Success with Remote Scanning

In 1928 when Australia was just beginning to feel the effects of the Great Depression, John Curtin was appointed a member of a Royal Commission to investigate Child Endowment and Family Allowances. More than 80 years later the JCPML was given the opportunity to digitize the records from this commission — which are still held by the National Archives of Australia — and make them available through its Electronic Research Archive (ERA).

Some 2000 image files, including 1300 pages of minutes of evidence, commission reports and an index to the material, were scanned during March this year by JCPML Archives Technician, David Wylie. David located a remote site scanning station at the Victoria Park regional office of the NAA to digitize the archival value records.

This required transportation and setting up of specialised equipment by Systems and Technology personnel from Curtin Library and Information Service and involved the cooperation of the NAA to get the records from Canberra and provide a suitable work environment in which to undertake the digitization process. As the material was scanned it was saved to a Jaz drive and later downloaded to ERA in the JCPML offices.

Unlike modern documents which can be scanned using a document feeder, the age and discoloration of the material meant that individual settings were needed to optimise the scanning resolution of each document. The NAA conservator worked on the material to ensure that preservation

*cont’d on back page*
From the Director’s Desk

I am delighted to have the opportunity to act as JCPML Director while Vicki Williamson is on leave during 1999. This year promises to continue the pace set in 1998—JCPML’s first year of operation. The JCPML team has already planned an exciting calendar of events for the coming year that includes a series of interesting public lectures and the opening of a special exhibition from the MacArthur Memorial Library.

Already JCPML has some major achievements under its belt for 1999. Highlights of the first quarter include the launching of our Electronic Research Archive (ERA) which is now available to researchers in the Challenge Bank Reading Room; the opening of our refurbished exhibition John Curtin: A Man of Peace, A Time of War, and the completion of the remote scanning program with the National Archives of Australia.

This was a very exciting project as it tested the feasibility of our undertaking the digitization of material at remote sites. We are very grateful to the National Archives of Australia and National Library of Australia for participating in this program.

In addition our schools educational program, which was successfully trialed in 1998, is proving popular with students from years 9 to 12 and we have had excellent feedback from both teachers and students involved in the program.

JCPML staff look like being kept especially busy this year as already all staff have been invited to give papers at conferences or seminars during 1999— which shows there is certainly a lot of interest in JCPML’s achievements and future plans!

We are pleased to include a copy of our 1998 Annual Review with this issue of Information Update. This highlights JCPML achievements during an outstanding first year of operation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank JCPML staff and all of our supporters who contributed to making 1998 such a success, and I look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

Sue White

Education bookings filling fast

With three stimulating education programs on offer during 1999 the JCPML now caters to students in years 9 and 10 Society & Environment, year 12 Politics & Legal Studies and Years 11 and 12 History.

Each program offers in-class teaching resources, a simulation game held at the JCPML and a tour of the JCPML exhibition John Curtin: A Man of Peace, A Time of War. In addition year 11 and 12 students receive an introduction to the archival facilities of the JCPML, including a hands-on introduction to the Electronic Research Archive.

More than 100 students have already participated in the programs during first term and bookings are filling fast for second and third terms because at just $2 per student they are such good value.

For more information about the education programs or to obtain booking forms teachers should contact the JCPML:

Phone: 9266-4205
Fax: 9266-4185
email: jcpml@boris.curtin.edu.au
New ERA launched

On February 9 the JCPML launched its Electronic Research Archive (ERA) for public use within the JCPML Challenge Bank Reading Room. ERA provides electronic access to 90% of the JCPML collection incorporating more than 7000 image and text files. The material available includes nearly 600 editorials written by John Curtin for the Westralian Worker, photographs from the Curtin family album, oral histories and other personal papers.

Digitization of the JCPML's physical collection and John Curtin related materials from other institutions is an innovative concept which gives researchers the opportunity to have full electronic access to the content of the archives. ERA's search retrieval software allows the full text of documents, as well as the descriptive metadata attached to each document, to be fully searched.

Researchers using ERA have described the digital access as "brilliant" because it cuts access and searching time, the images are of high quality and the information they seek is easily copied for research purposes.

Watch out for full web access to ERA through the internet later this year!

Dr David Day and Lesley Wallace accesses material on the new ERA

History Teachers at JCPML

On Saturday, March 6, the JCPML hosted another successful professional development seminar for the History Teachers’ Association of WA (HTAWA).

In conjunction with HTAWA, the JCPML conducted two workshops on its schools outreach program—one on its educational role play, Australia at War: Parliament ’42, and the other on its forthcoming educational resource kit. Participating teachers had the opportunity to give feedback and have an input into both of these resources.

A number of other workshops were held on the day focusing on the professional development theme of oral investigation for history students, while noted oral historian, Stewart Reed, gave a keynote address on oral history interviews.

During lunch participants were treated to a tour of the JCPML's refurbished exhibition, John Curtin: A Man of Peace, A Time of War, before participating in the afternoon sessions and concluding with a general meeting.

Curtin’s desk at home in new display

A recreation of the living room in the Curtin family home during the war years features as a major new display in the refurbished JCPML exhibition, John Curtin: A Man of Peace, A Time of War. The display includes Curtin’s desk, a selection of books from his personal library, family photographs and a selection of souvenirs that were of special value to Curtin.

The exhibition was opened to the public on February 9. The exhibition is open Tuesday to Friday from 10.30 am to 5.00 pm and on Sundays from 1.00 to 5.00 pm.
issues were addressed during the scanning and no damage was done to the documents.

David has been heavily involved in digitizing the JCPML collection for ERA and, in conjunction with the Archivist, Kandy-Jane Henderson, used his expertise to design a suitable structure for accessioning the documents before he began digitizing so that they would slot neatly into the collection.

The Royal Commission records, including Curtin’s minority report which disagreed strongly with the Commission’s findings, makes a valuable addition to the new Electronic Research Archive. This success means that the JCPML will plan to undertake similar projects in the future. 

Barry Jones talks with Archivist, Kandy-Jane Henderson, on his recent visit to the JCPML

Visitors to the JCPML
Challenge Bank Reading Room

Graham Anderson
Chris Avent
Battye Library staff
Kim and Betty Beazley
Adrian Bennett
Sallybeth Bumbrey
Mel Bungy
Steve Busbey
John and Doug Cash
George Chan HN
Ruth Coleman
Alison Croft
Howard and Judith Davis
Kenneth Evans
Bill and Betsy Grayden
Barry Jones
June Kirwan
David Klingberg
Jane Klobas
Michael Lyons
Abdul Tail Mahmud
Ken Maynard
Gordon and Betty McIntosh
Sue McKnight
Levas Mejus
Che Kwong Ming
Lorraine Negus
Astrid Norgard
Dick Old
Graeme Powell
Thomas Scully
Lee Kim Shin
Don and Nonnie Smart
Dr Hatta Solhee
Eugene Stankevicius
Kate Stewart
Laila Taib
Kevin Tonkin
Robert CrH Voon
Rona Wade
Athol and Anne Wheeler
Gordon and Margery Wise

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