

September 2009

Information Update

Three Times Around the World

Launch of the *Project Endeavour* Collection 2 November 2009

Jon Sanders sailed the yacht *Parry Endeavour* three times around the world between 25 May 1986 and 13 March 1988. The record-breaking voyage was solo and non-stop.

The *Project Endeavour: Jon Sanders' Triple Circumnavigation of the World Collection* was donated to the University Library in 2007 by Emeritus Professor John Penrose from Curtin's Centre for Marine Science and Technology (CMST).

Managed under the umbrella of the CMST, the Project Endeavour team were responsible for both the preparation program and the voyage. The project was funded by Parry Corporation and endorsed as an Australian Bicentennial Activity.

As part of the preparation program, Dr Kim Klaka from the CMST provided design advice for the refit of the *Endeavour* to enable the yacht to survive the two year voyage.

Professor Penrose prepared a scientific package that was taken on board so that Sanders could measure sea surface temperatures, log wildlife sightings and record bathymetric measurements. Using the package, Sanders was able to confirm the existence of a sea mount in the South Pacific region.

This historically significant collection includes hundreds of photographs, correspondence between Sanders and Penrose, designs of the yacht by WA Naval Architect Phil Curran, Dr Klaka's notes and drawings, scientific results and logs, minutes of the Project Endeavour working



Jon Sanders at sea on board the *Parry Endeavour*, 1986
(Records of Project Endeavour. CUL00039/19/2)

party, audio recordings and film footage shot by Sanders during his voyage. An important recent addition to the collection is the donation by Jon Sanders of five logbooks which chronicle the complete journey in his own words.

The Collection is held by the Library and housed in the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library, with many of the items, including the photographs, correspondence, log books, and log notes related to the scientific data, being available for viewing online.

Find out more about the Project, the Collection and Sanders' historic voyage by visiting the Project Endeavour website at john.curtin.edu.au/endeavour.

The Launch of the Project Endeavour Collection

You are warmly invited to the launch of the *Project Endeavour: Jon Sanders' Triple Circumnavigation of the World Collection* on Monday 2 November.

At this event, Jon Sanders will speak about his historic voyage with a special introduction by John Penrose.


JOHN CURTIN PRIME MINISTERIAL LIBRARY



Celebrating the legacy of the Curtin children

It is with sadness that we acknowledge the passing of the children of John and Elsie Curtin: Elsie Milda Macleod who passed away on May 5, 2009 at age 91 and John Francis Curtin who passed away on June 20, 2007 at age 86.

The generous support of Elsie Macleod, John F Curtin, and their families, has been a key factor in the successful establishment and continuing development of the JCPML's collections and public programs.

Their donations of Curtin family material, including books, personal papers, photographs and memorabilia, provided the foundation for the core collection focus of 'John Curtin's life and times'. Elsie's and John's memories of their parents and family life, captured in oral histories and correspondence, provide insights which complement the more public histories of the wartime prime minister and his wife.

By making these records available to the public through the JCPML, Elsie and John have helped to ensure that future generations will continue to be inspired by the achievements of their father while also gaining a sense of him as a family man.

Elsie Milda Macleod

Elsie Macleod was more than a dutiful prime minister's daughter. Having been with John Curtin under wartime pressure in the Lodge in Canberra, and knowing

his fears of the Japanese, she not only became protective of him but, after his death, was the fiercest defender of the Curtin legacy.

Elsie, the girl her father called 'Lambie' or 'Lambcat', was born in Perth on 30 December 1917. She left school early but had a way with words; a small volume of her poetry, *Killed in Action and Other Verse*, was published in 1944.

After secretarial studies, she worked in the civil engineer's office of the WA Government Railways. She nursed her father after he suffered a heart attack in Melbourne in 1944, then moved into The Lodge with him until her mother came from Perth to take over.

In 1948 Elsie married Stan Macleod, a medical auditor, and they had a daughter, Beverley. Elsie spent most of her life at the family home in Jarrad Street, Cottesloe, caring for her family, including her mother and her grandmother, Annie Needham.

Elsie left her mark on the Australian Labor Party and as a member of the Perth Labor Women. She was awarded the ALP's highest recognition, lifetime membership, and helped to make the party more supportive of women in politics. Elsie said she would have stood for election to parliament if she had



been a man, 'but I didn't want to do it as a female. I saw what it did to women. The women [in parliament] all seemed to age a lot then.'

Speaking about her father, she said: 'I would have been proud of him if he'd never become a Prime Minister, if he'd just stayed as editor of a paper, or even if he hadn't been editor, because he was a very loving father and he was a lovely man, good company.' (Interview of Elsie Macleod, JCPML00012/1)

(Based on obituary by 2009 JCPML Visiting Scholar, Bob Wurth)

John Francis Curtin

John Francis Curtin was born in Cottesloe on 31 January 1921. As a boy, he shared a love of sport with his father, talking with him about cricket and football, listening to games on the radio and going to sporting matches together as well as playing the odd game of cricket in the backyard and tennis in the front garden.

John joined the RAAF at age 20 and during the war years, the family managed a visit together at least once in 1942 when both father and son were in Perth at the same time. In January 1943 his father travelled by train to Adelaide to see John before his posting to Darwin. They had an hour or so on the railway station and John didn't see his father again until he was on his way to join 2 Squadron for Morotai in 1945. In July that year, he was granted compassionate leave from the RAAF to be with him at The Lodge just before his death.

In 1944 John married Catherine Reid Neill and they had two children, Barbara and John. Following his service in the RAAF, he worked in export shipping.

John Francis Curtin rarely discussed his father publicly but in 2004 he undertook an oral history interview for the JCPML with a particular focus on his memories of life in the family home in Jarrad Street, Cottesloe. (Interview of John Francis Curtin, JCPML00855/1)

Speaking about his mother, John said: 'She was a very kind person and very thoughtful. She always appreciated any help she got from people. She was very tolerant. Well you'd have to be if you get involved with parliament. You've got to listen to the other one's point of view - to be able to see their side of the argument, and mum was very good at that.' (Interview of John Francis Curtin, JCPML00855/1)

Curtin family photographs:

Top left: Elsie and John Curtin (jnr) 1942. JCPML00004/29

Centre: John and Elsie Curtin with their children Elsie and John, 1922. JCPML00004/9.

John Curtin with his wife, son and daughter outside house. Cottesloe, 1942. JCPML00376/34.

The Curtin family, 24 Jarrad St Cottesloe. 1937. JCPML00376/40.

Lessons for our times

News from the JCPML collection with David Wylie, Archives Technician

Philosopher, poet, literary and cultural critic, George Santayana wrote that:

History is a pack of lies about events that never happened told by people who weren't there.

In contrast, archives exist to ensure that the past is remembered. The documents and items collected and preserved in an archive were written or created by people who were there, who witnessed the events first hand, and who recorded their experiences at the time.

The period 1937 to 1947 was a tumultuous time in world affairs. In Australia it saw the build up to the outbreak of WWII, the involvement of Australia in that war, the accession to the prime ministership by Curtin, and post-war planning initiated by Curtin and Chifley including the setting up of international bodies such as the United Nations and the World Bank.

So many of the issues that concerned the government and the people of Australia in that time are mirrored today.

This can be seen by perusing the files of working papers, compiled by historians involved with the publication of *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49*, which were donated to the JCPML in 2003. Only a very small proportion of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) papers worked on in the project were published, and many papers not included have since been destroyed.

Consequently, the JCPML is now the only place to research the complete set of these DFAT papers. When these papers are compared with current affairs in today's press they reveal issues still of concern to Australians.

Afghanistan. In a cipher from London dated 27 May 1941 the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs was quoted as saying

that the Afghan Government had recently refused an Iraqi request to issue a summons to Jihad (holy war) against his country. (JCPML00869/11). In a memoranda dated 25 July 1947, External Affairs were advised that India was concerned about the temptation to the Soviet Government because of internal weaknesses in Afghanistan, and on 8 December 1947 it was opined that neither the Afghan nor Pakistani governments would be able to deal with unrest in the border areas of the two countries. (JCPML00869/12).

Whaling. In April 1943, it was thought that a proposed relaxation of the rules regulating the hunting of whales off the Western Australian coast would lead to indiscriminate killing of Humpback whales and a marked depletion in breeding stock (JCPML00869/27).

Burma. An announcement was made in January 1947 that a delegation led by U Aung San, Deputy Chairman of the Executive Council of Burma, would be visiting the UK that month. He was assassinated on 19 July. (JCPML00869/139). His daughter Aung San Suu Kyi was two years old at the time. The Karen were pushing for a separate state then too. (JCPML00869/134).

Other relevant subjects covered in the papers include:

Atomic energy and long-range (nuclear) weapons (JCPML00869/47, 321 & 342); **Sri Lanka** (JCPML00869/179); **Timor** (JCPML00869/1385); **Palestine** (many folders including JCPML00869/1567; and **Iraq** (JCPML00869/708).

There are in excess of 1,500 folders available for research which can be digitised for online use upon request.

As Santayana also said:

Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

Researching Japanese-Australian wartime relationships

2009 Visiting Scholar, Bob Wurth, made good use of the DFAT records in a recent visit to the JCPML, delving into some of the 200 or so files relating to Japan in the years 1936 to 1949.

His research focuses on the relationships between Japan and Australia, and in particular between the Japanese Consul, Tatsuo Kawai, and John Curtin, Robert Menzies and Arthur Fadden. A web resource and small touring exhibition are being developed around Bob's research and will be launched on 19 November.

Australia's Prime Ministers website and Prime Ministers Centre launch

The National Archives of Australia and the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House jointly launched the renewed *Australia's Prime Ministers* website and Prime Ministers Centre at Old Parliament House, Canberra, on 15 September.

Items from the JCPML collection, including photographs from the Curtin family and Hazel Hawke records, as well as the iconic Australian Journalists' Association Badge belonging to John Curtin, feature in the website and displays.

Curtin University Library &
John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library
Curtin University of Technology,
Kent St, Bentley WA 6102
GPO Box U1987 Perth WA 6845

John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library
Tel: 08 9266 4205 Fax: 08 9266 4185
Email:jcpml@curtin.edu.au
Web:john.curtin.edu.au