

Lancaster Health and Medical Museum Collection

Recent Acquisitions

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INTRODUCTION

The Lancaster Health and Medical Museum Collection (LHMMC) was established in the late 1980's by a small, dedicated group of doctors and local historians at a time when there was a closure of many hospitals in the area. They recognised that there were items and documents of historical interest that should be preserved particularly for educational purposes. They also recognised the important role that Lancaster had played in the history of medicine. The LHMMC is registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Although their original plan was to have a permanent display of the collection, this has not been achieved yet. However, some items can be seen in cabinets at the reception of the Royal Lancaster Infirmary Education Centre. In addition, the members give lectures at which some objects are presented and loan items for undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

The LHMMC statement of purpose says:

Lancaster Health and Medical Museum Collection exists to advance the education of the public by development, preservation and display of collections relating to the history of the practice of medicine, public health and healthcare in Lancaster and environs and to promote interest in the history of medicine for the benefit of the public.

ACQUISITIONS

The Trustees have a written acquisitions and disposal policy and work in strict accordance with the Museums Association Code of Ethics. Although the majority of items are from the local region, occasionally an object or objects have been offered for donation which are of such historical value that the Trustees have accepted them, even though they have not originated from Lancaster.

One exciting recent donation is a set of small bronze instruments that we believe to be a portable Roman Surgical Instrument Set. We are currently evaluating this set and hope to feature it in a future article. This paper will describe some other items that have also been recently acquired.

Feeding Pot (Figure 1)

This a white handled pot with a spout and side handle for feeding individuals. It is typically Wedgwood and dated to



Figure 1. Feeding Pot. Photo from authors collection

approximately 1760. The body is in "salt glaze" which was used between the 1720's to 1740's. To achieve the surface glass effect, the pot was fired to about 1420 degrees Centigrade at which point sodium chloride was introduced to the kiln. The sodium reacted with the aluminium silicate in the clay to produce sodium aluminium silicate, which covered the surface.

Medicine Spoons (Figures 2, 3 and 4)

The four spoons illustrated below are made of porcelain and are dated from the mid to late 1800's. They were probably made at the Coalport factory. The self-standing covered spoon (Figure 4) is thought to have been used to administer medicine to patients while lying down.

REFERENCES

Lancaster Health and Medical Museums Collection. Collections Development Policy. November 2018.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All the items in this article together with the bronze Roman Surgical Set have been donated by the Willis Family of Kirkby Stephen and for which we are grateful.



Figure 2. Medicine Spoons
Photos from authors collection



Figure 3. Self-standing Spoon



Figure 4. Covered Spoon