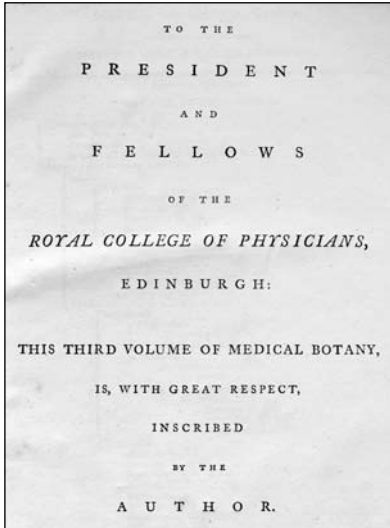
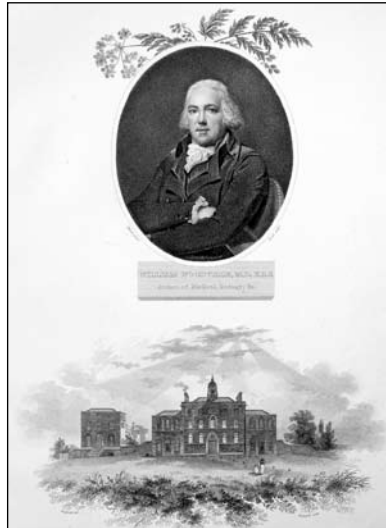


William Woodville's *Medical Botany*

Woodville's four-volume work is one of the most attractive books in the Sibbald library and is also closely linked with the College's history.



Woodville's dedication.



Portrait of William Woodville.



Illustration of a lemon, from *Medical Botany*.

William Woodville was born at Cockermonth in 1752. He went to the University of Edinburgh, where he attended William Cullen's classes before graduating MD in 1775. Woodville returned to Cumberland and began to practise medicine at Papcastle before he was forced to move to North Wales after accidentally shooting a man who was creating a disturbance in his (presumably prized) garden.

In 1782 Woodville settled in London, became a Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians of London and physician to the London Smallpox and Inoculation Hospital. He was a staunch advocate of inoculation and published populist pro-inoculation pamphlets. Later, convinced by Edward Jenner's work, he played an important role in establishing vaccination.

Woodville was passionate about botany and used two acres of the land that surrounded the London Smallpox and Inoculation

Hospital at King's Cross to cultivate a botanical garden. He met all the costs of this enterprise himself.

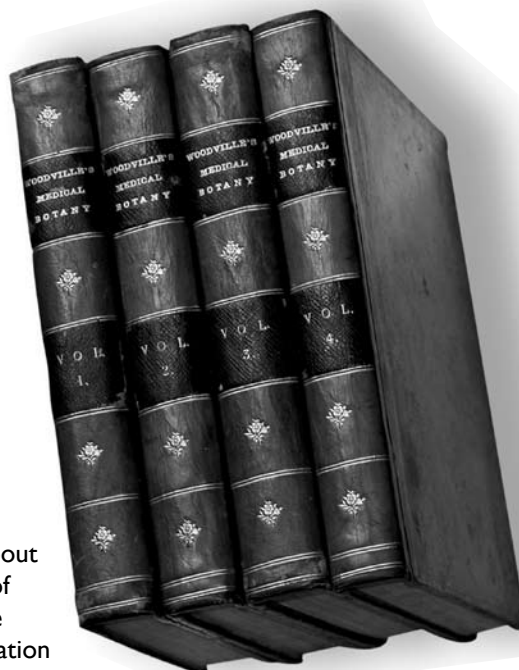
Medical Botany, Woodville's great catalogue of medicinal plants, was published in serial parts between 1790 and 1794. The work contains nearly 300 illustrations of the plants featured in the pharmacopoeias

published by the Royal College of Physicians of London and the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. The accompanying text gives clear plant descriptions and details the plants' medicinal qualities. A fourth supplementary volume contains plants not included in the college pharmacopoeias.

The beautiful illustrations in the book were nearly all drawn from living plants or herbarium specimens by James Sowerby, who also illustrated many of the plants featured in the *Botanical Magazine*.

Medical Botany was the standard illustrated work on the British pharmacopoeia for most of the nineteenth century. A second edition appeared in 1810, which was revised and enlarged by WJ Hooker and G Spratt in 1832.

Woodville died on 26 March 1805 at the Smallpox Hospital. His obituary in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* was laudatory.



Iain Milne
 Sibbald Librarian, RCPE