

HAIFA-PORTSMOUTH FRIENDSHIP LINK COMMITTEE
Report on delegation visit to Portsmouth May 14 to 17, 2012.

GENERAL

The visit by Haifa Councillors Shmuel Mermelstein (with his wife) and Yaniv Ben Shoshan was both productive and significant with regard to the strengthening of the links between the two cities.

Mr. Mermelstein is Head of Haifa's Budget Department and Mr. Ben Shoshan's role as a Councillor also involves close connections with the University of Haifa.

They were welcomed to Portsmouth's Mayor-making ceremony at a time which also marked the 50th anniversary of the twinning of the two cities.

The development of educational exchanges, the prospect of business relationships, and tourism were high on the agenda of the visit.

Conducted visits and issues arising from the organised programme included the following;

- *Tour of Highbury College facilities and Portsmouth University visit.
- *Meeting with Leader of Portsmouth City Council and Gunwharf Quays visit.
- *Meeting at Portsmouth Museum to discuss a reciprocal exhibition in Haifa to follow the Portsmouth exhibition created by Haifa's Tiltan College.
- *The creation of a DVD to promote the city of Portsmouth.
- *Other issues.

HIGHBURY COLLEGE AND PORTSMOUTH UNIVERSITY

The visit to Highbury College, arranged by Mr. Alex Bentley, Chairman of the Haifa Link Committee and a Highbury Governor, included a tour of the North Harbour Campus which specialises in training students in construction crafts and building services.

The delegation were much impressed by the facility described as state-of-the-art, boasting industry-standard workshops and the latest work-related teaching environments.

The meeting at Highbury was hosted by Ms. Deborah See, Executive Director, Collegiate College; Mr. Peter Moutray, Head of 6th Form Academy, Access and International Curriculum; and Ms. Emma Patchett, Co-ordinator, Floristry, Performing Arts and Art Design.

A meeting was also held at Portsmouth University with Mr. Chris Golya, of Graphic Design, whose Department has a co-operation agreement with Tiltan College.

Follow-up actions:

- *Further communication by the Committee and Highbury with Mr. Ben Shoshan to identify common interests with Haifa University and prospect of future developments.
- *On another level, to continue the present relationship with Tiltan College and investigate any possible links with Haifa University. And this would also apply to Portsmouth University.

MEETING WITH LEADER OF PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

The meeting took place with Leader Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Councillor Hugh Mason and members of the Committee.

The emphasis was on the lay-out and development of Portsmouth's port and the similarities with Haifa.

Mention was made of the port's importance in the importation of fruit such as bananas and citrus products and whether there might be any interest from Haifa for export of its fruit.

The delegation subsequently visited Gunwharf Quays and Spinnaker Tower and received a presentation by the Management covering its history, features, operational and business performance. This follows on from the Haifa City Engineer's earlier visit and his interest in this successful development being a possible model for developing Haifa's waterfront. The Gunwharf Quays visit was organised by Mr. Charles Stunell.

Follow-up actions:

*As Haifa may be considering its own port developments, the Committee keep in contact with Mr. Mermelstein for any information on possible co-operation by Portsmouth in any prospective business developments.

*Further communication with Haifa's City Engineer, Mr. Ariel Waterman.

MEETING AT THE CITY MUSEUM

Because Mr. Gareth Brettell, the Museum's Learning and Access Manager, was away, he arranged for Mr. Michael Gunton, Senior Archivist, to conduct the meeting and show the delegation round the Conan-Doyle exhibition.

Serious discussion took place on the prospect of the Conan-Doyle exhibition being set up in Haifa and a potential venue, the Castra complex, was identified.

Such an exhibition in Haifa would take into account the prospect of promoting tourism to Portsmouth in a similar fashion to the Tiltan College exhibition in Portsmouth designed to promote tourism to Haifa.

It was decided that if the exhibition takes place, items such as posters could be sent electronically in a similar way to the Tiltan College exhibition.

Follow-up actions:

*Committee to keep in contact with Mr. Mermelstein and Mr. Ben Shoshan on dates, etc. for an exhibition in Haifa.

*Assistance and advice to be sought from Tiltan College.

DVD TO PROMOTE PORTSMOUTH

During the delegation's visit, Ms. Heather Dalton, of Portsmouth University, was involved in aspects of the visit photographically recording events for a DVD promoting Portsmouth. More information is awaited. Mr. Warren Freedman is overseeing this project.

OTHER ISSUES

*Mrs. Ephrat Miller has undertaken to keep in contact with Mrs. Mali Alon, of Tiltan College, and assist in taking forward Tiltan's project of co-operation with Highbury College and Portsmouth University. Student placements and exchanges are included in the project.

*Mrs. Miller is also investigating the setting up of a link with the Baha'i movement, based in Haifa, as an attraction for visitors to Haifa.

*El Al Airline needs to be approached for possible co-operation in the development of a tourism project.