About the Role
We are creating a team of enthusiastic volunteers to be part of our new Herbarium Room at Oxford Botanic Garden, a ‘mini museum’ to showcase the Garden’s near 400 year-old relationship with Oxford’s world-class Herbaria (collections of pressed plant specimens). Volunteers will play a key role in enabling the Herbarium Room to open to the public – checking tickets and engaging visitors with the fascinating pressed plant specimens, botanical art and other objects on display.

We wish to open the Herbarium Room from 1st June if possible, on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Therefore we are looking for a team of volunteers to help this happen as much as possible, 10am-1pm and 1pm-4pm, Thursdays – Sundays.

About the Herbarium Room
The Oxford University Herbaria is the oldest botanical scientific collection in the UK and was originally amassed at the Botanic Garden. Until the mid-nineteenth century the Herbaria was one of the largest scientific collections of plants in the world. It contains material dating back to the early seventeenth century and its contents have influenced the use and planting of the Botanic Garden since the 1640s. These unique collections are now housed in the Department of Plant Sciences on South Parks Road but the collections’ ‘roots’ are in the Garden. Unfortunately, these botanical treasures are rarely seen by the public, so the Herbarium Room at the Botanic Garden will function as a mini museum and ‘shop front’ to the Oxford Herbaria. As the Garden approaches its 400th anniversary in 2021 the Herbarium Room will host a series of exhibitions of the botanical treasures of the Herbaria to celebrate the Garden’s historical and current links to the Herbaria and the Department of Plant Sciences.

The person
This would suit somebody who wants to volunteer for a regular morning or afternoon slot. However, if you need to be more flexible, then we are still keen to hear from you. You’ll be friendly, welcoming and eager to help visitors enjoy the Herbarium Room and learn more about the current exhibition. You don’t already need to know anything about plants, but we hope that you will be keen to learn more about the exhibition content so that you can pass it on to visitors. The Botanic Garden runs on a small staff team who are willing to provide support to volunteers on the day if needed, but this role will suit volunteers who are happy to work fairly independently.

What you will be doing
You will be responsible for ensuring that visitors to the Herbarium Room get the most out of the experience whilst helping to maintain the safety of the visitors and the exhibits. You will check that visitors have valid tickets, engage with visitors and answer any questions that they may have about the exhibits. Your presence will also help to ensure that visitors adhere to the rules of the Herbarium Room, such as no food or drink.
inside, no handling of the displays, etc. At this stage we do not know how busy the Room will be, because it has not been opened very often - volunteers may bring something to read during quiet periods.

**Training: 6.00 – 7.00 pm, Thursday 23 May at the Botanic Garden**
Before you start you will be given relevant training and a briefing on the Herbarium Room and the fascinating collection of plant specimens, fixtures and artwork housed within it. Any volunteers who have not yet done an Oxford University Museums Volunteers Service Public Engagement induction will need to attend earlier at 5.00 pm on the same day, or at another time to be agreed.

**Why you might enjoy volunteering in this role**
- This is a unique opportunity to join the team at the Oxford Botanic Garden - the oldest botanic garden in the UK
- Ideal for people who wish to build their portfolio of experience working with the public, or working in the museum and heritage sector
- As a volunteer you will receive training relevant to your role, and we will try to include you in the life of the Garden whenever we can.
- You will receive on-going support during your time with us
- This role offers a chance to meet visitors and make a difference

**Additional Information**
- This role will be coordinated by a member of staff who might not be present on the day you volunteer.
- To volunteer in this role you must be 18 or over and eligible to volunteer in the UK.
- Travel expenses can be reimbursed (up to £4.20 per session).
- A Right to Work check will be required for this role.

**How to apply**
To express your interest in this role, please email volunteering@museums.ox.ac.uk by **Sunday 19th May**. Responses will collated and sent on to the Botanic Garden staff to review. Please include:

1. A short paragraph on what you hope to get out of volunteering in the Herbarium Room.
2. Confirmation of whether or not you can attend the training session on Thursday 23 May, 6-7 pm. If you cannot attend, please let us know which days/evenings work best for you.
3. Your general availability over the next few months. Are you looking for a regular morning or afternoon slot, and if so which morning or afternoons (Thurs, Fri, Sat, Sun) would be possible for you? Or would you prefer to sign up for sessions in a more flexible way, as you go – in which case, are there any days or sessions (Thurs-Sun mornings and afternoons) which would NOT be possible?

We will respond to all applicants by 21st May.