

# Museums and Collections Projects Program 2021

## University of Melbourne

### Medical History Museum

#### Project Description

##### Research and interpretation project, Savory and Moore Pharmacy, Medical History Museum

#### The Project

This project offers the opportunity for student/s to research and then develop an on-line journey exploring the Latin names, and historic and current uses of the contents of the 120 herb drawers that form part of the Savory and Moore Pharmacy located in the Medical History Museum.

#### Background

Since its opening in 1967, the [Medical History Museum's](#) collection has grown substantially through the donation of documents, photographs, instruments, and records from medical graduates, families and institutions in and around Melbourne. Originally the collection mainly reflected the teaching of medicine at the University of Melbourne and its clinical schools, and the achievements of its graduates from the 1860s to the present day. However, the donation in 1971 of the 19th century Savory and Moore Pharmacy, through a further grant from the Wellcome Trust, and the 1994 acquisition of the Australian Medical Association collection, has seen the scope of the museum broadened to reflect the history of medical practice in Victoria, and more generally the development of Western medicine. The purpose of the Museum is to encourage appreciation and understanding of the history of medicine and its role in society. The Museum stimulates active learning about the history of medicine through research, teaching, and dialogue among communities of students, faculty, scholars, alumni, and the wider public.

The [Savory and Moore Pharmacy](#) was gifted by the Wellcome Trust in 1971 to the Medical History Museum. Some of the bottles and jars on display today came from the Chapel Street premises. In the window are ornamental carboys filled with coloured water to attract the attention of passers-by. In 1859 Savory & Moore patented the six-sided and eight-sided fluted poison bottle, which is still in use today (the unusual shape warns a person grasping the bottle in the dark that it contains poison). The drawers have labels for many drugs which are now forgotten and a number which are not included in the first edition of the British Pharmacopoeia. Examples include: Corn. cerv. (deer's horn), R. Sarzae Jam. (Jamaican sarsaparilla), R. Rhei Turo (Turkish rhubarb), C. Cuspariae (angostura bark), Chirayita (chiretta or Indian gentian), F. Uvae Ursi (bearberry leaves), R. Mezereis (daphne root), Dulcamar (woody nightshade), R. Anchusae (bugloss root), Croci Hisp. (Spanish saffron), Bol Armen. (Armenian myrrh), R. Lig. Guaiac (guaiacum wood or lignum vitae) and F. Diosmae (buchu leaves).

#### Details

Under the supervision of the Director, the student/s will have the opportunity to research and then develop an on-line journey through the 120 wooden drawers that form part of the Savory and Moore Pharmacy. The student/s will first need to translate the Latin drug/herb names, and then research the contents exploring their historic and current uses. The herb drawers will be individually photographed, and the student/s will then develop an on-line journey that will take the virtual visitor through their contents. This project would suit students who have an interest in medical history, botanicals and an understanding of collection management principles specific to the documentation of museum objects. As this project involves creating content to be featured on the Museum's website, well-developed research and writing skills are needed. Knowledge of the correct procedures for the safe handling of objects is required as is a methodical, prudent approach with a keen eye for detail.

## Benefits

Opportunity to work closely with one of the University of Melbourne's cultural collections, and professional development through experience gained in research and creating content on the Savory and Moore Pharmacy to be seen by wide audience. This project will improve our knowledge and understanding of the collection and assist in making the University's cultural collections more accessible, facilitate their interpretation and contribute to their long-term preservation.

## Supervisor

Dr Jacqueline Healy, Director Museums – Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences