

# Book magic in Victoria

from Jane La Scala, State Library of Victoria

**A** HUNDRED librarians, magicians and friends ushered in Australian Library Week in Victoria on Monday 5 October at a double function at the State Library of Victoria. Comedian (and good friend of

libraries) Rod Qantock launched Library Week with its theme of Book Magic, and asked all present to use every effort to influence the decision makers to fund libraries adequately. Then the President of the Council of the State Library, Leigh Masel opened an exhibition

entitled *Masters of Magic* as the State Library's main contribution to the Week.

The exhibition highlights the Library's extraordinary W G Alma Conjuring collection which is the work of Australian magician, Will Alma. It has been built up

over the twenty years since Mr Alma's retirement, and includes books, magazines, photographs, letterheads, business cards, blueprints of illusions, letters, postcards, magic suppliers' catalogues and other magic memorabilia: this is a magicana resource which is unique in Australia.

The function was co-sponsored by ALIA, the Library Promotion Committee of Victoria, and the State Library. ALIA (Vic branch) President Trevor Wakely and LPCV President Sue Noble joined Leigh Masel in welcoming their guests. ■



Master magician, Alexander Herrmann (1843-1896), performing his famous 'Trilby's couch' levitation illusion from *Magic: the great illusions revealed and explained* by David H Charney. (1975)

## ALIA SA Branch celebrates Australian Library Week

*Irene Doskatsch enjoyed the Kiwi wisdom and bush tucker*

**T**HIS YEAR THE South Australian Library Week Committee developed two separate themes: *Book Magic*-aimed primarily at the school and public library sector and *Communication*-aimed at the profession itself.

For the second theme we invited Philip Calvert, a speaker at ALIA '92, to talk on library effectiveness. His paper was based on a survey of New Zealand public libraries, with Rowena Cullen. Philip is a lecturer in the Department of Library and Information Studies at the Victoria University of Wellington, interested particularly on the human factors in library automation.

During a week when we heard much rhetoric about the importance of libraries, it was sobering to be asked:

- what is an effective library?
- how can one recognise an effective library?
- what factors make a library effective?

Calvert argues that in defining library effectiveness, opinions of library users and library funders must be sought. Too often performance measures are established with no apparent reference to the expectations outside of the profession.

His research showed that there is little difference in perceptions of public library effectiveness between

geographical areas, between large public libraries and small public libraries, or between library staff, local government authorities and public library users. However the indicator that was ranked the highest by these three categories of respondents was *helpfulness and courtesy of staff*.

Anyone interested in conducting a similar survey of Australian public libraries? Who knows, you could even present the results at the joint Australian and New Zealand conference, in Wellington in 1994!

After Philip's presentation, we celebrated Australian Library Week with 'bush tucker' at the Red Ochre Grill, accompanied by some very pleasant South Australian wines. ■