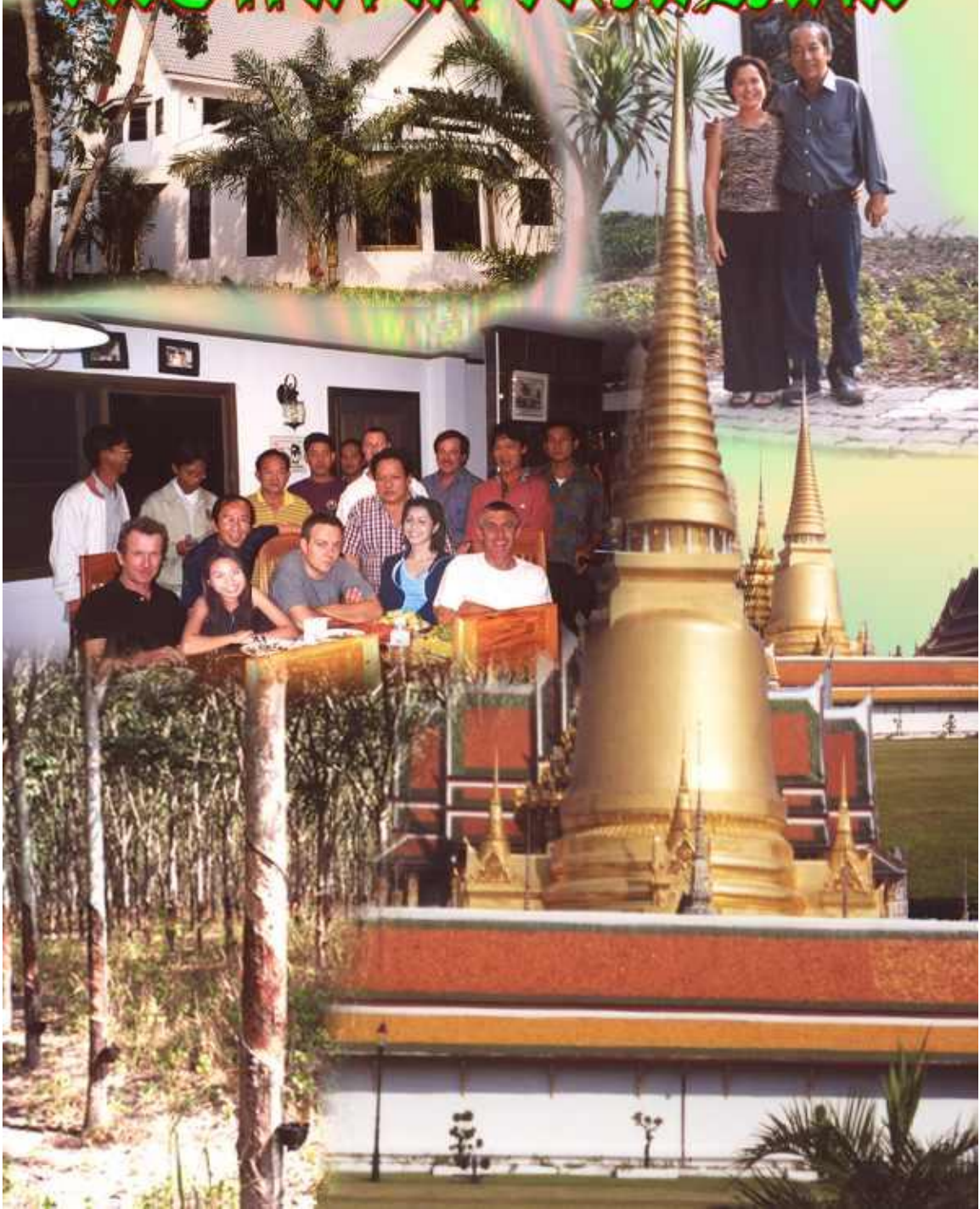


BARRY TREYIN

TREYIN IN THAILAND



Thailand as seen by Barry Trewin (2001)

The trip of a lifetime began when I met the Editor at the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service offices in Melbourne airport on the Wednesday, where he and Dennis Hayes the Chief Veterinary Officer were having a chat about times back in the old country. (They're both Irish you see) Having about 8 hours to kill before our flight, we paid a visit to Keith Veall at his Toorak home and enjoyed some great stories over a meal and possibly a little too much refreshment. The night was too good, as Richard and myself almost missed the flight and held up the departure of Thai International flight 989 by a few minutes. Finally when on the plane for the 9 hour flight to Thailand it was good to be able to discuss pigeon topics and have a good laugh about almost missing the flight (Richard will be certainly entering the next Olympics in the 800 meter car park dash). Your mind is certainly working over time trying to imagine the next week ahead.

We were met at Bangkok airport by Tna Dharmajiva and David Finerty (David is a well-known fancier with the VRPU in Melbourne), the first impressions of Bangkok is how enormous the city is and there is so much happening it is hard to absorb everything. The streets are very busy with vehicles and people, with everyone busy doing something. Firstly we visited the loft of Johnny Supachai and were welcomed by fanciers calling in to meet us. The main difference you notice about Thailand and its people is how when they first meet you they ask if you are well and if you are well fed. They believe in looking after the person first and foremost (something we should take more notice of ourselves.) While Richard stayed with the fanciers at Johnny's, I travelled to visit the Thailand Cup lofts at the Manam hotel. The lofts are located on the 17th Storey rooftop. It is an experience to see the passion and dedication the Thai fanciers have towards their pigeon racing. It is interesting to note the Thailand south East Asia fanciers place importance on the pigeons vent; they feel it plays an important role in the selection of their racing birds.

That night we travelled back to Tna's home where we were shown his magnificent lofts and gardens. He lives approx. 160 km south east of Bangkok. That evening more fanciers from Tna's local Chon Buri and Rayong clubs visited and it was a great evening of discussing pigeons and making new friends. Some Thai fanciers live and breathe pigeons with racing pigeons being the main topic of all conversation. I also met Willi Netzler (a German fancier now living and flying pigeons in Thailand) who I had previously only met through email, so it was good to meet him and his friend Dutchman, Johan van Kleef. Johan is an endurance expert who breeds and races the Van der Wegan pigeons, stamina being his main selection criteria. He has taken top prizes from most of the classic European race points such as Pau etc. He is also a professional pigeon photographer and general bon viveur.

The following day we visited Willi Netzler's loft in Pattaya. His loft is mainly open with wire grid floors. This is due to the temperature and humidity in Thailand. "Dr Willi" makes his own picking stones etc; and the gleam in his eyes when he prepares his grain mix for the race birds is something you need to see to believe. Johan flies some birds in partnership with Willi; this type of partnership is quite common and helps fanciers from around the world to test their birds against the strong competition in Thailand. Johan has achieved some very top class performances at distance racing in Europe. That evening we were taken out by Willi to see the nightlife in Pattaya. I was fortunate enough to play some guitar and sing with a band (something I hadn't done for a few years) in the Winchester club in what was to develop into "Onehelluvanight" The following morning I had the chance to see the basketing at one of the Clubs for the following days race. Here I saw many

birds from different fanciers and as at home, the quality and condition of the birds varied considerably. The following day I had the chance to visit a market near Tna's home, a lot of the Thai cooking is done with seafood and fish oils so there is a very distinct smell at markets and road side stalls. I could smell the aroma of the food places long before I could see them. Seafood plays a big part of the Thai diet as do vegetables and fruit which are both available in abundance. We travelled back to Bangkok where we had the chance to visit some more lofts. There were many different designs, some with 3 storeys and some built on the roofs of tall buildings. Floors ranged from wire, grate, cement and hardwood, but whichever loft we visited they were all immaculate in the cleanliness. The competition in Thailand is very strong and the fanciers put a lot of time into keeping their pigeons in top condition. One loft manager was a chef by night, having only a few hours of sleep and spent his days with the pigeons and even had his accommodation as a part of the loft. He produced 4 bottles of 7 Up which were very welcomed by us all (See Photo Left). The birds were very quiet in all the lofts we visited and on occasion we saw loft boys having to move them out of the way as we walked through the lofts. Quite a number of fanciers (especially those involved in business) employ loft boys to look after the birds and keep the lofts clean. These boys are with the birds all day and keep the floors and perches spotlessly clean. One of the highlights of the trip was a visit to Lookgrok lofts in Bangkok the Thailand long distance champions in 1998, 1999 & 2000. This loft was of a very high standard, with the lofts maintained on the roof of their business premises in Bangkok. The stock sense at this loft is proven by their results and the outstanding quality of the birds we handled, it was an experience in itself, each bird was bred to type and the success of this loft is very evident. Each race bird has his own compartment and is rested. One particular bird "Black Superman" was outstanding, he was able to be called from his perch and also from a kit of flying birds and he has helped to win this loft many thousands of dollars. There will be more written on this bird and his loft mates at a later date, they were superb.

That night we visited the Na Na district of the City and were able to see many different nightclubs, street stalls and restaurants. The streets are always moving with every person having a job to do. Although the wages in Thailand are not very high compared to Australia, the streets were always clean, parking places had security and you begin to notice the fact that the Thai people are not as stressed as us Westerners. The driving of a car is very different with everyone understanding the need for patience, although there were millions of vehicles on the roads, there were very few accidents and no road rage! Once again I had the chance to play some guitar this time in a Blues Band at The Warbler Pub made up from guys from all over the World and run by a couple of American Viet Nam vets.

In order to satisfy the Editors seemingly endless hunger for information on anything and everything, the following day we visited the Wat Phra Kaeo Temple in Bangkok. It to see the work and detail that has been carried out in the construction of these buildings. Work was ongoing on the famous Reclining Buddha which was really breathtaking. We then took a boat ride on the river and finally partook of a traditional Thai massage which was very good and badly needed! Massage plays an important role in the Thai custom and maybe this is why they are so relaxed and never seemed to get upset. The following day Richard and I travelled to Chon Buri to visit Surinthorn, Jamnong and Israwat. Surin and his friends won this year Mallee Classic with a bird bred by Joe Denaro of Melbourne. Their lofts were of excellent design and were a credit to these 3 fanciers. There will be a loft report of these good friends in the next journal. They treated us to some exceptional hospitality and the friendships formed will last forever. The night before we left Thailand we visited Chan Chailertvanitkul in Chon Buri and were once again able to see some top class pigeons and as seems to be the usual custom, we were treated to a great meal on the seashore.

The spicy food in Thailand was something I was not quite accustomed too, but maybe if McDonalds will introduce a Thai section, I can get used to the food before my next trip. I also forgot to take my Wheaties, maybe next time. I will never forget the hospitality and respect of the Thai people and I can see why many visitors to the country end up staying. I left with mixed emotions but the friends and memories will stay with me forever.

Before I go, I learned a short Thai proverb which is most appropriate in the Pigeon Sport and in many other walks of life. "Those who can't dance blame it on the flute and drum".

Thailand the “Land of Lifestyle”

By Barry Trewin

Again, I have had the pleasure to visit Thailand, the land of smiling faces.

I had two reasons for my visit, one was to visit some old friends and also to see some great Pigeon Lofts. Since my last visit I have expressed a great admiration towards my Thai friends who had previously showed me hospitality that I would never forget.

I boarded the Thai International flight in Melbourne on Thursday 13th October as I headed off on a 10 day experience of a life time. I am convinced that Thailand is not only a beautiful country, but the lifestyle is something that cannot be put into words. I suggest and encourage, people from around the world to experience this for themselves, they can feel free to contact me for any queries they might have. The heat is very different to the cold and windy Ballarat where I reside, but coming originally from the drier Mallee region in Victoria, I was actually enjoying every minute of the warmer conditions.

I again spent time in Bangkok, this time in the Bangrak district, also visiting Rayong, Chon Buri and Pattaya. I spent the first few days in Bangkok. I visited the Patporn market and many other sites on Friday and Saturday, after which I had the opportunity on the Sunday night to meet Sornthep Gomutputra, Vice Chairman of the Thai Racing Pigeon Federation. I had previously only corresponded with Sornthep via email after he had sent an article for our website, regarding a handicap system for pigeon racing. This subject has always intrigued me, especially given that only two months earlier, I had written a very similar article on the same subject. I eagerly made contact with Sornthep and we discussed our articles, and on meeting him in Bangkok, I was amazed that the two of us, from different parts of the world, had the very same thoughts and that both of us had been making efforts to encourage other fanciers to open their minds to new possibilities which can enhance pigeon racing and attract new members to the sport.



Barry and Sornthep

Over a very nice meal, we talked and discussed many ideas regarding pigeon racing in both Australia and Thailand. As a result of our discussions about reciprocal arrangements between Thailand and Australia, I will be obtaining more articles from Sornthep in the future, which will be an asset to have on our website and the soon to be released internet pigeon magazine. These articles should be for all pigeon fanciers from around the world to read, to get a better insight into pigeon racing in Thailand.

On Monday, I headed towards Rayong to meet my good friend Tna Dharmajiva, who conducts the Thai International One Loft Event on his property. We discussed the viability of the Mallee Classic becoming involved in the Thai International event. Tna's property is like a tropical paradise, beautiful palms, trees and scenery with views of the nearby lake and surrounding pineapple plantations. In the middle of the property, is the magnificent loft for housing the International birds for the One Loft Event. Facilities are excellent and with the acreage around the property, this is an ideal place to conduct an International One Loft Event! Over the next four days, Tna and I had many discussions regarding the management of the event and the involvement of the Mallee Classic with the Thai event, including the "Friendship Cup" which is part the Australian Mallee Classic.

We were also able to meet up with Chan Chailertvanitkul on Tuesday night for another night out. Chan is another Thai fancier whom I had previously met. Once again, I enjoyed discussing different aspects of pigeon racing with him. On the Wednesday we returned to Bangkok with Tna and later that day we had the pleasure of visiting the Royal Bangkok Sports Club. After a fantastic meal I was encouraged to play guitar and sing a few songs for the patrons. Having previously been a professional musician, I haven't played seriously for close to ten years, but I still love to play the guitar and sing a few songs. I was having a very enjoyable time there, but the night was not yet over! After leaving the Royal Bangkok Sporting Club, Tna suggested we visit another club, The Tami Club in the Japanese district in Bangkok, only this time I was to spend a couple of hours

with the band. The Thai people are a very joyful, they love to live life and this shows by their participation when there is music playing.



Chan, Tna and Families



Tna, Barry and Chan

After a fantastic night, I got to experience the Bangkok traffic first hand as a driver, unfortunately for me I took a couple of wrong exits and what should have been a two hour drive turned into three, so what an eventful night for all. Close to Tna's property is the Dok Krai Lakeside Resort, which overlooks the magnificent Haui Dok Krai Lake. They have quite comfortable facilities there,

where visiting fanciers from around the world can stay and only a short distance from the Thai International Loft.



Dok Krai Lakeside Resort

The next night we were able to catch up with an old acquaintance, Willi Netzer, whom I originally met via the internet and on my previous visit to Thailand. We had an outstanding meal at Anton's German Restaurant in Pattaya; this was one of the best restaurants that I have been to in Thailand, a credit to the owner and staff and well worth the visit if anyone is visiting that area. It was good to discuss many different things since we had last met. Willi has a horse trail riding business for tourists and visitors alike. We found that we had quite a few common interests in other facets of life and business, so it was good to sit and talk with Willi and others to catch up on different points of view.



Tna and Willi (Anton's Restaurant)

The following day we experienced even more great hospitality from our fine host Tna Dharmajiva at his house with more friends visiting, another great meal and fantastic conversation. In the afternoon I headed back to Bangkok where we met up with friends and after dining on even more of the superb Thai fare in Bangkok, we again headed back to the Tami club, for I had not had enough of the music of a couple of nights previously. I do miss the music scene, so this was another most enjoyable night singing and playing guitar with the band Thai-jin. These guys could play most music that I would regard as the old classic's (from my era anyway) Rolling Stones, Status Quo and the Eagles. I thank these guys for their time and music ability while I was with them and I look forward to spending more time in Thailand and perhaps doing quite a bit of playing and singing with these guys in the future.





Fanciers at the Bangkok Racing Pigeon Club

Saturday saw us visiting the big markets again, bargains were everywhere! That evening we attended the Bangkok Racing Pigeon Club and had the chance to discuss more pigeon topics. I was able to see their transporter, clock room, and meet the various fanciers in attendance. I wanted to also catch up with another top fancier Teerapol Techavichian from the famous Lookgok Lofts, but unfortunately we missed each other, but we have made definite plans to catch up with each other early next year in March, when I visit Thailand again. After the Club visit, Sornthep invited us out to a Chinese restaurant to join some of the Thai fanciers, which was another good night spent discussing many topics and not just pigeons. I thank Sornthep Gomutputra for his time and hospitality while I was in Bangkok.

Sunday was my last day in Thailand and I really did not wish to leave, before flying out on the Sunday evening. I had a chance to phone my various hosts before leaving, to thank them for their hospitality.

The lifestyle in this country of paradise is outstanding, and I am very happy to be involved in some major developments for pigeon racing which will give me a further chance to make new friends and contacts from all around the world.

I was most impressed with the phenomenal development of industry and commerce since my last visit. The country is moving forward in many ways that other countries should learn from. I am pleased to be now more involved in the promotion of this wonderful country, people and pigeon racing, and I am thankful that I have made so many good friends.

If anybody has any queries about the Thai International One Loft Event or about pigeon racing in Thailand, please feel free to contact me via my email.

