

**HISTORY OF SCIENCE MUSEUM & BODLEIAN LIBRARIES, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
NEWS RELEASE****Oxford University to collect the artefacts from its COVID research to tell the incredible story of the University's response to the pandemic****Dedicated Collecting COVID curator and archivist to jointly lead unique two-year project**

OXFORD, 5 August 2021 – Oxford University's History of Science Museum and the Bodleian Libraries are joining forces to collect the stories of the COVID-19 pandemic and the extraordinary responses to this global challenge across Oxford University.

The global pandemic is history in the making, and these two Oxford institutions are playing a critical role in capturing and preserving this history. The material heritage – objects and documents – captured for this project along with personal stories will be collected for researchers and the public to study and explore. Few institutions have contributed as much to COVID research over this period as Oxford University.

Oxford University staff and students, and anyone connected with the University's response to the pandemic are invited to share objects, documents and personal stories from this period. Material collected and professionally preserved now will enable future generations to understand how Oxford University rose to the challenge in its extraordinary response to the global pandemic.

Thanks to a recent grant award from the E P A Cephalosporin Fund, the material will be curated by a dedicated Collecting COVID Curator at the History of Science Museum working in close partnership with a dedicated archivist at the Bodleian Libraries. These two newly created posts will identify, collect, catalogue and preserve these objects and stories of COVID-19 for future research, displays and public engagement.

So far, the project has been promised a fascinating range of materials and memories of the pandemic, including:

- Equipment used in the development and delivery of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine, including a vial used to administer the second dose to Professor Sarah Gilbert
- Stories of the clinical delivery of the vaccine programme
- A prototype ventilator developed by a team in MPLS (the Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences division of the University) and
- A bottle of beer that a local brewery created especially for the Oxford Vaccine Group to thank them for their essential work.

Even the most seemingly unassuming of objects can help tell the story of the University's response – for instance, a glass safety cabinet from the labs of the University's Clinical Biomanufacturing Facility (CBF) at the Churchill Hospital used to grow, infect and harvest cells for the COVID-19 vaccine. The cabinet was initially passed to the sustainable resourcing company UniGreenScheme (UGS) in Wales for recycling when the CBF was refurbished earlier in the year. A keen-eyed member of UGS recognised its potential significance and got in touch with the Science Museum Group in London who in turn alerted the Collecting COVID project in Oxford, resulting in the cabinet now having found a permanent home in Oxford due to UGS' generosity. This glass cabinet is ideally suited to provide a background story of the environment that scientists worked in during the pandemic and can also tell how these cabinets and other laboratory equipment are sustainably managed beyond their usable lifespans.

The Collecting COVID project has the support of key players in the University, including Professor Andrew Pollard FMedSci, Director of the Oxford Vaccine Group and Chief Investigator of the Oxford COVID-19 Vaccine Clinical Trials and recently appointed Knight Bachelor in the Birthday Honours List 2021. Professor Pollard said: "I am enormously proud to be collaborating with the History of Science Museum and the Bodleian Libraries, which are so uniquely placed to share the stories of Oxford science and to shine greater light on our endeavours to make the world a better place."

As one of the world's leading research libraries, the Bodleian Libraries has outstanding collections of archives documenting the personal and professional aspects of Oxford science and medicine in both physical and digital forms. And the History of Science Museum has always played a key role in telling the stories of the scientific contribution of the University through material culture, from Oxford's involvement in the development of penicillin to tackling tuberculosis. **Director of the History of Science Museum and lead applicant for the E P A Cephalosporin grant, Dr Silke Ackermann, said:** "We are delighted to be working together with the Bodleian Libraries so that we can share the stories of Oxford science with the wider public and academics alike."

Susan Thomas, Head of Archives & Modern Manuscripts at the Bodleian Libraries said: " The sorts of materials and memories we hope to uncover through this project are surprisingly vulnerable to loss. It is timely to start the process of gathering these things to make sure they survive to inform future research and reflection."

The Museum is already sharing insights into the development of the Oxford COVID-19 vaccine with its newest acquisition; a one million times size glass sculpture of a single nanoparticle of the vaccine, made by internationally renowned artist Luke Jerram. Alongside the sculpture, the only one on display in a public institution, the museum is asking its visitors (both online and in-Museum) the question: What would you tell museum visitors of the future about the COVID-19 pandemic? Feedback will be added to the Museum's own archive and help inform future displays and interpretation that may include items from the Collecting COVID project.

Professor Neil Barclay, Chair of the E P A Cephalosporin Fund, said: “The Trustees of the E P A Cephalosporin Fund are delighted to award a grant to the History of Science Museum and Bodleian Libraries to support their joint Collecting COVID initiative. The grant will enable both institutions to continue and expand their close collaboration with colleagues in the University of Oxford science faculties and departments and will ensure that the artefacts, records and oral histories from this extraordinary period for Oxford research can be made accessible to researchers and the public, furthering future science innovation and education.”

Anyone associated with the University is warmly invited to offer objects, records, documents, or memories to the Collecting COVID project. Please email us with details of your proposed submissions at collectingcovid@glam.ox.ac.uk. The Collecting Covid Team will come back to you with further information on next steps. The process is straightforward and aims to make getting in touch as simple as possible.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the History of Science Museum

The History of Science Museum houses an unrivalled collection of historic scientific instruments in the world's oldest surviving purpose-built museum building, the Old Ashmolean on Broad Street, Oxford. By virtue of the collection and the building, the Museum occupies a special position, both in the study of the history of science and in the development of Museum culture and collecting.

The present collection preserves the material of past science. As a department of the University of Oxford, the Museum has a role both in making this material available for study by historians, and presenting it to the visiting public. The Museum offers a programme of special exhibitions, events, tours and school sessions in order to engage the public with the fascinating history, and future, of science.

About the Bodleian Libraries

The Bodleian Libraries at the University of Oxford is the largest university library system in the United Kingdom. It includes the principal University library – the Bodleian Library – which has been a legal deposit library for 400 years; as well as 27 libraries across Oxford including major research libraries and faculty, department and institute libraries. Together, the Libraries hold more than 13 million printed items, over 80,000 e-journals and outstanding special collections including rare books and manuscripts, classical papyri, maps, music, art and printed ephemera. Members of the public can explore the collections via the Bodleian's online image portal at digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk or by visiting the exhibition galleries in the Bodleian's Weston Library. For more information, visit www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk.

The project is recruiting for the Curator role (based at the History of Science Museum) and Project Archivist, based at the Bodleian Libraries. Details can be found at:

Project Curator

https://my.corehr.com/pls/uoxrecruit/erq_jobspec_version_4.display_form?p_company=10&p_internal_external=E&p_display_in_irish=N&p_process_type=&p_applicant_no=&p_form_profile_detail=&p_display_apply_ind=Y&p_refresh_search=Y&p_recruitment_id=151871

Project Archivist

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