

# Cultural Treasures Days

## Thursday 18 – Sunday 21 September 2008

People familiar with the University's collections generally are keenly interested in one, maybe two specific collecting areas. If the 19th century Savory and Moore Pharmacy in the Medical History Museum sparks your interest, then you probably have investigated the Henry Forman Atkinson Dental Museum. Conversely, if it is the experimental works on paper by Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack at the Ian Potter Museum of Art that inspire, then you are also likely to have explored the Print Collection at the Baillieu Library.

The Cultural Treasures Days event will encourage those with particular interests to explore others among the 33 cultural collections of the University of Melbourne. From Thursday 18 September to Sunday 21 September many of these will be opened to the whole University community and the general public. Some, such as the Tiegs Zoology Museum and the Herbarium, are rarely seen by anyone other than students and specialist researchers. Cultural Treasures Days will enable others to explore, for example, the working set of all types of animals and some of the 80,000 dried plant specimens.

Many of the museums and collections on campus will be open during nominated times on the

Friday, Saturday and Sunday, with expert curators and researchers in attendance to answer visitor queries. Numerous collection specialists have prepared displays and exhibitions particularly for this event. The Baillieu Library for instance will be overflowing with displays from many parts of its vast holdings, including works from the Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library, the Print Collection and Rare Books. The Baillieu will also host an exhibition of Herbarium specimens next to artworks that they have inspired. In the McCoy Building, visitors will see minerals, mining objects, rare books and maps from the F.A. Singleton Museum of Earth Sciences, the Earth Sciences Library and the Maps Collection.

Special events and activities are also on offer for the three days. Many of the curators will present guided tours of the displays. Curators instrumental in forming these collections will be available, including Professor Henry Atkinson speaking on the newly refurbished Dental Museum and Professor David Young on the Zoology Museum.

Temporary exhibitions will be brought to life by expert speakers such as Dr Heather Jackson's exploration of the ancient Greek vases at the Ian Potter Museum of Art. Also at the Potter will be the Basil

Sellers Art Prize, exploring sport and sporting culture. The curator of the Golden Cockerel Press exhibition at the Baillieu Library will discuss the display, followed by a behind-the-scenes visit. But these are just a taste. There are many tours scheduled over the three days so that visitors can join in a number of them during their visit.

University House will participate in Cultural Treasures Days, providing a terrific opportunity for those who are not members of the University's staff club to see the notable Ernst Matthaei Memorial Collection of Early Glass. An unusual and impressive space rarely seen by the public—the Karagheusian Room—will also be open. It contains the elaborate Renaissance Revival furnishings from the Paris residence of the Karagheusian family, enriched by a c.1610 painting of a merry peasant wedding by the Flemish artist Pieter Brueghel III. One of the long-serving Matthaei committee members, Professor Peter Attiwill, will be in attendance, and perhaps he can clarify if indeed the glass collection and the painting's theme might be cheeky references to the activities undertaken in the House.

The key event on Friday afternoon will be a talk by Mr Ahmed Fahour, Executive Director and CEO



Join Professor Reynard Eastley (PhD, Stories and Adventures) in his search for the mysterious secret of Melbourne University.

Australia of the National Australia Bank. NAB is commemorating its 150th anniversary this year and his presentation is inspired by the long-standing relationship between the University and the Bank. This is highlighted by the University's first bankbooks retained in the collection of the University of Melbourne Archives, dating from the time of the University's establishment in 1853. These and other papers documenting the two institutions' shared history will be on display, including some evocative and important letters relating to the Kelly Gang, including its robbery of the National Bank's Euroa branch, which are rarely available for public viewing. Bookings are required for this event.

Sunday's activities will focus on families, and the Physics Museum will take the lead with tours, interactive displays and demonstrations, plus giveaways for visitors to take home, where the experimentation can continue. Our distinguished Sunday guest will be Professor Reynard Eastley (PhD, Stories and Adventures) a.k.a. actor and educator Bernard Caleo, on one of his special tours in search of the Secret of Melbourne University! Professor Eastley is a 19th century style adventurer (or perhaps a missing master from the Harry Potter stories)

whose life's work is the exploration of the University, digging up its secrets, understanding its stories, and investigating its mysteries. These tours, principally for children aged five to 12 and their families and carers, are for small groups, so please book to join the team.

Readers are especially invited to join us in the launch of the Cultural Treasures Days where Associate Professor Robyn Sloggett will talk about conserving and caring for the University's cultural treasures. As Director of the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation she has a unique understanding of their preciousness and significance. The presentation will be in the Elisabeth Murdoch Theatre on the evening of Thursday 18 September, followed by refreshments where guests will meet students who have researched objects from the collections. Their presentations highlight the continuing use of the collections in the University's teaching, some of whose graduates will join Australia's next generation of curators, scholars and collection managers.

As befitting such a grand few days, there will be a splendid closing event, presented by the Grainger Museum. Renowned Australian musician Richard Divall will present an exciting program of musical

treasures from the Grainger Museum. This collection will truly come to life through both performance and commentary.

Cultural Treasures Days has been made possible by the Miegunyah Trust, established through the legacy of Sir Russell and Lady (Mab) Grimwade. The Trust has long provided substantial financial support for the University's collections, and through this event the results of Miegunyah's generosity will be available to the whole community. Sir Russell was also a keen collector, and selections from the many works that he bequeathed to the University will be on display at the Ian Potter Museum of Art.

These are just highlights of the program, with many more things to do and see. Please join us at the Cultural Treasures Days with your friends and family to enjoy the unique cultural collections at the University of Melbourne. Further details are available at <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/culturalcollections/treasuresdays>. To receive a program in the mail, email [treasures-days@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:treasures-days@unimelb.edu.au) or call (03) 8344 0269. Some activities are for smaller groups, so please check those which require a booking. All the activities will be free. It's time to discover new cultural collections at the University of Melbourne.