and Antoinette Powell-Cotton are responsible for one of the largest Angolan collections in Europe, numbering approximately 2,600 objects.

Closer to home, the Museum also holds items of local interest including approximately 8,000 archaeological finds from the Thanet coastline and an archive of supportive material including over 30,000 photographs and 40,000 documents.

The Collections Storage Project

The Collections Store Project began in January 2023 when the Board of Trustees released extra funds to address this collection care crisis. The project focuses on the two areas of the collection judged to be at greatest risk.

The new store offers significant improvements on the current storage for these objects, but it is not ideal and is regarded as a temporary solution. Longer term, the PCT would prefer to have the collection back onsite to improve access for researchers and communities as part of our plan to widen use of the collection.

Collections Research

The PCT holds internationally significant Natural History and World Cultures collections, and external researchers approach the Trust because of the collections and knowledge held. Some of this research may be academically driven, but much is informal, for individual interest, personal development or for cultural enrichment.

The Trust has a dedicated website to promote and facilitate research of the collections:
<https://pcmresearch.org/>



Vision, Values and Strategy

Vision: People Matter

The Powell-Cotton Museum is for everyone – current and future audiences, staff, volunteers, the local community, and the source communities from where our collections originate.

We will make space for these voices in our museum: past, present and future. We will listen to the diversity of voices within our community today and use our collections to make space for people who have historically been silenced.

We are committed to telling a wider story, to enable others to share in that narrative and be a part of its making. At its heart, any story we tell is about people. For this reason, our vision can be encapsulated in the phrase: *people matter*.

Values

- A commitment to inclusion means greater collaboration and co-production with diverse perspectives and voices, so that we are relevant to the communities we serve.
- A commitment to equity means everyone's lived experiences are valued by the organisation and everyone should be empowered to fulfil their potential.
- A commitment to change means radically rethinking what we do and how we do it, being brave in our actions and innovative in our approach.

Key Aims and Strategic Objectives

Our new 5-year strategic plan 2023-2028 is centred around three key objectives:

1. Financial Sustainability; we are on the cusp of receiving a significant inheritance that assures our financial future. That said, we recognise that we can't solely rely on this and must engage in actively growing our income from both fundraising and commercially based activities;
2. Collection Sustainability; we must continue to build on the hard work we have already started both in preserving the collection as well as developing the gardens. There needs to be a long-term plan and investment in both, with one significant new development of a Collection, Learning and Research facility;
3. Impact and Inclusion; simply put, we must continue to develop how we engage our target audiences to ensure that we are relevant and available to all. Our offerings from the garden, museum and house must be inclusive to all and not just a small group of visitors who make the trip to Birchington. We must utilise technology to the fullest extent to make us accessible to all, locally, nationally and internationally.



Reconstructing the Museum Narrative

In 2018, the Museum began working to tell a wider, more inclusive story through its partnership with members of the Making African Connections: Decolonial Futures for Colonial Collections Project. In February 2020, we started laying the groundwork for our re-imagining of the museum programme. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and the development of the Black Lives Matter movement brought a dual global shift in how we work and focus on what matters. This gave us the impetus to take this work from ‘behind the scenes’ and into the public eye. Bringing our reimagining programme to the fore gave us a window of opportunity to radically rethink what we do and how we do it. This was and is a moment for change in our organisational culture – the understanding that, if we want to, we can do things differently.

By ‘Reimagining the Museum’ we are engaged in decolonising the museum and significant activity has occurred during the period.

Namibian Narratives

Funded by Arts Council England, this project has delivered a new permanent display that showcases contemporary culture and experiences from the African continent for the first time in decades.

In April 2022, some of the project team spent a week travelling in the Oshana region of northern Namibia, on the

border with Angola. They met with each of the specialist makers, discussed the Museum's historic collection and asked each of the women how they would like to see their community and work represented in the Powell-Cotton Museum. Each of the women was interviewed on film, and these films form part of the display of their work.

'Colonial Critters'

This long-term programme of work started in 2020 and is managed by a Curator of Natural History. The final outputs are to reinterpret the museum's historic dioramas and look critically at the context in which these displays were created. Early research activities have uncovered several 'hidden' stories in our archive, identifying individuals and communities with whom Percy Powell-Cotton worked across the African continent, in India and in Kent.

Decolonisation and Practice

Funded by Arts Council England (2021 – ongoing), this project explores the stories surrounding the artefacts in the museum's East Africa collection. The interpretation for these objects has changed very little since the 1920s when they were first produced. Notably absent are the stories and voices of the African communities from which the objects were acquired. We have partnered with local writer and consultant Lucy Edematie, who is of Nigerian parentage, and invited a team of community participants of African descent to work with us to create interpretation that acknowledges and gives voice to the East African communities of origin.





Green spaces

The walled garden has significant heritage value through its survival as a near intact late Victorian/Edwardian Garden with its associated buildings. Each year within the garden, the PCT has prioritised the refurbishment of historic glasshouses within the walled garden, repairing the buildings and their historic features. Much of this work has been undertaken by the Gardens team drawing upon specialist advice, gifted labour,

monetary donations or significantly reduced costs for materials and equipment.

Plot to Plate

Transformation to the historic glasshouses has been matched within the walled kitchen garden. The Head Gardener has led staff and volunteers in a programme of work to systematically remove the inappropriate floral planting schemes, and the grassed lawns of the last decades, to return the area to a functioning kitchen garden.

Today, the PCT balances traditional horticultural practices with a modern sensibility, and more sustainable techniques, including modern organic principles. This long-term programme of work aims to 'revitalise and restore these spaces and help reconnect people to locally grown food'. An extensive – and delicious – selection of seasonal herbs, fruit, and vegetables is now grown. Over the past few years, the produce from the walled garden has gained a niche reputation and has been sought out by

local chefs. Installation of a woodstove and sink enables the garden to expand on the links it has with local chefs and add a unique element of sustainable cookery – fuel for the wood stove is readily available from the woodland – and the chefs carry out demonstrations using the seasonal produce. Since 2022, lessons and demonstrations have taken place in the garden itself with selecting and harvesting the produce being part of the experience. This leads to many learning opportunities as well as attracting external funding and commercial potential for hire as a venue.

Social inclusion and a community hub

The ethos of a garden, and its historic buildings as a space for learning, is echoed in

its development as a centre of excellence within the PCT for diversity and inclusion.

The 'Sunshine' garden project is a commitment to working with local groups and organisations throughout Kent to ensure equity in access to the Garden. The Gardens team worked to build an inclusive, varied workplace welcoming individuals and groups of all backgrounds. Our Head Gardener has trained with Thrive and is embedding the ethos that gardening can bring about positive changes in the lives of people living with disabilities or ill health, or who are isolated, disadvantaged, or vulnerable.

The team work to support young adults and adults with learning disabilities and / or mental health issues attending site to engage and participate in general garden duties, maintaining garden furniture/equipment and meaningful work experience for the furtherance of their wellbeing. Partners includes Terrance House, Forelands Field School and Kent County Council Adult Social Care for whom the Powell-Cotton Trust is a recognised 'Community Partner', providing 'support services and meaningful occupation to people accessing Kent County Council Community Service'.



The role

The Powell-Cotton Trust now seeks a new Chief Executive to lead us through this exciting time as we look to implement our new strategic plan focused on developing what we do as a charity, to increase our reach, relevance and impact within our local community, as well as nationally and internationally. As our new Chief Executive, you will join at this exciting time to lead us on an amazing journey of growth in all that we do, setting our direction of travel for the next 100 years. You will work closely with Trustees, staff and our stakeholders to develop the charity and our capabilities that we need to succeed and sustain our growth and impact.

Main duties and responsibilities

- To work with the Board in delivering the 5-year strategy and further developing the vision for the Powell-Cotton Trust as a heritage and arts venue;
- To be responsible for strategy, execution and resource management and for ensuring that those are clearly communicated both internally and externally;
- To continue the Trust's commitment to diversity and inclusion, and passion for participatory cultural activity;
- To work with the Senior Management Team to diversify income and maximize revenue from a variety of sources, consistent with the values and ethos of the Trust;

- To forge a strong working relationship with the Board and its Chair who will provide support and expertise in developing and delivering the strategy;
- To lead on the annual budget setting process and to monitor the budgets for all areas;
- To represent the Trust and act as an advocate and ambassador with a wide range of stakeholders and partners including Government, local authorities, tourist and leisure bodies corporate partners, National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), Arts Council England and more;
- To drive the Trust's fundraising effort, working with the Board;
- To develop marketing and communications strategies locally, nationally and internationally to raise the Trust's profile in line with its strategy;
- To initiate audience development strategies and the promotion of the site, its products and services to enhance the positive profile of the Trust and the historic and artistic site and grow both visitor attendance and income generation;
- To plan, develop and implement a commercial strategy to maximise the potential of income generating activities including venue hire, sponsorship and fundraising;
- To work to ensure that environmental and conservation considerations are embedded in all aspects of operations;
- To maintain good communication between the key PCT partners: The Trust, Quex Park, and members of the Powell-Cotton family;
- To ensure operational and health, safety and security of staff and visitors are properly addressed across all activities.



Person specification

The ideal candidate will be a passionate and enthusiastic, capable of leading us on what we believe will be an amazing journey of growth as we implement our new and exciting 5 year strategy. They will bring all or most of the following attributes:

- A demonstrable enthusiasm and knowledge of the arts and heritage sector;
- A commitment to the values and legacy of the Powell-Cotton Trust ;
- The ability to lead, motivate and manage in complex and unique organisations;
- A proven track record in leading fundraising activities;
- An entrepreneurial appetite and the ability to adapt to new opportunities;
- Proven ability to shape and evolve organisational vision;
- Ability to originate, cultivate and develop multiple partnerships;
- An open, inclusive and respectful management style;
- Ability to engage with and cultivate a diverse range of stakeholders;
- Clear analytical and strategic thinking;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills;
- High level financial management;
- A good commercial and charity understanding;
- Strong negotiation skills;
- A strong commitment to sustainability and its visible promotion at the Powell-Cotton Trust ;
- An understanding of and commitment to inclusivity; and
- Previous experience of involvement with heritage organisations.

In essence, the Board is looking for a candidate who has a proven ability to lead and inspire a team in which everyone shares enthusiastically a vision of where we are heading. Such a candidate will also place a high priority on creating a warm and positive working environment for all members of the team.

Terms of appointment

The role is based at The Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex House and Gardens, Quex Park, Birchington, Kent, CT7 0BH.

The Board is open to discussing flexible working patterns with candidates, however, the CEO is expected to be on-site the majority of the time.

The salary for the role is envisaged to be between £60-65k, with some possible flexibility for an outstanding candidate.

Pension: 6% employer contribution.

Annual leave: 25 days pa plus Bank Holidays, plus 1 day per year after 5 years of service, to a maximum of 5 additional days.

How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the Powell-Cotton Trust on this appointment.

The Powell-Cotton Trust aspires to remove barriers and be open to all and strongly encourages applications from individuals currently underrepresented in the Creative and Cultural Sectors. This includes but is not limited to people of African or Caribbean heritage; Arabic heritage; Latin American heritage; East Asian, South Asian and South East Asian heritage; people from traveller communities; disabled people; LGBTQIA+ people and people from a low-income background. The Powell-Cotton Trust fully supports Access to Work applications. The Powell-Cotton Trust are a Disability Confident Committed Employer, and applicants with disabilities who opt in are guaranteed interviews where they meet the essential requirements of the role as set out in the job description.

Candidates should apply for this role through Saxton Bampfylde's website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code **JBMLA**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter, and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form, please also see the below note about alternative application formats.

** The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.*

The Powell-Cotton Trust welcomes applications from those proposing alternative leadership models (e.g. job-shares), as well as welcoming applications in written, audio or video formats. To submit applications in an alternative format, or to request information in an alternative format please email todd.heppenstall@saxbam.com. If you would like more information about accessibility before applying, please see the guide we have here.

The closing date for applications is noon on Monday 11th December.

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.



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