SCIE258 HW4a: Description of potential artifacts

Background

Recall that the final goal of HW4 is a research paper based on a document or other artifact that is relevant to the course and housed in a London archive, museum, or library. Most likely, you will be working with a document of some kind, but we use the word "artifact" from now on, to cover the possibility that you are working with some other kind of item.

Main task for HW4a

In this part of the assignment, HW4a, you must select *three* suitable artifacts via online searches and submit a brief description of each. *At least one of your artifacts must be in the Royal Society archive, and at least one of them must be in some other location* (see below for suggestions). For each artifact, provide:

   a) All relevant archival details, such as: which archive it is in, any reference number, title, date and official description provided by the archive, the length or size, and (if appropriate) which language it's in. It is fine to copy and paste a verbatim description from the archive catalog.
   b) A short paragraph (1-3 sentences) describing why this artifact is of interest to you.

Try to avoid artifacts that are too closely related to our summer readings (*Longitude*, *Ghost Map*); if there is too much overlap between your choice of topic for this assignment and the summer readings, you will be asked to choose a different topic.

Rank your artifacts according to preference, listing the one you are most interested in first. If you have a strong preference, state this clearly at the top of your assignment and give an explanation. The instructor will assign one of your choices to you based on a variety of factors such as relevance to the course, suitability for a research paper, relevance to your major, and the availability of reading tickets for the Royal Society and other archives.

Submit your three artifact descriptions to Moodle in PDF format.

Archives to browse

As stated above, at least one of your three artifacts must be in the Royal Society archives, and at least one must be in a different location. Apart from that restriction, feel free to browse the collection of any relevant London-based museum. Here are some specific suggestions:

- [Royal Society](): For keyword searches, make sure to select the "archives" button, and/or use the more specialized "archives search" near the bottom right. However, it may be more productive to initially explore some highlights via the "view the collection" link (right-hand side towards the bottom).
- [Wellcome Collection](): You can search by keyword, but the "subject guides" (middle right) may make it easier to find something interesting
- [Science Museum, London](): Make sure to choose an artifact that is located in London; the searchable interface includes archives at other locations too.

- **Natural History Museum, London**: Useful links include highlights, archives catalog, Wallace letters.
- Bank of England archive

Techniques for browsing online archives

As noted above, some of the libraries and archives have their highlights organized by subject and this is a good way to get some ideas. Another useful way to browse is to identify a particular scientist you are interested in, use the name of that scientist as a search term, then look for interesting items within the returned results for that scientist.

Topic suggestions

A good first step for finding a topic is to scan through relevant sections of our Gribbin textbook to identify particular scientists or subjects that may be of interest to you, and use these to seed your explorations. Additional guidance is given below:

- There are plenty of famous British scientists that could be a starting point.
- Since women are underrepresented in the history of science, you might consider choosing a topic that relates to a British woman scientist: the Royal Society has a list of 10 influential British women scientists, and to this I would add Marie Stopes and Ada Lovelace.
- You might also consider a topic that incorporates multiculturalism. A good starting point here is the Royal Society's page on The role of black people in the history of the Royal Society.
- As stated above, your artifacts must be "relevant to the course." For this purpose, a broad definition of relevance will be adopted, so relevant topics include economics, engineering, technology, architecture, business and science-related literature. Suitable people here could include James Watt, John Maynard Keynes, Isambard Brunel, and Christopher Wren, among many others.