

IMPACT

Australian Associated Press Group Newsletter

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Jubilee BBQ for 700

Some 700 people, from toddlers to grandmothers, enjoyed a successful staff barbeque put on by the group companies at Taronga Zoo, above Sydney Harbour, as part of the AAP 50th Jubilee celebrations.

The occasion, on a brilliantly fine day in May, has been praised by many as the biggest and best-organised outdoor party in memory.

Several hundred guests travelled across the harbour by ferry, and some came early enough for the children to visit the zoo on the firm.

Drinks all round, and iceblocks for the youngsters, were on from 11 am, in preparation for spit-roasted lamb and beef followed by fruit salad and pavlova.



Jessie Knight, of AAP finance, settles for lunch from the lap.

Chief organiser, Dawn Willis, and her helpers have been warmly praised for the arrangements which meant what the invitation said: "Just bring yourselves".

Messages of thanks have come from the AJA House Committee, the Field Service Group, the Sales Staff, Data Services, the Engineering Staff and Computer Operations.

For the news staff, Ted Simmons said the venue and the arrangements made for a real family day in pleasant surroundings.



Enjoying a drink before the BBQ (from left): Lee Casey, Leeta Witham, Alan Willis and Russell Arnold.



Lunch is served with the harbour view. In the foreground: AAP sportsmen, Ian Telford and Ted Simmons.

AAP Pictures by VDU

AAP has upgraded the wirephoto service with the latest overseas technology in readiness for a big programme of international news events ahead, and to meet increasing demands on our world and domestic picture exchange services.

The new Swiss Technavia picture storing and editing equipment was in place in the Sussex Street photo room in time for recent major sports coverage, and will be proving its worth again soon under the pressures of the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh, and the America's Cup challenge round.

New technology has brought some amazing progress from the old and long-used methods of storing pictures.

Today's incoming daily file of



Picture people Bruce Baxter, (Supervisor), and Jan Sherwill, (Chief Operator), with the Technavia VDU picture equipment.

Associated Press world news pictures is immediately available on VDU screens for selection and editing.

The Swiss equipment normally stores 32 pictures but can take up to 64 with continuous display on VDU.

Photos can be received and transmitted simultaneously. They can be called up either at random

or in sequence, and there is simultaneous programming of pictures, either to be printed or transmitted.

Incoming overseas pictures arrive fully logged and with descriptive captions, but if these are not needed, editors can replace them with four lines of print wherever they want them around the picture.

TIS Races Away

AAP's new computerised racing information service would be of great benefit to all facets of the industry, Federal Sports Minister, John Brown, said at the official launching.

"I think the service is going to be quite unique, and the fact that all the major racing clubs have decided to take part in it, makes it even more unique," Mr Brown said.

"And it is fully in line with the splendid service that AAP has provided in Australia for such a long time."

The Thoroughbred Information Service, (TIS), will be available at a cost of 1,500 dollars a year through personal computers or desk-top display terminals.

By AAP's satellite and microwave communications, breeders and owners will have access to complete pedigrees on all thoroughbreds, going back 35 generations if required, as well as stallion statistics, fertility rates, nomination fees, sales results and associated information.

The service will rate each of the

350,000 Australian and New Zealand thoroughbreds on file in a system equivalent to England's Timeform ratings.

Punters will have available data on race performances, barrier trials, race results, steward's reports and betting trends and other information that AAP has established through its Formguide system since 1975.

For trainers, the service offers simple and instant access to future race dates, distances, weights and a wide range of other information.

AAP chief executive, Lee Casey said: "The Australian Thoroughbred industry, which quite apart from betting, has an annual turnover estimated to be in excess of 500 million dollars, is in many respects the envy of racing organisations throughout the world.

"We believe it will continue to thrive and, given the right facilities and support, it has the capacity to expand and develop both on the national and international scenes.

"Information is probably the most

important element in the decision making process in virtually all sectors of the industry. There is plenty of it available in Australia, and provided you have the time to wade through reference books, catalogues and the like and can accept that much of it is not up to date, then there is no need for a change.

"However, I am pleased to say that the racing authorities in this country believe that there is need for a change if we are to stay at the forefront in the world of thoroughbreds.

"AAP is joining with the two main official racing information providers in Australia, the Racing Services Bureau, a division of the VRC, and the Australian Stud Book, jointly owned by the AJC and the VRC, to establish what we believe will be the most comprehensive thoroughbred racing information system of its kind in the world.

"AAP is investing in excess of \$4 million to establish this new system in our new \$6 million dollar technical and communications centre in Glebe to provide the information and services necessary for a well managed and efficient thoroughbred industry."

Personality Piece: Trevor Root

*"Life is mostly froth and bubble
Two things stand like stone
Kindness in another's trouble,
Courage in your own."*

Adam Lindsay Gordon

Trevor Root, in his 71st year, was the longest-serving AAP staff member by several years at our 50th anniversary celebrations.

He was the only surviving pre-World War II staffer, and he was with AAP long enough to have two long-service leaves, and to be still on deck in a part-time role in 1986.

It was typical of this kindly, self-effacing man, who was unique to the occasion, that he kept well clear of the flash bulbs and left us not one photo of himself in the dozens taken.



Trevor Root

Nor is there even the faintest self-praise among the notes we asked him to make on his career; just the bare facts as he remembers them.

It sometimes happens that one man's cryptic notes tell more than a filing cabinet of documents, and in Trevor Root's case we learn in a few unembellished sentences the story of AAP's extraordinary growth from a simple one-purpose wire service to a national news agency.

When he joined AAP in August, 1937, at Collins Gate, in Little Collins Street, Melbourne, the staff totalled 8. By January, 1986, when he gave up his part-time work (after retiring in 1977), the group staff was nearing 500.

Trevor remembers there were just two teleprinters in his first

AAP office, and these were soon taken away for war service, along with the male staff, who were replaced by girl typists.

He returned to AAP after the war, and by the time he was running the communications console in AAP's first Sydney headquarters in Wynyard House in the 1970's, there were around 90 teleprinters in the newsroom and dozens more networked around the country.

This supervisory role at the peak of the teleprinter era was the highpoint of Trevor's career, and the time for which he is best remembered.

Old hands can recall a seemingly nerveless and ageless man somehow controlling an endless flood of news, with an iron fist at the console, imperious belling of the interstate offices, and a voice they can still hear piercing the din.

In retrospect, he says, as others know, that he had to live through the bedlam teleprinter days to appreciate fully the marvels of computerised news services and the still unbelievable calm of today's newsroom.

Trevor has no children of his own, but the next best thing, a favourite nephew, Don Lawrence, who has been the pride of his life throughout a distinguished career as golf writer for first the "Age" and then the Melbourne "Herald" for many years.

As Trevor told friends proudly when Jack Nicklaus again won the U.S. Masters Golf recently, it was Don Lawrence who first gave him the name "Golden Bear" 20 years ago.

Trevor had an office farewell in 1977, but before he finally cut adrift this year, his old friends, and some newer ones who wanted to be there, held a luncheon for him.

Company Secretary Brian Carr, next senior in service, spoke of Trevor's enthusiasm for his job, for the credit union, the punting syndicate which he ran for years, bowls, Richmond Aussie Rules Football Club, and even current Australian cricket.

There were also messages from two well-remembered AAP old hands, Norman Macswan, and Alan Ramsey.

Ramsey said, as many others could have: "I have not seen Trevor for 20 years but I have never forgotten him".

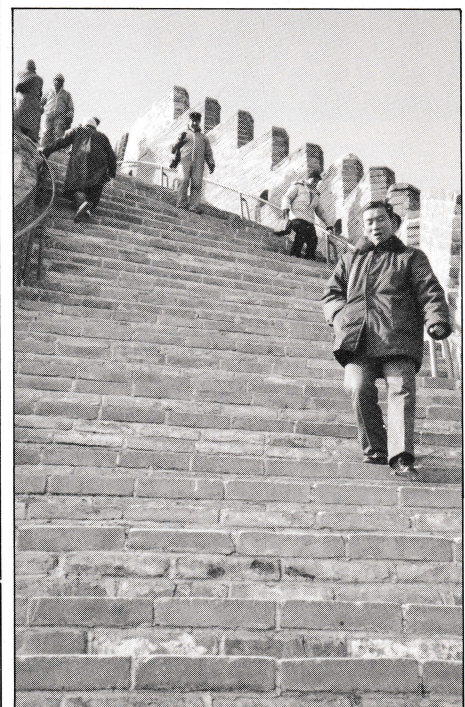
Holidays Away

Some of us stayed at home planting cabbages, or painting the roof, or just sitting in the sun. Others, more adventurous, spent their holidays visiting scenic wonders of the world, as near as New Zealand's South Island, and as distant as China. Here, for winter reflection, are some of their experiences (with more to follow when space permits).

Climbing the Great Wall

Hazel Sproule, a much-travelled lady of the fifth floor at Sussex Street, flew off this time to China to see for herself why, as they claim, the Great Wall is the only man-made structure visible with the naked eye from outer space.

"I guess this was as close an encounter as I will ever have with outer space", she said.



Some of the steepest going on the wall journey.

"We travelled to the wall from Beijing (Peking) to Badaling beyond the Nankou pass. The wall here is seven metres thick, up to eight metres high, and wide enough to allow five horsemen to ride abreast they say.

"The guide tells you there are two ways of approaching the climb, an easy side and a difficult side and each must make his or her choice.

"Began the climb, — the 'difficult side' naturally, — and what a climb, my heart thumping in my ears, but with determination reached my destination, as far as one could go.

"From there looking further along the wall was just rubble but will be repaired someday, or that is the hope.

"The walk along the ramparts begins with a gentle grading then some steps at various intervals and of various heights, some of them incredibly steep (approx 2ft high).

"You have to resort to pulling yourself up along the side railing, (obviously a modern day innovation), for which all tourists must be grateful.

"Finally from the highest battlement, with the wind whistling around the ears, you view the wall



Hazel Sproule as she reached one of the high points on the Great Wall of China.

as it winds into the distance like an immense dragon whose head and tail are invisible.

"The wall was the highlight of the trip for me, apart from most wonderful banquets (organised by Leeta Witham who was also on the same tour).

"They remain a delicious

memory, especially a luncheon at the Fangshan Restaurant in the picturesque Beihai Park, set up in 1925 by the former royal chefs.

"There were recipes from the 19th century imperial court. Food with the most delicate flavours, — a lovely way to enjoy a communist environment!"

Viewing NZ the Easy Way

After 15 years of family holidays on the Gold Coast, Brian and Joy Carr made a break with tradition by flying off alone to New Zealand, and taking a Newmans coach tour of the two main islands.

They went in a mixed party with Canadian and American tourists, but, as two of the only Australians, had to deal with the Kiwis' chacking over the cricket.

From Auckland, they spent four days on the way to Wellington visiting scenic resorts, then flew to Nelson for 10 days among the grandeur of the South Island.

Summing it up, Brian said: "The weather was mixed, but the sun shone brightly on the two days that mattered most — a day spent cruising on Milford Sound and an



Brian and Joy Carr on tour in the New Zealand outback.

afternoon flying in a Cessna over the alps and glaciers.

"The accommodation was first class, meals excellent, and it was a pleasant change to be driven everywhere and to have ample time to take in the magnificent scenery."

The Carrs were sorry there was too little time in Wellington to see

AAP's John Coomber, but in the far south they did speak by phone to former AAP staffer, Ian McCrone, now living in retirement at Lake Wanaka, which Brian called "a serene and beautiful part of what the natives claim with some justification is God's country."