

Dawn of a new ERA



JCPML and LIS staff who worked on developing and implementing the new ERA. From l to r: David Wylie, Colin Meikle, Kandy-Jane Henderson, Lesley Wallace, Libero Parisotto and David Wells. Absent: Stuart Caporn

'The new ERA is terrific. Very user friendly.'

'ERA is certainly much easier to use with the new interface and photographs now display with ease.'

'Most impressed – particularly with the video and sound options. Retrieval was also quick and fairly intuitive. I always struggled with the previous software.'

On 6 November the new-look Electronic Research Archive (ERA) was officially launched and researchers and other users have been favourably impressed with the improved access, especially to video and audio files; significantly reduced download

times; and the more intuitive user-friendly interface. For JCPML staff the behind-the-scenes benefits include increased efficiency for managing the collection and the opportunity to ensure that ERA is more compliant with internationally recognised standards of archival description.

The success of the revamped ERA is a tribute to the hard work of the JCPML and Library & Information Services staff who have been working for the past 18 months in partnership with ExLibris, an international software applications developer, to develop DigiTool. DigiTool is the digital assets management system

which provides the enhanced functionality now displayed in ERA.

The implementation phase included a complex migration of data with a variety of digital formats. ERA provides the most content rich and complex of the applications of DigiTool in the world to date and is the only website actively using version 2 of the software. Congratulations have been received from Matti Shem-Tov, Ex Libris CEO and President, and Oded Scharfstein, DigiTool Product Manager who consider ERA as the premier DigiTool implementation and therefore a 'must' for Ex Libris staff to demonstrate.

Nearly 40,000 digital files can now be accessed through ERA. The JCPML research collection includes personal papers, oral histories, photographs, moving pictures, sound recordings, copies of official records and other archival material from our own collection and from collections worldwide. Digital objects include:

- Images (photographs, documents)
- Full text (contents of documents)
- Audio and video (oral histories, sound recordings, motion pictures)

Online help and a quick and easy tutorial are provided to help users get started. Check out the new ERA via the JCPML website: <http://john.curtin.edu.au>

An interesting life
now on record



Jim Coulter with Kandy-Jane
Henderson

Hon. Kim Beazley recently launched Jim Coulter's book, *Met Along the Way...in war and peace*, at the JCPML. Jim is a long-time JCPML supporter and donor so it was very fitting that the Perth launch should take place at the JCPML.

Speaking to a capacity audience, Kim Beazley and Jim and Rita Coulter spoke about the wonderful people Jim has met throughout his life, including his unexpected meeting with Prime Minister John Curtin in London during World War Two.

JCPML offers research support

The JCPML is a participant in the Australian Historical Association/Cultural Institutions Honorary Research Fellowships scheme. The aim of the scheme is to assist historians with support facilities whilst they conduct research in Australian cultural institutions, usually during a period of study leave, for up to six months. The inaugural fellowships will be offered for 2004/2005.

Other participating institutions include the National Library of Australia, National Archives of Australia, State Records Authority of New South Wales and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

Thought-provoking lecture on John Curtin: Internationalist

Professor Marilyn Lake, JCPML Visiting Scholar, gave a stimulating and thought-provoking lecture on 9 October as part of the celebrations for John Curtin Day.

Her lecture was an exploration of the tensions between John Curtin's belief in international socialism which had 'no concern for race or frontier' and his commitment to a white Australia policy. Researching Curtin's early writings Professor Lake noted Curtin's strong belief that the working class must mobilise in a world-wide struggle for emancipation. According to Professor Lake, Curtin 'dedicated most of his life to promoting the trans-national idea of the world's common humanity'. Furthermore, Curtin expressed his views about self-determined government by 'native populations' as early as 1919 when discussing the Versailles Treaty at the end of World War One.

Curtin wrote: 'All the argument has been directed as to how the colonies could be kept from Germany. Not a thought has been given as to how they could be made free of everybody. And yet that is what self-determination means if it means anything. The rights and interests of the natives rather than the "safety and security" of European powers should have been the first consideration of the Congress...Any such charter would include provisions for the prohibition of forced labour; the definition and preservation of native land rights; complete separation of the administration from all forms of native exploitation; and the maintenance of and respect for tribal authority, laws and customs. This is what Australia should have done in Papua. It is what should have been done by the imperialist powers in regard to colonies peopled by natives the world over.'

'Significantly, Curtin did not see the implications for indigenous peoples within Australia,' said Professor Lake. 'Curtin, like his contemporaries, could not see white Australia as an occupying power.

Aborigines could not be conceptualised as colonised people, because Britain, "with its supercilious air of lofty superiority" still treated white Australians as colonials.' Instead Curtin, as a staunch member of the Labour movement, viewed the white Australia policy as essential to maintaining the white worker's standard of living. He hoped that the new international organizations established in the 1920s might bring workers throughout the world up to the Australian standard. Professor Lake concluded that overall, Curtin could be acknowledged as one of Australia's 'early advocates of de-colonisation, indigenous land rights and international solidarity'.

The full text of Professor Lake's lecture can be accessed from the JCPML website under 'What's New'.



Professor Marilyn Lake

What a drama at the JCPML!



Students from Collier Primary School enact a *Week on the Wireless*

A *Week on the Wireless* is sure to inspire and delight primary school students as they use their creative talents to explore the mysteries of the golden days of radio and create their own radio plays.

The JCPML's new primary school drama program launched in November encompasses a diverse range of areas

including Society and Environment, Maths, English, Drama, Media and Music.

Throughout World War Two the radio was an important source of communication, information, entertainment and education for the Australian people. A *Week on the Wireless* invites students to create an imaginary series of

radio programs set in 1945. The cooperative learning activities are designed to cater for a wide range of learning abilities. Visiting school groups are divided into 5 teams, each producing a different radio program from ABC News to the Velvet Soap Hour.

Several schools have already participated in the program and both teachers and students have been impressed.

'It was worthwhile and we learnt a lot about World War Two and John Curtin. I had a fantastic day! We would love to go back,' commented year 6 students from Collier Primary School.

'What is most impressive about the program is the comprehensive support material you receive. The open ended nature of the program means it could be taken as a focus for a month or a term,' said one participating teacher.

The program emphasises cooperative activities and working in teams, the need to be organised and well-prepared, and helps students to be confident, maintain concentration and pace themselves.

Award-winning play continues performances next year

At the 10th Annual West Australian State Arts Sponsorship Awards, the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library (JCPML) was awarded a 2002/2003 Partnership Endorsement for its role in supporting culture and the arts in Western Australia. The State Arts Sponsor Award was in recognition of the JCPML's partnership with the Perth Theatre Company for the production of *Shadow Of The Eagle*, a play based on the dramatic and historic first meeting between Prime Minister John Curtin and US General Douglas MacArthur.

Shadow Of The Eagle was nominated for Best New Play and Best Production in the WA Equity Guild/International Foundation for the Arts and Culture Awards for 2003. The winners were announced on 15 November and *Shadow Of The Eagle* was a joint winner in the Best New Play category while actor Geoff Kelso won the Best Actor category for his performance as John Curtin.

The play has been confirmed to tour throughout Australia and will be performed in a number of regional venues from Canberra to Darwin in 2004.

The Perth Theatre Company and JCPML are delighted with their involvement in this innovative cultural partnership which continues to win accolades.



Actor Geoff Kelso in his award-winning role as John Curtin. Photo: Jon Green

JCPML the first in WA to join Picture Australia

The John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library is the first institution in Western Australia to contribute its images to PictureAustralia.

The development of the new ERA made it possible for JCPML to participate in PictureAustralia as the system now allows direct linking from external sites to both the descriptive information about our records and the digital objects themselves. Multi-page image viewing software developed by Curtin Library & Information Service converts tiff images to jpegs 'on the fly' enabling the production of thumbnail images necessary for PictureAustralia.

Over 650 photographs from ERA are now available via PictureAustralia. The images relate to themes such as Curtin's involvement with the Victorian Socialist Party, Timber Workers' Union, World War

One anti-conscription movement and the Australian Labor Party, his work as editor of the Westralian Worker newspaper, his leadership of the ALP and his years as Prime Minister of Australia.

Photographs from other institutions, not otherwise available digitally, are included in the JCPML images on PictureAustralia, with the support and consent of the originating institutions. For example, Curtin related photographs from the papers of Curtin's biographer, Lloyd Ross, held in the National Library and copied for the JCPML, can now be viewed online in this way. The original provenance of the photographs is clearly noted in the descriptive metadata for such photographs.

ERA has always been a means of



Roxanne Missingham, Assistant Director-General, Resource Sharing at the NLA, visits the JCPML for the launch of Picture Australia

providing access to John Curtin related records held around the world and the inclusion of these photographs on PictureAustralia extends this even further.

History provides a national challenge for schools



WA State winners with Minister for Education Alan Carpenter (right) and NHC State coordinator Ian Murray (left)

The theme for this year's National History Challenge for years 5 to 12 students was 'Conflict and Resolution'. State coordinator, Ian Murray, did an excellent job of organising the preliminary and final state judging, as well as the State awards presentation. As in previous years, the judging and presentation was held at the JCPML.

year 11 student at St Mary's Anglican Community School, was the State winner with her essay *Struggles and solutions* which looked at John Curtin's courage in his approach to all his conflicts including that with Churchill in 1942.

The national winner in the JCPML special category prize, announced in December,

Alan Carpenter, Minister for Education, awarded Megan Miller, Year 11 from Prendiville College, the prize for WA Young Historian of the Year for her essay *The Vietnam War involvement*.

In the JCPML special category Eileen Payne, a

was Oliver Rourke from Shore School in Sydney for his essay *Conflict and Resolution: The life and times of John Curtin*. According to the judges: 'As well as analysing the well known conflicts Curtin faced as prime minister, Oliver identified less obvious points of conflict, such as the appointment of the Duke of Gloucester as the Governor General and the ANZAC Agreement. We were impressed by the clarity and quality of Oliver's writing, the depth and breadth of his research and by the insight and evidence of critical reading shown in his annotated bibliography.'

Robert Grieve and James Orloff from Marcellan College in Victoria received an honourable mention for their performance *John Curtin's Finest Hour* – a dramatic recreation of events between October 1941 and February 1942. The judges commended the students for tackling such a challenging format so capably.

An investigation into John Curtin



John Curtin's granddaughters (from left to right) Barbara Davidson and Beverley Lane with JCPML Visiting Scholar Denis Fitzgerald

The JCPML's latest digital project showcases some of the material resulting from the investigative and analytical work undertaken by economic journalist Tom Fitzgerald during his research into a biography on John Curtin that he was planning to write, but which was still in progress when he died in 1993.

Denis Fitzgerald, Visiting Scholar, worked closely with JCPML on this donation of

papers from his father which provide new and intriguing insights into Curtin the 'inner man' as well as Curtin the prime minister. Denis contributed to our understanding and arrangement of this donation and worked on the joint publication for the JCPML website.

Dr John Edwards, economist and 2000 JCPML Visiting Scholar, believes that there is no other comparable resource to

Fitzgerald's work in 'pursuing, analysing and annotating the development of Curtin's economic ideas'.

The digital project allows users to browse through some of the themes Fitzgerald was developing for his biography, as well as some of the sources that he used for his research, such as correspondence with Elsie Macleod, Curtin's daughter.

'...[D]ad always had casual cream outfits: jacket, pants & several short and long-sleeved cream cotton-weave jumpers,' she remembered in 1986. 'We well knew the story that before leaving Melb. in 1917 dad was given a farewell social in the Socialist Hall and presented with a travelling rug and a small bag of sovereigns...[H]e immediately bought his first pair of cream trousers, and he certainly had a definite penchant for these cream outfits when on holiday at home or weekends at The Lodge & when he did a number of trips pre war...'

Check out this new digital resource by clicking on 'What's New' or type in the URL <http://john.curtin.edu.au/fitzgerald/>



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

JCPML Visiting Scholar for 2004



The JCPML is pleased to announce that the JCPML Visiting Scholar for 2004 will be Dr James Curran.

Dr Curran graduated with a Ph D in history from the University of Sydney in October 2001. His thesis will be published next year by Melbourne University Press under the title *Power of Speech: Australian prime ministers define the national image*. The book is the first in-depth Australian study of prime ministerial rhetoric in the modern era. It investigates the speeches and writings of five prime ministers - Gough Whitlam, Malcolm Fraser, Bob Hawke, Paul Keating and John Howard - and asks how they interpreted the nation's life and redefined the national identity.

Since completing his research degree Dr Curran has lectured in Australian studies at the Australian Catholic University and worked in the NSW Cabinet Office. He is currently a policy officer in the Department of The Prime Minister and Cabinet in Canberra. His current research interests include the period of 'new nationalism' in Australia in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and historian WK Hancock's approach to the problem of nationalism, 1925-1935.

Farewell to friends

The JCPML offers its condolences to the families of Sydney George Gray and Frederick John Mann. Both were donors and supporters of the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library who contributed to the growing collection of material on John Curtin.



Sydney George Gray (1918-2003)

Syd Gray's association with John Curtin went back to his boyhood as he helped Curtin's election campaign by handing out 'how to vote' cards.

Syd has donated anecdotes of his memories of John Curtin to the JCPML. One in particular recalled the time he was granted special leave to be married in January 1942. Travelling across the Nullarbor by train, he came across a 'very nice special coach' which turned out to be John Curtin's. Curtin 'came over, shook my hand and...invited me into his coach, and we had a long talk, some nice sandwiches and a beer.' Syd arrived in time for his wedding, which was duly attended by John and Elsie Curtin, giving the newly-wed couple a 10 pound wedding present.

Frederick John Mann (1911-2003)

Frederick John Mann died in July 2003. Mr Mann and his family had a long association with John Curtin through the Labour movement. Like Syd Gray, he also helped with election campaigns – posting notices on telephone poles and attending Curtin's speeches. He thought Curtin was a 'marvellous speaker; got down to grass roots and used language that everyone could understand...he used to pack the town hall at Mosman's with people.' Mr Mann remembered that Curtin introduced him to two new terms – fiduciary issue and troglodyte.

Mr Mann recorded an oral history interview of his association with John Curtin for the JCPML in 1997.

Welcome to new University Librarian



Imogen Garner (left) with Kandy-Jane Henderson

JCPML welcomes Imogen Garner as Curtin's new University Librarian and Deputy Chief Information Officer. Imogen is particularly interested in managing libraries in an educational environment.

Before her appointment to Curtin in July, Imogen worked at the University of Western Australia Library as the Associate Librarian, Client Services.

Imogen is actively involved in a number of professional areas. She is currently the Vice President and President-elect of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA).

Contributions and Support since July 2003

Graeme Henderson
Marilyn Lake
National Archives of Australia
Old Parliament House

JCPML Challenge Bank Reading Room Visitors

Alex Bayrell
Kelvin Chung Kui Yeng
Margaret Eaton
Margaret Fowler
Fu Qiang
Imogen Garner
Pam McKay
Ingrid McKenna
Mavis Miller
Roxanne Missingham
Harry Needham
George Nichols
Erica Ryan
Salmubi
Graham Scott
Kevin Sproat
Roy Stall
Tom Sullivan
Sally Talbot
Agnes Tan
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