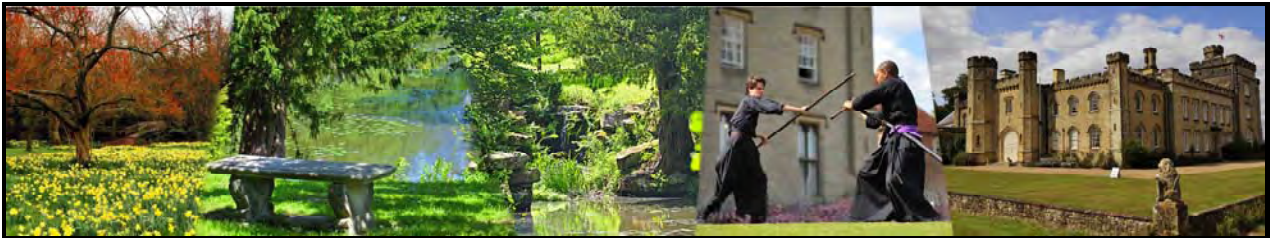




News Release

December 2009

Chiddingstone Castle plan to build the largest Japanese Stroll Garden in the UK



Chiddingstone Castle has exciting new plans to develop its stunning 35 acres of natural landscape into a Japanese Stroll Garden. When completed, the landscaped grounds will feature many winding strolling pathways, a cherry tree garden, a Japanese ceremonial tea garden, a woodland play garden and nature garden.

This unique project will give Chiddingstone Castle the largest Japanese Stroll Garden in the UK, and will be a fitting addition to the Castle, which is renowned for being home to one of the most important private Japanese collections in Europe. This wonderful collection of Japanese artefacts includes swords, armour and lacquer ware, all collected by Denys Eyre Bower, who died in 1977 leaving the Castle and his entire collection for the nation to enjoy.

Chiddingstone Castle is a Grade 2 * heritage building of national importance. The Castle Staff have been working closely with English and Japanese Historians to ensure the authenticity of the new garden with the history of the Castle and grounds. Their research has led to discoveries that during the Victorian era people in the UK became fascinated with Japanese culture. In fact, the interest was so great in London that a Japanese village was built in Knightsbridge, complete with tearoom,

gardens, shops and homes! The Victorians also became avid collectors of all things Japanese, especially ceramics.

In 2008/09 150 years of diplomatic relations between Japan and the United Kingdom were celebrated. Following a commemoration of the signing of the Treaty on 26th August 2008 a large number of events took place to celebrate JAPAN-UK 150. As part of the celebration, the Chiddingstone Team successfully promoted Japanese arts, culture and crafts, which culminated in a very popular Japanese Culture and Arts festival held at the Castle in 2009.

To coincide with JAPAN-UK 150, details for the Japanese Stroll Garden in a Victorian setting were revealed during a day of celebration. Specially invited guests came from all over the UK to take part in the opening presentation of the plans. The Chairman of the Trustees, Mark Streatfeild and Garden Designer Marie Jackson revealed the designs and explained how the Stroll Garden would enhance and compliment the history of Chiddingstone Castle. The Chiddingstone team were honoured by the presence of Mr Ken Okaniwa, the Cultural Minister from the Japanese Embassy at the event.

If you would like further information about the plans or are interested in giving support, donating or becoming a sponsor of the Japanese Stroll Gardens project please contact Marie Jackson on 01892 872744 or email her on info@chiddingstonecastle.org.uk

For images of the garden plans or of Chiddingstone Castle please contact Caroline Edmunds at Pennington PR on 01892 616647.