

2000 - JCPML excellence recognized

The JCPML success story continued during 2000 culminating in a Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence - for an outstanding contribution to Curtin University.

An exciting initiative that occurred in 2000 was the inaugural Hazel Hawke Scholarship and JCPML is delighted with the growing partnership and relationship that we are developing with Mrs Hawke. Other endeavours this year included the launch of our colourful and dynamic Federation exhibition, *Shaping the Nation*, a new book, *John Curtin's Legacy*, and some innovative web projects. The JCPML also had pleasure in presenting the John Curtin prize to Alysia Debowski who went on to become the Young Historian of the Year in the National History Challenge for 2000.

In addition, use of our Electronic Research Archive (ERA) increased some 40%, international access to the JCPML Website more than doubled, we expanded our Education Program to include primary school students, and our public lectures continue to be filled to capacity.

For the Library and Information Service staff, involvement with the JCPML continues to be an honour and a very rewarding professional experience.

Thank you to our many supporters for their continued interest and encouragement.

Dr Vicki Williamson
University Librarian



INTRODUCTION

The role of the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library (JCPML) within the Library and Information Service (LIS) of Curtin University of Technology is to develop and manage a unique special collection of scholarly resources focusing on the life and times of John Curtin, Australia's wartime prime minister and international statesman. As Australia's first prime ministerial library the JCPML raises the profile of the 'Curtin' name, contributes to the University's prestige internationally, nationally and in the local community, and provides the LIS model for a Special Collections Unit. In addition, the JCPML forms part of the John Curtin Centre.

DIGITIZATION PROGRESS

Continuing the innovative development of the JCPML Electronic Research Archive (ERA) this year involved a major expansion into sound with all of the JCPML oral histories and most of John Curtin's speeches held in the JCPML collection being digitized with users being able to link from transcripts to download the sound files. The process of digitizing relevant material for inclusion in ERA continues with such significant additions in 2000 as the Cabinet Minutes and Agenda for the Curtin Ministry; relevant records of the Perth Labor Women's Association, of which both Elsie Curtin and her daughter were long-time members; and material from the Archives of the University of Western Australia dealing with the establishment of Practical Lectures in Journalism and a Diploma in Journalism Course between 1918 and 1933. Successful remote site scanning was undertaken during the year in partnership with the National Archives of Australia (NAA). They temporarily transferred to their Perth office a collection of official and private correspondence compiled by the Prime Minister's Office during John Curtin's term in office (1941-1945) for the JCPML to digitize.

A user satisfaction survey of ERA was conducted in May. Analysis of survey responses revealed that users were generally satisfied with most aspects of ERA and pointed to areas where improvements were desirable. An on-line tutorial to

assist users to find the information they seek in ERA has been developed in response to needs identified by the survey analysis and this will be available early next year.

Website Developments

New additions to the website include: *What's on this month in John Curtin's Life* – which lets users know more about our wartime prime minister's activities and lifestyle; *Commemorating Australian Prime Ministers* which lists all the known memorials to former Australian prime ministers; and *Visiting John Curtin at Home: 24 Jarrad St, Cottesloe* which explores the early years of the Curtin household.

The JCPML will be working with the National Archives of Australia (NAA) on its Prime Ministers' website. In the May Federal budget the Treasurer announced funding to assist the NAA in making prime ministers' papers available to the public and planning is now underway to develop resources that illustrate the role and office of the prime minister, as well as the achievements, challenges and styles of individuals fulfilling this role.



EXHIBITION

On 6 October the JCPML's major new exhibition, *Shaping the Nation: John Curtin and Australia* was officially opened by Mr Kim Wilkie, Federal Member for Swan. The opening was part of the celebrations for John Curtin Day which commemorates the anniversary of Curtin's becoming Prime Minister of Australia. The exhibition serves as a showcase for material in the JCPML collection, including photographs, documents, oral histories, speeches by Curtin, audiovisual material and special items such as John Curtin's gold watch. Other institutions including the National Archives of Australia, the National Library of Australia and the Australiana Fund have also contributed material for display.

LECTURES

The third annual JCPML Anniversary Lecture commemorating the 55th anniversary of Prime Minister John Curtin's death was given on 5 July by Senator Natasha Stott Despoja to a capacity crowd of 250 people. Under the title *The Politics of Conscience*, Senator Stott Despoja paid tribute to Curtin's leadership of Australia, based on his strong ideals and an equally strong desire to lead the country in a new direction. She contrasted his leadership with the politics of today, saying: 'There is a need for the vision, meaning, and conscience espoused by John Curtin.'

RESEARCH

Amongst the major projects undertaken during the year was the purchase of 80 photographs relevant to John Curtin from the Fairfax Photo Library, including many images not previously sighted; the identification of over 200 journal articles relating to John Curtin and his life and times for inclusion in the collection; a donation of photos and postcards relating to the years of Curtin's involvement with the Victorian Socialist Party; and further purchases of images from the National Library of Australia. In addition, 460 photographs relating to Mrs Hazel Hawke have been copied and added to the collection.

The JCPML Visiting Scholar for 2000 was Dr John Edwards. As well as providing research assistance to Dr Edwards, JCPML staff also gave significant assistance to Professor David Black during the writing of his forthcoming publication; to George Blazevic during the scripting of a new play; and to Margaret Moore for the preparation of a major exhibition featuring Hazel Hawke. JCPML also coordinated the development of the new JCPML exhibition, *Shaping the Nation*, and provided significant support for the exhibition's curators and designer. The research undertaken by our Visiting Scholars Professor David Black and Dr John Edwards has resulted in a considerable amount of material being added to the research collection.

With further assistance from Professor David Black research was undertaken to identify all of John Curtin's known published writings and more than 200 articles and editorials from such diverse newspapers as the *Socialist*, the *Daily News*, the *West Australian* and the *Timber Worker* are now being processed for addition to the collection.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

In first term this year, the JCPML expanded its education program to offer primary school students in years 5 to 7 a program which centres around the JCPML's major exhibition featuring the Pacific theatre during World War II and Australia on the home front. The program provides comprehensive lesson plans and resources for the classroom teacher to be used in conjunction with their class visit to the JCPML premises. Resources which have been developed for the primary school program include a Snakes and Ladders game (John Curtin edition) and a jigsaw puzzle.

Considerable time has been spent upgrading the website with the launch of a comprehensive education page targeted primarily at students and teachers, which offers a range of activities for students from years 5 through 12. It also includes information and links to the National History Challenge in which the JCPML sponsors a prize.

The JCPML, continuing its partnership with the History Teachers' Association of WA, once again hosted and participated in the preliminary and final judging of WA entries in the National History Challenge. This year the JCPML offered both state and national prizes in the special category of John Curtin. Alysia Debowski, a year 10 student, won the John Curtin prize and went on to be named Young Historian of the Year. The JCPML also hosted and participated in the History Teachers Association of WA Professional Development seminar day, presenting a session that encompassed a tour of the archives and research facilities.

JCPML staff contributed to the success of the second Sir Charles Court Young Leaders program. As one of their scheduled activities, students participated in a JCPML education program role play, *The*

Allied Summit Meeting, and were given the opportunity to meet and question Senator Natasha Stott Despoja who was in Perth to deliver the JCPML Anniversary lecture.

In July the inaugural Hazel Hawke Undergraduate Scholarship was awarded. The scholarship is a joint project between Mrs Hazel Hawke, JCPML and Curtin University of Technology, and is one of the collaborative ventures being undertaken between the JCPML and Mrs Hawke since her donation of research papers last year. This partnership is proving significant to the development of the JCPML collection in one of its focal areas, namely the prime ministership as an office.

PAPERS PRESENTED

The JCPML contributed to the planning for an international human rights conference held in December 2000 with a small paper entitled, *John Curtin: A Fair Go for All*. In February the Public Programs Coordinator gave a paper at the VALA Conference on *The progress of digitization technology, particularly multimedia, within some British cultural institutions*.



NEW OUTREACH PROJECTS

The JCPML's latest publication, *John Curtin's Legacy: A Series of public lectures from the JCPML*, was launched on 17 April by JCPML Director, Dr Vicki Williamson, and JCPML Historical Consultant, Professor David Black. The book features the speeches of distinguished lecturers Dr David Day, Michelle Grattan, Hazel Hawke, Dr Geoffrey Serle and the Hon. Gough Whitlam.

JCPML staff have been heavily involved with a forthcoming book being written by Professor David Black. This is the JCPML's most ambitious publishing project to date and at the heart of the book is the series of letters Curtin wrote during his 1912-1917 courtship of his future wife Elsie. The letters were donated to the JCPML in 1999 by the Curtin family and with their permission are now being published in their entirety for the first time. The book is expected to be launched in February 2001.

Early in July, ABC Radio National broadcast a Hindsight radio biography on John Curtin. Bill Bunbury of the ABC Social History Unit worked in collaboration with the JCPML to prepare the documentary, making use of oral histories from the JCPML collection and including interviews with JCPML Visiting Scholars Drs David Day and John Edwards. The JCPML will use a shortened version of the broadcast in its new exhibition and as part of the JCPML Education Program.

Another innovative collaboration is the partnership being developed between the JCPML, playwright George Blazevic and the Perth Theatre Company to produce a play highlighting aspects from the life of John Curtin. It is envisaged that the play, entitled *In the Shadow of the Eagle*, will not only be performed for

general audiences but will be adapted for use within the JCPML education program.

AWARDS

In August the JCPML received a Mander Jones commendation, sponsored by the Australian Society of Archivists, for its educational resource, *John Curtin and International Relations during World War II*. The commendation was for a 'publication making the greatest contribution to archives or a related field in Australia written by or on behalf of a corporate body'.

On 6 November the JCPML foundation staff team, comprising Dr Vicki Williamson, Kandy-Jane Henderson, Lesley Carman-Brown and David Wylie, was presented with the Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence in recognition of their outstanding service to Curtin University of Technology. The award is an acknowledgement that the group was instrumental in bringing to reality the vision to create Australia's first prime ministerial library. The team's capacity for innovation has resulted in a number of new programs and services and the JCPML has become a benchmark for other prime ministerial libraries being developed in Australia.

Statistics for 2000

Visitors to JCPML exhibition	12 166
Visitors to JCPML Reading Room	820
Research Enquiries	2060
Website hits	13 887
ERA usage	2516

Calendar of events 2001

- February 26 Launch of 'Friendship is a Sheltering Tree': John Curtin's Letters 1907 to 1945
- April 19 Public lecture 'In search of John Curtin' by Dr John Edwards, JCPML 2000 Visiting Scholar
- July 5 Anniversary Lecture by the Hon. Kim Beazley
- July 15-19 Sir Charles Court Leadership Program in conjunction with the John Curtin Centre and HTAWA
- October 8 Proposed panel discussion and Public Lecture by Peter Edwards, JCPML 2001 Visiting Scholar

JCPML Publications

'Friendship is a Sheltering Tree': John Curtin's Letters 1907 to 1945 by David Black RRP: \$29.70

For Australia and Labor: Prime Minister John Curtin by Geoffrey Serle RRP: \$11

John Curtin's Legacy: A series of public lectures from the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library RRP: \$11

John Curtin and International Relations during World War II: JCPML Education Series Resource RRP: \$38.50