Position Title: Collection Management - Pre-1700 Rare Books consolidation project

Supervisor: Susan Millard, Curator, Rare Books
Helen Arnoldi, Museums and Collections Projects Coordinator

Position Goal: The primary goal of this position will be to assist the Curator to physically move the collection of pre-1700 rare books to the Rare Books Room, and then to update the location codes on the flags and library catalogue. This project will aid in the long-term management, accessibility and preservation of the collection.

Background: The Rare Books Collection at the University of Melbourne holds a significant collection of books, journals and ephemera. Strengths of the collection include printing history, Greek and Roman classics, private presses, English literature, social and political thought, children’s books, Australiana and book arts. These items are housed in special conditions by reason of their age, value or uniqueness in order to ensure their care and preservation for current and future generations of scholars and researchers. Some significant works held in the collections are Piranesi, Collection of folio works, 1761-1807; Colonna, Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, 1499; Mr William Shakespeares comedies, histories and tragedies (Second folio) 1632; John Gould, The birds of Australia, 1848 and The Mammals of Australia 1863.

Responsibilities: Under the general direction of the Curator, Rare Books, pre-1700 items in the collection that have previously been identified will be retrieved, moved and the new locations updated on the library catalogue and physical flags. To successfully carry out this task it will be necessary to first find the items to be relocated amongst other parts of the collection. Prior to moving the items, they will need to be assessed for any weaknesses and vulnerabilities. As part of the consolidation process, other parts of the collection may need to be moved to accommodate the pre-1700 items with all catalogue entries to be updated accordingly.

Qualifications: The student/volunteer will preferably have a basic understanding of collection management principles specific to library and/or museum collections (progress towards the completion of a degree in Librarianship, Information Management or similar would be ideal).

The student/volunteer will need to be competent in use of the library and its catalogues.

An interest in and knowledge of rare books, literature, printed materials and the history of the book would be ideal.

Knowledge of the correct procedures for the safe handling of museum objects is desirable as this position will require the close inspection and handling of these vulnerable items.

Ability to work independently and in consultation with the Curator.
Training and Supervision: On-the-job training specific to the task of this position will be provided.

Occasional meetings with the Museums and Collections Projects Coordinator to review how the project is progressing and discuss any ideas or problems encountered.

Benefits: Opportunity to work at close hand with one of the University of Melbourne’s extensive cultural collections.

The satisfaction gained through contributing to the long-term management, accessibility and preservation of the pre-1700 items in the Rare Books collection.

For more information on this position please contact:
Helen Arnoldi, Museums and Collections Projects Coordinator
Telephone: 8344 3103
Email harnoldi@unimelb.edu.au