



Further Particulars

Shell Collection Cataloguer

Fixed-term (12 weeks), 35 hours per week, £5,800

Introduction

Somerville College was founded in 1879 and named after the polymath Mary Somerville. A mathematician, geologist, astronomer and artist, Somerville was mostly self-taught, and in 1834 William Whewell coined the term 'scientist' to describe her.

Since its foundation, the college has been fortunate to receive gifts of Mary Somerville's books, papers, paintings and artefacts from her family. The most recent gift was her shell collection, in its original cabinet, and the college now wishes to have this catalogued, photographed and curated.

This will be a 12-week paid internship, suitable for a graduate student with an interest in natural history. The post will be available from the end of June or as soon as possible thereafter until mid-September 2024. £5,800 for 12 weeks, full-time (35 hours per week), £25,138 FTE equivalent plus lunch in college. Accommodation is not provided.

The collection

Mary Somerville began collecting shells as a girl and the earliest specimens may date from the late 18th century. Most were combed from a beach and the extent and breadth of the collection reflects many hours spent by an enthusiast with an eye for detail.

The collection is stored in a wooden cabinet, arranged over 12 small drawers and two further compartments. The majority of the shells are in good condition, with few signs of Byne's disease or delamination.

There is evidence of a numbering or reference system having been assigned.

The aims of the project

To preserve any historical data inherent in the arrangement and labelling of the collection, as received.

To catalogue and photograph the collection, in order to make it accessible to researchers digitally.

To conserve the collection by reviewing and improving storage within the shell cabinet.

The Oxford University Museum of Natural History (OUMNH) will provide two days of training in many aspects of curating shell and invertebrate collections as well as collections management, classification and identification, and make its collections and reference literature available to access throughout the project.

About us

Somerville College is one of 39 independent, self-governing colleges of the University of Oxford. Somerville takes great pride in its pioneering history, its academic excellence and its intellectual and social openness. It was founded in 1879 as a non-sectarian college and one of the first Oxford colleges to admit women tutors and students; it has been a mixed college since 1994. There are 200 graduate students currently reading for Master and Doctoral degrees and about 400 undergraduates following three and four-year courses across a wide variety of disciplines. The undergraduate body includes a higher-than-average proportion of state-school students.

The Library and Archives Team

The Library and Archives teams form part of the Information Services team, and together with IT and AV support the creation, dissemination, use and storage of information for all aspects of college activity. The Shell Collection Cataloguer role is part of the Archives team and reports to the Archivist.

Main Duties

1. Photograph the collection:
 - in its current condition, as received
 - each specimen by type plus individual examples of each
2. Catalogue the collection for inclusion on the college's collections database:
 - identify the specimens
 - create a record including taxonomy
 - record any existing numbering or identification data
 - assign object references
 - upload data and images to the catalogue
3. Conserve the collection:
 - Improve the storage within the original cabinet with light touch, apparent conservation
4. Produce a short paper on the collection, with a view to publication, supported by the OUMNH.

Selection criteria

Essential

- Experience of data entry or record keeping
- A degree in a related subject
- An interest in natural history
- Ability to work accurately, with an eye for detail
- Ability to work to a procedure
- Ability to work with minimal supervision
- Ability to work in a systematic and organised manner
- Familiarity with Excel and other Microsoft Office apps

Desirable

- Experience of working with archival or museum collections
- Knowledge of shells
- Familiarity with using cameras and taking images of inanimate objects
- Familiarity with online databases

Salary, hours and benefits

- The salary is £5,800 for 12 weeks, which is aligned to the College's pay scale for support staff, Band 4 and has a full time equivalent of £25,138 p.a.
- This is a full-time, 35-hours per week post, fixed term from June to September 2024.
- Generous contributory pension scheme with employer contribution of up to 16%
- Pro-rata of 38 days annual leave per year (inclusive of bank holidays and flexible leave)
- Free lunch each working day
- Wide range of discounts and access to University gardens, libraries and museums

Full terms and conditions of employment will be provided in writing to the successful candidate. This information is for guidance and does not constitute the contract of employment.

How to apply

Please use our online recruitment site via www.some.ox.ac.uk/jobs and follow the application instructions provided on screen. Please ensure you provide details of two referees who have recent experience of your work. One should be your most recent line manager. We will assume you are content for us to approach your referees at any stage unless you clearly indicate otherwise.

In addition to completing the online application form, please provide a covering letter explaining why you are applying and how you feel you match the selection criteria above. Please also include an up-to-date CV.

Deadline

The closing date for applications is Noon (UK time) on Monday, 29 April 2024

Interviews

Candidates shortlisted for interview will be contacted individually and offered an interview time in the first or second week of May 2024.

Equal Opportunities

The policy and practice of the University of Oxford and Somerville College is that all staff are afforded equal opportunities within employment. Entry into employment and progression will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. Subject to statutory provisions, no applicant or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of any protected characteristic. Where suitably qualified individuals are available, selection panels will contain at least one member of each sex

Your data

All data supplied by candidates will be used only for the purposes of determining their suitability for the post and will be held in accordance with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 and the College's policies. Further details are available at <https://www.some.ox.ac.uk/privacy-foi/privacy-notice/>

Pre-employment Screening

Any offer of employment will be subject to the following:

1. Documentary proof of right to work in the UK

The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 makes it a criminal offence for employers to employ someone who is not entitled to work in the UK. We therefore ask applicants to provide proof of their right to work in the UK before employment can commence. Our Human Resources team will provide further details at the appropriate stage in the recruitment process.

2. Evidence of qualifications

You will be asked to provide original certificates and documentation to evidence any qualifications or training that is required for the role and that has been stated by you as having been obtained.

3. Medical fitness

Please note that any offer of employment will be conditional upon receipt of a completed pre employment medical declaration. It may also be necessary to refer the successful candidate to the University of Oxford Occupational Health Service for confirmation that the candidate is medically fit for the post (allowing for any reasonable adjustments that may be required, in line with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010).

4. Further checks

Where required for the role, further checks, such as DBS, may be required. The Human Resources team will advise applicants of the need for any additional checks as appropriate.