

News from the collections

Cultural Treasures Festival 2014

The University of Melbourne welcomed the community into its extraordinary collections of treasures for two days earlier this year, for the biennial Cultural Treasures Festival. Held on Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 July, the fourth Cultural Treasures Festival included guided tours of the university's art, botanical, literary, medical, musical, scientific and zoological collections; special exhibitions; and talks conducted by curators, librarians, academics, students and other experts.



The rich tradition of collecting at the University of Melbourne is vividly reflected in its diverse museums, scientific collections, archives, libraries and public art. From historic daisy specimens in the University Herbarium, collected by Sir Joseph Banks and Dr Daniel Solander on the first exploratory voyages to Australia in the early 1770s, to the skeleton of the extinct New Zealand moa in the Tiegs Zoology Museum; from Percy Grainger's extraordinary collection of musical instruments, to the rarity of the work of Renaissance printmakers in the Baillieu Library Print Collection; visitors experienced a marvellous sample of the university's treasures.

Cultural Treasures Festival 2014 coincided with Open House Melbourne, an annual event in which tens of thousands of Melburnians and tourists go behind the scenes of buildings across the city, to learn about our history and architecture. A number of the university's buildings were open as part of Open House. Visitors also took advantage of the chance to enjoy the Melbourne Rare Book Fair, which for the second time was held in Wilson Hall. More than 11,000 visits were made to the campus for this remarkable cultural weekend.



Nellie Melba portrait acquired by School of Physics Museum

The School of Physics Museum recently acquired a portrait of the Australian soprano Dame Nellie Melba (1861–1931). Showing the diva dressed in costume for the role of Marguerite in the opera *Faust*, this image is a 1908 two-colour half-tone print after an 1880s photograph taken by the Aimé Dupont Photographic Studio in Paris. The image of Melba was acquired to complement the museum's collection of 'normal'-pitch tuning forks. As part of an international attempt to standardise

Previous page (left): Professor Reynard Eastley (actor Bernard Caleo) and friends at Cultural Treasures Festival 2014.

Previous page (right): Aimé Dupont Photographic Studio, Dame Nellie Melba as Marguerite in *Faust*, two-colour half-tone print, 1908. Purchased 2014, School of Physics Museum, University of Melbourne.

Below left: Crystal display, c. 1910–50, featuring a crystal of cupric potassium sulphate, 5.5 cm diameter. Reg. no. CH 78.f, School of Chemistry Collection, University of Melbourne.

Below right: *Tips on touring: Discover Australia with Shell*, 1960. Unit 255, ref. 2008.0045, Shell Historical Archive 1903–2007, University of Melbourne Archives.

the pitch at which orchestras and instruments were tuned, and therefore at which singers were expected to sing, Dame Nellie donated £50 in 1907 to the Ormond professor of music, Franklin Peterson, for the purchase of a set of reference tuning forks, to be tested at the university by the professor of natural philosophy (physics), T.R Lyle. The aim of the Victorian education minister, Mr Arthur Sachse, was eventually to purchase sets of normal-pitch tuning forks for all schools across Victoria.

Reflections: Tales from within the crystal

Crystals have long captivated the imagination of humankind. They have been part of ancient myths and legends, healing remedies, modern fashion trends and industrial applications. Scientific interest in crystals was piqued in the 1600s by the German mathematician and astronomer Johannes Kepler, who explored the beautiful symmetry of ice crystals. By the 20th century, scientists had discovered that X-rays could be used to analyse the arrangement of the atoms making up a crystal, creating a new field of scientific inquiry: crystallography. Today, crystallography is an important technique for determining the structures of proteins, DNA and other complex molecules

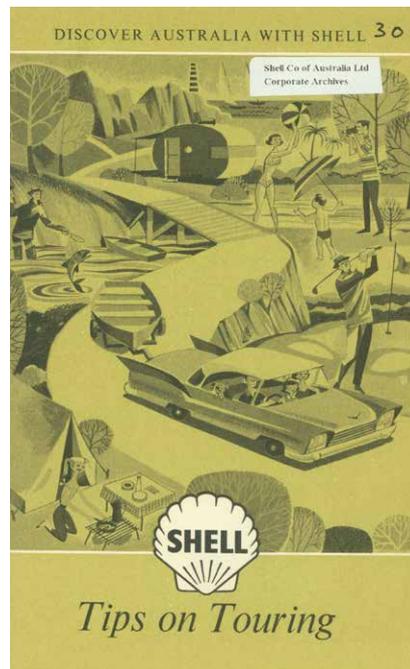


and is key to the design of new materials and medicines.

The exhibition *Reflections: Tales from within the crystal*, currently on display on the ground floor of the School of Chemistry Building, celebrates the International Year of Crystallography. It brings together crystal specimens, models and the instruments that have been used at various times in history to solve the mysteries that lie within the crystal.

Shell Historical Archive now available

Over 300 boxes of correspondence from the Shell Company of Australia are now listed online and available for research. Held by the University of Melbourne Archives, this collection is a wonderful source of information on Australia's oil and petrol industry and also a surprisingly rich source for social history. The correspondence covers key events such as the formation of an oil cartel during World War I, the United Australia

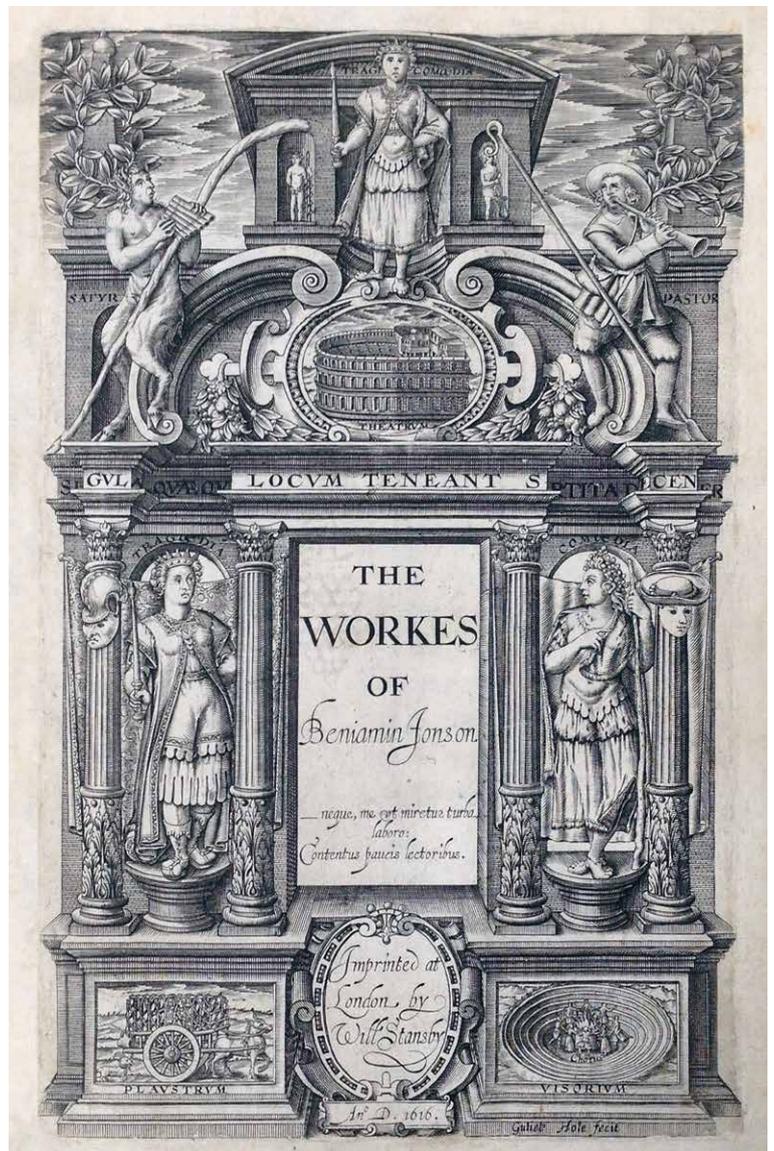


Party's links to the oil industry, and Shell's introduction of single-brand petrol stations in the 1950s. Shell's sponsorship of early motoring and aviation endeavours is represented in hundreds of photographs and pieces of memorabilia. This large collection will be of great interest to researchers in a wide range of fields. The finding aid is available at <http://tinyurl.com/n5cwmk8>.

Ben Jonson: first folio

Special Collections in the Baillieu Library recently acquired the first two folio volumes of the collected works of English Renaissance poet and playwright Benjamin Jonson (1572–1637). Published in 1616, the first Jonson folio was a crucial development in the treatment of English drama as serious literature, and set a precedent for subsequent published collections of plays, most notably the Shakespeare First Folio of 1623. The second Jonson folio was published in 1640–41, and includes additional plays and masques and four miscellaneous works.

Special Collections is fortunate to hold a copy of the Shakespeare Second Folio (1632), along with the first edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Comedies and tragedies* (1647), making the Jonson folios fine additions to our holdings of English dramatic literature published in the 17th century.



Right: Kerriane Stone.

Below: Mortimer Menpes, Sarah Bernhardt, c. 1901, drypoint, 27.3 × 17.6 cm. Grainger Museum, University of Melbourne.

Pastoral family records to be available online

University of Melbourne Archives is pleased to announce that one of its important collections of papers relating to the history of Victoria, the Ritchie Family Collection, will soon be more easily available for research. The Ritchie Family Collection documents the lives of a well-known pastoralist family who settled in Victoria's Western District in the mid-19th century. The collection contains records of the expansion of the business and the personal fortunes of various family members. Notably, it contains Daniel Ritchie's watercolours and his impressions of the slave trade, recorded in his diary. Other diaries include that of James Ritchie, which gives the reader a vivid daily account of Ritchie's travels through the Western District in 1841.

Artist's utopia: Mortimer Menpes in Japan

This Grainger Museum exhibition of prints, paintings and decorative arts tells the story of the Adelaide-born artist Mortimer Menpes (1855–1938) and his love for Japanese culture. Menpes was one of the first Western artists to visit Japan and produce artworks depicting the people and their customs. He saw traditional Japan as a world where art existed

at all levels of society and artists and craftspeople were greatly respected.

A popular and successful artist in Edwardian London, Menpes befriended and promoted the young Australian virtuoso pianist and composer, Percy Grainger. Menpes' love of Japanese culture left a lasting impression on Percy and his mother, Rose. The exhibition, in which works from the Grainger Museum are complemented by items generously loaned by private collectors and the Art Gallery of South Australia, runs until March 2015.



Prestigious Harold Wright Scholarship recipient announced

Kerriane Stone, Special Collections curatorial assistant (prints) in the Baillieu Library, was recently awarded the Harold Wright Scholarship and the Sarah & William Holmes Scholarship, both of which she will take up in 2015. These scholarships provide a special opportunity to study prints at the British Museum. Harold Wright (1885–1961) was a renowned London-based print dealer and collector who helped shape many public and private print collections, including several in Australia, such as the Baillieu Library Print Collection. The Sarah & William Holmes scholarship is named in honour of the parents of Harold Wright's wife. These scholarships, which are inspired by Harold Wright's legacy, provide privileged access to one of the world's greatest print collections.

Kerriane Stone curated the *Radicals, slayers and villains* exhibition, which was displayed earlier this year in the Baillieu Library and will tour to the regional art galleries of Ballarat, Hamilton and Morwell in 2015.