

Introduction

John Dewar



The contents of this issue of *University of Melbourne Collections* vividly illustrate the long-lasting benefits that donors and other benefactors have provided to our cultural collections, whether through the gift of collection items, or funds to support them. Chris McAuliffe for example discusses the substantial enhancements that accrued to the University of Melbourne Art Collection through the generosity of the late Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE. Over several decades Dr Brown donated more than 70 works of art to the University, as well as giving to many other institutions. Dr John McKenzie discusses a rare book that he donated to the Baillieu Library. His contribution shows that a donor gives not only the collection object (and in this case also, funds toward conserving it), but also the benefit of his or her professional expertise that sheds light on the object itself. The opportunity to publish a discussion by a distinguished medical scientist of a historical text in his own area of specialisation shows the synergies that can occur particularly in University collections.

The magazine highlights other recent gifts from people with a strong association with our University: maps donated by the former Curator of Maps, Mrs Dorothy Prescott OAM;

Chinese books donated by Professor Harry Simon, our Foundation Professor of East Asian Studies; and a rare book by Francis Bacon donated by the recently retired Head of the Department of Zoology, Professor David Macmillan. Each gift is significant in its own right and of great use to students and researchers, but the connection to a former staff member or alumnus adds another layer of meaning and value.

Museums, libraries and archives require money to make these rich collections usable and accessible, and to ensure that they are preserved for future generations. Financial gifts are therefore equally important and we are fortunate to be able to report on many projects that have been made possible through philanthropic support, such as the appointment of a Curator of Academic Programs at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, funded by the Ian Potter Foundation; Cultural Treasures Day 2010, funded by a bequest; publication of a new brochure listing all the cultural collections, supported by the University's Cultural and Community Relations Advisory Group; and projects made possible by donors to the University's Annual Appeal.

As Provost, the University Library falls within my area of responsibility and I am therefore particularly

pleased that five of the 11 inaugural Scholarly Information Innovation Grants, which are funded by the Library, will support cultural collections: the Medical History Museum, Baillieu Library Special Collections, Grainger Museum, School of Chemistry Collection and Architecture and Planning Library.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of *University of Melbourne Collections*. The University takes seriously its commitment to public engagement through knowledge exchange, and our collections are tangible evidence of that commitment. We are delighted to receive such strong support from the community for our collections.

Professor John Dewar took up the role of Provost, the University's chief academic officer, in September 2009. He was previously Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Relations). Professor Dewar is an internationally known family law specialist. A graduate of the University of Oxford, he taught at the Universities of Lancaster and Warwick and worked for the London law firm Allen & Overy.