

Archives and theatre

— a unique partnership

On 11 March the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library in association with the Perth Theatre Company launched the educational program of *Shadow Of The Eagle*. The play is due to have its world premiere on 24 May at the Playhouse Theatre in Perth, after a long gestation of research, writing and workshopping.

The play, written by George Blazevic and Ingle Knight and directed by Alan Becher, tells of the pivotal events that led to changes in British, American and Australian relations and the first historic meeting of Australian Prime Minister John Curtin and American General Douglas MacArthur.

In 2002 the Australia Council for the Arts awarded JCPML a grant to help produce the play.

The education program for the play was promoted to teachers throughout March. The educational notes, aimed at English, Drama, Society & Environment and History students from years 10 to 12, will help students interpret the play, stimulate their involvement; enhance their understanding of the social and historical background of the time;



Above: JCPML and PTC staff celebrate the launch of the play's educational notes. *From left to right:* Rosalba Verrucci, Natalie Jenkins, Kandy-Jane Henderson, George Blazevic, Sue White and Ros Marshall. *Below:* teachers peruse the play's educational material.

and successfully undertake critical analysis of the play.

This unique resource will not only enable students to understand Australia's turn to America in 1942 but also to question Australia's role in the current conflict in Iraq. The educational notes and lesson plans can be used both before and after viewing the play.

The play has a short season in Perth (24 – 31 May) and will then travel to Kalgoorlie before touring regional centres in the eastern states.

Be sure to book your tickets early to avoid missing this exciting historical drama.



For more information and educational bookings contact Kelly on 9325 8366 or desk@perththeatre.com.au

Perth Season tickets available through BOCS on 9484 1133 or www.bocsticketing.com.au



From Curtin to Coombs

The *From Curtin to Coombs: war and peace in Australia* seminar on 25 March presented an exciting opportunity for the audience to investigate and the presenters to illustrate and illuminate the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library's newest exhibition, *John Curtin's Legacy: Leading Australia from war to peace*. Seminar topics ranged from homefront issues of wartime tucker to internment; from uncovering the transitional tensions of postwar planning to a new wave of immigration.

Guests were welcomed to campus by Vice-Chancellor Professor Lance Twomey and Professor David Black, JCPML Historical Consultant acted as Chairperson for the afternoon.

Special guest speaker for the seminar was well-known author, Nugget Coombs biographer, and historian, Dr Tim Rowse whose paper, *Curtin, Coombs and Labor's full employment promise*, provided a detailed look into John Curtin's thinking about the 1945 white paper on full employment. Dr Rowse undertook a detailed analysis of Curtin's handwritten comments on the draft white paper which gave fresh insight into what Curtin wanted in the postwar era.

Dr Nonja Peters, Director, Migration, Ethnicity, Refugees and Citizenship Research Unit at Curtin presented a paper on *From Aliens to Austr(alians)* with an absorbing and sometimes emotional look into the treatment of newcomers to Australia and their absorption into the Australian way of life. Ms Michal Bosworth, historian and researcher, followed with an entertaining and informative exploration of wartime food tastes and our changing palette.

A lively discussion and question time followed the presentations and afterwards visitors were encouraged to visit the exhibition and follow up on the various themes.

Visiting Scholar

This year's Visiting Scholar is Professor Marilyn Lake who holds a Personal Chair in the History Department at La Trobe University where she teaches Australian history and women's studies. Her areas of teaching and research interests range widely and include feminist theory, world wars one and two, nationalism, colonialism and Australian gender relations.

Her current research and writing focuses on historical investigation of the idea of the white man's country and the emergence of the 'white man' as a mode of identification and includes research into the racialised identities of Australia's Federal fathers and the complexity of 'white Australia'.

Marilyn visited JCPML in February to research John Curtin as an interesting case study of the tensions between socialist internationalism and the commitment to white Australia which will form the basis of a public lecture at the JCPML in October.

Marilyn has published widely with books including *Getting Equal: The History of Feminism in Australia*; *Women's Rights and Human Rights: International Historical Perspectives* co-authored with Patricia Grimshaw and Katie Holmes; and the prize-winning *Creating a Nation*, co-authored with Patricia Grimshaw, Ann McGrath and Marian Quartly. She has just completed *Faith: Faith Bandler, Gentle Activist*, winner of the 2002 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Arts Award for Non-Fiction. Much of Marilyn's work has been selected for re-publication in local and international anthologies of historical writing.

Marilyn has been a Visiting Fellow at Stockholm University and in 2001/2 was Visiting Professor of Australian Studies at Harvard University. The JCPML is very pleased and proud to welcome Marilyn as our 2003 Visiting Scholar.



From left to right: From Curtin to Coombs seminar presenters Dr Nonja Peters, Dr Tim Rowse and Ms Michal Bosworth



Wartime records find home in the West

A series of working folders containing duplicate copies of policy records from major Commonwealth departments and appropriate files in London and Washington covering the years 1937 to 1949 have now been donated to the JCPML.

According to Dr Jim Stokes from the National Archives of Australia (NAA) in Canberra: "The John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library was an ideal destination for the papers because they document in detail aspects of Curtin's work as wartime prime minister. It is also fitting that they should come to WA because Sir Paul Hasluck initiated the project and maintained a continuing interest in and support for it."

The documents were brought together as a result of a project launched in the 1960s by the Minister for External Affairs, Sir Paul Hasluck. From these working folders appropriate documents were selected for publication, although the published material was inevitably only a small proportion of the whole. This was a massive undertaking covering more than 25 years with the final volume in the sixteen volume set being published in 2001. Creating yet another link is the fact that the foreword to the sixteen-volume set was written by the Hon. Gough Whitlam, who is the Foundation Patron of the JCPML.

The working folders for 1937 to 1944 were later transferred to the NAA as Commonwealth Record Series A5749. Folders for 1945 to 1949 (approximately 30 shelf metres) remained in the custody of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Early in 2003 it was agreed between NAA and DFAT that it would be desirable to keep the working folders together and find an appropriate home for them, since they represented both a comprehensive research resource and also a unique guide to the location of material in the



From left to right: Steve Scott, State Director DFAT, Steve Stuckey, Assistant Director General NAA, Kandy-Jane Henderson, JCPML Archivist and Justice Nicholas Hasluck

original records.

Thanks to the efforts of DFAT staff Liz Nathan and Alison Purnell and Dr Jim Stokes from the NAA Canberra, the transfer of these documents to the JCPML was smoothly effected with the official handover happening on 9 April. NAA State office staff, Alan Ralph and Tony Lewandowski, facilitated local arrangements.

"These documents are a major new resource for the JCPML and its researchers because we can make all the source documents available, not just the published volumes," said JCPML Archivist Kandy-Jane Henderson. "We are also happy to strengthen our relationship with the Hasluck family and it is a further demonstration of the strong partnership between JCPML and NAA."

Once the records have been accessioned into the collection and cleared for public access they will be available to researchers.

Vale Francis 'Ali' Sharr

The JCPML joins with friends and family to farewell John Curtin Centre supporter and long-time State Librarian, Francis 'Ali' Sharr.

Mr Sharr arrived in Perth in 1953 to become State Librarian. During his tenure he revamped the public library service into the structure we all take for granted today.

As one of the first supporters of the John Curtin Centre, Mr Sharr attended several JCPML events to lend his encouragement to our endeavours. He had a long association with Curtin University of Technology and in 1991 was awarded an honorary doctorate of letters. Mr Sharr and his wife, Flo, were much respected and admired within Perth's library community and will be missed.

David Black takes up residence

Following his retirement from his position as professor of history and politics in the School of Social Sciences at Curtin University of Technology at the end of 2002, Professor David Black has moved his 'official' office to the JCPML.

Since 1998 David has held the honorary position of JCPML Historical Consultant in recognition of his continuing contribution to the Library and now he will be able to spend more time advising and working on historical projects being undertaken by the JCPML.

David has lectured and written extensively on Australian and West Australian history and politics. He is a regular newspaper columnist and radio and television commentator on electoral and current political affairs, and for many years has been Chairperson of the Parliamentary History Advisory Committee.

In 1995 he published a book on John Curtin's speeches and writings *In His Own Words*. In 2001, the JCPML published David's book *'Friendship is*



a Sheltering Tree': John Curtin's Letters 1907 to 1945 which was the result of his work as the JCPML Visiting Scholar for 2000.

David has spent many hours advising the JCPML staff in regard to historical issues, helping to develop our major exhibitions and also acting as head of the editorial committee which brought to fruition Dr Serle's book on John Curtin, *For Australia and Labor*.

JCPML staff enthusiastically welcome David to his new office and look forward to a closer and continuing professional relationship.

ERA soon to get a new look and enhanced functionality

The JCPML has been working in partnership with ExLibris, a leading worldwide developer of high-performance applications for libraries, information centres, and researchers, to develop their digital-asset management system *Digitool* to provide a new look and enhanced functionality for the JCPML Electronic Research Archive (ERA).

For the JCPML, key benefits will be the improved efficiency of both the physical and intellectual management of the collection and the opportunity to ensure that ERA is more compliant with internationally recognised standards of archival description.

For researchers, the move to *Digitool* will provide better access to the collection via a more user friendly ERA with significantly reduced download times for document images, easier access to audio and video files and a 'seamless' interface when accessing linked records held in other collections.

Contributions and Support since December 2002

David Black
Dennis Fitzgerald
Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Elsie Macleod
National Archives of Australia

JCPML Challenge Bank Reading Room Visitors

Norma Barton
Tara Brabazon
Raymond Clee
Pam Gatenby
Lorraine Hayden
Graham Hilton
Renee Hindley
Marilyn Lake
Ken McCluskey
Leanne McRae
Jill Milner
Debra Payne
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Steve Redhead
Pat Reeves
Maureen Robieson
Victoria Rogers
Jon Selby
Roma Simmonds
Helen Wills-Johnston
Andrew Wiseman

John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library
Curtin University of Technology,
Kent St, Bentley WA 6102
GPO Box U1987 Perth WA 6845
Tel: 08 9266 4205 Fax: 08 9266 4185
Email: jcpml@boris.curtin.edu.au
Web: <http://john.curtin.edu.au>



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