



VJ-Day/
AGM at
NMA



Navy rebuilds
Memorial



Arie at
Plymouth
service



Java
Cabinet
returns

COFEPOW Quarterly is a review magazine, informing members of events and opinions expressed over a three-month period. Please visit the COFEPOW website at www.cofepow.org.uk and our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/cofepow for regular updates.

CoFEPOW Quarterly

The official newsletter of the Children, Families and Friends of the Far East Prisoners of War and FEPOW Associations • Issue 103 • October 2023

80 years to the day since Thai Railway hell ended

Rutland 'Rocks by Rail' Museum to mark date on 17th October

On 17th October 1943, in the jungles of Siam - now Thailand - surviving Allied POWs dropped their primitive and often make-shift tools, as their years of slavery building the Thai/Burma 'Death Railway' came to an end.

As the Japanese congratulated themselves on the completion of construction, the Servicemen held captive knew only too well of the high price in human sacrifice, misery and deprivation, that was paid at the hands of their ruthless enemy. With medicine often withheld by their captors, nearly 13,000 Servicemen perished, together with some 100,000 native workers. For those who survived, it would be another two years of hell before, if you were lucky, you came home.

This October sees the 80th year since construction work was completed. In honour of these bravemen, the volunteer-run 'Rocks by Rail' Museum at Cottesmore is to hold a special commemorative event around the FEPOW memorial steam locomotive 'Singapore', to remember those Allied POWs and natives who suffered and those who died building the line.

"We hope people never forget, future generations never forget, what happened here."

Terry Manttan - Thai/Burma Railway Museum

The museum wishes, therefore, to invite COFEPOW members and families to attend a memorial event, which will take place on **Tuesday 17th October 2023, at the Living Ironstone Museum, Cottesmore, Rutland LE15 7FF commencing at 11.30am. The museum will open to visitors from 10.00am. To book a place(s) at the event, please email curator@rocks-by-rail.org**

The infamous, 250-mile railway ran through inhospitable jungle and had to traverse hills, valleys and rivers en-route. Over 150 million cubic feet of earth and rock was moved by hand, involving some 60,000 Allied prisoners of war and 200,000 native workers. Disease, malnutrition, injury (from beatings and accidents) and death was commonplace.

As is well-known, sections of the railway claimed a life lost for every sleeper laid and consequently the project became known as the 'Death Railway'.

For details of the marking of this major date in the Far-East theatre of war, please see page 5 of this newsletter.



Patron Terry is knighted

COFEPOW Patron Terry Waite has been appointed Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George (KCMG) for his services to charity.

Sir Terry, who is 84 and lives in Suffolk, described being recognised in the King's first Birthday Honours as one of his life's "peak" achievements. For many, he is remembered for travelling as a humanitarian envoy to Beirut in 1987, attempting to secure the release of four hostages, only to be kidnapped himself by militants and held captive for almost five years. Kept in solitary confinement, he was blindfolded when anybody came into the room and faced beatings and a mock execution.

He continues today to work supporting the families of others taken captive and has long been an active patron of the COFEPOW charity, attending as many commemorative services as his still busy schedule allows. On behalf of all members, the trustees offer their sincere congratulations to Sir Terry, on the award of this significant honour.



Chair's Notes

“ One weekend in mid-September, I attended the Northamptonshire Heritage Forum, with three other COFEPOW members.

This is an annual event where many organisations in the county get together to introduce themselves to the public and to network with each other, to forge links, find common interests and explore opportunities to present ourselves to these groups.

To support these events, the charity has developed a new leaflet to distribute to interested parties, which gives a brief synopsis of what COFEPOW is and does, and provides a short history of the development of the charity.

In our quest to spread the knowledge of what happened in the Far-East during the Second World War, we should seek to engage with everyone we can to ensure that the memory of what happened is not forgotten. There are so many people that are barely aware of the Far-East theatre, and the fact that so much of World War Two was centred on the other side of the world. It would be good if as many members as possible, therefore, could attend events such as the one in Northamptonshire, and fly the flag for the charity.

On the 27th November this year, for example, I will be at the Duchess Theatre in Long Eaton, Derbyshire, to see the play 'Letters of Hope' and present a short talk to the audience afterwards on the charity's work.

The play recounts the work of Hope Robinson, who wrote letters to the newspapers in 1941 to 45, in a quest to bring hope and comfort to many people in Britain who were worried about their FEPOW loved ones. The event also supports 'Combatstress', which cares for Servicemen with PTSD. Entry is just £5.00.

As this is the last newsletter before Christmas, may I offer you my compliments of the coming season and wish you all a happy and healthy new year.

David Brede
COFEPOW Chair.



Prevailing conditions affect attendance at...



Trustee and current National Events Co-ordinator, Chris Wills, reports on the VJ-Day commemoration service and the COFEPOW AGM, held at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, in Staffordshire on August 13th...

"The trustees were concerned that a combination of circumstances and events may have contributed to a reduction in members able to attend the annual AGM and subsequent VJ-Day Commemoration Service this year. As it turned out, an encouraging number of members did manage to make it, but it was plain to all that influences such as the current cost-of-living crisis had applied downward pressure on available funds for members to spend, if travelling from any distance. The hugely unpredictable weather this summer also played its part, and lingering uncertainty about new and more virulent strains of the Covid infection remain in the air. Attendance is always affected, of course, by the timing of the service in the middle of the peak holiday season across the country. It's also important to remind ourselves of the ever-poignant fact that fewer of our FEPOWs now remain, which naturally has an affect on continuing attendance.

"One excellent addition to the proceedings, however, was the assurance that the meeting would not be affected by last year's soaring heatwave, at its height on VJ-Day 2022.

"The AGM, held again in the Aspects Conference Suite in the National

Memorial Arboretum, covered all the various activities and changes during the year, with merchandise and books on sale during the day. A comprehensive report of the Minutes is included in this newsletter, alongside a full financial synopsis for the preceding year.

"Following the AGM, members ambled along to the FEPOW Memorial Building and Grove, for the annual VJ-Day Service and wreath-laying. The Commemoration, as in the past, was led by COFEPOW Patron and Padre, David Childs CBE. After the wreaths were laid, everyone paraded back to the Aspects Suite, where the VJ-Day Service took place.



Carrying the COFEPOW Standard was COFEPOW trustee and Treasurer, David Brown, pictured on the next page, alongside bugler Antonio Socci.

"The trustees would like to thank all those that made the journey and participated in the day. And whilst we started with plenty of rain and drizzle, by the time we got to the wreath-laying, it was dry and we were able to pay our respects to our FEPOWs, making sure, for all of us, they will not be forgotten."

Chris Wills

...the annual AGM/VJ-Day service at NMA

.....Continued from previous page.



Remembrance Day Service and Parade Whitehall, 2023

COFEPOW asked the Royal British Legion for tickets to the Cenotaph Service and Parade in Whitehall, for Sunday November 12th., now that the situation regarding Covid allows for a resumption of near-normality.

Acknowledgement of our application has been received from the RBL, and a diary of events so far is as follows:

5th May - All association ticket requests were submitted. Any requests received after this deadline were not be accepted.

25th May - RBL confirmed 2023 ticket allocation to each association.

25th August - Deadline for when associations had to complete individual participant information.

We are expecting to receive further instructions from the Remembrance Events Team as follows:

30th-31st October - Registration closes. E-tickets and instructions sent to individuals.

For those who registered interest by the 20th April, David Brede, COFEPOW Chair, will respond to you in due course. His address is 3, Blossom Way, Little Billing, Northamptonshire NN3 9ET, email is at cofepow.chairman@gmail.com and phone number is 07930 960241.

Please be aware that:

- Those who applied to attend and are successful in obtaining allocated tickets are advised that they must be on Whitehall by 9.00am: extra time is needed to go through security so it is an early start on what could be a cold and wet morning.
- There is a great deal of standing about from assembly, through the 11.00 Silence and Service and until the final march-off. The parade is dismissed at about 12.45.
- Once COFEPOW tickets are allocated, personal details are submitted to the RBL for security. Tickets are strictly non-transferable as they are issued to people by name and proof of ID will be required.

Remembrance Sunday, NMA November 12th, 2023

Following the last couple of years, where attendances at the FEPOW Memorial Building at the NMA have been hampered by Covid, we will be organising a normal wreath-laying on the 12th November, 2023, offered alongside the Cenotaph Parade in London.

We will meet at 10.15 a.m., in readiness for when the general Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffs., commences at 10.30 a.m.

When this Service ends, we will parade to the nearby FEPOW Memorial Building and Grove to lay our wreaths, after which, if you wish, you can rejoin the main body of the congregation at the end of one of the walks to take part in the march-past and salute back nearer to the entrance of the main NMA building.

The COFEPOW trustees are hopeful more members will be encouraged to attend, following the removal of almost all government regulations after the pandemic which have severely restricted the charity's ability to conduct these important memorial services.

If you are interested in attending any or all of the Remembrance Service/Parade, please contact **Chris Wills** by phone on 0121 244 7263, or by email at chriswills@blueyonder.co.uk

COFEPOW Quarterly is available either as a printed multi-page A4 magazine, or as a PDF, emailed to your online address.

Published in January, April, July and October, it is edited and assembled by Chris Wills and Steve Riley, who are keen to receive all material from members, to contribute towards the content of the newsletter.

Please send all photographs, illustrations, articles, notices and event information to either: chriswills5071@gmail.com or sriley.beeches@btinternet.com Thank you.



COFEPOW and the Royal British Legion commemorate VJ-Day in Nairn in the Highlands.

Jane Stuart, a member of COFEPOW and the Royal British Legion, arranged a short Service and wreath-laying at the Nairn War Memorial to commemorate the 78th Anniversary of VJ-Day, when Japan surrendered and brought the Second World War to an end after six years of fighting.

Reverend Tommy

Bryson conducted the Service and wreaths were laid on behalf of FEPOW and Children of Far-East Prisoners of War (COFEPOW) by Kirsteen Forbes and Carol Huggins. Jane Stuart read the FEPOW prayer.

For information, the wreath photographs include on the left, the names of those on the War Memorial who lost



Organiser
Jane Stuart

their lives in the Far-East, and on the right, the FEPOW Prayer. The Nairn & District War Memorial received a grading of 'Very Highly Commended' and a date is awaited for final judging for the 'Champion of Champions' award.



The editors of COFEPOW Quarterly wish to clarify that the opinions, stories, features and information reproduced in this newsletter are generally submitted by contributors and do not reflect or otherwise, the opinions of the trustees of the charity. Whilst every effort is made to verify factual accuracy and content of material published, the trustees accept no responsibility for errors or beliefs printed here.



VJ-Day and Plymouth remembers

Lisa De-Lar reports on the two commemorative services held during August in the south-west...

"On a hot and humid day in Plymouth, VJ-Day was remembered firstly on Sunday 13th August, with a service held in the Minster Church of St. Andrew, led by Mac Forsyth and attended by FEPOW families. Also present was the Deputy Lieutenant of Devon, Brigadier Simon Young CBE and wife Sarah, the Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Cllr Mark Shayer, WO1 Steve Harvey RN, WO1 (RSM) Neil Clark RA, Major 'Spider' Webb RM and the candle-bearers from the Royal Navy at HMS Drake, with Royal Marines from 42 Cdo RM Bickleigh, Army RA from the Royal Citadel and the RAF from JHGSW (Joint Hospital Group South West – Freedom of The City 2023).



"Betty, daughter of HMS Prince of Wales survivor, George Whitman (RM), and Mo, granddaughter of HMS Repulse's Byron Eden (RN), who is sadly buried in Jakarta Cemetery, carried the wreath ahead of the procession and placed it on the alter table to start the service.

"Members of the serving Armed Forces who had given up their summer leave to take part were very much appreciated by us all.

"For the Act of Remembrance, candles were placed on the alter table, by Arie den Hollander, our child civilian internee, and by members of all the

Armed Forces, including the medical profession, represented by JHGSW. Arie was accompanied either side by a member of the RAF Cadets, as Arie's father was a Dutch pilot.

"A DVD showing photos of the military and civilians in the Far-East with accompanying music, was thought-provoking and appreciated by all. The service was watched by the Lord Mayor of Plymouth, himself an ex-Royal Navy veteran.

"Once the service was completed, we joined together at the Rowan Tree of Peace, where Brigadier Simon Young CBE laid the VJ -Day wreath and took the salute. Invited guests then made their way to the 'Treasury' bar and restaurant for the reception, where an afternoon tea was very much appreciated. A huge thank you to the 'Treasury' for hosting FEPOW Plymouth for the last 20 years - a great support to us.

Thanks also go out to the Standard Bearers who represented the RN, RM, Army, RAF, MN and RFA, under Parade Marshall Jerry, and Peter who set the candle-bearers off down the aisle to the song "I'll Remember You" by the D-Day Darlings - very fitting words for the occasion. A military bugler played the Last Post and Reveille. Everyone in attendance was a huge support.

VJ-Day – Tuesday 15th August

The official day of VJ-Day saw the FEPOW families return to the Rowan Tree of Peace, where tributes were laid and the FEPOW prayer spoken.

We would like to thank everyone who attended both of the Services and although it was hot, we kept in our hearts and thoughts what our families went through in the Far-East. We look forward to seeing our FEPOW families and guests at the Rowan Tree of Peace on Remembrance Sunday at 3.00pm.

Lisa



'Picture: Rutland and Stamford Mercury.

'Rocks by Rail'



The Living Ironstone Museum

'We Will Remember Them' Tuesday 17 October 2023

As announced on the front cover of this newsletter, the 'Rocks by Rail' museum will be holding a special event to mark the 80th anniversary since the completion of the Thai/Burma 'Death Railway' in October 1943. We will be joined by the Lord Lieutenant of Rutland, the High Sheriff of Rutland and local council leaders.

The museum would like to extend an invitation to all COFEPOW members and their families to attend our Special Remembrance Service on that day, which will take place alongside the steam locomotive 'SINGAPORE', captured by the Japanese at the Fall of Singapore in 1942. The engine worked alongside thousands of Allied POWs, and was eventually brought back to the UK to form part of a FEPOW Memorial at the Living Ironstone Museum. During the commemoration there will be an opportunity to lay a white orchid below the memorial plates on the locomotive.

For further information and details of the location, please contact:
'Rocks by Rail': the Living Ironstone Museum, Cottesmore Iron Ore Mines Siding, Ashwell Road, Cottesmore, Oakham, Rutland LE15 7FF.
www.rocksbyrail.org Tel: 01572 868415
email: curator@rocks-by-rail.org



Jacquelyn Frith-Crofts BSc MPhil FRGS PhD Archaeology, is in the final year of her PhD research on the Thousand Men of Liang, the FEPOWs of Ambon Island. Jacqueline's book, 'Unwritten Letters to Spring Street', about the Suez Maru atrocity, was published in 2020. She is also involved in the Suez Maru Family Research Group - a Facebook group for the Suez Maru victims' families.

Her article expands on arrangements about an important forthcoming anniversary, as listed briefly in the July newsletter....

"Plans have now been finalised to mark the 80th Anniversary of the sinking of the hell-ship, Suez Maru, and the subsequent untried war crime. A Service will take place on the 29th November, 2023, starting at 1.30 pm., at the Suez Maru Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffs.

"The heart of the day will simply be 'remembrance', putting aside for this day, the lack of apology for what was the worst untried war crime of the Second World War. We plan to mark the ten years since the families of the victims of the Suez Maru built the Memorial, with a commemoration befitting the great sacrifice our men made, 80 years ago. Although it has been a complicated event to put together, I hope, on the day, it will be a quite simple, yet symbolic

'A Tide of Poppies'

Marking the 80th Anniversary of the Suez Maru atrocity

show of our enduring remembrance of these 414 British servicemen.

"The Hell-ship Garden was created around the Suez Maru Memorial (left) a few years later, and the rough sketch (below) shows how the garden will look. Around the Memorial will lie a 'tide of poppy crosses' to reflect witness reports that 'long lines of POWs in the sea' were formed by the men as they floated, awaiting rescue from the mine-sweeper 'W12.' The ship approached but saved only Japanese survivors. The POWs in the water were all shot. I believe

the 'Tide of Poppies' will also show more clearly the significant numbers of British men involved. The image (below right) shows a 'sample' poppy cross, as I will write the name of each of the 414 men on these crosses. Hundreds of these will be

laid out in the early morning, and then, as part of the Service, each family will lay their poppy cross in the 'tide' instead of placing a wreath. We will also be reading out loud each of the 414 men's names who were lost on the Suez Maru. I think it will be most poignant and fitting for the 80th anniversary.

Suez Maru Memorial 80th Anniversary - fund-raiser

"The fund-raising for the poppy crosses has gone very well. Even though I don't have a contact for every one of the 414 Suez Maru families, every one I know is donating for their family. Although we are approaching our target, the crosses are £2.70 each and we would welcome any further donations.

"Anyone who would like to attend would also be most welcome. Please contact Jacquelyn for appeal/Service details, or see the page on

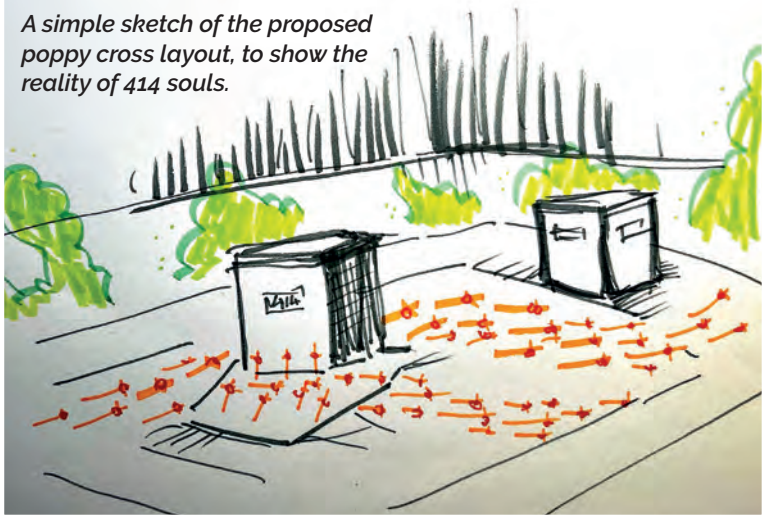
PayPal Fundraisers at <https://www.paypal.com/pools/c/8V8YoduoWt>

The memorial is located at the National Memorial Arboretum, Croxall Road, Nr. Alrewas, Staffordshire, DE13 7AR. www.TheNMA.org.uk

Please email jacqfrith@mac.com or see the Suez Maru Facebook page, facebook.com/suezmaru or search for @SuezMaru.

LIANG MARCHERS - "I have also made a new Facebook page for the 'Thousand Men of Liang', also known as the 'Liang Marchers', who are the subject of my

A simple sketch of the proposed poppy cross layout, to show the reality of 414 souls.



current PhD thesis.

"There, I hope to share my research, listen to other family stories, and also remember these brave men. Please contact me if you had a relative transported to Ambon in Spring 1943, or search Facebook for @1000menofLiang (the page is new, so not much has been added just yet).

For more information, email Jacquelyn at Jacqfrith@mac.com or visit her website or see the Facebook group - www.unwrittenletterstospringstreet.co.uk www.facebook.com/suezmaru

Jacquelyn Frith-Crofts
October 2023



VJ-Day 2023 with the Lanarkshire Yeomanry Group



VJ-Day, Sunday 13th August.

On 13th August, the first of the VJ-Day commemoration services was held at the Lanarkshire Yeomanry Memorial, situated in Belhaven Park, Wishaw. The same Service content was also used at the Carluke Memorial.

The Lanarkshire Yeomanry wreath was laid by Anne Carnochan, great niece of Gnr. Andy Carmichael of the 155th. Anne and her husband, Jim, had made the long journey from Dumfries to be present at the Service and are photographed above.

The service included the following readings:

*"Bent double,
like old beggars under sacks;
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags
we cursed through sludge;
Till on the haunting flares
we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest
began to trudge.
Men marched asleep.
Many had lost their boots
but limped on.
Some went lame, some blind.
Drunk with fatigue, deaf even to
the shrieks of the guards.
"Speedo! Speedo"
Death crept towards them
and they welcomed Him
As gently and slowly
their lives drifted away.
And they felt the relief of eternal rest."*

Adapted from Dulce et Decorum Est

Act of Remembrance

*'For both the injured and the lost
I ask you to keep count with me.
Of all the wars and what they cost
I ask you to be silent with me.'*



This was followed by the Silence, the Laying of Wreaths and the Kohima Epitaph. The photograph above, taken at the Carluke Memorial, shows Campbell Thomson holding the Lanarkshire Yeomanry wreath, alongside Frank Morrison. Frank joins at every FEPOW occasion in order to take photographs.

VJ-Day, Tuesday 15th August.

On Tuesday 15th August, a VJ-Day Service in honour of Far-East POWs was held at the Far-East Memorial at the Civic Centre, Motherwell.

Councillor Kenneth Duffy, the Provost of North Lanarkshire Council, welcomed the large gathering present at the event and Campbell Thomson of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry Group provided a brief introduction to the POW story, and of the men and women of the 'Forgotten Army' who continued to struggle in the Far-East long after the war in Europe had ended.

A Reading by Father Bill Bergin was followed by a moving Address and Act of Remembrance, given by the Rev. Jim Wyatt, Co-Moderator of the Presbytery of Forth Valley and Clydeside. This was followed by the playing of the 'Last Post' by Elaine Smith, after which a One Minute Silence was observed.

The Kohima Epitaph was recited by Father Bergin, after which a large number of wreaths were laid, included among them wreaths on behalf of the Lord Lieutenant of Lanarkshire, North and South Lanarkshire Councils, the Scottish Government and the local MP, Marian Fellowes.

Others wreaths were then laid by the Cameronian Association, RAF Association and other armed forces groups.



The Lanarkshire Yeomanry wreath was laid by Jean Moore, whose late father, Gnr. James Hamilton, served with the Lanarkshire Yeomanry during the ill-fated Malayan campaign. An epitaph, drawn from the very poignant and moving Address given by the Rev. Paul Grant at a gathering of the families and friends of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry held some years ago, was then read by Scott Wilkinson. Scott's late father-in-law was Captain Gordon Brown of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry, who won the Military Cross at the Battle of Slim River in Malaya in January 1942. Councillor Margaret Cooper, Provost of South Lanarkshire, provided the closing remarks after which Father Bergin closed the service with a Benediction.



'Escape from Singapore'.

Jean Moore's father, Gnr. Jimmy Hamilton, was part of the successful party ordered to escape back to Allied territory two days before the Fall of Singapore.

Despite many challenges, they made it to Ceylon. Jean is preparing a piece about the fascinating story of her father, which will be featured in the next edition of COFEPOW Quarterly, issued in January 2024.

Annual General Meeting

Sunday, 13th August 2023,

at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, 10.30am - 12.00am.

DRAFT Minutes.

The COFEPOW Annual General Meeting was held in the Aspects Conference Suite, at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, on Sunday 13th August 2023

Present:

David Childs DLitt
(Patron and COFEPOW Padre)
David Brede
(Chairman and Interim Secretary)
David Brown
(Trustee and Treasurer)
Nick Bullen-Bell
(Trustee and Merchandise Secretary)
Sylvie Bullen-Bell
(Trustee and Merchandise Secretary)
Guy Metcalfe-Hume
(Trustee and Web Master)
Alexandra Metcalfe-Hume
(Trustee)
Sharon Morris-Mee
(Trustee)
Chris Wills
(Trustee, Co-editor of the newsletter and National Event Co-ordinator)

1. Apologies:

Lt. Col. C. Stallard (Rtd); Steve Riley; Sir Terry Waite; General Sir James Everard (Rtd); Olga Henderson; Alan Wills; Wenda Kiddie; Patrick Toosey and Alexandra Metcalfe-Hume.

2. Minutes from the 2022 AGM:

The Minutes from the meeting held on Sunday 14th August 2022 were upheld as being a true record of the meeting.

Proposed by David Childs and seconded by Keith Andrews.

3. Matters Arising:

3.1 Romusha Labourer's Plaque –

According to the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA), there is no monument or plaque for the Romusha labourers.

The trustees will liaise with the NMA to create a plaque after Keith Andrews (KA) has confirmed that currently, one does not exist.

4. Chairman's Report

David Brede (DBr) reported that this year has been challenging for the trustees with many highs and some lows. The saga of getting the Changi Shutters to the NMA is coming to an end. We now have an agreement with the Royal Navy Museum so we can now work on creating a display for this important artefact in our history.

We have negotiated with the NMA to take responsibility for the Thai/Burma Railway, Sumatra Railway and the FEPOW Grove Memorials so they will continue to be a tribute to the FEPOWs.

We are also seeing a higher level of positivity from the NMA regarding the relationship with us, so items as suggested by Barbara James (BJ), regarding the signage, are being treated in a more constructive way.

This year we have our favourite events like the weekend in Torquay. There have also been events at the waterfront at Southampton, which we have supported and similarly, there have been events at Cottesmore which members have supported. The Memorial at the Albert Dock, Liverpool Waterfront, has degraded through the effects of weathering and Meg Parkes is looking to renew it. She will be starting a 'Go-Fund-Me' page and COFEPOW will make a donation towards the renewal of this memorial.

Our efforts to recruit new officers has not had the success we had hoped, with us having to part company with our Secretary and the National Events Co-ordinator after serving only short periods in their roles. So, we are again actively seeking new persons to fulfil these roles. We are looking for a new Archivist to support KA and his work in this area.

The trustee team has continued to meet quarterly to keep its eye on the charity and ensure it works smoothly.

We are seeking re-election this year so can I commend to you the magnificent team with whom I have the pleasure to work, who rise to challenges and solve problems with a real 'can do' attitude.

We have continued to refine the

membership system. It is still a work in progress, but most of the core issues have been solved, so it is now a case of ironing out the wrinkles and getting real value from it for the charity. This has been led by Guy Metcalfe-Hume (Webmaster) with support from Karen Brown (Membership Officer).

Thanks again to the Area Co-ordinators for their work with members in their localities. Thanks to the amazing team who edit the newsletter, in particular Steve Riley.

There are still spaces available for the ceremony at the cenotaph in November - if there are any more takers? We had a full complement last year so want the same this year.

5. Treasurer's Report

An overview of the 2022 Accounts was given to everyone attending the AGM.

The charity's total assets as at 31st December 2022 were £295,152, which represents a significant increase on the previous year. This is largely as a result of membership fees and donations for the year totalling £108,133 (this figure includes the exceptional charitable bequest of £60,000 from the estate of Moira Bates).

Other miscellaneous income from merchandise sales etc., totalled £5,377.

Overall expenditure amounted to £24,183.

Note: In view of demands on space in this particular issue of the charity's newsletter, a full breakdown and analysis of the accounts for the charity, featuring performance graphs and comparative analyses over previous years, will be included in the January 2024 edition of COFEPOW Quarterly.

No questions were raised. It was agreed to accept the Accounts.

Proposed by Paul Housden and seconded by Barbara James.

6. Membership Report –

Karen Brown's (KB) first year as Membership Secretary has been a steep

learning curve with much still to learn.

The overview of the membership figures at the end of July 2023 are as follows:

With a total of 1061 members, 414 members from 2021/22 did not renew their membership in 2022/23 whilst 112 new members joined through the year.

The following is a breakdown of how membership fees were paid this year.

Cheque – 204

New System – 259

BACS – 109

PayPal – 264.

Payment methods will be reduced from this year due to issues with BACS and PayPal.

Going forward, there will be two methods of payment, either the online system via the website, or by cheque. Any payments received by PayPal or BACS will be refunded.

Difficulties have been found tracking the PayPal or BACS payments, as names or details listed as references are not always provided, making it almost impossible to link payments to the correct members.

Also, some people have paid via PayPal and then retracted their payment a week later and we cannot stop this happening. Some people do this because they just want access to the website for a short period of time, perhaps to carry out some research.

There is also an issue with members not paying the correct membership fee: it is £15 for a single membership and £21 for a joint membership. Some members are still paying the old amounts of £12 and £18. KB will be contacting these members and asking them to pay the correct amount going forward.

It is also important that members are aware that, if they have paid on the online system, payment will be automatically debited to that same card every year, as the new system sets it up as a recurring payment. When the renewal payment goes through members will receive an email, attached to which will be an invoice for the coming year's membership and a receipt to show payment has gone through.

The other change to note is that membership fees will be due from the anniversary of members' initial payments, so will not necessarily be due on 1st August as in previous years.

Some issues regarding the online renewal payments were raised by

Christine O'Leary, Barbara James, Penny Grant and Mary Watson. KB arranged to speak with them after the AGM had ended.

BJ wondered if it would be an idea to offer the opportunity to pay five years' membership fees in advance.

KB said it was something to think about.

7. Sales of Merchandise –

Nick Bullen-Bell (NBB) reported that merchandise sales for the year totalled £473.90 (inc p&p).

Submissions for the second volume of 'Poems of Hope' is going slowly at the moment.

NBB wanted to thank Sylvie Bullen-Bell (SBB) for all the hard work she does with the merchandise and keeping him on track.

8. Events

Chris Wills (CW) reported that the weekend in York was cancelled due to the lack of interest, with only two couples electing to go.

The weekend in Torquay is going ahead with 24 people going.

Planning for VJ80 in 2025 is progressing and will be held over a weekend again, as was the 70th and 75th anniversaries. The dates for 2025 will be 16th and 17th August.

9. Re-Election of current Officers/ Trustees-

9.1 Trustees:

David Brede

Nick Bullen-Bell

Guy Metcalfe-Hume

David Brown

Sylvie Bullen-Bell

Sharon Morris-Mee

Karen Brown

Alexandra Metcalfe-Hume

Chris Wills

Proposed en bloc by David Childs and seconded en bloc by Paul Housden.

9.2 Officers re-elected:

Chair: David Brede

Web Master: Guy Metcalfe-Hume

Treasurer: David Brown

Interim Secretary: David Brede

Proposed en bloc by Keith Andrews and seconded en bloc by Paul Housden.

10. Any other business.

10.1 VJ80 in 2025

KB informed the meeting that there was to be a competition to design the lapel pin for VJ80. The aim is to have three age groups - 11 to 13; 14 to 15 and 16 to 18. COFEPOW would approach schools, scouts, etc., and encourage any parents/grandparents to get their children and grandchildren involved.

There will be a 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each age group, which will be chosen by the COFEPOW Patrons. The top three of each group will receive £30, £20 and £10 Amazon voucher. The winners from each group will then go into a final round, where the trustees will pick an overall winner. All three finalists will be invited to Lichfield Cathedral for the VJ-Day Service in 2025, where the artwork will be on display. The overall winners' design will then be sent to the manufacturers, where it will be made into the commemorative pin for VJ80.

The closing date for this competition will be April 2024. The top three finalists from each group will also have their artwork on display at the AGM next August. Anyone who can send out information to schools, please contact KB.

10.2 Conservation of existing sleepers

David Childs (DC) asked what was happening with regard to the conservationist that he brought to the NMA to look at the That/Burma Railway sleepers. DBr explained that the trustees would not be able to save them but would look at all avenues of replacing them. It may be possible that the NMA will allow the current sleepers in 'good' condition to be stacked up with a sign to say they were the originals.

10.3 Archives

KA reported to the meeting, following a visit from a professional archivist to the FEPOW Memorial Building.

The trustees would need to contact the owners of all current exhibits, as each item was donated on the understanding that they would be displayed forever.

The charity will need to invest in preservation folders and tissue to ensure the documents and papers are properly preserved.

11. Next AGM

The next Annual General Meeting is to be held on Sunday 18th August 2024 at 10.30 a.m., in the Aspects Conference Suite, at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas.



Left: the boxed VJ-Day 75th anniversary pin, produced in 2020.

VJ-Day 80th anniversary

New lapel pin design children's challenge

COFEPOW Lapel Pin Design Competition Entry Form.

Please indicate which category you are entering by circling round the number below...

1 2 3

Name

Address

Postcode

Age

School/Organisation

Please print this form and attach it to your design and email or post your entry to:

Alexandra Metcalfe-Hume
Breck Farm House, Breck Farm Lane,
Taverham, Norwich,
Norfolk NR8 6HL.
Email: education@cofepow.org.uk

August 15th 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of VJ-Day. As in the past, COFEPOW will be commemorating this next significant anniversary with a special new COFEPOW lapel pin badge design competition for children...

COFEPOW would like members' help in contacting all secondary schools, cadet groups, scout groups and any youth groups across the country, to invite them to get involved in this new children's competition. Private entries will also be welcomed and we would ask any COFEPOW members who would like to offer help getting the message across, to get in touch. Please encourage your children, grandchildren and even your great grandchildren to get involved - ask them to get thinking of ideas now!

Children can enter in their age category and the top three winners from each will win Amazon vouchers with the overall winner having their design crafted into a beautiful lapel pin badge.

The competition will be divided into three categories:

Category 1 - Age 11 - 13

Category 2 - Age 14 - 16

Category 3 - Age 17 - 18

The nine finalists will have their work exhibited at the COFEPOW Annual General Meeting on 18th August 2024 at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, where they will be voted on by the members of COFEPOW and the winner from each category will go through to the final.

The three winners will then be judged by a COFEPOW trustee panel and the overall winning pin will be manufactured and sold to raise funds for the charity.

The three finalists will be invited to the 80th anniversary commemoration at Lichfield Cathedral in August 2025 and presented with their prizes.

Prizes.

The three winners from each category will receive Amazon Vouchers:

1st Prize - £30

2nd Prize - £20

and 3rd Prize - £10

Competition entry rules.

- The closing date for entries is the 30th April 2024.
- Designs must be able to be made into a pin with a width of 1 inch (2.25 cm) so cannot be too detailed.
- Designs must contain the COFEPOW name - and the date - 2025.
- Designs are judged anonymously, so the name of the designer must not appear on the design.
- All designs must be accompanied by a completed entry form (1 design - 1 entry form).
- Designs must be the original work of the entrant.
- Receipt of entries can be confirmed if a stamped self-addressed envelope is included with the entry form, or if entered via email, then a confirmation email will be sent.
- The nine finalists will be informed after 1st August 2024.
- The judges' decision is final.
- Submitted designs may be printed in the media, printed in the COFEPOW Quarterly newsletter and displayed on our website or featured on local radio/TV.
- The overall winner will have their design crafted into the commemorative COFEPOW VJ-Day 80 pin, which will then go on sale as part of the COFEPOW commemorative merchandise collection, with all proceeds going to the charity.

Entry details.

Please complete and return the form alongside to enter the competition with your pin design, or visit the COFEPOW website at www.cofepow.org.uk to enter online.

Good luck!



Liverpool's FEPOW memorial urgently needs replacement

Funding appeal now launched

Repatriation Memorial has to be replaced - please support.

Twelve years after it was unveiled, the FEPOW and Civilian Internee Repatriation Memorial on Liverpool's Pier Head, one of the newer of the post-WWII memorials, is in urgent need of replacement due to severe weathering. The Researching Far East Prisoner of War (FEPOW) History Group, (RFHG) established the memorial after a national fundraising campaign in 2010-11.

The RFHG is working in partnership with COFEPOW, MVG, Birmingham FEPOW Association, Java Club, NFFWRA - all FEPOW groups in the UK which represent the descendants of FEPOWs and internees held captive under the Japanese during WWII.

The appeal has so far raised £4,500. A further £2,000 is needed. Can you help?

The RFHG established the memorial in Liverpool (two years later a similar memorial was unveiled in Southampton). Over time regrettably, it has become apparent that the type of granite recommended was not suitable, as rain and seawater caused irreversible staining to the stone. It was not resistant to rain and sea spray and has been permanently affected by discolouration. In addition, over the years, in such an exposed position, the black lettering has degraded and severe weather over the past decade has left much of it difficult to read. Fast action to replace the memorial is now needed.

The existing granite memorial has a central text, dedicated both to the memory of thousands of Far-East prisoners of war and civilian internees



who returned through the port of Liverpool during the autumn of 1945, and those who did not survive captivity. Either side of the dedication are the names of ships that docked at the Princes Landing Stage between 8th October and the end of December that year.

The RFHG will replace the memorial with a bronze plaque bearing the same inscription and ships' lists. The appeal will launch on 8th October, 78 years to the day that the first ship back to Liverpool from the Far-East, M.V. Monowai, docked.

For details about the appeal and how to make online donations, please visit: <https://fepowhistory.com/>

Alternatively, cheques should be made payable to 'Researching FEPOW History', (please write 'Repatriation Memorial Appeal' on the reverse) and send to Mike Parkes, 83 Saughall Massie Lane, Upton, Wirral CH49 6LZ.

For further information and photographs, please contact Meg Parkes at meg.parkes@lstmed.ac.uk Thank you.



Brian organises charity walk and arrives on crutches

Geordie philanthropist and founder of the 'Daft as a Brush' Cancer Charity, Brian Burnie, organised an epic 21-mile walk from Newcastle to Sunderland to mark VJ-Day and honour the memory of his recently deceased "great friend" Len Gibson and all FEPOWs. Taking place on 13th August, the walk started at the Newcastle Civic Centre, passing through Gateshead, Hebburn, Jarrow, Whitburn and finally to the Sunderland Cenotaph for a 6.30pm Service. The walk was officially started by the Bishop of Newcastle and arrived at St. Paul's Monastery, Jarrow, for an 11.00am service and 'thousand poppy drop'. From there, the walkers took the coastal route to Sunderland Cenotaph.

Donations of Artefacts

COFEPOW continues to accept relevant donations of POW authored publications, personal artefacts, souvenirs, mementoes and military keepsakes. Whilst donations of these treasured items are gratefully received, the trustees cannot guarantee that they will be displayed in the FEPOW Building, as we are unable to change the display cases in the downstairs exhibition area, and, of course, we are limited by space.

Please be assured that the donations of artefacts will be stored safely in the archives (upstairs in the building) under lock and key, where there are security cameras. Unfortunately, the space in the archives is also limited and although we are not yet at full capacity, when it is full, we will regrettably have to turn down any further offers of donations.

If you wish to donate an artefact please contact either Keith Andrews by email: scubaka@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 01530 450621, or Chris Wills by email at: chriswills5071@gmail.com or telephone 0121 244 7263.

Obituary

David Beatty Crawford

21st March 1915 to 5th July 2023

Born in Edinburgh, David served with the rank of Sergeant, service number 3194212, with the Royal Army Ordnance Regiment, and spent his time as a FEPOW in Java and Borneo. David died peacefully in his nursing home, at the age of 108. COFEPOW offers its sincere condolences to his family and friends.

Navy warship crew rebuilds memorial to POW victims of atrocities on Ballalae



The memorial in poor condition in 2023.

The crew of British warship, HMS TAMAR, has refurbished and re-dedicated a memorial to British FEPOWs in Ballalae. Lieutenant Commander Matt Millyard, Executive Officer on board, reports...

"In November 1942, 517 soldiers of the Royal Artillery, captured and held as POWs at the fall of Singapore, were transported to the tiny and remote Island of Ballalae, one of the 992 that make up the Solomon Islands, to construct an airfield the Japanese dubbed an 'unsinkable aircraft carrier'. Over the ensuing months of forced labour in a brutal tropical climate, many died from exhaustion and disease, and hundreds more as a result of Allied bombings. In 1943, as the South Pacific islands were liberated, Japanese guards executed the remaining 57 prisoners.

"When US forces retook the Northern Solomon Islands, they bypassed Ballalae and left it to 'wither on the vine'. It wasn't until 1945 that the remains of those 57 were discovered in shallow trenches.

"An atrocities commission on the island then led to the discovery of a mass grave, from which 436 bodies were exhumed with artefacts identifying them as British artillerymen. Subsequently, they were re-interred in separate graves at the Bomana War Cemetery near Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, their headstones marked with the inscription, 'Here lies a Soldier, known only to God'.

"In 2003, relatives of three of the POWs undertook a pilgrimage to Ballalae

and dedicated a memorial at the air-strip, in the form of a cairn with a wooden cross and a plaque donated by the Royal Artillery Association. While the island remains uninhabited, the air-strip is still in use today as the only access by air for the surrounding islands. The memorial stands near the small hut that serves as the terminal building. As it is not a registered Commonwealth war



The memorial after the refurbishment by the crew of HMS TAMAR.

grave, it received little regular maintenance, so by 2007 the memorial had fallen foul of the merciless tropical climate. Phil Jones, an ex-British serviceman working in the Solomon Islands as

Officer, Commander Teilo Elliot-Smith, was welcomed with fresh flower garlands by the Islanders, and the crew got to work removing the rust and grime of 16 years to return the Memorial to its former glory, before a service of re-dedication was held to remember the soldiers who had died on the island.

"The service was officiated by HMS TAMAR's Chaplain, Reverend Mick Uffindell, and attended by the ship's crew and representatives of the local island chiefs who kindly allow the memorial to stand on their ancestral land. During the ceremony, traditional red poppy wreaths were laid by the High Commissioner and myself as Executive Officer, alongside floral bouquets from the Solomon Islanders.

"Reflecting on the day' the Chaplain said, 'It was an incredible privilege to be able to pay tribute to these servicemen and their families today and in addition to restoring the Memorial we placed 517 white stones, one for each individual who lost their life on Ballalae Island.'"



The crew and Solomon Islanders conduct a rededication service of the memorial.



The Chaplain, British Defence Attaché, HMS TAMAR Commanding Officer and British High Commissioner are welcomed by the Islanders.

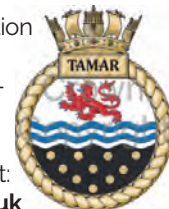
part of an Australian government mission, rebuilt the memorial with an iron cross on a concrete plinth on top of the remains of the old cairn.

"80 years on from the atrocities of 1943, and the British High Commissioner to the Solomon Islands, His Excellency Tom Coward, was keen to ensure the maintenance of the memorial and took the opportunity to do so during a visit by Royal Navy warship, HMS TAMAR. After wading ashore across Ballalae's coral beach, HMS TAMAR's Commanding

HMS TAMAR is permanently deployed to the Indo-Pacific and is visiting the Solomon Islands to support the British High Commission and strengthen the UK's civil and military ties with the Islands, which have been a member of the Commonwealth since their Independence in 1978. Commander Elliot-Smith added:

"It's been an honour for the ship to pay our respects to these British Servicemen. Ballalae is simultaneously the site of a horrific chapter of WWII, in the most inhospitable of places, and now a peaceful and idyllic island. Our sailors were eager to pay their respects and did so beautifully."

For further information on the Memorial, or on its refurbishment and rededication by the crew of HMS TAMAR, please contact Lt. Cdr. Matt Millyard on email at: HMSTAMR-XO-2OIC@mod.uk



Beryl's personal perspective on creating the Ballalae Memorial



Beryl Canwell recounts the visit of ten COFEPOW members to establish their memorial in 2003...

"It wasn't until the mid-1990s that we found out what had happened to our loved family members who had been Japanese POWs. We joined COFEPOW in 1997 and through the charity and other sources, we finally discovered our relatives had died constructing an airstrip for the Japanese on the remote island of Ballalae in the Solomon Islands, in the South Pacific. There were 517 British Royal Artillery personnel brought to this island, but sadly none survived.

"In 2003, after much planning, ten of us including Carol and Ron Cooper, founders of COFEPOW, and other family members of FEPOWs who had died there, decided to travel to Ballalae to erect a small Memorial to commemorate these 517 RA servicemen. It was a very successful mission and the Memorial was duly erected, together with a brass plaque kindly donated by the RA (the full story can be seen on the COFEPOW website - just search for Ballalae).

"This is not an official war grave site, so does not get the appropriate attention and due to weather conditions over the years, the Memorial had sadly deteriorated. In 2007, Phil Jones, a member of the Australian Federal Police (pictured below) was deployed in the Solomons and contacted me through the COFEPOW website to say he would very much like to restore the Memorial.



"Having completed this, he held a Service there on 11th November 2007. He kindly buried our original Memorial, plus the wooden cross and little poppy crosses we had taken with us, under the



The crew of HMS Tamar, pictured with local islanders at the recent service.

new one, whilst retaining the original RA plaque. Phil kindly updated us with many photographs during the restoration and his kindness was so appreciated by us relatives.



Above picture: "Our sad-looking original Memorial in 2007. The wooden cross had an RA badge (close-up), but it had deteriorated. Also, I took up with me, and carried, a bag of ready-mixed cement, which you can see on the top of the Memorial."

"It was so emotional therefore, to see a photograph on Facebook recently (I am a member of a Solomons group on there) and thought it looked like our little memorial, and was astounded to find that it was! I then learned that HMS Tamar, a British Naval offshore patrol boat, had recently been to the Solomons and together with the British High Commissioner in Honiara, had arranged to renovate our Memorial as it was 80 years since the POWs lost their lives building the island's airstrip. I have since been in

touch with the British High Commissioner, His Excellency Thomas Coward, who said that he and the Commanding Officer of HMS Tamar, Teilo Elliot-Smith, had been honoured to restore the Memorial and pay their respects by holding a Service on this remote, uninhabited island in the South Pacific. Poppy wreaths were also laid, together with floral tributes from locals living on neighbouring islands. White stones were also laid – one for each of the individual POWs who had lost their lives there.



Above "The Service and Dedication attended by dignitaries alongside those of us who had visited in 2003 from the UK."

"It's thanks to the power of modern technology that I came across these photos recently and we, the relatives, are truly grateful that all this has happened, especially as it's over 9,000 miles away from home. Rupert Brooks' poem entitled 'The Soldier' is so fitting.. **In some corner of a foreign field that is forever England.**' This, to us, will always be Ballalae!"

Beryl Canwell

Current and past Trustees meet up



Alan Wills (a former COFEPOW trustee) and wife Chris (a current trustee), took a week's break in Norfolk and whilst there, spent an afternoon with Graham Robertson (former COFEPOW trustee and Membership Secretary).

After a few hours catching-up, Alan and Chris took Graham over to see Brian Hume (former COFEPOW trustee) and his wife Jo. Guy Metcalfe-Hume (Brian's son and a current COFEPOW trustee) was also there with his wife, Rachel. Everyone was warmly welcomed and enjoyed a lovely evening chatting over a glass of wine (or two). As Chris pointed out....

"As far as I'm concerned, this embodies what COFEPOW is about – a coming together of strangers, who, through our forebears' shared experience, become lifelong friends".

Chris resumes 'Events' role

Following Chris Wills' 'retirement' from her role as National Events Co-ordinator, the COFEPOW has been very unlucky in obtaining a natural successor in the post and attempts to replace her have proved very difficult.

As a result, Chris has temporarily resumed the role until a permanent appointee can be recruited. If you're interested in taking on the position, which is unpaid, often challenging, but extremely rewarding, please email: chriswills@blueyonder.co.uk for an exploratory and informal chat.

Documentary film premiered - 'The Sinking of The Lisbon Maru'

Brian Finch reports about the latest on this important film, with which he has been involved as a consultant for some time...

"A special screening for relatives and selected guests of the new documentary film, "The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru" was shown to a packed audience of 450 at BFI Southbank on 15th August.

"The audience sat in total silence throughout this moving and powerful film, after which they rose spontaneously to offer an extended and thunderous standing ovation. Chinese Ambassador Zheng Zeguang spoke to praise the film, stressing that it illustrated the wartime cooperation between China and the UK, and urging everyone to work together for dialogue and understanding to bring benefits to the peoples of our two countries.

"Further screenings took place, mainly to military audiences over the following days, to members of the Royal Artillery at Warminster, the Royal Signals at Blandford, and the Royal Scots in Edinburgh. The aim was to get professional feedback from the military to help in putting the final touches to the end product. When minor changes have been made to finish the film it will go on general release, but no date for this has yet been confirmed.

"Many relatives and others have asked for a DVD of the film. This will not be available until after it has been on general release. I shall, of course, let everyone know when such details are available.

"There has been a flood of tributes and congratulations to Fang Li and the film crew for this excellent work. More than one person has said this was the best documentary on any subject they have ever seen. Please keep these tributes coming in. They will be invaluable when the time comes to launch the film on general release. Please also don't be offended that I have not had time to respond individually to all these e-mails.

"Several of you have also offered some very useful feedback, which will be helpful in making improvements to the final product. Thank you, and again, please keep these coming.

"If anyone wishes to write to Fang Li directly, he has asked me to pass on his e-mail address, which is: fangli@laurel-films.com. Please copy any correspondence to me so that I am kept in the loop.

"The rescue by Chinese fishermen of hundreds of British POWs under fire from the Japanese army in the Lisbon Maru incident is an example of cooperation at an individual level between people of different nationalities. President Xi Jinping of China has a personal interest in this affair, as he was for many years the Party Secretary (in effect the head) of Zhejiang Province, where the rescue took place. During his state visit to the UK in 2015, he raised the subject with Her late Majesty, describing it as an example of China and Britain fighting "shoulder to shoulder in the flames of war".

"Following the dedication of the Lisbon Maru Memorial at the NMA in October 2021, Mrs Denise Wynne, the daughter of the last survivor of the atrocity, the late Dennis Morley of The Royal Scots, wrote to President Xi and asked him to have a memorial built in China, to remember the courage of the Zhoushan fishermen. To her astonishment she received a reply.

"Last August, Ambassador Zheng made a special journey from London to Gloucester to deliver President Xi's letter by hand to Mrs Wynne. This meeting began the development of a broader friendship between the Ambassador and other members of the embassy and the relatives of POWs on the Lisbon Maru. During his brief speech after the film screening, the ambassador was able to confirm that plans for the memorial in China are now well advanced."

Brian Finch

email: bfinch1941@gmail.com

Memorial service held in October



A Memorial Service is being held on the 2nd October 2023 at the Lisbon Maru Memorial in the Far-East section of the NMA, to mark the 81st anniversary of the sinking. As the announcement of the event does not coincide with the press and publication date of this newsletter, a report will be featured in the next issue of COFEPOW Quarterly, in January 2024.

Southampton Repatriation - 18th Nov

An early update to advise that the Southampton FEPOW Repatriation Commemoration will take place again this year on Saturday 18th November.

The Dancing Man has already, once again, confirmed its agreement to host the event beforehand and to offer lunch afterwards. The Lord Mayor's attendance has also been confirmed this year. The Standard Bearers will again be making the journey from the West Midlands to join us, as will a number of people from around the country.

This annual event brings together people from across the FEPOW community, both from Southampton and across the UK, to remember our relatives and friends who shared harsh imprisonment and slave labour for three and half years in the Far-East. A quarter of those who experienced this, did not survive to return: we also remember them.

The event provides an opportunity afterwards to share information and recollections, and to learn together from others with similar experience. If you are able to join us, please consider bringing any material you would like to 'show and tell' over lunch with others.

In addition to military personnel, many British civilians who lived in Malaya, then a British colony, were also interned in Singapore for the duration of the Far-East war. Amongst these was Olga Henderson, who, at the fall of Singapore, was imprisoned as a 9 year-old child internee and whose story was featured on the BBC

News earlier this year on VJ-Day. Now in her nineties, Olga has very recently written and published her story in the paperback "In the Shadow of the Rising Sun". She returned to Southampton on the ship *Almanzora*, arriving on 17th October - the same journey as taken by the writer here, Walter Tuttlebee's own father, a Far-East POW. The arrival of the *Almanzora* (and the other repatriation ships) was reported in the Southampton Daily Echo, available on microfiche in Southampton Central Library (see attachments).

Tickets (free) will be available from the Eventbrite page from 21st September. The link, with full details, is <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/far-east-prisoner-of-war-repatriation-memorial-ceremony-southampton-tickets-712434820727>

Please make a diary note to visit the Eventbrite website to register for your tickets - this ensures a good idea of numbers is available beforehand. Please also feel free to forward this information to any friends with Far-East POW or civilian internee connections who may be interested in coming in November.

For more information, please contact: **Walter Tuttlebee, Romsey, Hampshire. Mob: +44 7980 677769. Email: walter@tuttlebee.com**

Also: Skype/Zoom/FaceTime
Son of Gnr/Dvr William Henry Tuttlebee
Service Number 1107666
281 Battery, 85th AntiTank Regt, RA.



Northants members at Heritage Forum



Pictured above at the event, the Mayor of Northampton, Councillor Stephen Hibbert with Jill and Rosalyn.

On Sunday 10th September, members of COFEPOW's Northamptonshire branch attended the Northamptonshire Heritage Fair, run by the Northamptonshire Heritage Forum.

Attending members were David Brede, Jill Robertson, Rosalyn Stewart and Ivor Watson.

The members ran a stall which featured a selection of COFEPOW merchandise, a book sale, the new COFEPOW information leaflet and other material about the charity. Three books and five pens were sold and a lot of the new leaflets were distributed to the many attendees of the event.

Research database of FEPOW facts

Using a variety of authenticated sources and references, COFEPOW volunteers have spent many years of unstinting dedication to assemble a comprehensive database of information on the wartime service and ensuing captivity of over 50,000 former FEPOWs.

This information is available to view on the COFEPOW website for members.

Please take time to visit the site and learn of the names, dates and places of incarceration relevant to your FEPOW at: <https://www.cofepow.org.uk/research-database>

Applications for Secretary

Applications are invited for the role of Secretary to the COFEPOW charity.

David Brede has resumed the role of interim Secretary alongside his position as Chair, until such time as a successful candidate can be appointed. This is a very important post within the charity, which will bring its own satisfaction. You will experience genuine pleasure in helping COFEPOW members, knowing that they will value and appreciate your input. The role involves the following:

- **Supporting the Chairman and trustees**
- **Preparing documents and taking Minutes at the AGM and trustee meetings**
- **Handling correspondence, telephone calls, emails from members and external bodies**
- **Issuing access to the FEPOW**

database

- **Maintaining the data protection database.**

Full support and guidance will be offered to the successful candidate. The trustees are a friendly and dedicated bunch of all ages and will welcome anyone who has the best interests of the charity at heart.

The position is a voluntary one and no remuneration is available, as the charity derives its income entirely from memberships and donations. If you are interested in the role, please contact: **David Brede in writing, by the end of July 2023, at 3 Blossom Way, Little Billing, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 9ET, or by email at cofepow.chairman@gmail.com**

Should you wish to discuss the role first, please call **07930 960241**.

Best wishes to Hilary in NZ for speedy recovery



On behalf of all trustees, officers and members of the COFEPOW charity, the trustees would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to Hilary Cunningham, who is currently experiencing a couple of difficulties with her health.

Although originally from London, Hilary lives in New Zealand and sends out the COFEPOW Quarterly newsletter email version every quarter, to hundreds of members across the world.

Despite being quite poorly recently, Hilary still manages to complete the task efficiently and without fail and, for this and all her additional efforts working with the membership to clarify information, welcome new people to the membership and many other voluntary services directing enquiries, we owe her a large debt of thanks. As most of the officers of the charity are based in the UK, it can often be overlooked how much impact Hilary and other volunteers in other countries can make in the work of the organisation.

On behalf of the trustees and the COFEPOW membership, therefore, we all wish her a speedy and complete recovery and hope to see her over in the UK on holiday in the not too distant future.

Thanks again Hilary.

Olga braves difficulties to tell of her Changi hell



Olga Henderson: picture courtesy BBC News.

Olga Henderson is a COFEPOW member who has supported the charity for many years. Now in her nineties, she is finding life increasingly trying as she suffers with failing sight. Nevertheless, after much encouragement, Olga agreed to write her book which was launched in July of this year, and is entitled 'In the Shadow of the Rising Sun - Surviving a Prisoner of War Childhood'.

In February 1942, ten-year old Olga Morris and her family were living in Singapore when the city fell to the invading Japanese army.

Her family had not been part of the privileged 'Raffles Hotel set', with a big house and servants. Her father worked in construction, building roads and hospitals. Olga and her siblings grew up in Johor Bahru, a diverse part of Malaya just across the causeway from Singapore, amongst children of all faiths and cultures, without a thought to race or class. It was a very happy upbringing.

One day, a British Army officer arrived to instruct the family that they had 20 minutes to pack and try to escape, with the Japanese only a few miles away. Turned back at an evacuation ship's gangway as bombs were falling, the family were forced to hide until, captured by enemy soldiers, they were forced marched to Changi Gaol.

Three years of disease, malnutrition, deprivation and oppression followed, sometimes enduring severe punishments and the ordeal of Tenko in the blazing sun, then forced into slave labour.

Once in Changi, Olga and her friends bravely raided the vegetable plot, dodging the searchlights. In the middle of the family's time in captivity, her younger brother was moved to the men's camp, and suffered cruelty that scarred him for the rest of his life.

Towards the end of the war, when the internees heard the Allies were coming, they were "given extra rice to have the strength and energy to dig our own graves" admits Olga.

As the 80th anniversary of the Fall of Singapore arrived in 2022, Olga felt ready to tell her story: recounting the great fear and deprivation, and of a childhood lost to conflict. It's a story of class prejudice, too, such as when she was freed and her experiences as she returned to England as an unwanted refugee.

Yet memories of camaraderie also live on within the book. Inmates of the camp, for example, held clandestine meetings, where they worked on sewing a quilt - the 'Changi Quilt' as it is now known and displayed in the Imperial War Museum in London, as an emblem of courage and faith. As Olga says, "We always felt the end of the war would come, we lived for it, from month to month and tried never to lose hope."



The book, which is in paperback, is 272 pages long and was published on 6th July this year. It is available for **£9.99 from Waterstones, W.H. Smith, Amazon and a number of other high quality retailers.**



Superb new display cabinet for returned 'Java' table-top

An update on the Java table-top artefact, first obtained by Joan Booth and donated to COFEPOW seven years ago....

In the October 2016 edition of COFEPOW Quarterly, Keith Andrews, COFEPOW Head of Research, reported on the splendid story of the 'Java' table. COFEPOW member, Joan Booth, had discovered that this top was to be auctioned, contacted the seller and explained her interest and that she wished to purchase it, to donate it to COFEPOW. The owner agreed to sell it for what he paid for it (in the region of £600/£700), and Keith went along to London to collect it.

It was carved by C. McLaren Reid in the RAF Orderly Room in Boei Glodok Gaol in Batavia in 1942, and bears the names of the Officers/Warrant Officers held there. Joan's father was one of the names on it, and hence her interest. The full story can be found in the Java Club's superb book 'Prisoners in Java', available directly from the Java Club.

Since Joan donated the table-top, it has been loaned to the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in 2019/20, when the school held their exhibition on FEPOW Art.

Following relaxation of the Covid pandemic rules, it was returned to COFEPOW and is now permanently on display in the FEPOW Memorial Building at Alrewas. It has also now been mounted in a purpose-designed and specially



fabricated display cabinet, and is laid on a spread of hessian sacking which represents the rice sacks the FEPOWs used as bedding.

The trustees believe they have finally fulfilled their promise to Joan, who sadly is no longer with us.



The history of the 'Java table-top'

Keith Andrews describes some of the history and features of the table-top and its importance in the FEPOW story.

"The table-top is, in fact, a teak bed board. Tools as such that could be used to create it were a single blade of a 'Dewars' advertising penknife, a bone-handled file and a sharpened nail or two. It took nearly four months to complete.

"The view in the centre is of the solitary confinement cells in Boei Glodok civilian gaol in Batavia. I believe the boxes of Japanese characters on the top left and right say Reid-o in three types of Japanese writing.

"Then follows the date of captivity - March 1942 - with the date of release added in around 1946/1947. The symbolic chain around the carving was copied from the chains used on the civilian prisoners. At the bottom is a

broken link in the chain, that link being one inch longer than the others and represented the day the bonds of captivity would be broken.

"This was used for the silver plate bearing the autograph of Mountbatten of Burma.

The silver to make the flat plate came from the spoon and fork that had been used throughout C. McLaren Reid's captivity, which was the last of the family silver."

If time allows, Keith has volunteered to produce a follow-up article for a later edition of COFEPOW Quarterly, which will catalogue the travels of the table-top (as previously mentioned, one of the table's homes was the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine during Covid). Keith has suggested that he may endeavour to trace the history of the men whose names are engraved on the table. Should any COFEPOW member be aware that their FEPOW was incarcerated at this camp and would appreciate any information retrieved, please email Keith at: scubaka@yahoo.co.uk

COFEPOW to trial new advertising spaces

The trustees have launched a new initiative via the COFEPOW Quarterly newsletter, offering advertising space in the magazine to members. The newsletter, which is sent out to all members every three months and has a circulation of around 1500 families, will offer a very traditional advertising service, based on small print ads for such items as members' flats, caravans or houses for holiday rentals; hotels which often provide accommodation for COFEPOW gatherings and events; discounts on special relevant services or attractions; even perhaps memorabilia or small artefacts linked to the charity. New books which are submitted would remain individually featured at launch and would not incur a charge.

Cottage to let South Cornwall July 1st to July 14th 2023

As long-standing members we wish to rent out our beautiful two bedroom cottage in Looe this summer. Beautiful location, all facilities, parking and free wi-fi. Call Mary on 01234 567891 or email mary@marycottage.co.uk

Sample 5cm x 1 column display, which would cost £10 per quarter, or £36 per year.

As the pressure increases on the charity to raise ever more funds and find new options to increase revenue, new routes to generating that additional income have to be found. Currently the charity is financed entirely by membership fees and donations.

As with many similar newsletters to ours, we feel that there is scope to provide members with the facility to place



MINIBUS AND DRIVER FOR HIRE FOR SMALL GROUPS - DISCOUNTS FOR CHARITIES

12-seater luxury minibus available for hire at John's Coaches. Established 2006, numerous referrals and testimonials. Advanced Test Driver, all comforts on board, available for daily or multi day rental, within 50 mile radius of Lichfield. Disabled facilities and can collect. Call John on 01234 567891 or email john@johnbushire.co.uk

Sample 10cm x 1 column display which would cost £20 per quarter, or £72 per year.

small advertisements in the newsletter for a small fee, dependent on the size of the space taken to promote the item/service. This will be no more than 10cm deep by 1 column wide as a maximum, 5cm x 1 column or, as a minimum, with lineage (as in general classified ads). As the organisation lacks the size and sophistication to produce a Rate Card, we would invoice members at the time of booking and submission of copy, to be cleared and paid prior to the appearance of the ad. Payment initially can be made to the editorial team, at this stage via a cheque made out to 'COFEPOW'.

So, for example, a 5cm x 1 column ad. (a column is 58 mm wide) would be charged at £10, a 10cm x 1 col at £20 and a classified (depending on the amount of space required) at £1 a line, run over one column.

The ads would appear at random throughout the newsletter, unless demand necessitated a page or so to be devoted to the facility at a later date.

Naturally, all content will be at the discretion of the editorial team and must comply with all ASA regulations and Trade Description Act measures.

Artwork may be supplied finished to the advertiser's specification as a reproduction quality Word document, eps or pdf, or the editorial team will convert your written copy into a standard ad., suitable for publication. All ads must include the advertiser's contact details. If you would like to consider placing a small promotional message for whatever service you feel would be relevant to the charity and would help other members, please contact the editorial team at chriswills@blueyonder.co.uk or sriley.beeches@btinternet.com before the January 1st 2024 issue deadline of December 1st 2023. All ads booked and placed will run for a minimum of one quarter and can be repeated multiple times for a fee equivalent to the original booking fee per quarter over how many quarters it appears, less 10%.

Happy selling!

Cottage to let South Cornwall - July 1st to July 14th 2023. Two bedrooms, all facilities, located near Looe. Call Mary on 01234 567891 or email mary@marycottage.co.uk

Sample classified x 1 column advertisement which would cost £5 per quarter, or £18 per year. The size of these would be limited to a maximum 20mm depth and will be less if copy supplied is shorter.



New leaflet promotes COFEPOW

As the trustees look to increase the range of tools available to them to encourage membership and donations, a brand new leaflet has been designed and produced to bring information about the COFEPOW charity up-to-date.

The leaflet, a double-sided full-colour A4, folded to envelope-size, uses a number of photographs from the activities of COFEPOW members, and a broad background to the story so far, to highlight the charity's work. Its intended use is for visitors to the FEPOW Memorial Building, during meetings, events, for schools, mailings and a number of applications where the opportunity for representation and promotion of the charity exists.

The design and artwork for the leaflet was produced free of charge.

Area Co-ordinator Robert retires

- Greater Manchester and/or East Cheshire

COFEPOW Chair David Brede was disappointed to receive the letter from Greater Manchester and East Cheshire Area Co-ordinator, Robert McGechan, announcing his plans to surrender the role as other commitments have made continuing to commit to the duties very difficult. David has thanked Robert for his work for the charity over many years and expressed his appreciation on behalf of the trustees for Robert's contribution.

We wish him well for the future.

....new Co-ordinator required for the above

As a result of Robert's retirement, COFEPOW needs to recruit a new volunteer! Please see page 19 and the back page of this issue for details of the excellent work of our many Area Co-ordinators. If you would specifically like to help in the north west of England, either across the whole region, or just a small local area, please contact COFEPOW Chair, David Brede at cofepow.chairman@gmail.com and he will outline what's involved.

Would you like to start organising COFEPOW events in your area?

As well as the large national events that are and will be organised by the National Events Co-ordinator, several local meetings, functions, talks and trips are initiated and managed by our many Area Co-ordinators, listed by region on the back page of this newsletter. If you would like to help by arranging events in your part of the country, which are not covered in the existing list, please visit the COFEPOW website at: <https://www.cofepow.org.uk/cofepow-events> and fill in the form, giving us as much information as you can which you think is relevant to taking on one of the posts. We'll bring you up to speed on the things you can do to help local members and provide as much material, information on venues and the types of small events other Area Co-ordinators manage across the country.



NMA FEPOW gardener Tom completes the walk for Ben



Above: Tom on the long walk.
Right: Ben at home receiving care. Extreme right: the proof!

In July's issue of COFEPOW Quarterly, we reported on Tom Price, the Head Gardener

at the NMA. He and his team help keep the COFEPOW Grove and Garden particularly neat and tidy, as his grandfather was a FEPOW.

In the newsletter, Tom had undertaken to complete the Peak District Ultra Challenge - a 50km walk which took place on July 8th and 9th. Tom aimed to do the walk to raise funds for former colleague Adrian Sharratt's son, Ben, who is very poorly and has been undergoing weeks of radiotherapy.

We are delighted to report on the walk, as Tom describes the day:

"I'm happy to say I completed the Peak District Ultra Challenge 52km. My start time was 9.00am at Bakewell and at 14k., we made it to Calver up a 200 metre incline, then on to Tideswell at 25k - a 340 metre incline, passing many beautiful villages along the way.

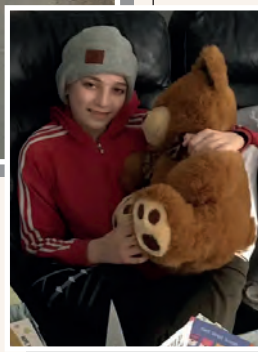
"The scenery was stunning but the walk was not easy. The next stage was Taddington - the steepest climb. All the energy from fitness training before the challenge was almost depleted at this point, so I relied on pure heart, having Ben and his loving family as a motivation to get me to the top.

"On the last 4 miles back to

Bakewell, we hit thunderstorms. I came across a group of 20 people, really struggling, and it didn't look like they were going to make it. I decided not to go ahead of them, but to lead the pack instead and we ended up running to the finish line - doing a total of 87,122 steps!

"All the time I was walking,

I was getting messages from the family, friends and work colleagues supporting me.



"I would also like to say a huge thank you to COFEPOW for helping me find information on Jeffrey Price - his story of survival influenced me on the walk to keep going and never give up on what you believe in. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Below is the link to a GoFund Me page to donate to the cause to help Ben and his family. https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/bensfamily?utm_term=dXP26j4W6

Luckily, via Facebook, Tom received the following grateful text via other walkers from a lady called Kirsten:

"I want to say thank you to the man who walked with me during the last leg of day one. I didn't get his name but he was wearing an Iron Man T-shirt and was raising money for a very poorly young boy to go to Disneyland.

"He kept up the positivity while I was seriously flagging up those last hills and getting soaked in the storm.

"If anyone knows who he is please pass on my thanks. And if you see this, thank you!!

Well done everyone."

New letter to IWM hits hard

To follow is a letter received by COFEPOW Chair, David Brede, from member Michael Foster, regarding his recent communication with the Imperial War Museum.....

"Dear David,

"I have just rejoined COFEPOW. Your organisation has been very kind and helpful to me regarding my late father.

"I have been in conversation with the Imperial War Museum (IWM) over the last few months, regarding FEPOWs and others affected by the capitulation in Singapore and the rest of the Far-East theatre of war, plus the almost absolute connivance of the IWM, never mind HM Government, throughout the post-war period. I have finally written to the Director and two deputy directors of the IWM, commenting on this and the failure to recognise the Far-East POW, internee and native population subjected to war crimes/crimes against humanity. I enclose below my email and I'm happy to follow it up at a later date. Regards."

Mike Foster

Mike writes...

To: The Director, IWM, Kennington.

"I am writing to you regarding several issues I have with the IWM.

"1) I wrote to the IWM three weeks ago regarding the current displays/exhibitions, in response to an email advertisement for the upcoming Olive Edis Photographic Exhibition. I received an automated response, but since then have heard nothing. In my opinion, not a positive reflection on the IWM Customer Service Department.

"2) My comments in my original email were in respect of the minimal coverage of the war in the Far-East, 1939-45 or subsequent events. I visited the IWM on Sunday last and I still find it hard to reconcile that the war in Europe dominates all WW2 displays. My particular concern is that the disastrous capitulation in Singapore and the ensuing horrors meted out to FEPOWs, internees and the native populations, by both the Japanese and their Allies, is barely covered. Token pictures and references are not good enough when the descendants of the men, women and children who suffered in the period of Japanese conquest, still want adequate reflection of their ancestors' sufferings. The current images in the WW2 gallery are just that; tokenism.

"3) There is a brief reflection on the post-war 'War Crimes Trials' but that is all. We, as a nation, did not pursue

Japanese war criminals in the way the Allies in Europe pursued the Germans. Nothing is said, nothing is explained. Why not? Why can't the museum reflect on the political exigencies which caused such moral cowardice on the part of the Allies?

"4) My further comments in my earlier email were in regard to the paucity of photography of the conditions in the slave labour camps and internee camps. Even the 'celebration' of VJ-Day was not reflected on in recent VJ-Day anniversaries nor even commemoration of the fall of Singapore. Obviously in-house exhibitions were limited by the then pandemic situation, but was there any on-line commemoration? I know many at the time of the capitulation/surrender were aghast and wanted to forget about Britain's biggest military failure, but surely in 2021 people are more alert to the nuances and repercussions of the disaster?

"5) In 2025, it is the 80th anniversary of the surrender of the Japanese. Are there plans afoot to celebrate this event or, in the niceties of diplomacy, are we once again to be fobbed off by some palliative display? We are quite rightly willing to celebrate the horrors of the Holocaust and display writings, photography and film recognising the crimes against humanity perpetrated in Nazi Europe. The Germans have taken it on themselves to teach about it both in schools and in public displays. Can we not do the same thing for the forgotten victims of the Japanese, or is this asking too much of our national institutions?

"I have copied this letter to the curators at the IWM, and to COFEPOW. My final comments are these - do we really only want a 'Ladybird Books' version of the horrors of war in whatever sphere of conflict we were or are involved in? The Holocaust exhibitions show that we don't. The WW2 gallery shows, in my opinion, that we do want to simplify and gloss over the horrors which occurred. As an aside, I also think the current 'Northern Ireland: The Troubles' exhibition, falls into the category of bowdlerisation and trivialisation of a conflict which was so close to home and affected and still affects many people. I'm afraid I, and several friends and family, felt it glossed over what was, and is still, a horror not yet resolved. Yes, it appeals to casual, possibly non-British/Irish tourists but beyond that, it was fairly innocuous. Yours sincerely,"

Michael Foster.

Excerpts from IWM DG's response

Michael received a response to his letter of 28th August, with a letter of 8th September, from the Director-General of the IWM, Lambeth Road, London.

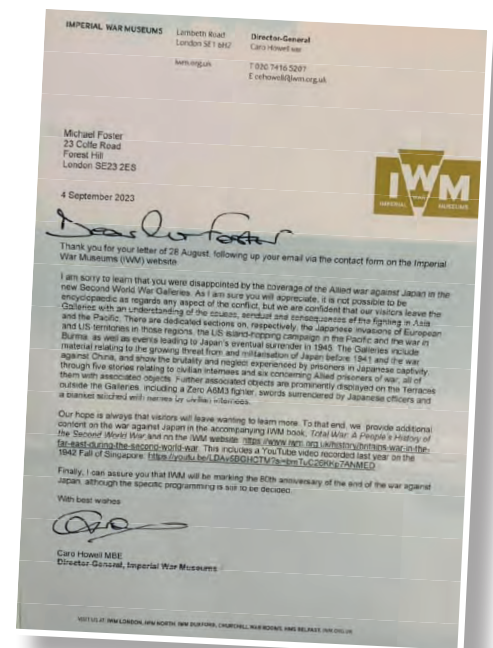
Excerpts are printed below.

"Dear Mr Foster

Thank you for your letter of 28th August. I am sorry to learn that you were disappointed by the coverage of the Allied war against Japan in the new Second World War Galleries. As I am sure you will appreciate, it is not possible to be encyclopaedic as regards any aspect of the conflict, but we are confident our visitors leave....with an understanding of the causes, conduct and consequences.the Galleries.....show the brutality and neglect experienced by prisoners in Japanese captivity through five stories relating to civilian internees and six concerning Allied prisoners of war..... with associated objects. Further....objects displayed on the Terraces include a Zero....fighter, swords and a blanket stitched with names by....internees. Our hope is that visitors will leave wanting to learn more. To that end we provide additional content.... in the accompanying IWM book....and on the IWM website. This includes a YouTube video recorded last year on the 1942 Fall of Singapore....

"Finally, I can assure you that IWM will be marking the 80th anniversary of the end of the war, although specific programming is still to be decided. With best wishes

Caro Howell MBE
Director-General, Imperial War Museum"



Important information about 2023 COFEPOW membership - payments and renewals

After reviewing the current membership payment schemes, it's been decided that the process should be slimmed down to make it more manageable for members, the Membership Secretary and the Treasurer. Currently, the charity has a number of payment methods, namely cheque, PayPal, BACs and the online system, via the COFEPOW website. So many forms of payment are making the process of tracking payments much more difficult.

For this year's membership payments, there will just be two payment methods available, either by cheque or the online system via the COFEPOW website. Some members may already have automatic payments set up with their bank or through a PayPal account, so any payment that comes via these routes will be refunded. **The trustees would ask members that have previously paid by BACs or PayPal therefore, to please cancel these automatic payments and make payment only by cheque or the online system.**

Those that have already paid this year on the new system need do nothing, as payment will be automatically taken on the 12 month's anniversary of the payment you made this year. You needn't make a payment on 1st August as it will be taken automatically when your renewal is due.

So, for example, if you paid on 18th September 2022, a payment will be taken on 18th September 2023. You will remain a fully paid up member until your fees are due for renewal on the new system. Even if you didn't make payment until early this year, your renewal will not be due until the date you paid your fees this year.

For those paying by cheque, please make payment to 'COFEPOW' and post to the Membership Secretary, Karen Brown, 14 Ridgicroft, Ashton under Lyne, OL7 9TG. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Karen on 07935

312349 (email: cofepow.membership@gmail.com) as she will be able to help you.

Make sure that, whichever of the two methods of payment you take, please pay promptly and in full - £15 single and £21 joint membership. If you wish to make a donation, please use the side bar, on the COFEPOW home page, and click on Donations, then Make a Donation. Any money donated to COFEPOW goes towards the maintenance of the FEPOW Memorial Building, the Hell-Ships Garden, the Changi Lychgate and will shortly include the FEPOW Grove, the Thai/Burma Railway and the Sumatra Railway memorials, all of which can be found at the NMA, including other projects around the UK. Donations also help fund all commemorative services.

Please also note- all FEPOWs, civilian internees, spouses and widows are not required to pay for their membership.

Testimonial from a former Membership Secretary!

Chris Wills was delighted to receive an email from former Membership Secretary, Beryl Canwell, who had just asked about renewing her membership fee using the new online system.

Chris advised her...

"Hi Beryl - if you can join/renew online, it will make things so much simpler in the future. I believe the Membership Officer and Treasurer are going to stop the BACs as well, as it causes so many problems."

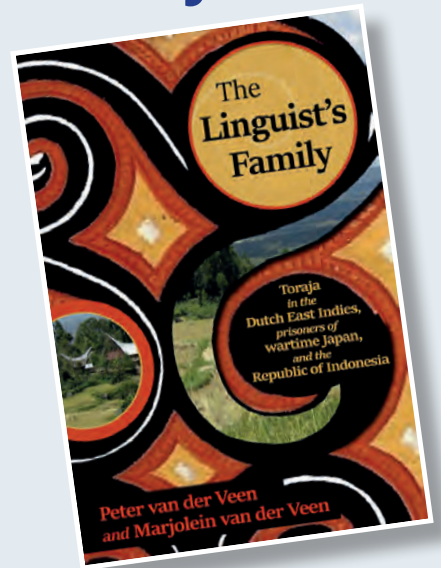
"Some people who pay by Paypal pay their subs and then a few weeks down the line, recall the payment. This means we have a member to all intents and purposes who has paid but in the end, hasn't. That's a despicable thing to do to a charity!"

Beryl replied...

"Hi Chris - Just paid our subs, Chris - so simple to do! How we would love to have had that system in our day! LOL."

"It's called progress!"

'The Linguist's Family'



A new work which reveals life in internment in the Dutch East Indies during the Japanese occupation, co-written by Peter van der Veen and daughter Marjolein van der Veen.

This fascinating new book, launched in May of this year, tells the story of a Dutch family living in the Far-East, who supported Indonesian independence and describes an essential chapter in the Asia-Pacific War and subsequent decolonisation.

Marjolein helped her father write the book, which details in part his internment in Japanese concentration camps in the former Dutch East Indies. Chapters include information on the notorious Fukuoka 2 POW camp in Nagasaki, where Peter's older brother was held captive and lost his life.

Peter's parents lived in Tana Toraja, then in the Dutch East Indies. His father, Dr. Hendrik van der Veen, was a linguist specialising in Indonesian languages. Peter grew up at his family's mission post near Rantepao and survived five Japanese internment camps after the occupation, including the Tjitjalengka railroad camp.

The family suffered irreparable losses and left for Europe after the war, although Dr. van der Veen returned alone in 1946 to finish his translation of the Bible. More about the book can be found at: <https://electromagneticprint.com/van-der-veen>

Available on Kindle or in paperback. See website as shown above for details.

The two principal objectives of COFEPOW

The objectives of the charity are:

B1: To provide and maintain a Memorial in memory of all British Servicemen and civilians who were prisoners of war in South-East Asia under Japanese occupation during World War II.

B2: To advance the education of the public about prisoners of war in South-East Asia whilst under Japanese occupation during World War II from 1941 - 1945.

Perfect gifts and fitting mementoes

A comprehensive selection of quality COFEPOW branded merchandise, priced competitively to help the charity.

1. Blue pen with logo



2. 'Poems of Hope' - an anthology of over 80 poems written by FEPOWs both whilst in POW camps or once home, or by family members since.



3. 30mm diameter 75th anniversary of VJ Day commemorative enamel pin badge in blue velvet presentation box



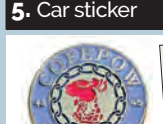
4. VJ70 mug



5. Car sticker



6. Tie clip



7. Lapel badge



8. Badge



9. Badge



11. Note holder



10. Key ring



12. Trolley coin

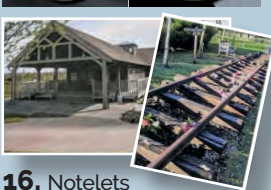


13. VJ70 Medallion



14. Tie

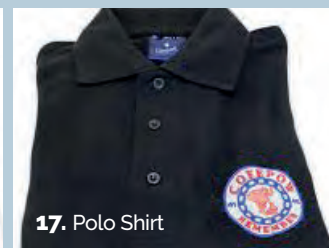
15. Cloth shopping bag
37cm (14½") x 47cm (16") cloth



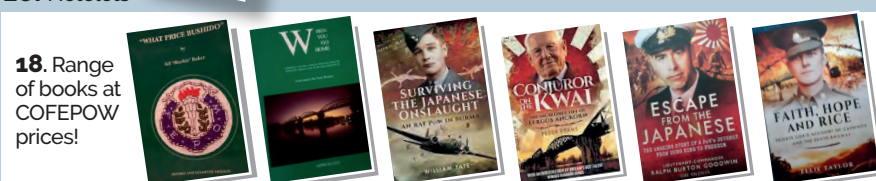
16. Notelets



17. Polo Shirt



17. Polo Shirt



18. Range of books at COFEPOW prices!

Merchandising Officers, Sylvie and Nick Bullen-Bell, would like to thank all members who have purchased COFEPOW merchandise, to wear or use with pride, and all those who have made additional donations to the charity throughout the year.

Through your generosity, a substantial quantity of merchandise is being sold every year to help COFEPOW funds.

A further big thank you to all those who add a donation (however big or small) to the COFEPOW funds when they make their merchandise purchase. Every penny donated helps the charity.

Take a look at the range of COFEPOW branded merchandise alongside, where you'll find everything from small everyday items such as keyrings and trolley coins, right up to polo shirts, shopping bags and beautifully-bound anthologies of FEPOW poetry.

Details of ordering/payment methods for all merchandise, including Paypal and overseas postage costs, can be obtained by emailing Nick or Sylvie at: tickles.sbb@gmail.com, or phone 01245 222 604/mobile 07721 067501. Information is also available on the COFEPOW website at www.cofepow.org.uk For general information or if you would like to submit ideas for merchandise which we are always happy to receive, please also email us.

Items shown are not to scale.

Current merchandise price list

ITEM		Price	P&P	
1.	Blue pen with logo and website	£1.00	£0.88	
2.	FEPOW Poetry Anthology book	£11.99	£3.00*	
3.	Special VJ Day 75 pin badge	£4.00	£3.10	
4.	VJ 70 Mugs	£8.50	£3.10	
5.	Car Sticker	£1.00	£0.65	
6.	Tie clip	£3.00	£0.88	
7.	Lapel Pin Badge	£2.00	£0.88	
8.	Woven COFEPOW Badge	£3.50	£0.65	
9.	Poppy Woven Badge	£2.50	£0.65	
10.	Key ring, fob	£3.50	£0.88	
11.	Note Holder	£2.50	£0.88	
12.	Trolley coin	£3.25	£0.88	
13.	VJ70 Medallion	£7.50	£3.10	
14.	Tie	£12.99	£0.88	
15.	Cloth Shopping bag 14.5" x 16"	£2.50	£0.88	
16.	Pack of 10 Notelets, inc. envelopes	£2.50	£0.88	
17.	Unisex Polo shirts (B/W) M, L, XL.	£16.00	£3.10	
18.	BOOKS - Title			
	'When You Go Home'/Arthur Lane	£5.00	£3.10	
	'What Price Bushido'/Alf Baker	£5.00	£3.10	
		List Price	COFEPOW	
	'Conjuror on the Kwai'	£9.99	£3.50	£3.10
	'Surviving the Japanese Onslaught'	£19.99	£6.50	£3.10
	'Faith, Hope and Rice'	£19.99	£6.50	£3.10
	'Escape from the Japanese'	£19.99	£6.50	£3.10

*P&P in Europe £6.00, elsewhere £10.00.

New members



DATA PROTECTION: please read the following carefully:

COFEPOW only publishes details of new members in this quarterly newsletter. Each new member is given the option on the application form to stipulate that their personal address/telephone/email details are not included in the listing. If you are happy for your details to be included in the newsletter when you join, your local Area Co-ordinator will also be informed within their region. Each Co-ordinator is conversant with data protection legislation and your details are not shared again. Only officers of the charity will have access to this information going forward and all information is protected in accordance with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). Any bylines, credits and contact details within articles and features are included with the originators' approval.

Submissions invited for second 'Poems of Hope'

In 2019, the trustees of COFEPOW initiated a drive to collate as many poems written by FEPOWs and their families as possible, to create an anthology of poetry. The collection featured over 80 poems, many of which were written during captivity, or were based on recollections or emotions experienced by close family since the war.

A second volume is being assessed for viability and is hoped to contain not only poetry by captives, but also stories, and thoughts or memories of loved ones in poetry form.

Merchandising Officers, Nick and Sylvie Bullen-Bell are asking for contributions of any new or freshly discovered poetry to be included. Any originals will be returned, but in the interests of protecting family heirlooms, they would prefer if rewritten or typed contributions could be submitted.

If you would like to provide any poems, please contact them at the merchandise office by emailing: tickles.sbb@gmail.com, phone 01245 222 604/mobile 07721 067501.

Information will also be available on the COFEPOW website in due course, at www.cofepow.org.uk

NAME	LOCATION	EMAIL
Graham Smith FEPOW - Father	Coalville, Leicestershire Leslie George Smith	graham.smith117no@gmail.com 35th LAA 78th Battery, RA.
Jonathan Bradshaw FEPOW - Wife's Grandfather	Ontario, Canada Frederick George Clare	jonathanrbradshaw@hotmail.com 9th JAT Regiment
Martin Willoughby and Judy Willoughby FEPOW - Uncle	Wareham, Dorset Henry Charles Lee -	martin@eastcote.go-plus.net 85th Anti Tank Regiment, RA
Alison Grace FEPOW - Grandfather	Amesbury, Wiltshire Patrick Dunleavy	at93jj@gmail.com RAMC
Melissa Jane Fensom FEPOW - Father and First Cousin 2xremove	Ipswich, Suffolk William George Emuss Charles Wilfred Tortice	melfensom1@gmail.com Royal Norfolks - 5th Battalion As above
John Williams FEPOW - Father	Ipswich, Suffolk Jack Ronald Williams	ella.francesca.williams@gmail.com Royal Corps of Signals
Brian Spittle FEPOW - Great Grandad	Illinois, USA Ronald John Spittle	brianjspittle@gmail.com RAMC
Col. Robert Lucas FEPOW - Father	Beaconsfield, Bucks Bob Lucas	rob@ledborough.com Royal Artillery
Irene Watson FEPOW - Father	Port Seton, Scotland George Watson	watsonthomson@aol.com -
Fuyuko Nishisato FEPOW - Research	Tokyo, Japan Madsen Kokjer	fuyuchild@outlook.com -
Revd Richard Brooker and Tina Brooker FEPOW - Grandfather	Solihull, West Midlands Wilson David Thomas	richbrooker@hotmail.co.uk Royal Artillery, 137 Field Rgt.
Alison Long FEPOW - Uncle	Poulton le Fylde, Lancs Douglas Leece	alison.rasmus@googlemail.com Royal Air Force
Joe Brennan FEPOW - Uncle	Bolton, Lancs George Brennan	joe959@icloud.com Royal Engineers
Julie Aldridge FEPOW - Father	London John Wilbye Benson White	jfaldridge@btinternet.com 88th Field Regiment
Rodney Albert Martin FEPOW - Father	Victoria, Australia Albert William Martin	ramartin46@optusnet.com.au 80 Anti-tank Regiment, RA
Gillian Eason FEPOW - Great Uncle	Kirkliston, Scotland Thomas Robertson	theeasons@btinternet.com RAMC
Michele Dance FEPOW - Father	Bournemouth, Dorset R F Hosier	michelebrett63@yahoo.co.uk RAF
Paul Griffiths FEPOW - Father	Solihull, West Midlands Walter Griffiths	paul.b.griffiths@gmail.com Unsure
Christopher Shilton FEPOW - Great Uncle - Great Uncle	Fulwood, Preston Austin Waring Ewart Gladstone Waring	chrisshilton@icloud.com Royal Corps of Signals Royal Corps of Signals
Judith Evelyn Relf FEPOW - Grandfather	Flitwick, Bedfordshire Donald Maitland	judith_fisher@talk21.com 6th Battalion, Royal Norfolks
Kay Harbird FEPOW - Father-in-law	Iver, Buckinghamshire James Albert Harbird	rogerwazzo48@btinternet.com Lanarkshire Yeomanry, RA

Patrons, trustees, members, officers and officials.

COFEPOW: Children, Families and Friends of the Far East Prisoners of War, incorporating FEPOW. Registered address: 3 Blossom Way, Little Billing, Northampton NN3 9ET. Tel: 07930 960241. email: cofepow.chairman@gmail.com Website: www.cofepow.org.uk Registered charity, number 1074474.

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and **CHRISTINE WILLS** email: chriswills5071@gmail.com Chairman and interim Secretary: **DAVID BREDE** email: cofepow.chairman@gmail.com

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Head of Research: **KEITH ANDREWS** email: scubaka@yahoo.co.uk Honorary Life President: **CAROL COOPER**.

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Area Co-ordinator Officer: **ALEXANDRA METCALFE-HUME** email: ametcalfehume@gmail.com Far-East Travel Adviser: **MARTIN PRECHNER** email: roquefort44@hotmail.com

Membership Officer: **KAREN BROWN** email: cofepow.membership@gmail.com M: 07935 312349. Membership fee per annum: **£15** per person, or **£21** per joint membership.

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The FEPOW Memorial Building Archives at the NMA are open to visitors by arrangement. If you would like access to the material held there, you must be accompanied by a COFEPOW officer. If you would like to visit, on a Sunday preferably, please arrange with Keith Andrews. Head of Research, on 01530 450621. Thank you.

Area Coordinators. Please note: the list of Area Co-ordinators is provided to facilitate access to a local group for members. The trustees are also anxious to recruit Co-ordinator volunteers for overseas, and for regions in the UK not covered below, particularly in Beds, Bucks, Herts, Staffs, Warwicks, Wilts, West Hants, East Somerset and Yorks., where we enjoy existing groups which no longer have a Co-ordinator. If you have a Co-ordinator near you, they would welcome you making contact, with a view to meeting and sharing knowledge and memories about your FEPOWs.

Area	Name	Email
1. Birmingham and the Black Country	Annette Hughes	cranedriver1964@live.com
2. Derbyshire	John Rutherford	ukJoruth27@gmail.com
3. Devon and Cornwall	David and Val Warner	davalofcedartree@gmail.com
4. Dorset	Ann Whiteside	louisewhiteside7426@gmail.com
5. Essex	Nick Bullen-Bell	bullenbell@btinternet.com
6. Gloucestershire	Diane Vear	dianevear@yahoo.co.uk
7. Greater Manchester and east Cheshire	<i>New vacancy</i>	<i>Please apply to David Brede, Chair.</i>
8. Herefordshire and the Wye Valley	Kerry Bird	hanjoem@gmail.com
9. Kent	Brian Faulkner	faulkner2021@btinternet.com
10. Leicestershire	Shirley Barnes	shirleyb60@virginmedia.com
11. Lincolnshire	Hazel Taylor	hazel.taylor@yahoo.co.uk
12. Merseyside and Lancashire	Colin Coleman	colin.colemanuk@mac.com
13. New Zealand	Hilary Cunningham	hilarycunningham1@gmail.com
14. Norfolk	Thelma Johnson	tjohnson4@btinternet.com
15. Northamptonshire	David Brede	davidbrede@yahoo.com
16. Oxfordshire	Mike Clarke	mikejclarke27@hotmail.com
17. Scotland	Jackie Sutherland	skyscape96@gmail.com
18. South Wales	Tony Jukes	bajukes@tiscali.co.uk
19. Surrey	Una Price	trryroger@aol.com
20. West Sussex	Elizabeth Hallett	wscfepow@gmail.com
21. Yorkshire	<i>New vacancy</i>	<i>Please apply to David Brede, Chair.</i>
22. USA (East coast)	Jan Slimming	jslimming@comcast.net
23. USA (West coast)	Sharon Cusumano	lestweforget1941@gmail.com

Donations can be made to COFEPOW via cheque or transfer. See above.



Help and information

While researching personal information, members below have accumulated data which they are happy to pass on and share with others. They are as follows:

Amanda Johnson: Haruku/Ambon and Moluccas (Spice Islands) email: amanda@dcodetranslations.co.uk

Agnes Dougan: 155th (Lanarkshire Yeomanry) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery. email: agnes.dougan@live.com

Jean Roberts: 3rd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Saigon Party. email: jeanadrianroberts@gmail.com

Steve Mockridge: Jesselton, Sandakan and Kuchin. email: smockridge@sky.com

Keith Andrews: Singapore Coast Regiments and A.A. Artillery and Thailand. email: scubaka@yahoo.co.uk

Colin Docketty: Rabaul and Ballale Island.

Frank Clark: Saigon. email: paghamfrank@talktalk.net

Thailand-Burma Railway Centre: All things related to the Thai-Burma railway. email: admin@tbronline.com

Address: Thailand-Burma Railway Museum, Kanchanaburi, Thailand: www.tbronline.com

Derek Lawson: Deaths in captivity. email: lawsonderek@hotmail.com

Michael Hurst MBE: Director, Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society. email: society@powtaiwan.org Web: www.powtaiwan.org

Hong Kong: Tony Banham, email: tony@hongkongwardiary.com Web: hongkongwardiary.com

David Tett: The subject of 'mails'. Also: www.fepowmail.com may be useful

Welfare Grants: Grants are available from the FEPOWs' Central Welfare Fund for all FEPOWs, wives and widows. It covers hospital stays, carers, care homes, sheltered accommodation, etc.

For further information contact: **Margaret Martin** of the Java FEPOW Club, email: enquiries@thejavafepowclub42.org

or **Pauline Simpson** of NFFWRA, email: pauline761@btinternet.com