

## Council meeting 7 & 8 December 2004      OPEN BUSINESS

### **Proposed acquisitions for the Museum's portrait collection**

#### **Purpose**

To consider the offer of the gifts of two portraits to the Society's Museum

#### **Recommendation**

Council is asked to agree the acceptance of the gifts of the two portraits

#### **1. Background**

The addition of new items to the Museum's collections is governed by its Acquisitions and Disposals Policy (adopted by Council in April 2002). The Policy sets down a procedure for acquisitions outside the current collecting areas:

"1.3 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances and only after proper consideration by the governing body."

Acquisitions and Disposals Policy, February 2002

The Museum has been offered two separate donations, details given below, that fall outside its current collection areas. However, both gifts would represent valuable additions to the Museum's collections.

#### **2. The Portraits**

##### **2.1 Portrait of Elsie Hooper**

Framed, glazed oil portrait of Elsie Seville Hooper, artist unknown. Offered by Miss Hooper's great niece (along with Miss Hooper's Registration Certificate). Elsie Hooper registered with the Society in 1902, was a recipient of the Society's Burroughs Scholarship, and was also the first secretary of the (National) Association of Women Pharmacists.

##### **2.2 Portrait of Vera Lord**

Framed, glazed oil portrait of Vera Melville Lord, by D.Ritchie. Offered by Miss Lord's great niece. Vera Lord registered with the Society in 1915, and although she emigrated to Tasmania in the 1920s, she remained a member of the Society until her death in the late 1970s.

#### **3. Considerations**

Due to the similarity of the two donations, the factors surrounding their acquisition have been considered together. If a decision had to be made to accept one and not the other, the first priority would be the portrait of Elsie Hooper, because of her significant role in the (N)AWP and her connection with the Society through her scholarship.

### **3.1 Historical value**

The Society's collection of portraits is relatively small, primarily consists of nineteenth century works, and contains only one image of a woman (Jean Irvine). As additions to the historical record of individuals in the Museum's collection, these two twentieth century portraits of female pharmacists therefore add a significant element. It is also worth noting that next year is the National Association of Women Pharmacists centenary, and therefore they would be extremely valuable additions in that context.

### **3.2 Associated place**

In most situations where we are offered material that falls outside our collection areas, we recommend that the donor instead approaches the museum that is most relevant to the geographical area associated with the items. However, in the case of both portraits, the geographical connection is with London. As representations of London-based pharmacists, The Society's Museum is the most logical place for them to be retained.

### **4. Resource implications**

It is likely that the portraits would only ever be on display for short periods of time. As with the majority of the Museum's collections, they would be stored in environmentally-controlled storage, and made available to researchers, for potential loan to other museums, and for future display by the Society.

The portrait of Vera Melville Lord has slight "blooming" which may need attention from a portrait conservator. However, any costs for this work can be included in the Museum's conservation budget.

### **5. Recommendation**

Council is asked to agree the acceptance of the gifts of the two portraits

Briony Hudson  
Keeper of the Museum Collections