

Livingstone Online Advisory Board Meeting
14 May 2007

183 Euston Road NW1 2BE

In attendance:

Chris Lawrence (Chair)
Anne Hardy
Hal Cook
Janet Browne

Mike Hawkins
Sharon Messenger
Caroline Overy
Gary Li

Pietro Corsi
Mark Harrison
Rob Iliffe
Murray Simpson

Apologies:

Felix Driver

Director's Report

- Chris welcomed the board members and noted that the advisory board was not a requirement of the Wellcome Trust but established by the team's wish for to gain feedback and discussion. He reviewed the history of the project and what had been achieved to date.
- Janet added that the board were free to express their views as independent scholars but hoped that any concerns would be communicated first to Livingstone Online.
- Mike reported on the material that is pending and background technical developments.

Organisation of the site:

Discussion of Felix Driver's written comments, especially clarity of images and the addition of articles on the general context

- Mike noted the image size (pixels) could be doubled but the result would be very slow for modem users.
- Mark observed more images were needed in the text especially if aiming for student readership.
- Murray reported the John Murray archive has illustrations from Livingstone's works which are being digitised.
- It was agreed the general context might be best served by better online links. More images would definitely be added.
- Hal commented on the progress of project and targets as results seemed rather slow.
- Chris reported that there is a great deal of material in the pipeline, much time has been spent recently obtaining digitised material, preparing the database and the catalogue for publication. This was holding up the great amount of original, transcribed and annotated material which was ready to be published.
- Pietro suggested putting images up without transcription as on the Lamarck website (thousands of manuscripts online without transcriptions creating a successful site for scholars) and that that scholarly input could be done later.

- Janet expressed a concern that this might not conform to what the grant was intended for with regards to scholarly expertise.
- Rob observed that transcription made the letters searchable and so it would be necessary to consider the target audiences and what extra value the originals without transcriptions would add. He also noted it is worth considering making images of all letters to be processed and transcribed in the future so all material (not necessarily scientific or medical) rested in one place.
- For the present the project will probably continue on current lines but mounting of untranscribed letters will be recurrently reviewed. It would be ideal to image all the Livingstone letters but cost currently precluded this.

Content Markup:

- Chris reported that at present the database for content mark up only allows general information to be given, not letter specific information
- Mike observed that to generate 'book-style' footnotes would involve a lot of extra work and was dependent on UCL allowing software on server.
- Pietro suggested attaching a small database of information to each letter so letter specific footnotes could be included.
- Mike drew attention to the Wikipedia type approach with community adding comments.
- No firm conclusions were agreed

Supplementary material:

- There is a lot of material which as yet is not on the site as the team are not sure where it should go; in particular longer essays such as those on Mary Livingstone, Stanley and Fever. Also, in the future, letters *to* Livingstone from eg Stanley and Kirk will be published
- Pietro suggested a 'library' key with a search function and the essays arranged alphabetically into around 5 categories
- Mark considered more material on the African context was needed. It is vital to have for example information on the Portuguese and slavery
- Rob considered more maps needed; both Livingstone's own and modern maps – and suggested a link to Google Earth.
- An article on Africa would be added to the site if a suitable author is found or one of the members of the team would write it and an Africanist asked to review it. Maps would definitely be added. The suggestion of a 'library' was welcomed and will be discussed.

Copyright:

It was agreed that this should not be a problem but the site needs statements from individual archive holders and institutions.

- Pietro suggested for privately held letters prepare a statement for individuals to agree to rather than asking for permission.

Publicity:

Mike reported that Livingstone Online was on the first page of results from Google search of David Livingstone

- Pietro suggested Richard Horton might publicise the site in the *Lancet*.

Contacts in Africa:

No team member had contacts in African libraries but Rob and Mark knew of people and would be happy to be contacted in future.

AOB

- Chris stated that he still believed that we would fulfil the aims stated in the grant proposal
- It was agreed it was essential to consider soon the future of the project after 3 years

Date of Next meeting

No fixed date but it was hoped May 2008 would be suitable

Organisation of the site

Discussion of Paul Levitt's written comments, especially clarity of images and the addition of articles on the genealogy of the site

- Mike noted the image size (width) could be doubled but the result would be very slow for modern users
- Mark observed some images were coded in the text especially if using for student readership
- Murray reported the John Murray archive has illustrations from Livingstone's works which are being digitised
- It was agreed that general content might be best served by better online links than a search and definition page
- Hal commented on the presence of images and targets as results seemed rather slow
- Chris reported that there is a great deal of material in the pipeline, much time has been spent transcribing, scanning, digitising material, preparing the database and the catalogue for publication. This was holding up the great amount of original, transcribed and annotated material which was ready to be published.
- Pietro suggested putting images up without transcription or on the Landrek website (the scans of manuscripts can be without transcription creating a successful site for scholars and that the scholarly input could be done later

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

May 2007-2008

FINANCE

Figures for the end of December when we were 34% through life of project: we had spent 33% of academic salaries and 29% of the total budget.

PUBLICATIONS ON LINE

Catalogue

- Transformed G.W. Clendennen & I.C. Cunningham's published catalogues of David Livingstone's letters into a fully searchable online database.

Letters Published (76 as of 6 May 2008)

- September 2007: 2 letters held at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow.
- November 2007: 7 letters held at the Royal Society.
- February 2008: 2 letters held at the RSA.
- March 2008: 55 letters and an original Livingstone map held at the NLS.
- April 2008: 5 letters to John Kirk and T.H. Dyke held at the NLS.
- May 2008: 1 letter Mitchell Library, Glasgow; 1 letter held at the David Livingstone Centre Blantyre; 3 letters held at the NLS.

Collaborating Institutions

- Short illustrated articles on institutions whose letters we have published.

Companion

Existing and new accessory material is currently being organized into a searchable

Companion containing

- Historical Essays
- Individuals
- Medicine
- Organizations
- Peoples
- Places
- Science
- Technology

Eight new essays have been added to one or other of these headings:

1. Fever in the Tropics
2. The Zambesi Expedition
3. Mary Livingstone
4. Livingstone's Africa
5. Dr Livingstone I presume? Henry Morton Stanley
6. Sir John Kirk
7. Exploration
8. David Livingstone's Medical Education

In 'Individuals' tooltips/mouseovers of the names of people -- recipients of letters and people mentioned in letters -- can be accessed as a searchable database.

Images

We are selecting and ordering images (including maps) for the site. These are currently stored in an internal (password protected) area and Mike has developed a programme for their random selection on the home page. Images have been selected for the **Companion** essays. Their publication is imminent and depends only on copyright permissions from Wellcome Trust.

Maps

One of Livingstone's maps has been added to the site.

DISCOVERIES

- Seven letters from the collections of the Royal Society unrecorded by Clendennen & Cunningham.
- One letter from the collections of the Royal College of Surgeons of England unrecorded by Clendennen & Cunningham.
- Two letters in the John Murray Archive in the National Library of Scotland unrecorded by Clendennen & Cunningham.
- Direct contact from a private owner with an original letter formerly known only as a copy in the NLS.
- Originals of 10 letters known only as copies have been located with the Pyne family, descendents of the original recipients. Five of these letters are in Norwich. We have visited the owner and photographed the letters. The other five letters are in Surrey and we will visit shortly.

PUBLICITY/OUTREACH

Papers have been given about the site or on historical research based on the site at conferences, seminars and public lectures.

By the director:

- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (September 2007)
- Warwick University (October 2007)
- The Wellcome Library (February 2008)

By the director jointly with Mike Hawkins:

- The Royal Society (November 2007)

By Mike Hawkins:

- The British Society for the History of Science (June 2007)

Announcements about the site have been appeared in *Discover* (NLS magazine) *Medical History*, *Wellcome News*, *Newsletters: SSHM, AAHM, BSHS*.

The director has advised various film producers but nothing of tangible publicity value for the site has yet resulted.

livingstoneonline@ucl.ac.uk has been frequently contacted by the public, mostly requesting information but occasionally proving a useful source of facts unknown to us and in one case offering an original letter for publication.

Christopher Lawrence May 2007

AGENDA

**Livingstone Online Advisory Board Meeting
2 pm Monday 12 May 2008**

**Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at UCL
183 Euston Road NW1 2BE**

1. Welcome: Board Members and Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of last meeting (14 May 2007)
3. Matters arising
4. Director's Report (Document Attached)
5. Mike Hawkins' Report
6. Goals (Document Attached)
 - (a) Short term
 - (b) Long term
7. Board Members' feedback
8. Publicity
8. Long term future/finance
9. AOB
10. Date of Next Meeting

Feedback:

mark: images - reassured.
maps.

schematic map. based on google maps.

*
Sarah has GIS maps:

Portrait Gallery - Exhibitions
Peter Funnell

Archiving David Livingstone

science + medicine:

Pietro - suggested publishing in
medical sections

Lawrence / Antsar / Publishing history

John
letter.

networks.

hand it over to someone else.

Essays +
examples.

⇒ links to other essays.

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES
(In progress or planned for implementation shortly)

LETTERS

Archives

We have been collaborating with a number of archives and individuals.

- RGS: we have collected all of the Livingstone letters held in the RGS. These appear at various places in the process. Only 3 have been published at present but all will appear in due course. However, many are extremely long and a number were extensively annotated by Murchison for publication.
- NLS: ongoing collection.
- SOAS: has been contacted, possess 175 letters. See appended email (FYI No necessity to read at length for this meeting).
- John Rylands Library, Manchester: to be visited this week.
- The Pyne family: letters held by two family members. One visit has been made and letters scanned. Another to be arranged

} no mention

Acquisition and processing of digitised form of letters

- John Murray Archive (NLS): 70 letters
- NLS: 10 letters
- RCS England: 1 letter
- RGS: 27 letter
- Blantyre: All letters (at least 30)

'Sandbox Area'

Transcribing, Coding and 1st Proofing (Caroline and Sharon), followed by 2nd and 3rd proofing (Chris and Janet)

- 2 Blantyre letters
- 22 NLS letters (including 10 John Murray Archive)
- 4 Pyne letters
- 3 University of Strathclyde letters
- 15 RGS letters

Correcting 2nd and 3rd proofs (Caroline and Sharon)

'Staging Area'

Publishing online in development (password protected) area of site (Mike).
Proofing on Line (Chris)

- No letters outstanding



Ready for publication

- 9 RGS letters
- 8 NLS letters
- 1 Hurst letter
- 12 Kew Gardens letters

'Put Online' (Mike)

COMPANION WORK (Online organisation by Mike)

Content Markup (Chris)

Ongoing. 100+ letters but only a few yet live on the site

- Brief descriptions on every identifiable name in the catalogue. Approximately 430 names in catalogue; 57 already have such descriptions.
- Essays on those perceived as more significant
- Brief descriptions of the significant places in the catalogue – essays where useful.

Essay Writing (Chris and Janet)

— slavery.

LONG TERM OBJECTIVES (BY END OF GRANT)

Libraries

- Rhodes House
- African Libraries (various)
- Royal Naval Museum, Portsmouth

Transcribing issues

- Originals no longer available (various in NLS)
- Cost problems (BL)
- Access/Cost Africa Transcribing copies

} rambling
- copyright

Scanning Published Letters

- *Kirk Letters*, ed D. Foskett (EUP)
- *David Livingstone: letters & documents, 1841-1872 ; the Zambian collection*, ed T. Holmes
- Livingstone's letters in the *Parliamentary Papers* and Miscellaneous Publications

why?!