



## SUPPORT JERSEY!

The Jersey team wants your messages of support while they're in Melbourne. It could just spur them on to a medal! So here's the address to send them your good luck messages:

Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Village,  
(Name of person),  
Jersey Commonwealth Games Team,  
GPO Box 5835,  
Melbourne,  
Victoria 3001,  
Australia

Tel no. 61 (0) 3 88557010



# And they're off!

**Jersey's Commonwealth Games squad is flying out to Melbourne for the sporting trip of a lifetime. 24SE7EN's Martyn White, who is joining them in Australia, finds out if they're ready**

**E**xcitement is mounting for Jersey's Commonwealth Games team. With the Games just weeks away, a nervous tension surrounded the group as they gathered for the official reception at Government House recently.

Looking resplendent in their red 'Team Jersey' blazers, the atmosphere was akin to sprinters anxiously waiting in the blocks for the sound of the starter pistol.

The XVIII Commonwealth Games begin on 15 March, but for 10 days beforehand the team members will be busy acclimatising to the conditions in Melbourne. And they can't wait to get there!

Some already know what to expect. Members of the shooting team flew out early to compete in a pre-Games competition, swimmer Dan Halksworth and athlete Lauren Therin were in the area for the Commonwealth Youth Games last year, while triathletes Paul Clements and Scott Pitcher have been competing in Australia for the past few months.

Preparations for the triathlon team have been fraught with mishaps though. Experienced triathlete Tim Rogers broke his wrist in a freak training accident when a dog knocked him off his bike recently. Scott Pitcher received 18 stitches after also falling off his bike, whilst team-mate Paul Clements contracted a virus that forced him to miss training.

Scott and Paul have recovered, but it's still not known whether Tim will be fit enough to participate in the triathlon on 18 March.

Preparations have gone well for the nine other teams representing the island. The all-

conquering badminton squad beat Guernsey to maintain their two-year unbeaten record. They were also elated to learn that England No. 2 singles player, Elizabeth Cann, would be representing the island after she narrowly missed out on England selection. England's loss is certainly Jersey's gain.

Sharp shooter David Turner, air rifle gold medallist at the Shetland Island Games, came back with a trophy from the British Open Championships in Bisley.

With the men's bowls team also performing admirably at the British Isles indoor championships in Llanelli, it bodes well for the island's medal chances in Melbourne.

Yet the behind-the-scenes arrangements haven't gone quite as smoothly, says Paul Huddleston. As the general team manager his job is to prepare the 35 team members and numerous officials for their arrival in Australia. But he revealed it hasn't been an easy task.

The tragic death of 45-year-old cycling team manager, Tony Richomme, who sadly died of a double stroke recently, deeply affected the team. Everyone was downcast and preparations were brought to a standstill, admits Paul.

"It was a huge shock to everyone. It is a big loss to the team and our thoughts go out to his family," he says, adding that Toby Aubert, president of Jersey's Velo Sport Cycling club, has stepped in.

Association secretary Alan Cross adds: "Both Sam Firby, the cyclist, and Toby Aubert will be highly motivated to ensure that Jersey cycling is represented at its highest level in Melbourne as a

tribute to Tony Richomme.”

It puts Paul’s organisational problems into perspective, but it hasn’t stopped him worrying about everything from accommodation and insurance to uniforms and drug testing.

“It has definitely been busier than I thought it would be,” he declares. “I’ve taken a sabbatical from work for the

village being over-subscribed and, unfortunately, we will just have to wait and see,” says Paul, his frustration evident.

It’s at the top of his priority list when he arrives in Melbourne a week ahead of the team, if he can overcome the difficulties of arranging adequate insurance for the team first that is!

Add to this the logistical nightmare of getting blazers, shoes, tracksuits and other items of uniform to the correct people and you’d be forgiven for thinking that Paul had endured enough. Far from it.

“Even though I’ve still got a few things to sort out while I’m in Melbourne, I’m really looking forward

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past couple of months to get everything finalised. My wife thought I’d be available to do chores around the house; she certainly didn’t expect me to be working day and night to sort out some of the things that have arisen.”

His biggest bugbear, and one that has yet to be fully resolved, is the accommodation for the 4,500 athletes in the Games village. The bigger teams are notified of their housing allocation first, leaving the smaller nations in limbo.

“Basically, at this time I have no idea if we have been allocated enough places. There is a situation with the

“This is mainly because of the guns and ammunition we have to take,” he explains. “It’s nonsense really. The guns will be sealed and the ammunition is in a totally separate place. But airlines have strict guidelines and restrictions in place and we have to adhere to this.”

UK Sport also secretly visited the island to drug test the squad, which added to his worries. Although the team is well aware of the drug testing requirements, they will have to wait weeks for the results and may not even hear at all. “Well, no news is good news, I suppose,” shrugs Paul.

to going out there now and experiencing the atmosphere of the Games first hand as team manager,” says Paul.

Jersey’s Chef de Mission and President of the island’s Commonwealth Games Association, Martin Hebden, sums up the mood in the camp. He says: “The team is as well prepared and well supported as it can be; now all that remains is for the athletes to go out and grasp the opportunity of a lifetime.”

Medals could be won by some of our athletes in Melbourne, but maybe Paul Huddleston and his team of officials deserve a medal too!