Discoveries is an exhibition about imagination and knowledge, about the pleasures of looking, and the power of objects to generate wonder as well as new ideas. Presenting singular objects and unearthing little-known treasures in the extraordinary interiors of Two Temple Place on London’s Embankment, Discoveries is the first major exhibition to bring together the fascinating collections of the eight University of Cambridge Museums.

Co-Curator of Discoveries and Director of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge Professor Nick Thomas said: “I am delighted that these awe-inspiring objects – fragments of enormous human endeavour and effort – can be seen at Two Temple Place in London. Many are leaving Cambridge for the first time and together they present a microcosm of the limitless notion of discovery through time. They represent man’s quest to find his place within the world (and far beyond), and also his triumphs, frustrations and wrong turns.”

The exhibition challenges and responds to the very notion of ‘discovery’ as it explores the limits as well as the frontiers of knowledge and the connections between visionary thinking and scientifically-observed vision. The ornate and atmospheric spaces of Two Temple Place are cabinets of curiosities, displaying objects that span millennia, from the majestic to the minuscule: Charles Darwin’s recently re-discovered Tinamou Egg, the only surviving egg from the HMS Beagle voyage, accidentally cracked by Darwin himself; a surprising juxtaposition of art works from the First Millennium BC to the present day; and rare zoological specimens such as a complete skeleton of a dodo.

Visitors are invited to experience the exhibits as peculiar objects with stories to be unravelled and to encounter the idea of museums, not just as repositories of things, but active places of learning and revelation. 19th Century religious prints attempt to counteract the progress of science by demonstrating the Earth as the centre of the universe, while Inuit snow goggles crafted from wood point the way towards today’s polarised version. Historic instruments sit alongside cutting edge technology – The Discovery telescope used in Victorian explorations to the North and South Poles, and which in 1984 was taken aboard the Space Shuttle ‘Discovery’ travelling some 2.5 million miles, keeps company with the ‘Triwizard Tournament’ Digital Optical module, a ground-breaking instrument at the forefront of 21st Century cosmological and astrophysical polar research.
EDITORS’ NOTES:

*Discoveries* is curated by Professor Nick Thomas (Director of Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology) and Martin Caiger-Smith (curatorial advisor to Two Temple Place and Head of MA Programme: Curating the Art Museum at Courtauld Institute of Art) with the University of Cambridge Museums Programme Curator, Dr Lydia Hamlett. It continues Two Temple Place’s series of annual winter exhibitions showcasing collections from outside central London. *Discoveries* follows from *Amongst Heroes: The artist in working Cornwall* (2013), a partnership with the Royal Cornwall Museum; and the inaugural exhibition, *William Morris: Story, Memory, Myth* (2011 – 2012), which featured highlights from the William Morris Gallery collection. To date, some 90,000 members of the public have visited the exhibitions, attracted in part by the venue of Two Temple Place itself, a Victorian Gothic mansion house that was built as an estate office for William Waldorf Astor in the late 19th Century.

The University of Cambridge has long been at the forefront of learning, invention, exploration and discovery across the arts and the sciences. The University of Cambridge Museums have grown alongside this research and teaching, founded and developed by scholars and collectors to house their collections of objects and works. Discoveries is hosted at Two Temple Place by The Bulldog Trust in partnership with the University of Cambridge Museums: Fitzwilliam Museum; Kettle’s Yard; Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; Museum of Zoology; Museum of Classical Archaeology; Whipple Museum of the History of Science; The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences; and The Polar Museum.

The Bulldog Trust is a registered charity, founded in 1983 by Richard Q Hoare (Registered Charity No 1123081). The Trust provides financial and advisory assistance to charities throughout the UK, using its headquarters, Two Temple Place, as a focal point for activities (www.bulldogtrust.org). Two Temple Place is closed to the public until 31 January 2014 but is available for private hire throughout the year - please see www.twotempleplace.org for more details.

*For press images and further press information please contact:*
RHIANNON PICKLES, Rhiannon Pickles PR:
E: rhiannon@picklespr.com  T: 0031 20 620 0369
or GAIR BURTON, Rhiannon Pickles PR:
E: gair@picklespr.com  T: 07402 784 470

*For other information please contact:*
LUCY GARDNER, Exhibition Coordinator,
Two Temple Place, 2 Temple Place, London WC2R 3BD
E: lucy@bulldogtrust.org  T: 020 7836 3715