Grand opening for Beginnings

The second annual John Curtin Day was celebrated on 7 October to mark the anniversary of Curtin's assumption of the prime ministership in 1941. Amongst the activities to mark the occasion, the JCPML opened a travelling exhibition entitled Beginnings: Images of Occupied Japan on 4 October. The exhibition was put together under the direction of James Zobel, Archivist of the Douglas MacArthur Memorial Library & Archives in the USA, and was fittingly opened by Ms Sallybeth Bumbrey, US Consul General.

Ms Bumbrey spoke about cultural relations between Australia and the US: “Cultural exchanges such as this exhibition present opportunities for cross-generational analysis of events that turned the tide of history more than half a century ago.”

Beginnings is an exhibition which remembers the occupation of Japan in the aftermath of World War Two. It was a period of tremendous change for Japan which was suffering from a collapsed economy and a politically impotent government. An apprehensive Japanese people awaited the arrival of General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), to their country on 30 August 1945. Thus began the occupation of Japan which lasted until 28 April 1952.

General MacArthur was a well-known personality to Australians. He had formerly been the Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific area, headquartered in Brisbane from March 1942. In this position he had been closely connected with Prime Minister John Curtin and the two men had developed a friendly personal relationship as they worked together to bring the war to a conclusion. General MacArthur’s strong leadership, self-confidence, sense of purpose and sound political sense won him the respect of the Japanese and made the Allied Occupation of Japan highly successful.

Beginnings: Images of Occupied Japan dramatically portrayed the story of Japan’s recovery from total defeat. The photographs, taken by Nicholas A Orzio between 1948-49, provide a glimpse into the poverty, destruction, apprehension, reforms, tradition, love and dreams of a nation and people who were looking towards new beginnings.

The exhibition closed on 28 November and will travel to Canberra in 2000 to the Australian War Memorial. Nearly 9,000 people visited the exhibition while it was in Perth. ✦
From the Director’s Desk ...

Having been absent from the Director’s role for most of this year, I find on my return that there’s nothing like time away to put things in perspective. Returning after a considerable absence makes one appreciate how far the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library has come and how well it has consolidated its collection and programs. Clearly others believe this to be true as well. As Dr David Day, last year’s JCPML Scholar, recently said about us at the launch of his new biography on John Curtin: “The assistance of the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library was also crucial to the timely production of this book. The library’s rich and growing resource of Curtin material now vies with the National Library and the Australian Archives as the first port of call for anyone interested in Curtin.”

There is a real excitement in seeing ideas that were conceived two or even three years ago, now being fully realized. While there have been many achievements this year, the birth of our Electronic Research Archive (ERA) and the publication of our first educational resource are definite high points. Despite what we have accomplished so far, this is not a time for us to rest on our laurels. In fact we are working harder than ever and looking forward to making next year even bigger and better.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support along the way—it has been critical to our success. I also want to thank the JCPML team who carried on the vision in my absence. On behalf of all the JCPML staff, I wish everyone the very best for the new year.

Vicki Williamson
JCPML Director

New resource and program for schools

As part of its focus to make the collection more accessible, in September the JCPML launched an educational resource featuring nearing 200 items of primary and secondary source documents covering a range of sources from photographs and cartoons to oral history excerpts, reports, personal and official correspondence, newspaper articles and wartime telegrams. Entitled John Curtin and International Relations during World War II, the book not only delves into Curtin’s early life and influences, his development from a radical socialist to pragmatic politician and prime minister but also carefully dissects Australia’s relations with Britain and the US between 1941 and 1944.

Associate Professor David Black, who has had a long involvement with the teaching and assessment of secondary level history students, as well as in researching the life and times of John Curtin, says in his foreword: “What makes this collection of documents and extracts particularly exciting is that a number of the documents have never previously been published... Furthermore, the source materials have been integrated around selected themes and linked to activities designed to develop students’ skills and understandings in dealing with historical evidence... I welcome this publication... and look forward eagerly to the book’s inclusion in the resource listings for the various school curricula.”

During development, input was sought by teachers to ensure its relevance to the curriculum. Liz McGinnis, Vice-President of the History Teachers Association of WA, says in her review: “The JCPML has taken heed of comments and suggestions made by practising teachers who workedshopped the book... Essentially, the book is dominated by sources and well-targeted activities linked by short introductions and explanations... Overall, this locally-produced publication deserves our support. It could be used as a class set or as teacher and library reference material. There is a wealth of material for exam-setting purposes and aspects of all the Key Understandings are included... Careful perusal will be well-rewarded.”

The resource costs $35 plus postage and handling. Order enquiries should be directed to (08) 9266 2414.

During fourth term, the JCPML also piloted its new primary school program aimed at years 5 to 7. The program was a big hit with West Leeming Primary School students who participated in a number of activities related to learning about John Curtin and Australia during World War II. The program will be in full operation next year and bookings should be directed to the JCPML office on (08) 9266 4205. The program will run on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.
History Challenge Winners

The theme of this year's National History Challenge (NHC) was 'Working Together' and that's precisely what the History Teachers Association of WA and the JCPML did to ensure the smooth running of both the state and national judging throughout the year. The culmination of the NHC was the hosting of the special Awards Ceremony to honour all the division prize winners in October. The NHC State winner, who was awarded the Young Historian's Award, was Adam Tyler for his essay on Harry Sandon Park. Adam flew to Canberra for the national presentations on 24 November. Although there was no state winner for the special category, Life and Times of John Curtin, sponsored by the JCPML, there was a national winner announced at Canberra. This was Marcus Fitz-Gerald from Queensland for his winning essay which examined how John Curtin drew Australians together during the crisis of World War II.

The National History Challenge was established several years ago to promote public support for involvement in the teaching, learning and making of history. It is an Australia-wide program involving students from years 5 to 12. This year's winners are:

**Age Division Winners:**
Year 7/8: Dana Ihlaydid and Nava Ghalili of Rossmoyne SHS for their museum display Life & Times of John Curtin.
Year 9/10: Adam Tyler of Applecross SHS for his essay Harry Sandon Park.

**Special Categories Winners:**
Working Together in Peace and War: Stephanie Green of Morley SHS for her essay East Timor and Australia relations: World War II and Today.
Working Together to Celebrate our Heritage: Adam Tyler of Applecross SHS for his essay Harry Sandon Park.
Using Archival Sources: Adam Tyler of Applecross SHS for his essay Harry Sandon Park.

**Curtin biography launched:**
A new, in-depth biography of John Curtin had its Perth launch at Curtin University on 20 October. Written by Dr David Day, John Curtin: A Life traces Curtin's life from his childhood to his dramatic and courageous leadership during World War II. Day's research of the book brought him to Perth as the JCPML Visiting Scholar in 1998. He made a subsequent visit to the JCPML in 1999 to conduct further research. As Day explains: "I was particularly anxious to examine Curtin’s life on its own terms, from his earliest days in Creswick to his tragic death in the Lodge. [This book] will, I hope, correct some of the myths that have grown up around John Curtin while at the same time keeping the memory of this great Australian alive for decades to come."
Professional Highlights

Throughout the year, JCPML staff have participated in a number of professional activities to promote the work being undertaken by the JCPML.

In March LASIE published an article written by Vicki Williamson, JCPML Director, and Kandy-Jane Henderson, Archivist, describing the background and progress to date of the Electronic Research Archive (ERA). Entitled *John Curtin records open to the world: How Australia’s first electronic archive was developed*, the article was a revised and updated version of a paper they presented at the Australian Society of Archivists Conference Place, Interface & Cyberspace: Archives at the Edge.


In May Lesley Carman-Brown, Public Programs Coordinator, visited several notable UK institutions on a VALA scholarship to examine the electronic progress being achieved by them. Lesley will be presenting a paper entitled *The progress of digitization technology, particularly multimedia, within some British cultural institutions* at the next VALA Conference in February 2000.

The 10th ALIA National Library Technicians Conference, *Projections, Reflections*, was held at Fremantle in September. David Wylie, Archives Technician, presented a paper entitled *Learning from the past to build a better community: the JCPML Electronic Research Archive*. The presentation was an introduction to the JCPML’s adaptation of available technology and software to provide equitable access to the collection through the world wide web. The paper was well received and a large number of conference delegates visited the JCPML the next day to have a hands on session with ERA.

Archivist Kandy-Jane Henderson attended the 10th Round Table of the National Scholarly Communications Forum titled *Archives in the National Research Infrastructure*, on 1-2 November in Canberra. A range of national and international speakers from diverse backgrounds spoke on the role of archives in research today, archives and their use for societal accountability, and the use of archives in the digital networked environment. A number of resolutions were agreed upon to ensure that present and future generations of Australians have easy access to the documentary heritage of Australia.

On 13 November the JCPML Education Officer, Ros Marshall, and Collections Development Librarian, Lesley Wallace, presented a paper at the National Local Studies Conference *Post Haste the Millennium: Opportunities and Challenges in Local Studies*. Ros and Lesley spoke on the theme *Providing education programs on a shoestring: Some ideas arising from the JCPML’s adventure into outreach in our first two years of public programs*. The paper outlined the main facets of the JCPML’s adventure into outreach while aiming to encourage thought and discussion about effective, low budget programs in a variety of contexts.