Life at the
XII COMMONWEALTH GAMES VILLAGE

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
Brisbane, 1982
This book has been produced by Griffith University to say "thank you" to all the athletes and team officials who made the University their home; the thousands of volunteers, soldiers, police, University staff and students who made the Village such a success; and to the people of Brisbane without whom the Friendly Games would not have been possible.
I am much honoured to be invited to write a foreword to this book.

The "Commonwealth Games" is a united effort with the Governing Bodies of Sport united in a Commonwealth Games Association in each country, and all united in the Commonwealth Games Federation.

To me, the centre piece of the Commonwealth Games has always been the Games Village itself. For some weeks every four years, athletes from all over the Commonwealth live in pleasant surroundings of mutual friendship, where training and wide-ranging discussion are the order of the day. From these experiences, links are formed that live in the memories of these young athletes for the rest of their lives.

From my own Commonwealth Games experience as a competitor and later as General Manager and Chairman of the Federation, there is no doubt in my mind that Griffith University was the venue of the finest Commonwealth Village one could possibly imagine. The modern efficiency of its buildings set in superb surroundings, and the smiling crispness of the meticulous organisers and their assistants, made it an experience to remember.

The Federation of fifty-seven Commonwealth countries is deeply appreciative and grateful to Griffith University for all that was made available in those momentous days of the 1982 Commonwealth Games.

Sir Alexander Ross
Chairman,
Commonwealth Games Federation
9th October 1982
History and Administration of the Village

In 1974 the Brisbane City Council put forward a proposal that the XII Commonwealth Games be staged in its city. By July 1976 the Commonwealth Games Federation, the international body, had formally accepted the proposal and Brisbane was declared the host city for 1982.

Following that decision, a study team was set up with members drawn from the City Council and both the Queensland and Australian Governments, to produce a report on the facilities the city would need to provide in order to stage the Games.

Several proposals for a Games Village were put forward, including one from Griffith University which, conscious of the needs of its growing student population (as well as those from other institutions nearby) had already been developing plans for its own on-campus accommodation.

Wheels of government bureaucracies do not always turn quickly, and it was not until half way through 1978 that the University's proposal to build the Games Village was finally accepted. Once this agreement was reached, preparations went ahead quickly and in 1979 construction on the Village began.

The Hub complex, containing a dining hall, post office, bank, grocery shop, indoor recreational areas and a coffee shop, was finished in March 1980. Six months later all the proposed accommodation blocks had been completed.

For the next two years (immediately prior to the Games) all these facilities were in use not only by Griffith students and staff but also by students from the Queensland Institute of Technology, TAFE apprentices from country areas undertaking courses in Brisbane and medical staff from the nearby QEII Hospital. They continue to be in use by the same groups today.

In 1981 it became obvious to officials, both within the University and the Games Foundation, that this accommodation would not provide enough rooms for the visitors. The early estimate of 1,600 athletes and officials was revised first to 1,800 and eventually to 2,500!

With this somewhat disturbing realisation, it became a matter of urgency to build more accommodation, and in late 1981 work commenced on School Building 5, or as it was to be known during the Games, the North Residence. Its job was to provide housing for 450 male athletes and officials, and after the Games to be converted to an academic and teaching complex.

It was this building which caused some much publicised unhappiness among a number of Scottish athletes. The problems were eventually overcome, but it highlighted for Foundation officials and University staff involved in its construction, the disadvantages of not knowing the number of team members expected to participate until they actually arrived in Brisbane. Nevertheless, the North Residence, completed in only 40 weeks, provided the only practical solution to the numbers problem and by September 1982, all was in readiness for the first arrivals.
The nerve centre of the Village was the building normally occupied by the University's School of Australian Environmental Studies (A.E.S.). Here the Games Foundation staff, people like Steve Grieve, the Village Mayor and Laurie Devereux, the Manager, Village Division, directed the day to day administration, overseeing a volunteer contingent of 600 men and women.

Also in the A.E.S. building was the Information Centre where athletes were introduced to everything that Brisbane had to offer — from clubs and restaurants to day trips to the Gold Coast. The Media Centre also had its home here and at busy times there was standing room only as dozens of journalists typed up their copy and phoned in their Games stories. Activity never stopped.
Volunteer staff at work

The Media Centre

The A.E.S. building, nerve-centre of the Village
Special mention is due to the police and the army for the many important jobs they performed in setting up the Village and the assistance they provided during its short life.

The police were instrumental in establishing and maintaining security check points throughout the campus. They were always there, unobtrusively supporting volunteer staff from the Foundation, and with a difficult and not always pleasant job, they were always friendly and helpful.
A temporary yard for police horses was set up near the entrance to the Village.

Opposite: A mounted police patrol, a common sight in the Village.
Without the support of the Australian Army's 6th Brigade, stationed in Brisbane, many vital jobs just could not have been completed in the time available. They distributed hundreds of tonnes of stores needed throughout the Village. There were beds to be moved, desks, chairs, typewriters and cupboards to be placed in numerous offices, and last but not least there was the linen! A total of 9,640 sheets were required and sorting and moving them was a mammoth task.

Administration is a word often referred to in derogatory terms, summoning up visions of faceless bureaucrats, but as far as the Village was concerned nothing could have been further from the truth. Volunteers carried out administrative jobs allotted to them with efficiency and goodwill with the sole aim of making the Brisbane Games something everyone would long remember. They did a splendid job.

Men from the Australian Army's 6th Brigade, stationed in Brisbane, sorted and distributed over 9,000 sheets!
Day 1 Arrives and the Village Comes to Life

For weeks beforehand everyone associated with the Village had been working at top speed to make sure all was in readiness for the arrival of the teams. There was a feeling of excitement and not a little anxiety as a thousand last minute jobs had to be finished.

Then on Monday, 20th September at 8.00 a.m. when the coaches pulled up at the Village Circuit and out stepped the first athletes, the campus suddenly came to life. The Village was up and running . . .

The first task for the athletes and officials was to pick up their accreditation. With large, heat-sealed, plastic covered identity cards around each neck it was time to unpack bags, settle into rooms and explore what the Village had to offer.
Every afternoon for the first week a flag raising ceremony was held as official recognition of each team's arrival. And with large crowds on hand, bands playing and the teams' first real opportunity to display their Games' uniforms, the ceremonies were colourful indeed.

For many team members the first day or two was spent quietly recovering from "jet-lag" — not an uncommon problem with the vast distances involved in getting to Australia. (The special flight from London which picked up team members from all over the British Isles took over 38 hours!)

But once over that hurdle, the athletes were back into training and sampling what Village life was all about.

Athletes settle into their rooms
Above: One of the two RAAF bands from Victoria which provided music for the flag raising ceremonies.

Left: Each day a crowd turned up to give the newly arrived teams a big welcome.
Above: The Governor of Queensland, Sir James Ramsay, delivers a welcoming address.

Above right: The Canadian flag is raised.

Right: Flags of the 45 competing countries line the Ring Road into the Village.
Above left: Marjorie Nelson – Australian Women’s Team Manager with mascot

Above: American actor, Charlton Heston, talks to Major Colin Harper, Music Director of the 1st Military District Band, and Sir Edward Williams, Chairman of the Games Foundation

Left: Teams line up as their flags are raised
Daily Life in the Village

From day 1 there was no shortage of entertainment or facilities to make the visitors feel at home.

The University Cinema ran first release feature films, many of them Australian, twice a day to packed houses. In fact they were so popular that a third session was added. Australia’s biggest box office hit, “The Man From Snowy River”, was so successful that by popular request it was shown four times!

One of the highlights of Village life was the constant flow of entertainment provided by courtesy of Festival ’82. Under the University’s huge, yellow canvas canopy, or on the Village lawns, school bands, clowns, mime artists and numerous dancing companies from all over the Commonwealth made a spectacular showing every day. It was really something to look forward to.
Above: Dr. Lloyd’s Fly By Night Medicine Show

Left: The Punjab Theatre from India

Opposite: Drummer from the Sri Lankan National Youth Theatre
A member of the Meke traditional dance group from Fiji lets fly.
Arnold Land Aboriginal group relaxes after a presentation of traditional dances
Above: Te Whanaunui
Maori Song and Dance
group

Left: Members of the
National Dance Theatre of
Nigeria
Above: Athletes were delighted with the koalas, wallabies and cockatoos provided each day for a couple of hours by the Lone Pine Sanctuary.

The Lone Pine Sanctuary brought a variety of Australian animals and birds onto the campus each day for a week and not surprisingly, there was always a long queue of people waiting to have their photos taken with a koala.

Table tennis and snooker were popular ways of relaxing. A number of athletes found it hard to pass up the challenge offered by the giant outdoor chess board, and several were keen to learn the intricacies of throwing a boomerang.
Athletes relaxed with games of snooker, table tennis and chess. They even learned how to throw a boomerang.
Above: The Village Bar

Left: Another barrel rolls out under the watchful eye of Keith Walls, the University's Catering Manager

Opposite: The Wool Shed Disco
For many of the athletes in strict training during the day, the nights were a popular time for relaxing. The Village Bar and the Wool Shed Disco were often crowded — more so as the days passed and increasing numbers of athletes, finished with competition, no longer had to worry about late nights.

The Bar, in fact, was so popular that the final tally revealed that patrons had consumed 12,500 cans of beer and 10,000 litres of draught beer. For those who wish to convert to the old system, 10,000 litres is equal to 122 18 gallon kegs. Wine, spirits and soft drinks were also happily consumed but nothing came near the demand for the local amber fluid.

The Wool Shed Disco, managed every evening by disc jockeys from local rock music station 4BK, was a great hit. There's nothing like hours of disco dancing to relieve the day's tensions, but for some athletes it provided a unique form of training. A couple of boxers were observed dancing the night away, each wearing two heavy tracksuits — a new approach to losing weight and apparently a lot more fun than roadwork.
The ideal weather was irresistible to many athletes and within hours of arriving, the deck chairs on the lawns were well patronised. But it wasn’t long before some team officials had to sound a warning about the strength of the Queensland sun — after all, it’s hard enough competing for your country without the added agony of sunburn.

Throughout the three weeks, the Village was kept up to date with all the latest news and gossip by “The Village Courier”, a daily newspaper written by a team of journalists engaged by the Foundation. It provided a unique coverage of Village life and in many ways helped to establish a positive feeling of community identity.
Above: The daily newspaper, 'The Village Courier', kept everyone up to date with news and gossip.

Right: A mural painted specially by Rolf Harris decorated an entire wall of the Wool Shed Disco.
Above: Food for the athletes and officials was served cafeteria style.

Right: Members of the Nationwide catering team.
With the final count at 2,107 athletes and team officials living in the Village complex, the most difficult and challenging task was providing high quality meals to meet a variety of tastes and diets.

The Foundation felt that many potential problems would be averted if the catering was of a high standard and every effort was made to ensure that this was the case.

As it transpired, the Nationwide catering team did a first class job and not one complaint was received — a great credit to them considering that they served 140,000 meals.

The Foundation staff, volunteers, university personnel, police, army, media officials and a host of other support staff were catered for in a separate dining area. Here the University's catering staff provided another 29,000 meals.
Above: Watching replays of the day's events in one of the video rooms.

Right: Drug testing was carried out in the Medical Centre.

Below: Athletes found peace and quiet in the reading pits.
· Adidas Service Centre
· Meeting Room
· Telecommunications Centre
· Quartermaster
· Social Function Rooms 1 and 2
· Stefan Hairdresser

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Above: The Village Post Office which provided service 7 days a week.

Left: Phoning home from Telecom's Communications Centre.
Stefan's hairdressing salon. Both it and the Telecom Centre showed just what could be done with a chemistry laboratory!

Just a few yards from the athletes' Dining Hall in the Hub was the Village Post Office which provided a service 7 days a week. The major part of its business was in philatelic sales.

The Foundation tried to think of everything to make the athletes' stay happy and relaxed. Telecom provided a communications centre where they could make overseas phone calls and send telegrams and telexes. Queensland's most successful hairdresser, Stefan, provided a salon which operated daily from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. Both these facilities required the conversion of a large chemistry laboratory but who could tell? With a little imagination, a few posters, pot plants and mirrors — hey presto!
Interior of the Village bike shed
An athlete receives specialist attention at the physiotherapy clinic.
Above: The Singer Sewing Centre where alterations and repairs were carried out.

Left: A successful athlete collects his medal from the Village engraving shop.
The Village shop did a brisk business in souvenirs. Souvenirs were among the most eagerly sought after goods for sale at the Village shop and when it came to sewing on badges and buttons and altering and repairing tracksuits, there was the Singer Sewing Centre. There a team of 20 volunteer seamstresses worked around the clock providing a cheerful and efficient service.

So with all the fun of Festival '82, the Wool Shed Disco, the films and the Bar, along with the home visits programme and trips around Brisbane and the Coast, there was little time for the visitors to feel lonely or too homesick.
The Premier of Queensland, Mr. Joh Bjelke-Petersen — one of several important visitors to be given a tour of inspection.
Village Visitors

The Village played host to a number of special visitors. The Premier of Queensland, Mr Joh Bjelke-Petersen, the Australian Prime Minister, Mr Malcolm Fraser, and the New Zealand Prime Minister, Mr Robert Muldoon all spent time looking over the campus and talking to athletes, officials and Foundation staff. American actor, Charlton Heston, in Brisbane to promote his latest movie, dropped by to see the Village at first hand and delighted the crowd with an impromptu speech at the afternoon flag raising ceremony. But the highlight for everyone living and working on campus was the visit by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, and His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Malcolm Fraser, talks to athletes in the Dining Hall during his visit to the Village
The Prime Minister meets the General Manager of the Australian Team, Mr. Jim Barry, and talks with the athletes.

Opposite: American actor, Charlton Heston, receives a warm welcome from Matilda.
The New Zealand Prime Minister, Mr. Robert Muldoon, receives a Maori welcome as he arrives in the Village.
After lunching with the Chancellor of Griffith University, Sir Theodor Bray and Lady Bray, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor John Willett and Mrs Willett and other invited guests, Foundation officials and a number of athletes, the Royal party was given a guided tour of the Village by its Mayor, Steve Grieve. And as on every occasion when the Queen steps into public view, the crowds of onlookers gave her an enthusiastic welcome.
Throughout the Village, the Queen is met by enthusiastic crowds.
The Finale

So many people had given so much time and energy to the Games that in many ways it had become their life.

Staff from the Foundation and from Griffith had worked for up to three years to ensure that everything that was humanly possible was done to make the Village a success. And now it was coming to an end.

The Closing Ceremony at the QEII stadium with the final appearance of Matilda, the exuberance of the athletes and the spectacle of the sky-divers brought with it also a feeling of sadness.

That evening, the Foundation held a farewell party on the warm-up track at QEII stadium and several thousand athletes and volunteers joined together to dance to the music provided by local rock bands.

Not even the predicted torrential downpour which interrupted the celebrations was able to dampen their enthusiasm as people cheerfully raced back along the bush track from the stadium to the Village. And where did hundreds of them go? Where else but to the friendly atmosphere of the Bar and the Disco.

Everyone was soaking wet and steam filled the Bar as wet clothes began to dry out. Yet despite all that and the ridiculous overcrowding as people crammed into what, for the previous three weeks, had been an adequate space, the celebrations continued well into Sunday morning.
Over the next few days the teams packed up until eventually they were all gone.
It was a great experience, an unforgettable three weeks.
Perhaps someday we shall do it all again!