

A tribute to John Curtin's world



Former prime ministers Gough Whitlam (left) and Paul Keating chat before the JCPML Anniversary Lecture

'Leaders are significant in history. There is more to history than the determinism of events; personalities do matter, the scope of their minds matters, their courage matters, their capacity to make people believe, matters,' explained Paul Keating at this year's John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library Anniversary Lecture on 5 July.

In a speech entitled *John Curtin's World and Ours* Mr Keating explored aspects of Curtin's leadership during World War Two: 'History's prizes go to the leaders who make the turns and it was Curtin and Chifley with him, who made the turn. The strategic turn away from

Britain to the United States and the economic turn from six state economies to a national one. And with the migration policy, a recognition that Australia had to engage the world, that it could not exist in splendid isolation, that it had to eschew exclusiveness in favour of magnanimity and not go on conjuring distinctions between the civic and the human community. These were very big changes.'

He went on to talk about the 'indelible stamp' that Curtin left on Australia in turning our foreign policy towards the United States, stating: 'Before Curtin, Australia never really had a foreign

policy.' Mr Keating then went on to make some salient points about current foreign policy decisions, saying that an alternative approach to relying on powerful allies is to build coalitions of interests with smaller countries and he warned of the dangers of an unopposed unilateral state. 'We need to ask ourselves whether US exceptionalism is an adequate central organising principle on which to build a new world. Is it an enduring model that will help in twenty, in ten, even in five year's time, Australia to understand the world better and to find a place in it?'

A transcript and video proceedings of the JCPML Anniversary Lecture can be accessed via the JCPML's homepage <http://john.curtin.edu.au> under 'what's new'.

Whitlam Walk

On 5 July the contribution of the JCPML's Foundation Patron, Hon. Gough Whitlam, to the JCPML and Curtin University of Technology was recognised by the naming of a significant walkway in his honour. 'Whitlam Walk' is the pedestrian pathway leading from the northern end of the campus through the colonnades to the John Curtin Centre.

Fond farewell to friends



Adele Mildenhall at work with John Curtin

The JCPML bids a fond farewell to these donors and supporters who have contributed to the growing collection of material on John Curtin.

Vale Adele (nee Mildenhall) Hodges

Adele died in December 2001 aged 83. She worked as John Curtin's secretary from 1936 to 1941, during which time he contested two elections. In 1997 Adele gave an oral history interview for the JCPML.

She said: 'I found Mr Curtin one of the most charming men I have ever met. He was considerate, he was caring, he won you over by his simplicity, and anything that he wanted you to do you never felt, "Oh blow, what a nuisance." It was

just a joy to be there.'

Adele donated personal papers and photographs relating to this time in her life to the JCPML collection. One of her special memories was a letter John Curtin wrote to her upon her resignation in order to marry. 'I write this note to wish you happiness and the good life all your days. You count very much in my friendly affection as a workmate and collaborator in matters of great moment to our country...Yr Affectionate Friend, John Curtin. P.S. Give me a cup of tea some time!'

Vale Dame Rachel

Dame Rachel Cleland passed away in April 2002 aged 96.

Dame Rachel provided an anecdote to the JCPML collection of a meeting she had with John Curtin during the war as they were both travelling by train: 'It was a very interesting discussion, and [gave me] a lot of insight into the kind of man he was. And the more I talked to

him, the more I liked him as a person.'

In 1951, Dame Rachel and her husband moved to Papua New Guinea where she began 28 years of service to the people of that country. She played leading roles in the Girl Guides, the Red Cross, the Australian Pre-School Association in PNG and Legacy Torchbearers. She had strong links with Curtin University and was a John Curtin Medallist in 2000.

Vale Arthur Prickett

Arthur Prickett died in June 2002 aged 88. John Curtin took an interest in the orphaned Arthur who commenced work with the *Westralian Worker* as a 14-year-old apprentice compositor. John Curtin knew the family well enough to attend Arthur's wedding in 1937.

In 1998 Arthur did an oral history interview for the JCPML.

<http://john.curtin.edu.au>

Shaping the Nation

Shaping the Nation: John Curtin and Australia, the JCPML's major exhibition during 2001-2002, closed its doors on 18 August this year. It was a popular exhibition paralleling the life of John Curtin, Australia's great wartime prime minister, and the Australian nation from the time of Federation until the time it reached full adulthood.

More than 21,000 people visited the exhibition while it was on display. Although the exhibition will no longer have a physical presence at the JCPML, an online version will be available from October 2002 on the JCPML website.

A new exhibition, *John Curtin's Legacy: Leading Australia from war to peace*, will be on display at the JCPML from 17 September.

Shadow of the Eagle

During August the Perth Theatre Company (PTC) workshopped its new play based on the wartime relationship between Prime Minister John Curtin and American General Douglas MacArthur. This is an exciting prelude to the full scale production of the play, *In the Shadow of the Eagle*, which is scheduled to open in Perth in May next year before travelling to Canberra for further productions at the Australian War Memorial.

The play has been written by well-known Perth playwrights George Blazevic and Ingle Knight and was developed in collaboration with the JCPML, which provided extensive research services and archival material for use in the play. The Australia Council for the Arts awarded JCPML a grant to produce the play.





JCPML wins prestigious awards

In August the JCPML won the Mander Jones Award for a publication 'making the greatest contribution to archives or a related field in Australia written by or on behalf of a corporate body'. Kandy-Jane Henderson, JCPML Archivist, accepted the award for the JCPML web project, *Understanding Society through its Documents*, which is part of the JCPML's ongoing endeavour to contribute to the development and promotion of archives. The Mander Jones Awards are sponsored by the Australian Society of Archivists. The web project can be viewed on the JCPML website under 'online resources'. ►



From l to r: Ros Marshall, Kandy-Jane Henderson and Lesley Wallace

In July two JCPML staff members received awards under the Curtin Vice-Chancellor Rewards and Incentives Scheme as Employees of the Quarter.

Lesley Wallace was recognised for her initiative and unflagging commitment in developing a quality overall plan for the JCPML website. Her hard work, enthusiasm and in-house web design expertise have been crucial to the successful growth of the site.

Ros Marshall's exceptional customer service in developing and delivering education programs was also recognised. Ros is proactive in developing new educational initiatives and being responsible for their delivery.

Participation in Trainers' Forum

In August the JCPML Archivist Kandy-Jane Henderson, in collaboration with Ann Pederson, a Visiting Fellow in Recordkeeping Studies at the University of New South Wales, gave a paper to the Recordkeeping Educators and Trainers Forum held in Sydney.

Kandy spoke about the JCPML's website as an outreach tool and outlined the broad aims for the website as promoting knowledge and appreciation of John Curtin and his values, as well as the JCPML, and providing access to the collection and to 'packaged resources'.

The JCPML's emphasis is on gathering together source materials from a number of institutions and delivering as many resources, programs and services via the website as possible to maximise access and minimise costs. One of the major areas of importance of the website is the crucial role played by the Electronic Research Archive (ERA) in bringing together dispersed records relating to John Curtin.

According to Kandy: 'Starting out 50 years after John Curtin's death, we needed to accept that we would never hold all of the materials relevant to the JCPML's collection themes. So our initial focus is to concentrate on private records about John Curtin.

'Currently we have 11,000 records in our physical collection. Through our digitisation strategy, we work to develop links to both official and private records in relevant collections worldwide, as well as our own collection. ERA now offers access to more than 60,000 digital files around the world.'

PANDORA

The high quality and significance to Australia's documentary heritage of the JCPML website has been recognised by the National Library of Australia which has commenced archiving the complete site as part of its PANDORA Archive (Preserving and Accessing Networked Documentary Resources of Australia).

PANDORA is a digital archive (<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/>) established by the National Library of Australia and dedicated to the preservation of and long term access to Australian online publications of national significance. PANDORA plans to archive the JCPML site annually.

2002 JCPML Visiting Scholar

This year's JCPML Visiting Scholar is Denis Fitzgerald who has commenced working closely with JCPML on a donation of papers from his father, Tom Fitzgerald. During the year Denis will contribute significantly to the JCPML's understanding and arrangement of this donation and will also work towards jointly developing a publication for the JCPML website about his father, who was a well-known authority on John Curtin.

Rationing & Rebuilding

Contributions & Support
since April 2002

Thanks to generous sponsorship from the Water Corporation, the JCPML's newest digital resource *War & Peace: Rationing and Rebuilding: 1940s life in Cottesloe, Western Australia* was launched in June. The site focuses on what it was like to live in John Curtin's home community of Cottesloe, a beachside suburb of Perth, in the 1940s, as Australia moved from war-time privations to peace and growing prosperity.



John Curtin's wife and daughter hear the news he has been made prime minister

Covering everything from transport, keeping in touch, school, work and having fun, this resource contains a wealth of information, plenty of anecdotes, surprising facts, images, audio clips of John Curtin's wartime speeches and online activities for the adventurous. Some of our visitors will remember the butterless sandwiches, blackout curtains and charcoal-burning cars while younger generations will be amazed at the

efforts of older relatives to make the best of a difficult situation.

According to Water Corporation Chairman, Hon. Peter Jones: 'The value of this project really lies in the awareness and respect it fosters between young and old West Australians. It was an important period of time and it is vital that the lessons and values learned throughout it are passed onto our children.'

Visit the resource at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/1940s/>.

Education for teachers

The JCPML education officer, Ros Marshall, participated in two exciting Professional Development (PD) days earlier this year.

The History Teachers Association of WA Seminar Day took place on the JCPML premises. Professor Rick Lowe gave a presentation on 'Visual Learning and Critical Viewing in History' while the JCPML presented a workshop on 'Online Resources, Investigations and Role Plays' which was designed to introduce newcomers to the JCPML's interesting and varied range of programs. The workshop was well-attended and very positively received.

Ros also participated in the PD component of the National History Project which was held at Murdoch University in April/May. She gave a presentation on innovative ideas around historical processes. Following on from this experience, Ros served as a mentor to two schools in the Peel region which participated in the professional development exercise.

Australian Labor Party, WA Branch
Geoffrey Bolton
Denis Fitzgerald
Fitzgerald family
Roosevelt Presidential Library
Sydney Hodges
Thelma MacKinnon
Peg Perrin
Vicki Williamson

JCPML Challenge Bank Reading Room Visitors

Alastair Bryant
Tony Caravella
Gem Chang
Steven Chaytor
John Edwards
Pat Gilchrist
Evelyn Gill
Allan Gygell
Elizabeth Hock
International Council of Archives
Rita James
Bill Johnston
Peter Jones
Paul Keating
Ruth & Bill Marchant James
Thelma McCarthy
Brendan Nelson
Carolyn Newman
Deirdre O'Donnell
J Prickett
Records Management Association, WA
Stuart Robertson
Ian Rouse
Paul Santamaria
State Records Commission, WA
Greg Thurston
Greg Wallace
Norm Wells
Mr & Mrs Whitlam
Caroline Williams
Karen Willis

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>

Visiting members of the State Records Commission with Kandy-Jane Henderson (3rd from right)



SPONSORING THE ARTS.
ENDORSED BY THE
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS.