# **Doctors** on the books

The Leslie Cowlishaw Collection is a priceless collection of rare medical books tracing the evolution of medicine from Hippocrates to the early 1940s. It is housed at the Royal

Australasian College of Surgeons in Melbourne and will shortly

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be showcased during Rare Books Week he Melbourne headquarters of the Royal Australasian College impressive edifice, situated on historic

Inside it is equally impressive, the Council Room in particular, with its walls lined with the portraits of past presidents all the way from Sir George Syme, KBE, and a huge oval table surrounded by leather chairs and bookcases.

of Surgeons (RACS) is an

Spring Street on the eastern edge of

the CBD.

The books on those shelves, the artwork, and the various pieces donated to the College over the years - including a magnificent "bog" oak dining table dating back to Charles II — are the responsibility of the College's curator, Geoff Down.

Prominent among the rare and historic books in the RACS's possession is the Leslie Cowlishaw Collection.

Dr Leslie Cowlishaw was a Sydney physician who, from the time of his graduation in 1906 until his death in 1943, collected around 2000 rare books documenting the evolution of medicine.

Mr Down, who has curated the RACS's rare and historic book collection for 10

years, has still only made it through just over half of the Cowlishaw Collection.

The earliest book dates back to 1483 — Avicenna's Canon medicinae (The canon of medicine) — and there are seven other incunabula (books printed before 1501) in the Collection.

There is a 2nd edition of Andreas Vesalius's De humani corporis fabrica (On the fabric of the human body); a 1483 printing of Celsus; 18 editions of Hippocrates; and five editions of

Dr Cowlishaw originally wanted his collection to belong to the Royal College of Physicians, but at the time of his death in 1943, the College did not have the resources to house or maintain the collection, and it was put up for auction.

Ken Russell, at the time a trainee with the RACS and who would go on to become an eminent medical historian, was in Sydney visiting his sick father when he heard the Cowlishaw Collection was up for sale. He contacted Dr Gordon Wheeler, the secretary of the RACS.

A quick phone call to Sir Alan Newton, then president of the College, led to a

**"**Buy it. It doesn't

matter how much it costs, just buv it "

fast decision. "Buy it. It doesn't matter how much it costs, just buy it."

Bought by the College of Surgeons in 1943 for £2750, the collection is priceless today.

"That's a discussion we have with the College's insurers every year", Mr Down tells the MJA. "This is a collector's collection. Books like these are bought and sold at auctions. You only know what they're worth when someone at an auction puts up a bid."

Mr Down will give a presentation on the Leslie Cowlishaw Collection at this month's Melbourne Rare Book Week.

Also presenting at Rare Book Week is Dr Jonathan Burdon, a Melbournebased respiratory physician who will present on "Medicine in Melbourne in the time of La Trobe" on Friday 17 July.

Dr Burdon, a co-convenor of Rare Book Week, tells the *MJA* that public health was almost non-existent when Charles Joseph La Trobe was Superintendent of the Port Phillip District in the late 1830s.

"At the time, the mortality rate, particularly in children, was very high", Dr Burdon says. Infectious diseases, notably typhoid,

continued on page C2



gastrointestinal ailments, tuberculosis and syphilis, were the major culprits in a city without a constructed sewage system.

Also presenting is Dr Felix Behan, who will speak about French surgical books from the 16th to the 18th century, focusing particularly on the writing of Ambroise Paré, considered the "father of modern surgery" in France.

Melbourne Rare Book Week: www. rarebookweek.com

Dr Jonathan Burdon: Medicine in Melbourne in the time of La Trobe; 6.30 pm–8.30 pm on Friday 17 July at Morgans, 401 Collins Street, Melbourne. Bookings required at secretary@latrobesociety.org.au

Dr Felix Behan: French surgical books from the 16th to the 18th century; 7 pm–8 pm on Tuesday 21 July at the Hughes Room, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Spring Street, Melbourne.

Mr Geoff Down: Dr Leslie Cowlishaw and his book collection; 7 pm–8 pm on Wednesday

22 July at the Hughes Room, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Spring Street, Melbourne.

A podcast with Geoff Down about the Cowlishaw Collection is available at www.mja. com.au/multimedia/podcasts and iTunes. It is also available as a video at www.mja.com.au/multimedia

**Cate Swannell** 

# Around the universities

The Clem Jones Research Centre for Stem Cells and Tissue Regenerative Therapies at **Bond University** will receive \$395 000 per year for the next three years, for further research into acute macular degeneration (AMD). The Centre has developed a clinical grade transplantable disc comprising a synthetic mimic of the Bruch's membrane coated with retinal pigment epithelial cells, with engraftment at the back of the eye expected to restore retina and photoreceptor function to AMD patients. The new infusion of funding from the Foundation will allow research to progress to the testing phase, with a view to clinical trials in the future.

http://bond.edu.au/news/46770/visionary-research-one-step-closer-restoring-sight

Almost \$5 million in grant funding — for three national palliative care projects — has been awarded to **Flinders University** from Australian Government funding of \$52 million for palliative care projects in Australia. The grants have gone towards a range of palliative care projects which will benefit people nearing the end of their lives and their families, and support the medical, nursing and allied health staff who provide their care.

http://blogs.flinders.edu.au/flindersnews/2015/06/16/flinders-recieves-5m-forpalliative-care-projects/

James Cook University's Professor Sandra Harding has been re-appointed as Vice Chancellor and President, until the end of 2021. "I am so proud of the University and its talented students, researchers, teachers and professional staff. Building on the work of so many since the University began, the contemporary JCU has achieved much over the past few years, and there is much more work to be done". she said.

http://www-public.jcu.edu.au/news/JCU\_148126

**Monash University** has partnered with Nature Publishing Group to publish npj Regenerative Medicine, a new open

access research journal that will explore the potential of organisms to restore and regenerate damaged cells, tissues and organs. Professor Nadia Rosenthal, Director of the Australian Regenerative Medicine Institute, based at Monash University, has been appointed Editor-in-Chief of the new journal.

http://monash.edu/news/releases/show/ introducing-npj-regenerative-medicine-a-newopen-access-journal-fromnature-publishinggroup-and-monash-university

Four early career researchers from the University of New South Wales have received funding from the Society for Mental Health Research (SMHR). A total of 13 grants of \$100 000 each were awarded by the SMHR. The UNSW researchers are Dr Lexine Stapinski from the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), for a project titled "Making INROADs: interrupting the cycle of anxiety and drinking"; Dr Nicola Newton from NDARC for "Getting it together: engaging parents to improve the prevention of substance use and mental disorders in young people";

Dr Christina Marel from NDARC for "Roads less travelled: improving clinical pathways for people with heroin dependence"; and Dr Simon Rosenbaum from the School of Psychiatry and based at The Black Dog Institute for "Muscling up on mental illness (MuMi): investigating the role of strength training in the treatment of mental illness". Postdoctoral researchers Dr Mark Larsen and Dr Bridianne O'Dea from the UNSW-affiliated Black Dog Institute also received grants.

http://med.unsw.edu.au/news/unsw-mental-health-early-career-researchers-recognised

#### The University of Queensland's

Professor Ian Frazer, co-creator of the cervical cancer vaccine, has won a 2015 European Inventor Award. Professor Frazer won the Popular Prize section, which was decided by public vote and announced

at a ceremony in Paris on 11 June. The awards acknowledge inventions that have made major contributions towards social, technological and economic progress.

http://health.uq.edu.au/article/2015/06/cervical-cancer-vaccine-hero-wins-international-award

A University of Queensland clinical scientist has won a prestigious European award for potentially life-saving antibiotic drug therapy research. Professor Jason Roberts said the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases Young Investigator Award was an important acknowledgement of the work created by a network of UQ researchers. It was awarded in recognition of Professor Roberts' research into preventive treatments for dangerous multidrug-resistant bacteria, or superbugs, as part of his work on immunity and infectious diseases at UQ's School of Medicine and the UQ Centre for Clinical Research.

http://health.uq.edu.au/article/2015/06/ european-honours-young-investigator-of-year

The University of Sydney has established the Maurice Blackmore Chair in Integrative Medicine in order to facilitate better "understanding [of] complementary medicine's role in healthcare, research and teaching". Made possible through a \$1.3 million donation by the Blackmores Institute, the new term Chair honours Maurice Blackmore, a pioneer of Australian naturopathy. "Over the next five years the Maurice Blackmore Chair in Integrative Medicine will undertake research into the impact of complementary medicines in health outcomes, including how complementary and alternative medicines interact with the current standard treatments prescribed by medical professionals", the Dean of Sydney Medical School Professor Bruce Robinson said.

http://sydney.edu.au/news/84.html?newscategoryid=1&newsstoryid=15028

# Calendar of events

This calendar will be updated each month. If you have an event you would like to add, please include relevant details in an email to cswannell@mja.com.au

ALM = active learning module
ASM = annual scientific meeting
CPD = continuing professional development
CT = computed tomography
ECHO/echo = echocardiography
EMAC = effective management of anaesthetic crises
MRI = magnetic resonance imaging
OSCE = objective structured clinical examination
SAT SET = supervisors and trainers for surgical education and training
▲ = conferences in Australia

AUGUST	
2-7	Angiogenesis 2015, Newport, USA
4-5	7th Annual Operating Theatre Management Conference, Melbourne, VIC ▲
8-11	HGSA 39th ASM: Rare diseases and indigenous genetics, Perth, WA ▲
10-13	Translational Medicine 2015, Cairns, QLD 🔺
11-14	IEEE International Conference on Rehabilitation Robotics, Singapore
13-14	National Acquired Brain Injury Conference, Melbourne, VIC ▲
16-21	Hormone-Dependent Cancers 2015, Newry, USA
17-20	Molecular and Cellular Basis of Breast Cancer Risk and Prevention 2015, Cairns, QLD ▲
21-24	Medical Innovations for the Future and Beyond, London, UK
23-26	Congress of the Asian Society for Transplantation, Singapore
23-29	12th WHO/IDF/EASD Cambridge Seminar on the epidemiological and public health aspects of diabetes mellitus, Cambridge, UK
24-25	6th Annual Correctional Services Healthcare Summit, Melbourne, VIC _
24-27	Global Forum on Research and Innovation for Health 2015, Manila, Philippines
26-29	International Society of Hypnosis Congress: Roots and Future of Consciousness, Paris, France
27-28	Hospital Costing and Health Coding Forum, Melbourne, VIC ▲
29 Aug-2 Sep	Congress of the World Federation of Societies of Intensive and Critical Care Medicine, Seoul, Republic of Korea
30 Aug-2 Sep	12th International Conference on Chitin and Chitosan 2015, Münster, Germany
31 Aug-1 Sep	International Symposium on Critical Bleeding 2015, Copenhagen, Denmark
31 Aug-3 Sep	OESO 13th World Conference "The Esophagiome", Emerging Issues in Health and Disease, Monaco, Monaco

SEPTEN	MBER
1-3	International Conference of Medical and Health Sciences 2015, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
2-4	International Meeting on Respiratory Pathogens 2015, Singapore
3-4	7th International Conference on Ocular Infections, Barcelona, Spain
3-5	7th World Congress on Ovulation Induction, Bologna, Italy

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Australian Indigenous Doctors Association annual conference — Collaborate,

communicate and celebrate, Adelaide, SA 🔺

SEPTEMBER								OCTOBER							
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RACGP Conference GP15, Melbourne, VIC
3rd International Students' Association of Robotic Urologic Surgery Conference, Cluj- Napoca, Romania
17th Annual International Meeting of the Institute of Human Virology, Baltimore, MD, USA
World Congress on Interventional Therapies for Type 2 Diabetes and DSS II, London, UK
11th Australasian Conference on Vibrational Spectroscopy and 5th Asian Spectroscopy Conference, Sydney, NSW
International Congress of Innate Immunity, Marbella, Spain

OCTOBER	
1-3	Regional Congress of the World Federation for Mental Health, Singapore
1-5	Asia Pacific Rim International Counselling and Psychotherapy Conference, Perth, WA
2-3	Singapore Health and Biomedical Congress 2015, Singapore
2-4	Inaugural Scientific Conference of the Asia Association of Medical Laboratory Scientists 2015, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
4-8	43rd Annual Meeting of the International Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery, Izmir, Turkey
4-9	21st FIGO World Congress of Gynaecology Obstetrics, Vancouver, Canada
5-6	16th International Conference on Alzheimer's Drug Discovery, Jersey City, USA
5-7	Interprofessional Health, Education and Practice Conference, Melbourne, VIC
5-8	15th International Nutrition and Diagnostics Conference, Prague, Czech Republic
5-9	18th International Conference on Medical Imaging Computing and Computer Assisted Intervention
6-8	15th International Conference on Progress in Vaccination Against Cancer, Tübingen, Germany
6-9	45th Annual Meeting of the International Continence Society, Montreal, Canada
8-10	6th International Symposium on Microsurgical Anatomy, Istanbul, Turkey
8-10	20th World Congress on Advances in Oncology and 18th International Symposium on Molecular Medicine, Athens, Greece
8-11	47th Congress of the International Society of Paediatric Oncology, Cape Town, South Africa
9-11	Australasian Military Medicine Association Conference 2015, Hobart, TAS
11-13	11th International Congress on Coronary Artery Disease, Florence, Italy

5th Annual Next Generation Sequencing Asia

Congress, Singapore, Singapore

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