

Heather: *Calluna Vulgaris*

Heather (the scientific name being *calluna vulgaris*) was burned as protection against the Bubonic Plague. The plague was considered a miasma, a type of toxic air. People tried to avoid the toxic air by breathing in strong smells such as the smoke from burning heather. Heather was common thatching for Scottish houses, which meant it was close at hand.



Heather: *Calluna Vulgaris*

Date: 2020

Material: Dried heather and
heather essential oil

Object Origin: United Kingdom

Reproduction: No

Preparation: Sourced dried heather with essential
oils added to enhance fragrance



STATION "A"

Rosemary: *Salvia Rosmarinus*

Rosemary was burned as protection against the Bubonic Plague in many regions of Europe. Burning plants was a popular method of cleansing spaces or objects that would not survive alternative cleansing methods, such as boiling.



Rosemary: *Salvia Rosmarinus*

Date: 2020

Material: Dried rosemary
and rosemary essential oil

Object origin: United Kingdom

Reproduction: No

Preparation: Sourced dried rosemary with
essential oils added to enhance fragrance



STATION "A"

Flax Fibre: *Linum Usitatissimum*

Flax fibre is a material which was imported to Edinburgh from the Netherlands to be spun into fabric. Flax fibre was often shipped to Edinburgh by boat, arriving at the port in Leith. It was believed soft objects, such as fabric could absorb the plague and spread in indirectly. Flax fibre was considered one of the most dangerous goods, so shipments of the fibre were placed in quarantine before they could enter the city.



Flax Fibre: *Linum Usitatissimum*

Date: 2020

Material: Flax fibre

Object origin: Belgium

Reproduction: No

Preparation: Dried and spun



STATION "A"



Inchcolm Island

The plague was known to be brought to Edinburgh by boat, leading to many precautions at the port in Leith. Goods, as well as merchants, entering the port were often subjected to a period of quarantine on the islands in the Firth of Forth. Flax fibre was often laid out on Inchcolm to ventilate for over a month.



Inchcolm Island

Date: 2018

Material: Ink and paper

Object origin: Scotland

Reproduction: Yes

Preparation: None



STATION "A"

Plague Mask

The beaked mask of European plague doctors was designed to protect doctors from breathing in the “bad air” that carried the plague. The mask design is credited to Charles de Lorme, a French doctor. It was first used in Scotland by Dr George Rae, Edinburgh’s second plague doctor, during the 1645 epidemic. Unfortunately Dr Rae’s predecessor, Dr John Paulitious, died shortly after taking up the position.



Plague Mask

Date of original object: 1645

Material: Leather, fabric, beeswax

Object origin: United Kingdom

Reproduction: Yes

Preparation: Sewn leather
and fabric



STATION "A"

Juniper Berries: *Juniperus Communis*

Juniper berries were used in Scotland as strong smelling herbs for plague masks. The berries were placed in the beak of the mask and their strong smell was believed to protect wearers from breathing in the plague.



Juniper Berries: *Juniperus Communis*

Date: 2020

Material: Dried juniper berries
and juniper essential oil

Object origin: United Kingdom

Reproduction: No

Preparation: Sourced dried juniper berries with
essential oils added to enhance fragrance



STATION "A"

Plague Doctor with Mask

Plague masks were used by doctors in Europe. The outfits became popular costumes for Italian theatre and were often satirised. Hats were a common part of the costume to denote the wearer as a doctor. The outfit has lived on in pop culture today, often used as a costume and still seen in film and television.

This image came from a page in *Aescapule*, a French periodical highlighting "...letters and the arts in their relation to science and medicine."



Plague Doctor with Mask

Date of Original Object: 1924

Material: Ink and paper

Object origin: France

Reproduction: Yes

Preparation: None



STATION "A"

