

# Keeping a Lid on It

By Rex Barber



My wife and I started collecting pot lids back in 1969 and by the mid 1970s we had sold all our Australian pot lids to Bob and Sue Keeling as we both imagined that we would dig plenty more (Oh, well). We next decided to collect only coloured pot lids and bought quite a few from June Heath on a visit to England in 1977 to add to our collection. It was also during this period that we realized we were never going to be able to either collect, or afford to buy single fields of pot lids such as bears' greases, or the more specialized pictorial toothpaste lids as

collected by the American collector Ben Swanson.

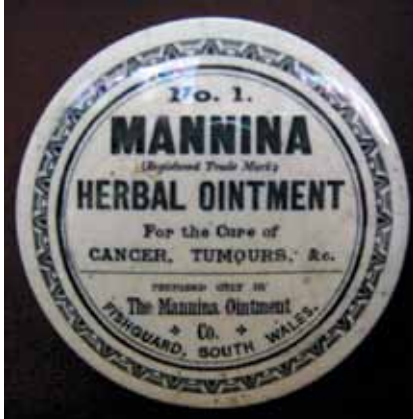
We looked at our collection and made our minds up to collect cure-all pot lids, ointments, salves and creams, and sold the rest to give us some buying power, a 40-year-long conversion. As with the rest of you dedicated collectors out there, it is our individual choice to chop and change whether you dig, buy, or swap your bottles and lids. Perhaps it is a combination of all those means of acquiring for your collection.

Regardless of our real jobs in life

we amateur archaeologists are keeping treasures of the past for the future, and I believe that the Victorian and Edwardian periods were the greatest for commercial advertising ware regardless of if it be bottles, stoneware or pot lids.

Look carefully at the Measams lid, a genuine cure-all pot lid that not only cures ring worms and other nasties, but is good for cleaning the teeth. I begs first go for my teeth only please; you get something else for your flaming ring worms.

People like Hollaways, with their



lids predate the impressive advertising of Coca-Cola and Kentucky Fried Chicken, remembering that Holloway did all of his advertising before television, telephone and even radio, and yet we dig his lids and pots all around the globe.

Most cure-all pot lids have a variation of cures that proclaim to cure nearly ever known disease to man, including a cure for cancer from Wales from "The Mannina Ointment Company" that also produced a threesome of quack cures.

Another lid by Dr. Showers salve cures cancerous growths and uses a new word in the dictionary at that time – radium.



Many of the Victorian cures were from doctors, if we are to believe the scripts and perhaps at that time in history they were. Dr. McWhinnie's Ung Rub, the red ointment, Dr. Buchan's vegetable ointment, Old Dr. Hardy's Scorbutic ointment and Dr. Wright's Celebrated Pearl Ointment pot lids in four separate colours and prices.

Two of the great pictorial cures are Johnsons Celebrated Ointment showing the manufactory building in Crewe (still standing in 2009) and the brown owl eye ointment from Sargent's Chemist of York, in Western Australia.

Amongst my collection of pot lids are cures for just about every disease known to man including many whose named ailments have gone out of common usage such as anti scorbutic

which apparently is pitting of the skin.

The use of words like Cetine, Cerate and Ceratum, refer to the fixing or bonding agent used in these concoctions, and this was normally bees wax or some form of animal fat such as lard, or pig fat.

If you take the time to read *Culpeper's Complete Herbal and English Physician*, (written in 1653) and as recommended by Dr Johnson in 1760, (Pratt pot lid) you will find the basis for a great many quack cures lid scripts, for even in the very front piece of the book you read "Are physically applied to the cure of all disorders incident to mankind"

I appreciate that many of his cures have found their way into modern medicine, but you have to wonder at Moonwort, for stopping bleeding, consolidating fractures, blows and bruises and reportedly has having removed 30 newly shod horse shoes from the Earl of Essex's command on White Down in Devonshire, near Tiverton.

Of course quack cures can be traced back in written history, to Romans, Greeks and many other cultures, but the Victorian period is the pottiest.



Common amongst quack cure script on lids in Victorian times was the word Egyptian as used in both the Clarkes cure-all lid and the Western Australian Trouchets corn cure lid from the Gold Fields. This evolved from the mid 18th century cure of ground-up mummy wrappings as shown in the famous William Hogarth Cartoon. This dust was added to the cetine and other strange ingredients to form the cure.

