

# PRESS RELEASE

## Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Appeal

### UNVEILING OF NEW PHOTOGRAPH OF MARY SEACOLE

An unknown photograph and a rare signature of Jamaican born Crimean War nursing heroine Mary Seacole (1805-1881) have been unearthed at one of England's oldest public schools. The exciting discovery was made earlier this year by Dr Geoffrey Day, the current Fellows' and Eccles Librarian at Winchester College. It was contained within an elegant private campaign scrapbook compiled by former Coldstream Guards officer Ely Duodecimus Wigram (1802-1869). Later, in 1916, it was presented to the Library of Winchester College by the then Headmaster.

The scrapbook is a major historical document, containing original watercolours, lithographs, photographs, and Russian military maps of the siege of Sevastopol. There are medals and militaria set into the boards in which it is bound. There are five principal sections each of which deal with one of the warring nations: Britain, France, Sardinia, Turkey and Russia. There are the autographs of over 170 British representatives, starting with Queen Victoria, and including all the leading generals and important individuals, including five VCs and Captain Nolan, who sounded the Charge of the Light Brigade. There are complete letters including one from Florence Nightingale.

But according to Dr Day, by far the most important, and previously unknown, photograph is that of Mary Seacole. It is full face and there is a wealth of detail: her hair style and the lace edging on her clothes particularly stand out. Also of great interest is that there is a signature of Mary Seacole, which is extremely rare. That Wigram included her photograph is an indication of her importance at the time: all the others are of military leaders: Mary Seacole is the only non-combatant photograph.

Now, well over a hundred years later, this previously unknown photograph is to be used to keep Mary Seacole's name alive. Winchester College, whilst retaining copyright of the image, has allowed the Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Appeal sole use of it in order to raise funds for their appeal. A specially designed postcard has been produced by the MSMSA and will be available for purchase at the event to help raise funds towards the £500,000 appeal for a memorial at a site donated by, and in the grounds of, St Thomas' hospital.

#### Details of Unveiling

**Date: Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2009**

**Venue:** Florence Nightingale Museum, Gassiot House, 2 Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7EW. [www.florence-nightingale.co.uk/cms/index.php/visitor-info](http://www.florence-nightingale.co.uk/cms/index.php/visitor-info)

**PRESS CALL: 2.30pm**

**Image of photo + signature:** Please click on the following link for a preview of the picture of Mary Seacole. Should you wish to license use of the image, please use the contact details in the link to request a high resolution copy and quote for the use of the image. Please note, a proportion of the license fee will go towards the Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Appeal. <http://www.maryevans.com/lb.php?ref=3665>

#### Unveiling ceremony: 3-4pm

Performing the unveiling will be actress Cleo Sylvestre, renowned for her Mary Seacole monologues. Cleo is also an Ambassador for the Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Appeal. Representatives of Winchester College will be attending.

**Further details:** please contact Professor Elizabeth Anionwu CBE FRCN, Vice-Chairperson MSMSA & Emeritus Professor of Nursing, Thames Valley University either by Email: [elizabeth.anionwu@tvu.ac.uk](mailto:elizabeth.anionwu@tvu.ac.uk) or Tel: 0780 371 2505

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