

Introduction

Barry Conyngham

Many people think of museums, libraries and archives as repositories of the more elite elements of our culture, having little to do with our everyday lives: expensive paintings and sculptures, rare books, illuminated manuscripts. But, as this issue of *University of Melbourne Collections* demonstrates, the University of Melbourne's cultural collections cover all forms of cultural expression, including cinema, television, even newspaper cartoons.

Back in the 19th century, scientists were already keen to share their discoveries with the broader community. Rohan Long describes mass-produced model dinosaurs that brought the amazing discoveries of early palaeontology to the world. Based on full-size reconstructions installed in a London park, these models are an example of the latest scientific knowledge being broadcast well beyond the ivory tower.

Television in Australia celebrates its 60th anniversary this year and, as Derham Groves tells us, the University of Melbourne was involved from the earliest days of the 20th century's most influential medium. In 1957 our newly retired professor of education, George Stephenson Browne, devised

and presented an enormously popular educational segment on GTV-9, airing six evenings a week after the news. Today we call this sort of activity 'engagement'—Browne immediately grasped television's potential to educate audiences in an entertaining way.

This issue of the magazine includes an article on the Victorian College of the Arts Film and Television collection by my colleague Donna Hensler. As many of Australia's leading filmmakers began their careers at the VCA and its predecessor schools, the recent project to preserve decades' worth of student movies, and to make them freely available via YouTube, is a great example of the university sharing the artistic diversity and strength of its collections.

Going to the dentist is not everyone's idea of a laugh, but cartoonists have for centuries capitalised on our instinctive dread of the dentist to produce satirical images, often involving sadistic tooth-pullers victimising hapless patients. The cartoons in the exhibition *It's a gas! Dentistry and cartoons*, curated by Jaqueline Healy, poke fun at dentists, patients, charlatans and politicians.

The magazine also includes a tribute to the late Professor Emeritus Henry Forman Atkinson (1912–2016), who made a remarkable contribution both to the study and teaching of dentistry, and to the preservation of the history of his profession through the museum now named in his honour.



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