Welcome to this special commemorative edition of Information Update.

The official opening of the JCPML permanent exhibition John Curtin: A Man of Peace, A Time of War, is an occasion for celebration and a time for reflection—for opening the doors of Australia's first prime ministerial library is the culmination of many years of effort to turn the concept into a reality. It could not have been achieved without the substantial support and encouragement we received from corporations, governments and individuals. I am very pleased that representatives from all these sectors of the community were able to join with us on April 20 to launch the public face of the JCPML.

April 20 also marks the launch of another significant endeavour. With the assistance of the Library & Information Service of the Curtin University of Technology, the JCPML is very pleased to have published Dr Geoffrey Serle's manuscript on John Curtin—For Australia and Labor—which we all hope will introduce a new generation to a great Australian prime minister.

In March we were honoured by a visit from another former prime minister, Gough Whitlam. I am pleased to report that we were able to extract a promise from him to be our special guest at the Inaugural John Curtin Anniversary function which will become an annual JCPML event to commemorate the anniversary of Curtin's death on July 5.

Finally, I wish to thank all those visitors and well-wishers who have made our opening a great success. In particular, Dr David Day, the 1998 JCPML Visiting Scholar, who maintained the high quality of the JCPML Public Lectures set by Dr Serle last year by giving an insightful interpretation of the complexities that plagued John Curtin's early years.

If you are unable to join us in person on April 20, we hope this special edition will help you be with us in spirit.
**Public Lecture to Celebrate JCPML Opening**

On February 23, the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library celebrated the opening of its reading room facilities with a public lecture by JCPML Visiting Scholar, Dr David Day.

Dr Day, who has just been appointed as an ARC senior research fellow at LaTrobe University in Melbourne, is currently engaged in research on Curtin for his forthcoming biography. In his lecture, entitled *Gallipoli, embezzlement and a death in the bush: John Curtin’s first war*, he gave an interesting and engaging account of the events of 1915—a pivotal year in Curtin’s life—and the long term consequences this had for him.

The occasion was also marked with the presentation of the first JCPML readers’ passes. Readers’ passes will be issued to those people wishing to make use of the JCPML research facilities and it was fitting that the very first reader’s pass was issued to Elsie Macleod, daughter of John Curtin. John Curtin’s grandchildren, Barbara Davidson, John Curtin and Beverley Lane, were given subsequent passes.
David Black’s Contribution Recognised

On March 7 the JCPML hosted the History Teachers Association of Western Australia (HTAWA) professional development seminar in its new premises. The theme of the event was discovering democracy and Keynote speaker, Dr Geoff Gallop, leader of the WA Labor Party, combined an interesting look into WA’s constitution with an interpretation of Australian democracy under Prime Minister Curtin’s leadership during World War Two.

A number of workshops were held during the day and this gave the JCPML an opportunity to test-run its new educational program for Year 12 history students. Geraldine Ditchburn, who has been instrumental in developing the JCPML education program, presented two workshops and feedback from the history teachers was very encouraging. A number of constructive suggestions have now been incorporated into the education program for 1998. Several bookings have already been received for the program which will be launched in second term.

In the afternoon participants were treated to a tour of the JCPML’s exhibition, John Curtin: A Man of Peace, A Time of War and a talk by Curtin’s grandson about his grandfather. The consensus of opinion at the end of the day was that the seminar was a great success, not least of which because of the excellent facilities available at The John Curtin Centre.

New Material for Collection

The JCPML has now accessioned material and finding aids from the MacArthur Memorial Library and the Roosevelt Presidential Library in the US.

Included in this material are copies of photographs, private correspondence, official correspondence and military reports relating to General Douglas MacArthur and his time in Australia (from 1942 to 1945); and photographs, miscellaneous correspondence and messages, both official and personal, between Roosevelt and Curtin.

Enquiries regarding this material should be directed to the JCPML on (08) 9266 4205.

The John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library welcomes enquiries from people who have material associated with John Curtin or who knew our wartime Prime Minister.

Ph: (08) 9266 4205 or Fax: (08) 9266 4185
Digital Progress Continues

In keeping with the JCPML’s vision to provide an electronic archive and make accessible to a worldwide audience archival material held in its own collection, the JCPML has launched several new digital projects to coincide with its opening.

The first project is the digitisation of the John Curtin Memorial Lecture Series. Featuring lectures by such well-known public figures as Gough Whitlam, Bob Hawke, Jim Cairns and Bill Hayden, the digitised versions allow searching of individual lectures through hot links from a contents list as well as brief biographies and photographs for each of the contributors.

A new link on the JCPML home page (<http://john.curtin.edu.au>) now gives access to the Curtin University Library and Information Service search engine to allow users to search the JCPML collection electronically. Keywords can be entered into a search field and entries matching those keywords will be returned in a list to provide such information as item descriptions and call numbers. Access is through the Collection Access link.

And finally, as part of the revamping of the JCPML permanent exhibition, a multi-media CD-ROM entitled John Curtin: Australia’s Wartime Prime Minister has been developed by the JCPML with support from Touchstone DDI. Two computer stations have been set up in the exhibition and users can choose to view different aspects of Curtin’s life—currently Childhood, Family Man, Journalist, Political Career, World War Two and Memorials.

The CD contains documentation, photographs, excerpts from oral history interviews and Curtin’s own speeches, and some moving film footage, all of which can be accessed interactively by users.

John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library
Curtin University of Technology
P O Box U1987
PERTH 6845
Telephone: (08) 9266 4205
Facsimile: (08) 9266 4185
email: jcpml@boris.curtin.edu.au

Contributions & Support since November 1997

The Australiana Fund
Sir Charles Court
Dr David Day
Dr Ian Fairnie
Sir Lenox Hewitt
Mr (Morris) John Hughes
Sir Richard Kirby
Mr Frederick Mann
Mr Philip Penda
Ms Vicki Williamson

Distinguished Visitors to the JCPML

Dr David Day, JCPML Visiting Scholar
Mr Gough Whitlam
Mr Alex Allan, British High Commissioner
Mrs Beverley Lane, granddaughter of John Curtin
Mr Tim Ryan, Acting Commissioner, Westrail
Associate Professor Michael Rowan, Director
Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre
Ms Rosemary Lake, University of SA
Mr Don McDonald, former CEO, Coburn Cement
Dr Yuji Kawajuchi and Dr Jeff Miller, World Health Organisation
Mr Barry McKinnon

Gough Whitlam poses with staff on his recent visit to the JCPML.