



The Key to the Medicine Cabinet: Unlocking resources in Archives and Manuscripts

Have you ever thought about using archives or manuscripts in your research? Or had the thought never occurred until now? Either way this tutorial is for you.

The Wellcome Library holds the most important manuscript and archive collection in Britain for the history of medicine, with nearly 9000 manuscripts and 600 archive collections spanning more than two thousand years. While medicine provides the unifying theme, hardly a subject relating to the history of European science and culture is not represented. Alchemy and chemistry, astrology and astronomy, physics, botany, zoology and other areas of natural history, cookery and pharmacy, exploration and travel, geography and geology, horology, mathematics, magic, mesmerism, phrenology, patent medicine, quackery, psychoanalysis and sexology are among the vast range of subjects covered by our holdings.

Whatever your research topic, we are likely to hold something unique for you. This short tutorial will show you how to unearth unexpected archival gems and exploit this powerful resource effectively. The tutorial includes three practical exercises, and by the end you will be able to navigate between the library and archive catalogues, browse the archive catalogue with confidence, refine your searches and order up materials.

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Searching the main library catalogue for archives and manuscripts

Library catalogue

<http://library.wellcome.ac.uk/> > Library catalogue or <http://catalogue.wellcome.ac.uk>

- 😊 Covers books, journals, pictures, films, archives and manuscripts – select the Entire Catalogue option to make sure you include archives/manuscripts:

The screenshot shows the Wellcome Library search interface. The search term 'vegetable growing' is entered in the search box, and the 'Entire Catalogue' option is selected. The results show 4 items found, sorted by date. The first item is 'Spring wartime gardening guide : what to grow and how to grow it an authoritative guide to vegetable' from 1945.

Num	Mark	WORDS (1-4 of 4)	Year
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spring wartime gardening guide : what to grow and how to grow it an authoritative guide to vegetable	1945
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	An account of some of the vegetable productions, naturally growing in this part of America : botanic	1903
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	A horrified gouty man discovering grass is growing out of his skin, as a result of taking J. Morison	1835
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Market-Gardening] [archive material]	1835

- 😊 Even if you didn't know you wanted/needed archives, you can unearth archival gems accidentally.
- 😊 There is a lot of crossover in holdings between different library departments – running a combined search via Entire Catalogue can bring related material together.
*e.g. keyword search on **Louis Wain** brings together drawings from both Archives and Manuscripts and Paintings, Prints and Drawings.*
- 😞 Keyword searches bring up archives and manuscripts, but subject searches don't.
- 😞 The library catalogue only holds brief details of each archive/manuscript. For fuller/contextual information you need to click on 'View full record' to view the item's entry in the archive catalogue:

The screenshot shows the Wellcome Library search interface for 'market gardening'. The search term 'market gardening' is entered, and the 'Entire Catalogue' option is selected. The results show 1 result found, sorted by date. The result is '[Market-Gardening] [archive material]' from c. 1815-c. 1835.

Title [Market-Gardening] [archive material]
Imprint c 1815-c 1835

Click on the following to:
[View full record](#)

ACCESS	SHELFMARK	STATUS	COMMENTS
REQUEST WMS 2	MS.3444	-	ONLINE REQUEST

Note Collection of extracts and notes on fruit-and-vegetable-growing, **gardening**, etc. Illustrated with 15 full-page and other water-colour drawings of landscapes, pencil lay-outs of vegetable gardens, cottages, etc.: also small pen-drawings of fruit-trees. There are numerous additions on inserted slips. One of these facing p. 44 contains the date 1836. This MS. is possibly by the same hand throughout, though there is considerable change in the script: it appears to have been started c. 1815.

Access The papers are available subject to the usual conditions of access to Archives and Manuscripts material, after the completion of a Reader's Undertaking.

- 😞 To get back to your original hitlist from the archive catalogue, you need to keep clicking on the Back Button.

Finding further information on items in the library catalogue

Need fuller details?

e.g. you have found MS.3444, a market gardening manuscript, via the library catalogue and want details on its provenance.



Easy, just click on 'View full record' in the item's library catalogue record to open up the full archive catalogue details:

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Home > Catalogues > Archives and Manuscripts catalogues

Search Wellcome catalogues

Search the Wellcome Library website

Record details

[Finding and requesting archive items \[PDF 147k\]](#)

[←search again](#)

Record: 1 of 1

Request [Request for use in the Library](#)

Reference **MS.3444**

[Click to browse](#)

Level Item

Extent 1 volume

Title Market-Gardening

Date c. 1815-c. 1835

Name Market-Gardening

Description Collection of extracts and notes on fruit-and-vegetable-growing, gardening, etc. Illustrated with 15 full-page and other water-colour drawings of landscapes, pencil lay-outs of vegetable gardens, cottages, etc.; also small pen-drawings of fruit-trees. There are numerous additions on inserted slips. One of these facing p. 44 contains the date 1836. This MS. is possibly by the same hand throughout, though there is considerable change in the script: it appears to have been started c. 1815.

Accession Number 61805

Want contextual information?

e.g. You've found an item 'Milk and Murder' on Singapore via the library catalogue and want to know who created it, and if there is any other useful material in the same archive collection.



Again, just click on 'View full record' in the item's library catalogue record to move into the archive catalogue:

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Search Wellcome catalogues

Search the Wellcome Library website

Record details

[Finding and requesting archive items \[PDF 147k\]](#)

[←search again](#)

Record: 1 of 1

Request [Request for use in the Library](#)

Reference **PP/CDW/B.2/2**

[See this in context](#)

Level Item

Extent 1 file

Title "Milk and murder", speech to Singapore Rotary Club

Date 1939

Box Number 7

Access Status Open

Access Conditions The papers are available subject to the usual conditions of access to Archives and Manuscripts material, after the completion of a Reader's Undertaking.



From here click on 'See this in context' to open up the contextual information for the item.



'See this in context' arranges the catalogue records into a "tree" that illustrates the collection's structure visually. Now you can see how the 'Milk and Murder' item fits into the collection i.e. it is part of a series on Singapore, which is in turn part of a section on the British Colonial Service 1929-1948, which forms part of the papers of Cicely Williams:

Finding and requesting archive items [PDF 147k]

[← search again](#)

X	PPCDW	Title Williams, Cicely Delphine (1893-1992) Date 1901-1988 Level Collection
	A	Title Personal and Biographical Date 1945-1986 Level Section
X	B	Title British Colonial Service 1929-1948 Date 1929-1948 Level Section
	1	Title Gold Coast Date 1928-1936 Level Series
X	2	Title Singapore Date 1936-1948 Level Series
	1	Title Correspondence with Chief Medical Officer, Singapore Singapore Date 1938 Level Item
	2	Title Milk and murder, speech to Singapore Rotary Club Date 1939 Level Item



Click on the icons to the left of the "tree" to explore the collection further:

= click here to open up more levels

= you have expanded this level to the full

= you have reached the bottom level of this section of the "tree"



To get full catalogue details for any level in the tree, just click on the blue number/letter/reference next to the icon.

Practice session 1

- Open up the library catalogue, do a keyword search on **Godber**, and find the first entry 'A little penalty idea Godber is tryin' out' (on penalties for over-prescribing in the DHSS)'.
 - what type of document this is (e.g. pamphlet, letter?)
 - the full name and birth date of this archive collection's creator
 - what happened to other DHSS papers created by this man
- Now find your way back to your original hitlist in the library catalogue.

Hints Look for the 'See this in context' link in the archive catalogue
 You'll find the answers by browsing upwards to the top of the catalogue
 Once you're at the top level record, the Description field will be useful

Answers

- Cartoon published in *The Practitioner*
- Sir George Edward Godber, b.1908
- They were left for his successors to be transferred to *The National Archives*.

Searching the archive catalogue

<http://library.wellcome.ac.uk/> > Archives and Manuscripts > [Online catalogue of Archives and Manuscripts](#)
OR
<http://archives.wellcome.ac.uk>

Keyword searches



Enter the words you want to search on in the 'Any Text' field. You can set various Word Options at the bottom of the search page:

- 'Phrase' (the default setting) e.g. searching on **black dog** will find records containing the phrase 'black dog'
- 'Or' e.g. searching on **black dog** will find records containing either 'black' or 'dog'
- 'And' e.g. searching on **black dog** will find records containing both 'black' and 'dog' i.e. both terms but not necessarily together in same phrase

Archives and Manuscripts catalogue

Medical and health-related archive material from antiquity to the present, including medical treatises and lecture notes, case books and diaries, ledgers and accounts, recipe books, laboratory notes and correspondence.

[Finding and requesting archive items](#) [PDF 147k]

Enter your search term(s) below and press the Search button

Any Text

Reference

Title

Date

Creator Name

Language

Subject

Level

Word Options Field Options



To sort the hitlist into your preferred order, click on the blue column heading 'Reference', 'Level', 'Title' or 'Date'.

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Home > Catalogues > Archives and Manuscripts catalogues Search the Wellcome Library website

Search results

[Finding and requesting archive items \[PDF 147k\]](#)

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Reference	Level	Title	Date
1 MS.3085	Item	Prescription book	1700-1701
2 PF/MLV/B/2/9	Item	Laboratory Photographs - "3 Pump Perfusions"	1930s
3 WF/CM/GB/A/02	Item	Press Adverts - Horticultural [and domestic household]	c 1933 - c 1939
4 WF/M/GB/35/02	Item	Explorers Cuttings Book 2	1912 - 1921
5 WF/MA/PR/S02	Item	Sites: Overseas: Africa (Ghana, South Africa: Johannesburg, Uganda; Zambia; Zimbabwe)	c.1911-c.1990

Subject searches



You can search by subject term if you prefer:

- Click on the blue 'Subject' link
- Enter the term you wish to use and click on 'Lookup'
- If your term is used in the catalogue it will appear below the Lookup box

Home > Catalogues > Archives and Manuscripts catalogues NEW! Discover what the Wellcome Library has for you

Archives and Manuscripts catalogue

Medical and health-related archive material from antiquity to the present, including notes, case books and diaries, ledgers and accounts, recipe books, laboratory notes

[Finding and requesting archive items \[PDF 147k\]](#)

Enter your search term(s) below and press the Search button

Any Text

Reference

Title

Date

Creator Name

Language

Subject

Level

Word Options Field Options

AND AND

OR OR

PHRASE

http://archives.wellcome.ac.uk/Dserve/dserve.exe?dsq...

Term

- Click on 'Term' to enter the subject term in your search form
- Click 'Search'



The subject terms used in the catalogue are not always intuitive *e.g. entering **cancer** in the Subject field = no hits*

- To check if your term is used click on the blue 'Subject' link, enter your term and click on 'Lookup' *e.g. for **cancer** you are told to use **Neoplasms***
- Click on 'USE', then click Term as usual to enter the subject term in your search form
- Click 'Search'

Archives and Manuscripts catalogue

Medical and health-related archive material from antiquity to the present, including notes, case books and diaries, ledgers and accounts, recipe books, laboratory notes

[Finding and requesting](#) archive items [PDF 147k]

http://archives.wellcome.ac.uk/Dserve/dserve.exe?dsq...

Term

Term Cancer

[USE Neoplasms](#)

Enter your search term(s) below and press the Search button

Any Text

Reference

Title

Date

Creator Name

Language

Subject

Level

Word Options Field Options

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> AND | <input checked="" type="radio"/> AND |
| <input type="radio"/> OR | <input type="radio"/> OR |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> PHRASE | |

Refining hitlists



You have the option to widen or narrow hitlists or exclude items from your search.

First, you need your hitlist *e.g. keyword search on **recipes***

To widen your hitlist:

- Click on 'Search Again' – **don't worry, the database will not lose your original hitlist!**
- You can now see some extra buttons under 'Search' on the right of the screen

The screenshot shows the Wellcome Library website. At the top left is the Wellcome Library logo. At the top right are navigation links: Home | About us | Contact us | Opening hours | FAQ | Join the library | Site search. Below the logo is the Wellcome Collection logo. A navigation bar contains links: Using the library | Catalogues | Electronic resources | Collections | Exhibitions | Projects | Schools. A search box is present with the text 'Search Library collections'. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Catalogues > Archives and Manuscripts catalogues. A small announcement reads: 'NEW! Discover what the Wellcome Library has for you'.

Archives and Manuscripts catalogue

Medical and health-related archive material from antiquity to the present, including medical treatises and lecture notes, case books and diaries, ledgers and accounts, recipe books, laboratory notes and correspondence.

[Finding and requesting archive items](#) [PDF 147k]

Enter your search term(s) below and press the Search button

Any Text

Reference

Title

Date

Creator Name

Language

Subject

Level

[Word Options](#) [Field Options](#)

- To widen to include herbals – *do a subject search on **herbals***
- Click on 'Widen'

To exclude items from your hitlist:

- Click on 'Search Again'
- To exclude material on alchemy – *do a subject search on **alchemy***
- Click on 'Exclude'

To narrow down your hitlist

- Click on 'Search Again'
- To narrow down by date – *do a date search on **1300-1400***
- Click on 'Narrow'

To restrict your search to items in a particular language

- Click on 'Search Again'
- To narrow down to English language material only: enter English in the Language box
- Click on 'Narrow'

Reference searches

- ☺ Useful if you already know which collection/manuscript you wish to find out more about. *e.g. you have found the papers of R J Hetherington listed in an online source guide at <http://library.wellcome.ac.uk/> > Archives and Manuscripts > Source guides, so know that the collection reference is PP/RJH.*
- ☺ To make the hitlist for a collection easier to browse via 'chapter headings', search on the collection reference under 'Reference' and **section** under 'Level':

Home > Catalogues > Archives and Manuscripts catalogues Search the Wellcome Library website

Search results

[Finding and requesting](#) archive items [PDF 147k]

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Reference	Level	Title	Date
1 PP/RJH/A	Section	Oral contraceptives: producers and their products	c.1960s-1970s
2 PP/RJH/B	Section	Conferences on Contraception. This section is arranged alphabetically under the organising body	c.1960s-1970s
3 PP/RJH/C	Section	Oral contraception: diseases associated with	c.1960s-1970s
4 PP/RJH/D	Section	Oral contraception: miscellaneous	c.1960s-1970s
5 PP/RJH/E	Section	Contraception: General	c.1960s-1970s
6 PP/RJH/F	Section	Drugs	c.1960s-1970s
7 PP/RJH/G	Section	Drug Abuse. There is some overlap between the files	c.1960s-1970s

Missing catalogues?

I can only find a single, summary record for a collection – where is the catalogue?

- ☺ Nearly all (c.85%) of our catalogues are searchable online
- ☺ You can access the remaining catalogues by:
 - consulting the hardcopy catalogues in the library
 - asking Archives and Manuscripts to email you a catalogue as an attachment

Practice session 2

1. You are looking for material on horse medicine. Try a subject search on **horse diseases**.
2. That's not enough material, so try widening your search to include the subject term **veterinary medicine**.
3. Actually, you only want material for the period 1700-1800. Narrow down your hitlist using these dates.
4. You want to restrict your hits to material in English only? Narrow your search using the Language box (see hint below).

Hints Each time you want to refine your hitlist, click on 'Search Again', enter your new search data, then click on 'Widen', 'Narrow' or 'Exclude'.

In large archive collections, the language is often only noted in the top, collection-level record rather than being repeated in every single record. It is, therefore, best to narrow hitlists by language after doing the initial search, rather than restricting by language right at the start of your search.

Answers

1. 45 hits
2. 225 hits
3. 88 hits
4. 28 hits

Ordering up archives and manuscripts

Are the archives and manuscripts themselves accessible online?

☹ No, the catalogue is a summary not a transcript/digital copy.

How do I order up the item?

😊 You can order up to 20 items at once (*items* not whole collections/sections etc.)

When you find an item you want to order, click 'Request for use in the Library':

The screenshot shows the Wellcome Library website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, About us, Contact us, News, FAQ, Join the Library, and Sitemap. Below this is a search bar and a breadcrumb trail: Home > Catalogues > Archives and Manuscripts catalogues. The main content area is titled 'Record details' and includes a link for 'Finding and requesting archive items [PDF 147k]'. A 'search again' button is visible. The record information is as follows:

- Record:** 1 of 1
- Request:** [Request for use in the Library](#)
- Reference:** **PP/CDW/B.2/2** (with a 'Click to browse' link)
- Level:** Item
- Extent:** 1 file
- Title:** Milk and murder', speech to Singapore Rotary Club
- Date:** 1939
- Box Number:** 7
- Access Status:** Open
- Access Conditions:** The papers are available subject to the usual conditions of access to Archives and Manuscripts material, after the completion of a Reader's Undertaking.

This will take you into the library catalogue - to place your order click either of the red 'Request from Stack' buttons:

The screenshot shows the Wellcome Library website search results page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, About us, Contact us, News, FAQ, Join the Library, and Sitemap. Below this is a search bar and a breadcrumb trail: Home > Catalogues. The main content area includes a search bar with the reference number 'PPCDW/B/2/2' and a 'Search' button. A 'Request from stack' button is highlighted in red. Below the search bar, there is a 'WebBridge for more resources' button. The record information is as follows:

- Title:** [Milk and murder', speech to Singapore Rotary Club] [archive material]
- Imprint:** 1939

Below the record information, there is a table with the following columns: ACCESS, SHELFMARK, STATUS, and COMMENTS.

ACCESS	SHELFMARK	STATUS	COMMENTS
REQUEST Arch. & MSS	PP/CDW/B.2/2.Box 7	-	ONLINE REQUEST

Below the table, there is a section for 'Access' with the following text: 'The papers are available subject to the usual conditions of access to Archives and Manuscripts material, after the completion of a Reader's Undertaking.' Below this, there is a section for 'Genre/Tech' with the text 'Archives' and a section for 'Record No.' with the text 'PPCDW/B/2/2'. At the bottom, there is a search bar with the reference number 'PPCDW/B/2/2' and a 'Search' button.

Enter your library card number and PIN

Ensure you click the 'Request Selected Item' button – if you don't the order won't go through!

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Home > Catalogues

Return to catalogue Start again

Requesting [Milk and murder', speech to Singapore Rotary Club] [archive material]

Choose one item from the list below:

Mark	ACCESS	SHELFMARK	STATUS	COMMENTS
Ⓢ	REQUEST Arch. & MSS	PP/CDW/B 2/2.Box 7	-	ONLINE REQUEST

REQUEST SELECTED ITEM

Hints

- ☺ To get back to the archive catalogue, use the Back Button not Start Again (this will take you into the library catalogue)
- ☺ If you can't see a red 'Request from Stack' button, the item cannot be ordered at the moment (e.g. already ordered by someone else)
- ☺ If you are unable to order an item online, use a green slip or contact Archives and Manuscripts to order it for you.

Practice session 3

Open up the archive catalogue and search for the following:

- (a) File reference PP/DAL/D/2/2 (letters from addicts, 1981-1983)
- (b) File reference PP/EPR/D/1/1 (correspondence)

How successful are you?

Hint To get back to the archive catalogue after your first order, use the Back Button.

Answers

- (a) *You cannot order this file - it is closed until 1 Jan 2084 because its contains highly sensitive personal information.*
- (b) *When we put a collection into the online catalogue, it takes a little while for us to activate its online ordering capability. So if you come across a message like this, you just need to order the material on a green slip or contact us in advance to order it on your behalf.*

Further queries?

You can contact the Duty Archivist in person at any time during the day. Just ask for them in the Rare Materials Reading Room.

Alternatively, you can get in touch with us in writing or by telephone/email:

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F +44 (0)20 7611 8703
E arch+mss@wellcome.ac.uk

In addition, over 70 online source guides and handlists are available providing detailed guidance to Archives and Manuscripts collections by subject (see <http://library.wellcome.ac.uk/> > Archives and Manuscripts > Sources guides).