

Food for thought

Dragging a leg of pork through the sea from the stern of an immigrant ship to freshen it or cooking and eating the sole of a camel's foot may not sound likely fare for librarians today, but South Australian society and library identities enjoyed these tales at the re-creation of an historic dinner within the Victorian splendour of the Mortlock Library of South Australiana.

As a prelude to the Adelaide Festival, and the State Library's exhibition of menus, 'Eating Out, a menu retrospective', the library hosted a \$100 a head Vice Regal dinner which re-created a Government House menu of 1867. This menu was for a dinner held in honour of the first royal visitor to South Australia, Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh.

Guests needed to go into training for what turned out to be a 20 course menu which, while authentic, had had its sauces lightened a little for 1990's tastes by guest chef Cheong Liew. By serving much of the meal on platters everybody had a chance to taste, if not eat, it all. The food was glorified by some very old Barossa wines to tempt the taste buds at every course. Apart from the food, guests were entertained by readings from early immigrants' and explorers' journals as well as some famous Australian writers such as Norman Lindsay's *The magic pudding* and Thistle Anderson's *Arcadian Adelaide*.

The popularity of the dinner in Adelaide was overwhelming, and all 116 tickets were sold in 4 days. As an experience it was a once in a lifetime event that still has Adelaideans talking.

While the library does not want to devalue this dinner, the interest it created in the library suggests that it would be worthy of a repeat as an opening occasion to future Festivals. With over 2000 menus to choose from, this

will be an exciting pastime for lucky librarians in the future.

The exhibition itself was a big hit and attracted many thousands of people, so much so that its showing was extended a further month.

The menus had been collected through a public appeal supported by food columnists in daily newspapers in Australia. Librarians Valmai Hankel, Liz Ho and Zaiga Sudrabs did most of the work with some help from members of the Gastronomic Symposium which was held in Adelaide this year. A number of menus were lent by other libraries in Australia and the State Library is very grateful for this support. In the end, 190 menus were chosen to go into the display of table settings and other food ideas including some of the original crockery and silver used at a civic banquet on the occasion of the 1867 royal visit.



The flavour was history at the Vice Regal dinner held in the graceful Mortlock Library.



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taken. And in that time there have been severe cutbacks in many departmental libraries, and a few threatened closures, which have been prevented only by last minute lobbying by members of the Branch Executive. Clearly this can't continue, especially with program budgeting and continuing pressure on Government spending compelling departmental managers to examine the value of the services which they are getting.

Only by a concerted effort in promoting the worth of library services can we expect that we will be taken seriously and be able to get on with the job of providing the best information services to our organisations. This concerted effort will be one of the major priorities for the ACT Branch in the next couple of years.



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Cataloguing: it's all Greek to...

One of the most significant developments in library services for many years was launched recently by Technilib. It is the Greek cooperative catalogue project, a newly developed program able to list and describe Greek books in participating libraries.

The program also provides a centralised cataloguing service and links it all to an online computer system which operates in the Greek language and not in the more usual transliterated form. As a result it is now possible to have a computerised Greek language catalogue of holdings of Greek books in libraries throughout Victoria including the State Library of Victoria. Catalogues produced from the system are published on microfiche.

Libraries of different types are now actively participating in the project and new participants are welcome from anywhere in Australia. This catalogue is also available for use by members of the Technilib network, which is a cooperative of public libraries in Victoria.

Doug Savage, Executive Director of Technilib said that as far as it can be determined it is also a world first and in advance of library cataloguing systems available, even in Greece. 'It is also a vital step in providing library services to Victoria's ethnic communities,' he said. 'Greek was chosen as the focus for this work because there was a large Greek-speaking and reading population in Melbourne and there were large holdings of Greek books and other materials in Victorian libraries. 'With the then emerging technologies of data processing and computer output microfiche there was potential to do this in the original form.'

It took more than 3 1/2 years of effort by Technilib to make it possible. The first stages of the work, began much earlier in the late 1970s and was centred around the Carringbush Regional Library, with great support from the then Heidelberg Regional Library. With the close help of the library computer bureau, Libramatic Systems, a cooperative working group put together a batch computer system. The system enabled the entry of

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