

The magnificent VJ80 weekend of events was a fitting celebration of the end of the sacrifice made by the brave men and women who served in the Far East during WWII. Inside - your photographic memento...

32 page  
80th anniversary  
special issue.

# CoFEPOW Quarterly

## VJ Day 80 marked by a new commitment



*Over 450 attend the service at Lichfield cathedral.*



*COFEPOW trustee David Brown, shakes hands with His Majesty the King.*



*Families and friends gather outside the Memorial Building.*



*Wreaths laid at the FEPOW Memorial Grove service.*

### Historic VJ Day 80th anniversary souvenir edition.

COFEPOW Quarterly is the official newsletter of the Children, Families and Friends of the Far-East Prisoners of War and FEPOW Associations. It is a review magazine which informs members of events and opinions expressed over the previous three-month period. COFEPOW is a charity, registered in England, no. 1074474. Please visit the COFEPOW website at [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk) and our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/cofepow](http://www.facebook.com/cofepow) for regular updates.

# Eighty years since victory was gained.



## VJ Day Chair's Notes

Well, what a weekend we had! The events on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday of VJ Day 80 exceeded all my expectations. Also, for a select few, there was an additional event on the Thursday at No 10, courtesy of the Prime Minister, which will be reported on separately by one of the attendees. We were blessed by fine weather throughout the weekend, so all was set fair for an amazing time. The best thing about the commemoration on Friday was that so many veterans were able to get there, take part and be greeted by the King and Prime Minister. Clearly, the fly-pasts were spectacular, but what about the doves?

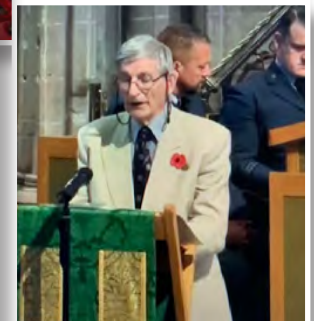
If anything depicted the hopes and dreams of the FEPOWs as they languished in misery at the hands of their captors, this did. So, very many thanks to the RBL and DCMS for the hard work in planning it out and a cast of hundreds from the armed forces, RBL again and so many others who made it possible.

The event at Lichfield Cathedral was for me very dignified and respectful. You cannot fault the venue for the peace and solemnity it gives to the event. So, many thanks to the staff and volunteers of the cathedral, but most of all to hard-working Chris Wills, who planned this brilliant event.

On to the AGM and I was impressed by the large attendance and the quality and understanding of the debates on the various issues shown by members. This really helps the trustee team to understand the issues better and reassures us that we are making the right decisions, in particular those to improve the deal with the NMA regarding the future care and maintenance of the Building and other memorials. The work on the Thai/Burma Railway delivered in spades, as it was the location of so many interviews and reports, and looked brilliant with the flowers decorating the track for added effect.

Looking ahead we have the Cenotaph on November 9th, for which we have a full contingent, plus a few reserves, and then at the Southampton waterfront on the 18th, to commemorate the FEPOWs who returned home to that port, including my father.

**David Brede**  
COFEPOW Chair



His Majesty King Charles III and Queen Camilla with Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and a number of dignitaries from around the country, led the nation in commemorating the 80th anniversary of VJ Day and the end the Second World War, at a truly special Remembrance Service on 15th August at the NMA. The event was hosted by the Royal British Legion and Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

On the Saturday and Sunday, COFEPOW presented its own series of commemorative events, which were unanimously voted a huge success by all who attended.

Whether visiting or taking part, no-one could fail to be impressed by the dedication and commitment to honour all those who endured unimaginable hardships in the Far East during the war, and those whose suffering, both physical

and mental, continued for the remainder of their lives.

Collectively, the weekend was a spectacular tribute. The service and speeches were both moving and highly charged, and all were given extensive live coverage by the BBC and broadcast across the world.

A significantly large number, estimated to be over 500, attended the special COFEPOW service at the impressive Lichfield Cathedral on Saturday 16th. Rather than describe it here, Event Co-ordinator, Chris Wills would refer all readers to the video made of the Service at the following link: <https://youtube.com/live/AphsdCNU8Zo>

On the Saturday evening, members and guests met in the dining facility at the NMA, to enjoy a lavish meal, with a chance to meet and chat

*Continued on next page...*

# Three days of remembrance.



## Remembrance Day Service and Parade. Whitehall, 2025.



The Royal British Legion has provided COFEPOW with 50 tickets for the Whitehall Service and Parade on Remembrance Day in November, and at time of going to press, all are taken up. However, there may be cancellations between now and November 9th, so please still apply, in case. Anyone related to a FEPOW will be allowed to march, but please note that if we don't take up our quota of tickets, the quantity provided will be reduced the following year.

If you would like to be considered for a ticket if any arise, please inform David Brede, COFEPOW Chair, by post at 3, Blossom Way, Little Billing, Northants NN3 9ET, by email at [cofepow.chairman@gmail.com](mailto:cofepow.chairman@gmail.com) or by phone on 07930 960241.

Please include in your message, your connection/relationship to the FEPOW you wish to represent. Tickets received have been distributed on a first come, first served basis. The procession along Whitehall is scheduled for **Sunday November 9th**. As the event has now returned to its regular form, please be aware that:

- Those who wish to attend must be on Whitehall by 9.00am: 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 usually dismissed at about 12.45 p.m.
- Once COFEPOW is able to confirm the number of tickets and allocate them, personal details have to be submitted to the RBL for security checks.
- Tickets are strictly non-transferable as they are issued to people by name and proof of ID will be required.



to, or reacquaint with, and compare stories. Of course, all present were mindful of the original purpose and objective of the COFEPOW charity - to remember and to educate.

On the following day, the agenda continued with the Annual General Meeting of COFEPOW, at which over 100 members gathered to hear of progress within the charity during the year. The AGM concluded at a little after midday, at which time attendees could join the many other visitors and convene at the FEPOW Memorials for a short service of remembrance and wreath-laying.

Guests then ambled back to the Aspects Conference Suite, for an



invitation-only lunch, followed by a series of awards made to volunteers.

### **Pictures on page 2:**

*Top: Wreaths are laid at the cathedral.  
Middle left: His Majesty the King takes the salute at the NMA.  
Middle right: David Childs at the cathedral.*

**Pictures on page 3:** *Top: Standard Bearers by the Sumatra Railway. Middle: The service in the cathedral. Below left: The Red Arrows fly-past over the NMA. Below right: Guy Metcalfe-Hume lays a wreath at the Sunday service.*



*Continued from previous page...*

The AGM minutes are reported fully later in this special commemorative issue of COFEPOW Quarterly, with a number of important issues discussed and documented to give the team of trustees and officers a steer into the future.

A service at the FEPOW Memorials followed, where retiring patron and padre David Childs lead the address to well over 200 people, many of whom had to settle for standing room only. The location had been suitably decorated with appropriate materials to lend the occasion the gravitas it deserved.

Standards were raised and lowered, the bugler played the haunting tones of 'The Last Post' and a huge number of wreaths were laid at the memorial. Many attendees took a moment in the searing heat to honour all FEPOWs, and especially those within their own families.

The service was followed by a lunch for guests in the Aspects Suite, where a number of service awards and symbols of gratitude were presented.



*Continued from previous page...*

Such an event takes an enormous feat of organisational skill coupled with boundless energy. The trustees would like to express their formal thanks herewith to National Event Co-ordinator, Chris Wills, for her outstanding and, often forgotten, voluntary contribution to the two days.

**Thank you, Chris.**



**Pictures on page 4:** Top left: The Bugler, Antonio Socci. Middle left: RAF Police Sergeant Helen Dallinger and her brother, Air Cadet Sergeant James Dallinger. Bottom left: David Childs and his final address. Top right: Guests listen to the speakers. Middle right: The FEPOW Memorial Building, suitably decorated. Bottom right: Emotions run high. **Pictures on page 5:** Top left: Seated guests at the Building study the programme. Left: Japanese Tomoyo Nakao thanks the meeting. Below middle: The wreaths are laid at the memorial. Bottom left: Nick Bullen-Bell reports at the AGM in the Aspects Conference Centre. Top right: Alexandra Metcalfe-Hume, trustee and Education Officer, briefs the meeting on her path to COFEPOW. Middle right: The newly refurbished Thai/Burma railway, decorated for the event. Below right: Lunch for over 200 guests.



# Honour, respect and remembrance. With thanks for services rendered.

**Pictures on page 6:**

*Top left: Sir Henry Every hosts the evening dinner at the Aspects Suite.*



*Top right: Chris Wills and husband Alan Wills received complimentary presentation boxed pens and a huge bunch of flowers as a small token of the charity's gratitude for Chris's organisational skills.*



*Left upper: Former trustee Brian Hume receives a token of appreciation for half a lifetime of work for the charity.*



*Right upper: Graham Robertson, returning to his role as trustee and Membership Secretary is presented with a memento of his father.*



*Right lower: Retiring patron and padre David Childs receives a beautiful, inscribed plaque for his contribution to services to COFEPoW.*



*Left lower: Keith Andrews, Head of Research, receives a gift of gratitude from patron Sir Henry Every.*



*Bottom left: Brian Hume presents Steve Riley with an inscribed plaque in recognition of his work on the quarterly newsletter and the two 'Poems of Hope' anthologies.*



*Bottom right: David Childs offers his thanks to the trustees and in his brief speech states that he should be presenting an award to the trustees, rather than the reverse!*



**Pictures on page 7:**

*Top left: The Reverend Richard Brooker reads the sermon at the cathedral on Saturday 16th. A few days earlier, he had agreed to replace the retiring David Childs as COFEPOW Padre and is looking forward to, and honoured to accept, the role.*



*Middle left: Guests enjoy the dinner on Saturday evening and listen to the speeches.*

*Bottom left: Presentations are made at the evening dinner.*

*Top right: Louise Reynolds (nee Cordingly), author of 'Echoes of Captivity' and the after dinner speaker on the Saturday evening.*



*Middle right: Sergeant Helen Dallinger, RAF Police, addresses the assembly.*



*Middle right lower: Evie Dallinger and Mum, Nicola Dallinger, both of whom did readings at the cathedral service, as they relax and enjoy the remainder of the day's events at the cathedral and the evening dinner.*



*Bottom right: Clare Smith gives a synopsis of 'The Happiness Box' as described in the Saturday service programme.*



**Note:**

All photographs selected for display here were taken over the weekend of the 80th anniversary of VJ Day and have been willingly supplied by members, the majority of which have been provided by John Rutherford and Ivor Dallinger.

The editors apologise for any variation in reproductive quality. Visitors' mobile phones and cameras can vary in resolution.

Also, should any photograph be deemed not to be covered by copyright clearance, the editors apologise and will print a full credit in the January newsletter. Thank you to all.



# COFEPOW and VJ80 around the country.



## COFEPOW Ilkeston VJ Day.

*Marilyn Hofmann reports on the Service at the Cenotaph in Ilkeston Marketplace on August 15th.*

"My daughter Amanda Hill and I laid out COFEPOW wreaths in memory of Marilyn's father, Pte Harry Hutchby 4861819 1st Battalion Leicester Regiment and all Far East Prisoners of War. Husband, Graham was the Standard Bearer and the service was attended by our lovely and very supportive friends at the RBL, Ilkeston and dignitaries from Erewash Borough Council.

"Very sad, as on the previous Friday 8th, around 1,000 people lined Ilkeston's streets to say goodbye to member, 110 year-old Donald Rose, who was the last living D-Day veteran and for a few months the oldest man in the UK. On VJ80 Day however, apart from ourselves, there were very few people. It breaks my heart. But never mind we were all there.

"Thank you to Chris Wills and everyone for the wonderful two days at Lichfield and the National Memorial Arboretum and for all the hard work that was put in".

## Dorset marks VJ Day 80.

*Ann Whiteside, Dorset Area Co-ordinator, reports...*

"Well, like everywhere else, it turned out to be an extremely hot day and keeping cool was the mainstay for the day.

"I'm very glad to say those that accepted the invite turned up and I'd like to say 'thank you' to them all for the

day. I worked very closely with the Royal British Legion Dorset, Ferndown Branch, and also with the people of Ferndown and the Town Council, to make it a very memorable and dignified day.

"After the service, the laying of wreaths and the minute's silence, we were invited to tea/coffee and other refreshments, to help us not to melt too much, and then on to the main event of the day, which was an afternoon tea in the local theatre. We, being the guests of honour (although it was played down) enjoyed a lovely 'spread' put on for us all. In the background, was a lovely piano, playing a medley of war songs, etc.

"We did have a photo taken of what I thought was the whole group, but four people were missing and it was unfair for them not to be in the photograph, so we decided not to submit a photograph with this article. Sorry to the folks who smiled so nicely at the time to the camera - Oh, how things have changed - to the mobile phone!

"I hope all arrived home safely with full tums and not too hot."

## VJ Day 80th at St Michaels and All Angels Church, Ford.



The 80th anniversary of VJ Day, Friday 15th August, will arouse poignant and painful memories of the many local men who died as prisoners of war of the Japanese, and the greater number who survived the camps but were permanently

affected by their experiences when they returned home.

On VJ Day, a service was held at 3.00pm at St Michael and All Angels Church in Ford Village, to remember in particular, those who served in the ill-fated 9th Battalion of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, especially the men of Z Company. Largely recruited from Berwick and nearby, these Fusiliers were captured at the fall of Singapore on 15th February 1942, just 10 days after arriving on the island.



The service also remembered those who survived and returned home but were deeply scarred by their years of constant cruelty, working as starved, slave labour on the Burma Railway and in mines and factories.

During the service the names of twenty-one local men who served in the Far East during World War II were read out, and to commemorate their memory, relatives placed a flower at the War Memorial. The sacrifices of these men must never be forgotten and the 80th anniversary of VJ Day was a fitting date to remember them.

The church service was followed by tea in Lady Waterford Hall in Ford, where some people shared vivid memories of what they were doing that day, 80 years earlier.

*J D Carnegie*



# VJ Day 80 at the Scottish National War Memorial, Edinburgh Castle.



*Scotland Area Co-ordinator, Jackie Sutherland reports...*

"On 15 August this year, I was honoured to be invited to attend the VJ Day 80 Anniversary Service at the Scottish National War Memorial, Edinburgh Castle.



"Led by the Rev. Dr. Karen Campbell, National Chaplain, The Royal British Legion Scotland, the service was a memorable event, attended by the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, veterans, heads of the army, navy and Air Force Scotland, politicians and representatives from organisations and charities including The Royal British Legion, Poppy Scotland, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), Children of Chindits and the War Widows Association.

"COFEPOW was well represented, as Jenny Martin (nee Jennifer Davidson, born Changi 1942) recounted her very early memories of the end of the war in Singapore, 1945. Further memories were stirred with video clips of 'Veterans' Voices' and readings by Charmaine McMeekin, daughter of the late Eric Lomax.



"The call for future peace as well as remembrance of the past was echoed in the choice of music, which included traditional Scottish airs. The Act of Remembrance included Binyon's Lines, the Last Post, followed by a piped lament and then The Silence.

"After the bugler piped Reveille, wreaths were laid, the first by the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. It was a great honour for me to lay the wreath on behalf of COFEPOW, particularly for those members in Scotland.

"Finally, the Book of Remembrance and the CWGC Torch for Peace were returned to safe-keeping, as the piper marched out slowly, playing a lament which faded into the distance.

"The congregation quietly dispersed, but not before exchanging memories, recounting experiences and remembering former friends and relatives".



*All images by kind permission of Legion Scotland (legionscotland.org.uk)*

## The Lanarkshire Yeomanry Group.

On 15th, a Service of Remembrance was held at the Far East Memorial at the Civic Centre, Motherwell. Provost Kenneth Duffy welcomed those present and he was followed by Lady Susan Haughey, Lord Lieutenant of Lanarkshire. Lady Haughey graphically told the story of the Forgotten Army and those who had been held in POW Camps. Her own father had been held in one of the worst camps on Sumatra.

The Address was given by the

Rev. Bryce Calder, who opened by reciting the Kohima Epitaph.

Fr. Bill Bergin, a former Army Chaplain, who is now with Motherwell Diocese, spoke of the importance that love has in our lives and of all the things that FEPOWs tried to do for each other.



### Sunday 17th August.

On Sunday 17th August, a Service to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VJ Day was held at the St. Brigid's Centre, Newmains. More than 100 friends and relatives of former FEPOWs came along to remember their loved ones.



Colonel Ted Shields, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Lanarkshire, introduced the event with a comprehensive description of the war in the Far East and the plight of those held POW. He had travelled widely in the Far East during his military career and had met many former FEPOWs and so had a full understanding and sympathy for what the FEPOWs had experienced.

The Address was given by the Rev. Bryce Calder, a Church of Scotland Minister, who drew from his Address at the Service at Motherwell on Friday. Fr. Bergin focussed on the importance of love in our lives. He referred again to the POWs' love for each other in spite of everything else they had to endure,

of how friendship and little acts of kindness meant so much to them. He commented, "We are standing on the shoulders of giants", a statement which was appreciated



by all. Following the Service of Remembrance, a presentation told the individual stories of some of those who had experienced the horrors of the war in the Far East, members of whose families were present on the day.

# VJ Day 80th - 15th August 2025 Plymouth Remembers.

*Lisa De Lar reports on the day in Plymouth...*

"On a hot and humid day in Plymouth, VJ Day 80th Anniversary was remembered firstly with the National two minutes' silence at the Rowan Tree of Peace before wreaths were laid. The FEPOW wreath was laid by Arie, our FEPOW survivor, before all of the members planted crosses and laid flower tributes in memory of their families. Wreaths were also laid from various associations.

"The memorial service in the Minster Church of St. Andrew was led by Lay Reader David Huntley, attended by the FEPOW families, Deputy Lieutenant of Devon, Brigadier Simon Young CBE, accompanied by Mrs Sarah Young, High Sheriff of Devon, Mrs Caroline Harlow, Armed Forces Commander of Operations Major General Rich. Cantrill OBE MC RM, Lord Mayor of Plymouth Cllr. Kathy Watkin, Captain of the Naval Base Iain Ritchie RN, WO1 Steve Harvey RN, WO1 (RSM) Stef Spink RA, Major ATD Chu 2IC RE Royal Monmouthshire Militia, Maj. Tim. Harnett Officer, Commanding 100 Field Squadron (Militia), OC Cdr. Alison Burgess QARNNS and WO1 RSM Stephanie Reed JHGSW.

"Major Simon Roles RM and Sgt James Johnston RM, both of 30Cdo RM Stonehouse, were a fantastic help with the planning of the marching contingent and the Candle Bearers from the Royal Navy from HMS Drake, Royal Marines from RMR Bristol, Army from RE Royal Monmouthshire Militia and the RAF from JHGSW (Joint Hospital Group South West). Extra RN and Army personnel also came from JHGSW.

"Two FEPOW Sons, John and Dave, carried the VJ Day wreath ahead of the VIP procession down the aisle and placed it on the altar table ready to start the memorial service.

"Members of the serving Armed Forces who had given up their summer



leave to take part in the Act of Remembrance were very much appreciated by us all. We know that at a moment's notice our Armed Forces can be called away to anywhere across the globe, so to have them attend VJ Day was extra special and they were able to represent their past members of the military who took part in the Far East.

"For the Act of Remembrance, music played as candles were carried by Arie, our child civilian prisoner of war, and by the members of all of the branches of

piece called "Plymouth Argylls". FEPOW Granddaughter Lisa delivered a heartfelt thank you to the congregation explaining why as family members we continue to remember VJ Day every year.



"A DVD showing photos of the military and civilians in the Far East with music which was appreciated and thought provoking for all. A lesson for those who never had a full understanding of VJ Day.

"Once the service was completed we joined together at the Rowan Tree of Peace where Deputy Lieutenant of Devon, Brigadier Simon Young CBE laid the VJ Day wreath and took the salute,



the Armed Forces which were placed on the altar table. This included the medical profession represented by JHSWG. Thank you to Deputy Parade Marshall Peter Clark for all his help.

"A poem called "Out In the Far East" and written by Former Royal Marine David Lilburn MBE was delivered by FEPOW son John. The High Sheriff of Devon, Mrs Caroline Harlow carried out a reading whose Dad was also in the Far East. FEPOW Granddaughter Abi read lines from 'The Fallen' by Laurence Binyon, followed by the Last Post & Reveille played by members of the Maritime Corps of Drums. A lone Piper played a



followed by the Lord Mayor of Plymouth Cllr Kathy Watkin. After the wreaths were laid, VIP's and Guests travelled to the Crowne Plaza Hotel where they awaited the Armed Forces Marching Military Contingent. Drummers from the Maritime Corps of Drums lead the Standard Bearers with an Armed Forces Marching Contingent from the RN JHGSW, RMR Bristol, Army from Royal Monmouthshire Militia RE. RN, RAF and the Medical branch from JHGSW. Keeping them in check and marching with them were Sgt. James  
*Continued on next page...*



Johnston RM and Deputy Parade Marshall Peter Clark. All gave up their time freely to be a part of this very important date.

"The Salute was taken by Deputy Lieutenant of Devon, Brigadier Simon Young CBE: FEPOW Plymouth would like to thank Simon for his many years of support to VJ Day as he takes retirement after attending every year. He will certainly be missed and I know he has always kept me on my toes. Good Luck and we wish you well. Also taking the salute were Major General Rich Cantrill and Lord Mayor of Plymouth Cllr Kathy Watkin. Amongst the line up were Iain Ritchie RN, WO1 Steve Harvey, Major Simon Roles, Stef Spink, Major ATD Chu and Maj Tim. Harnett.



"I must give a big thank you to FEPOW Family Donations, Roselyn Coaches of Devon & Cornwall, RNRMC & Greenwich Hospital, Babcock International, Plymouth City Cllrs, from their Community Grant, Carol Ney, Sally Haydon, Jon Dingle, Josh McCarty, Pauline Murphy, Neil Hendy, Paul McNamara, Jaime Bannerman, Mary Aspinall, Angela Penrose, Tudor Evans, Sally Cresswell, Chris Penberthy, Andy Lugger, Mark Coker, to Plymouth City Centre, Morrisons and the Federation of Plymouth & District Ex Services Association. A celebration took place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel with live entertainment from Timeless. The Hummingbirds, Alison Moyna and Ocean City Sound. Thanks go to everyone who attended and although it was hot, we kept in our hearts and thoughts what our families went through out in the Far East, where they could not receive comfort from the heat."

**Lisa De Lar.**

## Nairn VJ Day 80.

On 15th August 2025 the Royal British Legion held an 80-year commemoration service at the Nairn War Memorial, attended by Lord Lieutenant George Asher, Provost Laurie Fraser and Nairn RBL President and Colonel (Retired) R. Towns. The Reverend Edward Andrews, Church of Scotland, presided over the event with all other churches represented, and the RBLA standard bearers Johnathan Brookes and Richard Paxton flanked the memorial.



A number of local people attended, some of whom were direct descendants of survivors, one being Jane Stuart who had been instrumental in organising the event. Both Jane and her late husband Roland Stuart were thanked for their extensive research into survivors and those who had lost their lives, which included two young local Nairn men. The FEPOW prayer and Ode to Remembrance were read by Jane whose father Arthur Williamson, Royal Marines, had survived his captivity. Jane was supported by her son Christopher Stuart, her brother Neil Williamson (Veterans) and Rachel Williamson her sister-in-law, a still serving soldier of 23 years. They were joined by other COFEPOW (Children of the Far East Prisoners of War) Kirsten Forbes and her Aunt Malvinas Taylor. A full tribute was given by Col R. Towns, who read out the names of FEPOWS commemorated on the war memorial.



Wreaths were laid by Lord Lieutenant George Asher, Provost Laurie Fraser on behalf of the Highland Council, by Colonel R. Towns on behalf of the RBL, Janet Stuart daughter of FEPOW Kirsten Forbes, and her Aunt Malvinas and Neil Williamson and Christopher Stuart.

A 2-minute silence was observed, followed by the piper who played a lament, after which everyone moved to the VJ Tree in the legion grounds, where a new plaque was unveiled by Jane and her son Christopher.

The attendees then went to the Legion building, where refreshments were provided and stories shared.

## Swaffham Remembers.



Chris and Alan Wills were visiting friends in Norfolk. Whilst enjoying a coffee in Swaffham, they spotted these wreaths. Wandering over to investigate, they saw the memorial to the FEPOWs and so just had to take the pictures!

# VJ Day across the generations.



*During the August 17th AGM meeting, and following Alexandra Metcalfe-Hume's report about the schools pin design competition, member Bec Harding was invited to express her feelings about schools participation in remembrance, and to emphasise how essential continuing to mark the occasion is.*

*Here, she tells the story of her grandfather and her daughter, and how important it is to continue remembrance through our children into the future. This short tale is particularly heartwarming and moved many at the AGM to comment afterwards.*

**Bec takes up the story...**

"I attended the commemoration at Lichfield Cathedral and the event at the NMA over the VJ Day 80 weekend and it left a profound impression on me. I was humbled and overwhelmed to finally feel that I had found my people - other children and families of FEPOWs for whom VJ Day holds the same deep significance.

"My Grandpa, Captain Arthur Geoffery Threadgold of 48th Light AA Regiment, Royal Artillery, (known affectionately within my family as 'The Big Growly Bear') was a POW for 3 and a half years in Sandakan in North Borneo. He was taken as a POW at Garoet on 08.03.1942 and was released on 11.09.1945, after being held in several places, including Kuching, Jesselton,

and Sandakan. He was one of the lucky few who returned home. But by doing so, he brought home the tremendous guilt and despair of what happened over those fateful years, to himself and to his fellow comrades.

"He devoted the rest of his life to helping the families of those who had served or been imprisoned alongside him, determined to uncover and share every possible detail about their loved ones' experiences and fates.

"He documented his experiences, and his writings are now preserved in the Imperial War Museum, serving as a valuable resource for those studying this poignant chapter of the war. He's appeared in several books, including "Prisoner of War" and "Kill the Prisoner" and was at one point, the only person in this country who was distributing the 'Kill the Prisoner' book on behalf of the author, Don Wall.



"Grandpa was deeply passionate about establishing a memorial to honour those who were imprisoned and perished in Sandakan, believing their sacrifice deserved greater recognition, especially given the broader public awareness of Burma and the railway.

"On the morning of his passing, 10 January 1999, one of the last things he was told was that his tireless campaigning had succeeded: a plaque would be erected in the Garrison Church at Larkhill Barracks, Salisbury, to honour all who had died. The dedication was unveiled on 18 April 1999.

"In 2019, I was fortunate enough to visit the plaque in person. Standing before it, I spoke with the padre about Grandpa and the powerful history behind

the memorial. It was a deeply moving experience. She told me:

"You have no idea how many people come to the church just to see the plaque - to stand quietly beside it, reflecting and remembering." It was deeply moving to know that his efforts continue to touch lives and offer a space for remembrance.



"I have photos of Grandpa around the house, and one of my most prized possessions is his paratrooper beret, a unit he re-enlisted into after the war.

"I always try my best to keep VJ Day alive and in people's minds, but had no idea how much this has been taken on by my daughter, who is only 8.

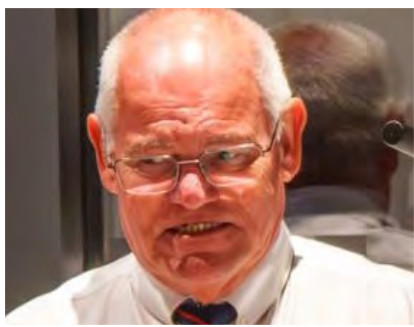
"There was an event at her school for VE Day, and the children were encouraged to dress up to commemorate VE Day, especially as it is the 80th year this year. She didn't dress up as did the other children, as she didn't want to, and as we support her to have her own thoughts and mind, we didn't push the issue and just let her go into school in her usual uniform and carried on with our day.

"At pick up time, we asked how her day had been, especially as it appeared she was one of the only children who hadn't dressed up. She said it was fine, but she'd been asked why she didn't join in the dressing up and we asked what her response was. She replied:

"I just said VE Day isn't the end of the war, and we don't do VE Day in our house, we do VJ Day!"

**Ed:** *To be applauded, don't you think?*

## Two trustees welcomed back.



COFEPOW Quarterly is delighted to report that two former trustees have returned to the board of the charity, after a number of years' break from their roles, following personal issues.

Norfolk-based Graham Robertson, who had already been encouraged to rejoin as Membership Secretary a few months ago, has, after a little pressing from other trustees, volunteered to adopt his old position as trustee too, and is already going beyond the call of duty to help source some merchandise to contribute to fund-raising activities. Top of his agenda is smoothing the transition from manual to digital membership recording.

Alan Wills also decided to take time off from the charity, but when fellow trustee, Sylvie Bullen-Bell, asked him recently when he was coming back, it set Alan off thinking about it. It didn't take long and he's now fully back on board and enjoying the process again.

Both men are wonderful assets to COFEPOW, so welcome back!



## The media pays attention.

Not only were British and Commonwealth troops out in the Far East referred to as 'the forgotten army', you might have thought the media added to that perception over the last 80 years. This time, however, it was different. BBC coverage of the VJ80 anniversary has been significant; in view of it being the 80th anniversary since the Japanese surrender, various pressure influences have been brought to bear to mark the event with equal reverence and commitment to that given to VE Day.

Firstly, on August 10th, **Antiques Roadshow** featured Fiona Bruce and the team of specialists reviewing artefacts held by FEPOW descendants. Filmed outside the FEPOW Memorial Building, the show was shot alongside the Thai/Burma and Sumatra railway exhibits and the Lych gates, all illustrated by the host.

On 13th August, the BBC's Rachel Burden spoke to remaining veterans about their memories of the Far East war and the ensuing end of the Second World War. Entitled **VJ Day 80: We Were There**, this hour-long programme featured several ex-FEPOWs and civilian internees remembering their time in Singapore, Malaya and Burma.

**Friday 15th at the NMA.** The BBC provided comprehensive coverage of the magnificent commemorative service conceived by the Royal British Legion and the DCMS.

## Mike's new poem, only one day after VJ Day 80.

Member Mike Berry was so impressed and moved by the August 15th commemorative service at the NMA, he felt instantly compelled to author a new poem to celebrate the occasion, as the event made him feel very close to his Dad. This latest poem is simply entitled "VJ Day"...

### V J DAY

*The 80 years special anniversary of VJ Day is such a poignant date  
Commemorated by an emotional event which was truly first rate.*

*What an incredible location with such a lovely and spiritual appeal  
So many wonderful military memorials to pray at and kneel.*

*Meticulous organisation and informative staff all around  
With musical tributes playing and the guests not making a sound.*

*Speeches, poems, diary quotes and memory prodding wartime songs  
VJ Day celebration at the Arboretum is just where it belongs.*

*To hear the heroic veterans talk of their tortuous and such brutal past  
Brings many tears to your eyes as the time flies by so amazingly fast.*

*To see our Monarch present there laying his wreath and giving support  
Is such a moral boosting sight and a joy to see him well I have to report.*

*The thrilling fly pasts by the Red Arrows et al was such a big thrill  
A magnificent sight of a lifetime not to forget and I am sure I never will.*

*To watch all the youngsters involved was so inspiring and nice to see  
Hopefully showing them all the real true brutal price of our victory.*

*I was so glad to attend the 80th VJ Day event as I shed many a tear  
And would most certainly recommend you all try it next year.*

*We must never forget the horrific time of man's inhumanity to man  
So we must always commemorate yearly our great Victory over Japan.*

## Why no 'fly-past' on Sunday?

*Chris Wills explains the fly-by no-show at the Sunday service...*

"I applied for the fly-past in 2024 and in November, it was agreed that we would be obtaining one. In June, a Squadron Leader called to say we'd been allocated the Dakota, but unfortunately, it was in the Duxford workshop and so all events this year to date had been cancelled. I asked if there was an alternative and was told regrettably "No", all other flights were committed to an air show on the south coast. Helen Dallinger, the RAF Sergeant who attended the weekend, tried to pull a few strings but, to no avail. So, in the end, we got nothing! Sad, but there was nothing else I could do."



# Letters

*Chris Wills received a heartwarming email from Brian Buick about the story of Tommy Doherty and his tie, carried in July's edition. Following Tommy's recent spell in hospital, he is now home and in good spirits, although a little frail. Brian wrote...*

Chris

The latest newsletter arrived today, a timely arrival as Tommy is being interviewed by the BBC tomorrow.

He was absolutely delighted/overwhelmed to see his story in the newsletter. Please pass on my thanks to all involved in its publication.

**Brian Buick**

*Chris Wills received a recent email from David Everett, regarding the COFEPOW Photo Album, featured in this newsletter on page 19.*

Chris and Alan

You'll never know the pride and pleasure I felt lately when I was able to show our daughter Joanne her grandad recently, through your excellent 'Photo Album' feature.

Thanks for making this wonderful facility available to me and so many others.

God Bless You!

**David Everett.**

## Letters from the weekend.

Dear Chris

*You - and all the team, but especially you - must be absolutely exhausted. What an incredible weekend, with organisation that undoubtedly took a huge amount of both time and energy, co-ordination with many others and so many factors.*

*You did an amazing job. Everything went well from what we could see, as attendees and the hosting by the NMA was exceptional. I have written to their head of visitor services. It was a privilege to meet and share stories with so many and even though attending as a single person*

*can be challenging at times, everyone was lovely. I do hope you can have some rest when you get home; it is so well deserved.*

*Mr Wills also deserves a mention!*

*Those who run and enable COFEPOW are a great team and long may it continue to thrive and encourage the sharing of knowledge and understanding that is so critical.*

*I met Tommy at my hotel this afternoon and was moved when she spoke over the weekend as well; she will have made many more contacts I hope. Perhaps a reminder in the next newsletter?*

*Lastly, I didn't hear/read about it until I was leaving, but the NMA has published a collection of 10 new poems to commemorate VJ Day and while I failed to 'download' them on the way out, I will be sent the link. I do hope that others were made aware of this too, as it could be of interest.*

*Thank you. An amazing success.*

**Clare Stanton**

Chris

What a heartwarming day! Thank you so much for the plaque - it was so touching and, of course, entirely unnecessary. It's already on my mantelpiece in pride of place after lugging it back to the car park! It really is a splendid thing and I am very appreciative.

By all accounts, the weekend couldn't have gone any better. We watched the events on BBC and I must admit, I think they pulled out all the stops and it's a shame prior engagements meant I couldn't accept the invitation.

By all accounts, the cathedral service was magnificent, and Sunday (17th) was excellent from minute one.

I got to meet so many people who are names only to me during my daily efforts on the newsletter, which was delightful. Everyone was so appreciative of my contribution, which is worth so much more than payment. And, by the way, the food was delicious!

Once again, Chris, thank you. It was nice that you were recognised for your work for the charity yesterday, but whatever expressions of thanks they give you, they are hardly enough. Well done you - as you say to me - "you're a star".

So good to see Alan and Graham back as trustees too.

**Steve and Lyn Riley.**

Chris and Alan,

*Chris! You are amazing, but then I'm sure you get told this many times. I'm sure that Alan is very supportive alongside you and it's good to see him back as a trustee, but I really don't think that most of the members of COFEPOW have any idea how much work is entailed in all that*



*you do and they certainly don't appreciate that you do it as a volunteer.*

*So, from the bottom of my heart I send you a huge thank you; hope you can find time to rest, too. The weekend was wonderful and I hope the membership continues to support what the trustees do to raise public awareness of all that happened in the Far East.*

*Thank you, thank you!*

**Barbara James**

Dear COFEPOW trustees,

Thank you all so very much for the framed photograph of my father and FEPOW Prayer that was presented by Sir Henry on Saturday night. It was totally unexpected and a great honour and privilege to receive such an award. It will certainly help make the VJ80 commemoration and VJ80 weekend events to remember.

I will be seeing my son and brothers next week for a long overdue get together so I will take it with me to show them.

On my computer for the first time since Thursday, 11 new enquiries already. Once again, thank you so very much.

**Keith Andrews**

Hi Chris.

*I just wanted to thank you for a wonderful day on Sunday, a day we never thought we'd have to celebrate/remember our special Dad.*

*We brought along a photo of our Dad in the army and his medals, and were able to have a photograph under the lovely arch of flowers and banner with them.*

*We met some wonderful people who had lost their relatives in the war, which has made us very grateful for the short time we felt we'd had. Thank you again.*

**Sandra Ward, daughter of Benjamin Gathercole.**

Hi Chris

I want to thank you for arranging the beautiful service at Lichfield Cathedral. It was a privilege to be there and to listen to the sermon read by Richard Booker, which my father would have heard in

Changi in August 1945. Also a real bonus was seeing the table made from the Jubilee Oak - what a stunning piece of craftsmanship.

During the service, I sat next to a lady called Claire from Devon (Dartmoor) whose father's story had many similarities to my own. I said I would send her some information, but unfortunately in the melee after the service I didn't get her surname or contact details. She said she'd been a COFEPOW member for about four years. Would you have any idea who that might be?

**Martin Prechner**

Morning Chris,

Many thanks for an excellent weekend of events. Enjoyable may be the wrong description, but certainly memorable. Once again thank you.

**Peter and Karen Burton**

Chris - So sorry for this very late email to thank you for all you have done for the perfect weekend last Saturday and Sunday. It was indeed perfect!! Thank you so much one again.

**Brian Barlow**

Chris,

A very big thank you for VJ80 events, brilliantly organised. A special weekend that will remain in memory as a real treasure. The events opened many opportunities, meeting special friends with the same interests. A couple of these I note for your interest...

We met John Rutherford and his wife Jodie, soon finding out that John was also a coordinator. He is visiting Oxford at the end of the month; we have arranged to meet. Also shared our lunch table on Sunday with Brian Hill. His father, a POW, was featured in Oct 24 & Jan 25 quarterly magazines, detailing the truth behind the massacre in Ballalae.

I did not take phone numbers, incorrectly thinking, I would obtain them from the magazines. Is it possible for you to forward brief email contact details? The father of an OXFORD COFEPOW member would have been murdered in the same Ballalae trench.

Trust you are now having a good rest with much appreciation, but not too many requests like this!

**Mike Clarke**

Dear Chris,

Thank you so much for your kind invitation to, and warm welcome at, the COFEPOW service this afternoon. It was a wonderful occasion and very moving. We were able to have a number of very interesting conversations over the coffee

afterwards and learned quite a bit about the POW situation that we didn't know before. The organisation was excellent and you must have put in a great deal of very hard work, so it was good to see how smoothly it all went.

We hope the evening dinner goes well and that tomorrow's meetings are successful.

With very best wishes,

**Ian and Sally Hayter  
(Sheriff of Lichfield)**

Chris

What a fantastic weekend at Lichfield and the Arboretum. Thank you so much for all your hard work in arranging such an emotional and memorable weekend. It really was first class. It was a wonderful turnout and so good to talk to so many COFEPOW members. Also the NMA was exceptional and the dinner and lunch were excellent. We had a lovely stroll around the Arboretum after the lunch was over. It is such a wonderful peaceful place. Thank you again for all your hard work.

**Myra Beczkowicz**

My father was George William (Bill) Shuker, Royal Airforce 84 Squadron, taken captive in Java. I wasn't sure who to contact in your organisation to express my appreciation for the wonderful commemoration of VJ Day. My husband and I attended the service at Lichfield Cathedral on Saturday. It was so well organised and such a moving service.

Despite suffering so badly and being partly disabled for the rest of his life, Dad had a very 'sunny' nature and a

positive approach to life. He described every day as a bonus, right to the end.

I am sure he would have approved of Saturday's service and would have been pleased to see the various participants of all ages.

Sincere thanks to everyone involved.

**Ann Dackevych (nee Shuker)**

Chris

I wanted to say how much my husband and I appreciated being at the commemoration events last weekend in Staffordshire. Please would you pass on our thanks to all involved in the arrangements.

We were particularly struck at the mood of warmth and acceptance that was achieved at the dinner on the Saturday evening.

As newcomers to a COFEPOW event we weren't sure what the "feel" of the evening would be, but we were quickly made to feel that we belonged, through what was said publicly and as we shared our stories with those around our table.

With our thanks again.

**Sydney Jordan**

Chris,

Many, many thanks for a superb event today. My wife and her sister really enjoyed being able to remember and talk with people who were able to understand.

Thanks again and best wishes from the four of us.

Bob Owen

**On behalf of: Niki Owen, Robert Owen, Teresa Smith and William Smith.**



Chris Wills was sent this cutting from the Times by Arthur and Doreen Burgess on August 16th. The caption reads...

*'Sign of the Times: The National Museum of the Royal Navy wants to trace relatives of Allied Prisoners of War held by the Japanese in Makassar Camp, Indonesia, who signed this Union Jack. The flag was in a September 1945 airdrop of food to the camp, which held British, American and Dutch troops.'*

## Remembrance Sunday, NMA November 9th, 2025.

Following upheaval caused by national events over recent years, such as the pandemic and various cost of living pressures, attendances at the FEPOW Memorial Building at the NMA have been significantly hampered.

Following the impressive turnout at the 80th anniversary commemorations at the NMA, we hope that members will be encouraged to brave the chill and also attend our normal wreath-laying service on the 9th November, 2025, offered alongside participation at the Cenotaph Parade in Whitehall, London (see page 3 inside). It is imperative that as a charity we continue to attend such services.

On the day, we will meet at 10.15 a.m., in readiness for when the NMA's general Service of Remembrance commences at 10.30 a.m. When this Service ends, we will parade to the FEPOW Memorial Building and Grove, to lay our wreaths, after which, if you wish, you can rejoin the main body of the congregation to take part in the march-past and salute as you return closer to the NMA entrance.

The COFEPOW trustees are hopeful more members will be encouraged to attend this year to continue these important memorial services for families.

If you are interested in joining all or any part of the Remembrance Service/Parade at the NMA, please email Chris Wills for more information at [events@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:events@cofepow.org.uk)

Chris will lead the wreath-laying at the FEPOW Grove.

*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 and beliefs of the trustees of the charity.*

*Whilst every effort is made to verify the factual accuracy and content of all material published, the trustees of COFEPOW do not accept responsibility for, nor are complicit in, any errors or beliefs printed herein.*

# Christine Bridges visits 10 Downing St.

*Christine Bridges wrote to David Brede to thank the trustees for the chance to go to Downing Street on 14th August, to participate in a special garden reception for relevant guests, as part of the VJ80 commemoration events.*

*Chris takes up the story...*

"After security clearance, we queued to have photos taken outside the door, which, as I posed, opened behind me and the cat made an appearance!

"We were told to leave any electrical items in the foyer, but were happy for me to take my Dad's book - 'POW on the Sumatra Railway' by John Geoffrey Lee (RAF 84 Squadron) - down to the garden. I kept pinching myself and couldn't believe where I was.

"I met up with Pam, Yvonne and Jacqueline Frith (someone I've known for a few years but never met) in the garden. It was very hot and there were lots of people of all ages. They'd even provided garden games for the youngsters and a brass band played. There were army, Royal Navy and the RAF cadets, plus youngsters from the Boys' Brigade, Guides, Scouts and many others.

There were a couple of elderly veterans who were quite amazing to talk to. I mingled and spoke to lots of people, explaining that I was a member of COFEPOW and what that meant. A lot of people asked about my Dad's book and again, many had not heard of the Sumatra Railway.

"Eventually Sir Kier Starmer arrived and gave a speech, thanking



everyone for being there and emphasising that VJ Day must not be forgotten, with all individual stories needing to be told. The staff were brilliant and very informative and there were finger sandwiches and cakes offered and eventually refused! I signed my Dad's book and passed it to one of Sir Kier's associates.

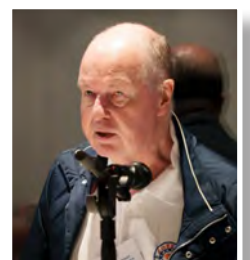
"Yvonne, Jacqueline and I were the last to leave, chatting away and still pinching ourselves. Another group photo was taken on the doorstep.

"It was an amazing, joyful afternoon and we were still buzzing from the experience in the taxi to the station. My Dad would have been so proud that I had taken part in such an experience and one which a couple of weeks ago I could never have imagined. Thank you for putting my name forward. The afternoon will stay with me forever."

**Christine Bridges**

## Keith Andrews acceptance.

After many years of unrelenting persuasion, the trustees of COFEPOW are delighted to announce that Keith Andrews, principal researcher to the charity, has finally accepted honorary membership, an accolade reserved for only four people in COFEPOW's history. Keith, a former trustee, has worked and still works tirelessly, to provide members with precious information about their FEPOW relative's location whilst in captivity. Thank you, Keith, for all you have done, and continue to do.



# COFEPOW members to receive exclusive VJ Day 80th anniversary commemorative pin.

Every COFEPOW member will receive a complimentary commemorative lapel pin very soon, to mark the historic 80th anniversary of VJ Day this August.

Following the successful conclusion of our children's design competition, Angela Cooper's winning artwork has been expertly transformed into a beautiful, professionally manufactured lapel pin.

The finished product represents a significant upgrade from the original design concept, with careful attention paid to every detail of the manufacturing process.

## Quality Craftsmanship and Presentation

The manufactured pin showcases Angela's peaceful dove design with remarkable clarity and depth. The soft peachy tones of the dove have been rendered in high-quality enamel, while the delicate branch and leaves feature precise detailing that brings the 13-year-old artist's vision to life. The pin's substantial feel and professional finish reflect the significance of this milestone anniversary.

Each commemorative pin will arrive in an elegant presentation box, making it suitable for display or safekeeping. Accompanying the pin is a specially-designed explanatory card that details both the significance of Angela's design and the historical importance of VJ Day's 80th anniversary.

## Member Distribution

The pins will be distributed to all

current COFEPOW members as part of their membership benefits, representing the charity's commitment to honouring both its members and the memory of the Far East Prisoners of War.

This gesture ensures that every member will have a tangible keepsake of this significant anniversary year.

For those wishing to obtain additional pins for family members or friends, extra copies will be available for purchase through COFEPOW's website in the merchandise section.



## A Lasting Memorial

This professionally-crafted pin serves as more than just a commemorative item - it represents a bridge between generations, allowing today's COFEPOW community to carry forward the memory of those who suffered and died in Far East captivity.

Through Angela's youthful interpretation of peace and hope, members can wear a symbol that honours the past, while looking toward to the future.

**Alexandra Metcalfe-Hume**

**NB: Pin shown not to scale.**



# Chris Wills says thanks for the thanks.

COFEPOW trustee and National Events Co-ordinator, Christine Wills has been inundated with letters, emails and calls from members, officials



and simply just interested bystanders, expressing their genuine gratitude for the time and effort she devoted to organising the VJ Day 80 COFEPOW weekend at the NMA.

The complexity of managing such an event, of co-ordinating all venues, VIPs and visitors, very often fails to be appreciated. Add the volume of this work to her roster of other duties - running weekend get-togethers, local COFEPOW remembrance services, acting as trustee and co-editing this newsletter, etc., - and the scale of her contribution is hugely impressive. Chris has worked tirelessly and with a dedication and commitment to the charity, to make this and every other occasion worthwhile.

So, with her characteristic humility, Chris has asked for the following message to be added.

*"Dear trustees and members,*

*"I would like to offer my enormous gratitude to each and every person who contributed to the organisation of the VJ80 weekend, and to everyone who attended either one or all of the events. Thank you so much for making the weekend such a success.*

*"Since the event, I have been truly humbled by the many letters and emails of thanks I've received, all of which are a vote of recognition for the effort involved.*

*"All that time, planning and work isn't worth a jot, of course, if no-one turns up, and I was particularly delighted to see so many attend. In the end, it's the members who make it a success and that's what makes it all worthwhile for me.*

*"Many thanks again, Chris."*

# AGM raffles raise helpful cash.

## COFEPOW Raffle

The COFEPOW raffle held during the VJ80 weekend at the NMA raised £71.00 to add to the funds of the charity. The trustees would like to thank all members who bought tickets on the day.

## Joy Dansette Raffle

When Joy Dansette recently visited the Thai/Burma Railway Centre (TBRC) at Kanchanaburi in Thailand, she was given a spike found alongside the Thai/Burma Railway. On her return, Joy had this mounted as a very special memento for

any FEPOW family or museum, and decided to organise a raffle at the AGM, with all proceeds going to the TBRC.

As a result of the raffle, £489.00 was raised for the Centre, a sum which represents a significant contribution to help underwrite the increasing costs of running the museum and towards the work it does on behalf of COFEPOW members in research and tours, etc.

The spike has been sent to the winner and a beautiful "thank you" card was sent back to the Merchandise Secretary to give to Joy. So thank you to both Joy and the winner!

# Annual General Meeting Sunday, 17th August 2025.

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

### Minutes.

The COFEPOW Annual General Meeting was held in the Aspects Conference Suite, at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, on Sunday 17th August 2025.

#### Present:

David Childs DLitt  
(Patron and COFEPOW Padre)  
David Brede  
(Chairman and Interim Secretary)  
David Brown (Trustee and Treasurer)  
Karen Brown (Trustee)  
Alan Wills (Trustee)  
Nick Bullen-Bell  
(Trustee and Merchandise Secretary)  
Sylvie Bullen-Bell  
(Trustee and Merchandise Secretary)  
Alexandra Metcalfe-Hume (Trustee)  
Guy Metcalfe-Hume  
(Trustee and Web management)  
Chris Wills  
(Trustee, Co-Editor of the newsletter,  
National Event Co-ordinator)  
Graham Robertson  
(Trustee and Membership Secretary)

#### 1. Apologies:

Lt. Col. C. Stallard (Rtd); Sir T. Waite; General Sir James Everard (Rtd); Sir Henry Every.

#### 2. Minutes from the 2024 AGM:

The minutes from the meeting held on Sunday 18 August 2024 were upheld as being a true record of the meeting.

*Proposed by David Childs and seconded by Keith Andrews.*

**3. Matters Arising:** Graham Robertson (GR) has taken over as Membership Secretary and we will continue with a recruitment drive to increase membership.

**4. Chairman's Report:** David Brede (DBr) reported on the dilemma of costs from the NMA to maintain the FEPOW memorials. The charge by the NMA has been £3,000 per annum for the past 20 years. The Trustees were informed that it could possibly increase to £8,000 per annum and rise every year after. The charity therefore needed to fix outgoings with a once-and-for-all payment to cover the upkeep. This opportunity was offered by the NMA and agreed by the COFEPOW board at a highly productive meeting in October 2024, which also agreed the location of the Changi shutters to be

beside the Building. These items were agreed in the same meeting held to establish the arrangements for the Thai/Burma Railway. Many thanks go to Nick Bullen-Bell (NBB), Karen Brown (KB) and Keith Andrews (KA) who attended the meeting with David Brede.

#### 4.1 The Thai/Burma Railway:

The memorial section of rail track was in a poor state, with the old sleepers disintegrating and giving problems with potential trip hazards for visitors to the site. NBB made a contact with engineers from the Permanent Way Institute, who came out to the NMA to supply new ballast and labour, free of charge. We provided some new sleepers for the track itself which would also create an edging on the tennis court side, to prevent the new ballast from falling down the slope.

#### 4.2 The Changi Shutters:

This has been an ongoing problem for many years. As mentioned, we have now agreed a location for them with the NMA, to be positioned beside the Building, and we have also negotiated with the NMRN in Portsmouth, an outline agreement about what the display should look like, how it should be maintained and which fixing details will be used. NBB has sourced an engineer to develop drawings, and this is inching to a conclusion.

#### 4.3 Membership:

GR has taken over this role and will be reporting later. This has largely recovered from the low point of preceding years as the system's technological problems have now been largely resolved. With the large numbers of visitors at our memorials following VJ80 publicity, we are hopeful to push numbers up further.

#### 4.4 VJ80:

What a triumph that was in the end, with all the events, including the Antiques Roadshow, the increase in daily mentions on TV, including BBC's The Repair Shop, and the garden party at No. 10, among many others. There were several other events up and down the country in the run up to the 15th. The 15th itself was fabulous, particularly the Red Arrows, the BBM Flight, the readings, the doves accompanying the lark arising

and especially Yavar who went off piste to give thanks to the King over His Majesty's cancer treatment and the exchange between them afterwards. It was 'sheer class.' I will be writing to the NMA, BBC, and the DCMS team who worked behind the scenes to pull it all together.

**4.5 Trustee Team:** I commend to you a team of fabulous people who work really hard to keep the charity going. So I hope you will be re-electing them for another term. We said goodbye to Sharon Morris-Mee who stepped down. So we will be looking for fresh faces or even old faces to strengthen the team and help us proceed in the way the members want.

#### 4.6 Going forward- Reaching out to new audiences:

David paid homage to the lasting legacy of founder Carol Cooper, and to David Childs, central to the formative years of the NMA and development of COFEPOW. Henry Every summarised David's achievements at Saturday evening's dinner. David, in particular, has been an excellent patron, giving the trustees wise words alongside informed guidance over many years, whilst engaging with sister charities and organisations in the interests of the FEPOW community in its wider sense.

#### 5. Re-Election of current officers/ trustees:

##### 5.1 Trustees:

David Brede  
Nick Bullen-Bell  
Guy Metcalfe-Hume  
David Brown  
Sylvie Bullen-Bell  
Karen Brown  
Alexandra Metcalfe-Hume  
Chris Wills

*Proposed en bloc by Barbara James and seconded en bloc by Keith Andrews.*

##### 5.2 Officers re-elected:

Chair: David Brede  
Webmaster: Guy Metcalfe-Hume  
Treasurer: David Brown  
Interim Secretary: David Brede  
*Proposed en bloc by Keith Andrews and seconded en bloc Barbara James.*

##### 5.3 New Trustees Appointment:

Graham Robertson

Alan Wills

*Proposed by Christina O'Leary and seconded Jill Robertson.*

#### **5.4 New officers to be appointed:**

Membership Secretary -

Graham Robertson

COFEPOW Padre -

Rev'd Richard Brooker (RB)

*Proposed by Joy Dansette and seconded by Jeff Byrom.*

RB said a few words about the importance of faith to those held captive, and stated that he was looking forward to serving.

#### **6. Treasurer's Report:** David Brown (DB)

David gave an overview of the 2024 Accounts to everyone attending the AGM. The Trust's total assets as at 31 December 2024 were £283,957.

The Membership A/c was £60,506  
Membership Fees Received totalled £11,997

Donations received were £25,716

Expenditure was £17,779

Investment income was £0.

*Proposed by Steven Hanging and seconded by Paul Housden.*

Brian Hill asked if the trustees had thought about increasing membership fees. The Treasurer responded saying this was something the trustees had discussed, reporting that increased fees can lead people to cancel memberships which results in a lower total, so there ends up being of no financial benefit. The trustees therefore decided to maintain current membership fees at present.

#### **7. Membership Report:**

GR explained that he has previously managed the membership and has volunteered to take it over again. Currently, membership is at 917.

We have more members now paying via MemberStack, but we still have members paying by cheque and BACS. Graham asked those paying by BACS to look at moving to MemberStack, as it makes it easier to manage the membership if more members use the same system.

Graham reported that it costs £4.50 each year to post out the newsletter to members, although costs are now lower as more members are opting for newsletters to be sent by email.

*Proposed by Keith Andrews and seconded by Paul Housden.*

**8. Events:** Chris Wills' (CW) report was read by Alan Wills (AW).

**8.1.1** The weekend will take place from 10th - 13th October. Alan confirmed that he believes this is a great weekend for members, as the hotel has nice rooms, great food and there's great company, so please contact Chris to get more details. One member asked if they lived close-

by, could they just meet up for the meals and not stay in the hotel. Alan confirmed that this was possible. One member gave feedback on Torquay, saying it was a very enjoyable get-together.

Alan also provided an overview of the weekend, saying it is about bringing the members together for comradeship.

**8.1.2** Those wishing to attend Remembrance Sunday at the NMA should meet at the back of the restaurant as usual. Attendance at this year's service was encouraged as it is important for members to attend. Members will also be attending Whitehall in London to march past the Cenotaph. There are 80 places available. See DBr for details.

#### **8.2 VJ80:**

DBr asked for opinions on the commemorations that have taken place over the weekend, to feedback to the NMA. Members can email any comments to David.

Barbara James said the service on Friday was magnificent, with the fly-past being the highlight. The cathedral provided a very moving service. COFEPOW gives us great comradeship through a wonderful team who keep the charity going. Joy Dansette offered thanks to Chris Wills for all her hard work.

Keith Andrews said he was at the NMA on Thursday and had seen the full-dress rehearsal, which showed great planning. The royal party arrived late on Friday which "knocked the Red Arrows out".

Christine Bridges stated that she was invited to Downing Street on the preceding Thursday and it was a wonderful experience. She left Sir Kier Starmer a copy of her book.

Tomoyo Nakao expressed her thanks for welcoming her as a member of COFEPOW, and she will be continuing her work in Japan to raise awareness with her students.

#### **9. Merchandise Report:**

NBB reported: Monies raised

Last year AGM - £150.30

Torquay - £40.50

Quarter to 26/10/24 - £103.46

Quarter to 25/01/25 - £183.46

Quarter to 26/04/25 - £51.17

Quarter to 26/07/25 - £471.51

This Quarter to 08/08/25 - £150.93

Nick continued that it was lovely to see everyone here on this special VJ80 Remembrance Weekend and offered thanks to all for attending.

On behalf of all the COFEPOW trustees, he also took the opportunity to thank each and every one for continued support.

Each merchandise purchase, no matter how big or small, is greatly appreciated, along with all the donations made to

COFEPOW combined with joining and renewal fees.

As trustees, we are constantly trying to come up with new merchandise ideas, without appearing to present items that are not appropriate to the memory of our FEPOWs.

This VJ Day 80 commemoration weekend has given us the opportunity to present new merchandise - we have new polo shirts and sweatshirts, both with commemorative embroidered badges; 30 bespoke individually hand-crafted wooden pens, new mugs, coasters and fridge magnets.

Of course, there is our new book "More Poems of Hope" to compliment our first edition, "Poems of Hope". This new book has taken a long time to compile, present and print and I hope you all agree it is well worth the wait. I would therefore like to take this further opportunity to thank all, from the bottom of my heart, who sent us poems and gave us permission to compile them.

I would also like to thank Steve Riley, Sylvie and I organised and collected the poems, sent them to Steve and he produced this work of art. I cannot thank him enough.

I would also like to thank Maria, our daughter for the proof-reading and Nigel at Simmonds Printers for liaising with Steve and myself to get the anthology printed.

We also have one other new book - 'From Shanghai to the Burma Railway - the memoirs of Richard Laird, a Japanese POW, edited by Rory Laird, who kindly donated the books to COFEPOW at a reduced price for us to sell. Thank you Rory.

"We have one other addition. After many requests to purchase the original 'FEPOW Ted', we only have two completed so far but more are in the pipeline and can be made to order. If anyone would like one of these they are at a special price for VJ80, at £20 each. Any further ones would be a minimum of £30 plus p&p, as we are limited to 30 bears.

Lastly, Chris Wills. Without Chris, there would be none of this today, nor indeed the whole VJ80 weekend at Lichfield and here at the NMA. She is the backbone of all that we do as trustees for COFEPOW, organising each event, meetings and many other things. So, thank you, Chris. Last but not least, I would like to thank my wife, Sylvie, without whose undying and constant support, I would be at a loss. I hope I have thanked all, and please forgive me if I have forgotten anyone".

*Approval of relevant points in Nick's report was proposed by Jill Robertson and seconded by Andrew Kirk.*

*Continued overleaf...*

# Synopsis of performance.

The table below is a summary of the management accounts of COFEPOW for the year 2023 - 2024. Adjustments have been made to occasional individual figures from previous years, where additional costs or savings arrived after the cut-off date at which the audit was finalised. These are minor amounts and do not materially affect comparisons.

Continued from previous page...

## 10. AOB:

**10.1 - Changi Shutters** NBB reported that difficulties have been ongoing since 2018 when the shutters were first collected, repaired and stored. The Navy would not approve our plans for removing them to the FEPOW Building, but now the Royal Naval Museum has taken over and after a meeting in April, plans have finally been approved. Special mounts are required at a cost of £13,000, so we are just awaiting a second quote. Additional costs of £18,000 have been forecast to complete the mounting, again under review. We intend to raise the cash by a 'Go Fund Me' page, so please look out on our social media for details.

**10.2 Sumatra Railway:** Keith Andrews reported that the railway is deteriorating. Some brickwork is starting to suffer, although we are aware and working on it. Chris Wills has already organised the replacement of sleepers at no cost from a Dutch company, who carried out the repairs to the Thai/Burma railway.

## 10.3 School Badge Competition

Alexandra Metcalfe-Hume (AMH) gave details of the competition. The trustees voted on the submissions and Andrea Cooper won. The pin badges have now been made and all members will receive one, with an accompanying card with information about the competition. Alexandra reported that although the school curriculum includes WW2, it is cleansed and details of the Far East are not really covered, so this was a good opportunity to get schools educated.

Barbara James asked about a school's membership, and could we look at this? AMH added that we could work on it with a suggestion of £50 a year and we could supply lesson plans.

Wenda Kiddle stated she has a passion for this charity, and we need to think about ways of engaging the next generation, just as this weekend has done.

**11. Next AGM:** to be held on Sunday 16th August 2026 at 10.30 a.m. in the Aspects Conference Suite, at the NMA.

## Accounts comments.

The principal financial data from the year-end Management Accounts has been encapsulated into chart form for ease of reading for members. The introduction of the new digitised membership system has proved to be complex and frustrating, with the switch to the new mode of managing membership enrolment repeatedly challenging. This investment will generate an increase in revenue, however and eventually pay dividends.

In conclusion, the trustees of COFEPOW are satisfied that performance is satisfactory, leaving the charity in a sound financial position to continue activities in line with its aims.

Profit and loss account £					
Income	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Donations	1,349	3,567	95,201	40,437	25,716
Membership fees	19,317	28,251	12,932	11,756	11,997
Merchandise/Book sales	11,130	3,063	4,577	2,232	2,417
Investment income	1,341	13,226	(8,229*)	(7,556*)	0
Memorial weekends	4,519	5,320	2,325	750	550
Gift Aid	425	640	800	2,232	825
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,081</b>	<b>54,067</b>	<b>107,606</b>	<b>49,851</b>	<b>41,505</b>

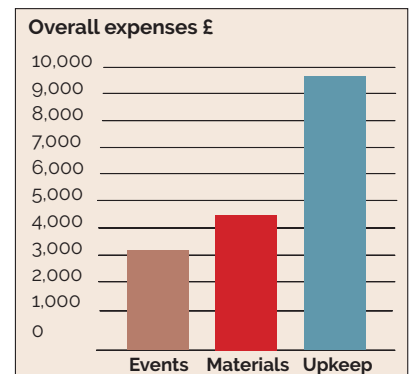
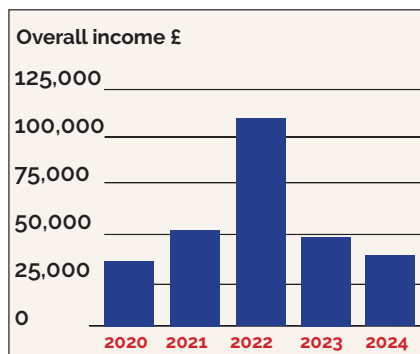
Profit and loss account £					
Expenditure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Cost of merchandise	4,947	569	120	374	210
Printing and duplicating	2,460	-	1,735	5,044	2,082
Memorial events/weekend	570	5,320	2,325	750	550
Wreaths/poppies/crosses	73	5,613	205	398	81
Burma railway	-	10,205	-	1,450	-
Sundry expenses	-	320	-	759	-
AGM/Room hire	-	16,086	3,410	2,287	2,424
FEPOW Building maintenance	10,867	8,668	-	-	930
Postage and Stationery	8,538	2,543	3,277	2,271	2,082
NMA	3,000	220	3,000	3,000	3,000
IT support/equip't/website	5,340	5,320	5,027	10,265	5,684
Committee meetings	-	128	57	270	-
Accountancy	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,795</b>	<b>54,992</b>	<b>19,156</b>	<b>26,868</b>	<b>17,779</b>

Operating Surplus/(Asset reduction) £					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Surplus/(Asset reduction)	2,286	(925)	88,450	22,983	23,726

Total Net Assets £		Assets	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
2020	197,200	320,000					
2021	197,654	315,000					
2022	220,320	305,000					
2023	260,757	295,000					
2024	283,957	285,000					
		275,000					
		265,000					
		255,000					
		245,000					
		235,000					
		225,000					
		215,000					
		205,000					
		195,000					
		185,000					
		175,000					

\* Revaluation of investment fund in which assets held.

## Trends in income/expenditure £



# Progress slows on Changi shutters.

*It all started when an eagle-eyed Royal Navy Officer had the foresight to request some remnants of Changi Gaol, whilst he was in Singapore and witnessing its demolition. It's believed he was from Royal Fleet Auxiliary Blackspur and he managed to obtain two sets of the prison bars and shutters.*

*After transportation to the UK they were "looked after" by the Royal Navy Submarine Museum (RNSM), who had them on display in the open air, set in concrete, it is believed. Nick Bullen-Bell continues the 'saga'...*

"The items were discovered by COFEPOW member, Jane Stuart, who informed COFEPOW and negotiated the loan from the RNSM to the charity. I then spent a year further negotiating to arrange the collection from the RNSM in Gosport. We arranged a date for all in March 2018. Chris and Alan Wills, Paul Watson (our previous chairman) and wife, Lin, agreed to help, along with my brother Nigel and brother-in-law Malcolm, who both took a day off to go to Gosport and collect them. We were not, however, banking on the 'Beast from the East' (remember that?) and due to the snow, Chris, Alan, Paul and Lin were unable to travel. I was urged to cancel due to the weather and more reports of suspected asbestos contamination from storage in the Nissen hut. I was determined however after all the negotiation and would not be deterred, even more so as and Nigel and Malcolm had both organised a day off work to help.

"We set off in separate vehicles and met in Gosport in plenty of time. The RNSM representative informed us of more possible asbestos contamination and we had to endure a couple of hours in a freezing, old naval office. The asbestos was plasterboard dust!

"After a lecture by a Health and Safety operative (who vanished when it came to actually lifting the items on to my trailer) we had them on board and on our way back home.

"The following morning, myself and Malcolm unloaded and put them into my neighbour's workshop (they were heavy!) who had kindly agreed to house them temporarily until they could be moved to the NMA which had also agreed to have them

on display around the FEPOW building.

"Fast forward to today, after countless negotiations, three sets of draft plans, visits to the NMA to meet their representative and an utterly pointless 10 minute meeting and refusal of the first set of draft plans (another day off, travelling to Alrewas, with my daughter, Maria).

"Back home, more discussions, another set of draft plans and further refusal. At last, a third idea and another set of draft plans and an agreement from the NMA for the location. All we needed now was approval from the RNSM before commitment to spending a four figure sum. Not forthcoming, I'm afraid.

Eventually, after a pointed but truthful email, I was accused of being aggressive and four years ago, was excused from the project. In the meantime, my neighbour sadly passed away and I had to relocate the shutters into my property. More heavy lifting entailed.

"Early this year, with now the RNM at the helm, we had another meeting, with Align Architecture on board, and a trip to Portsmouth with David Brede, Nick Clewer from Align, myself and Maria to get approval for the draft plans and a commitment from the RNM, even though there would be no financial help from them.

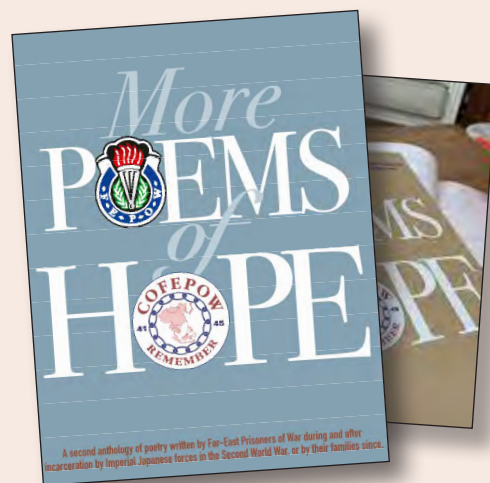
"Align Architecture (who have been magnificent) kindly sourced a company who gave us a five figure estimate for the mountings and a further five figure sum for the housing/come shelter. COFEPOW realised that what the RNM were demanding was far too expensive. We requested an explanation from them on 23rd May 2025 and we have yet to receive a reply. Basically, therefore we are at stalemate, so our next plan of action is to set up either a 'Just Giving' or 'Go Fund Me' page to try and raise funds for the project.

"Finally, I have to say, without Nick Clewer and Frances Lacey at Align Architecture we wouldn't have made progress at all. They have been so helpful and accommodating and I personally cannot thank them enough. Nick even very kindly offered his services for free, including the day at Portsmouth."

**Nick Bullen-Bell.**



## New poetry Vol. II for VJ80.



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. The collection featured poems, many of which were written during captivity, or were based on recollections or emotions experienced by former FEPOWs on their return, or by their close family since the war.

Now, a second volume of 'Poems of Hope' has been issued, containing more poetry by captives and their families. Whilst copies of the first volume are still available, it's thought that this second edition will help protect more poems and revitalise the fund-raising drive. All content and final ready-to-print artwork has been assembled at no cost to the charity. The book was on sale at the VJ80 weekend and is now available to purchase from the merchandise office, at £12.99 plus £3.90 p&p.

If you would like to reserve a copy, please email **Nick and Sylvie Bullen-Bell** at [merchandise@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:merchandise@cofepow.org.uk)

*The COFEPOW Quarterly newsletter is available either as a printed multi-page A4 magazine, or as a digital PDF, emailed to your online address. Published at the beginning of January, April, July and October, the newsletter 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: [events@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:events@cofepow.org.uk) or [sriley.beeches@btinternet.com](mailto:sriley.beeches@btinternet.com) Thank you.*

# Hong Kong to Japan, from fall to final days.

*Bob Sawyer has painstakingly transcribed his father's notes made during captivity, from Christmas 1941/42 to liberation in Autumn 1945. To date, little has been documented in such detail about the fall of Hong Kong by COFEPoW members.*

*The noted recollections of Lance Corporal K.F. Sawyer, who served with the Royal Army Veterinary Corps (RAVC), are in pencil and some parts are difficult to read, but nevertheless provide a keen insight into the events and emotional responses experienced as Japanese control is eventually overcome in one of the far-east war's first areas to succumb.*

*Bob explains...*

*"My father was in The Royal Army Veterinary Corps in Hong Kong, and chose not to surrender on 25th December, but was eventually captured on New Year's Day. His evasion from captivity for one week is a story in itself, mixing adventure, excitement, humour and terror all in one, and will be featured in the newsletter when my father's original story can be transcribed.*

*What follows here is his calendar of the time he endured in captivity. Of course, he is not always polite about the Japanese, but I can understand that to some extent. Although his time in camps in Hong Kong was not as bad as it was following his transfer to Japan, the Hong Kong prisoners were incarcerated overall for longer than any others, I believe.*

*"The transcription begins..."*

## The Fall of Hong Kong.

**December 25th 1941** Hong Kong capitulated. I escaped on that day, but was captured on January 1st 1942 and sent to Argyle Street POW camp.

**January 11th 1942** Sent to Sham Shui Po POW camp.

**May 18th 1942** Sent with officers to Argyle Street POW camp.

**December 8th 1943** Sent to Sham Shui Po.

**December 15th 1943** Embarked on Japanese ship.

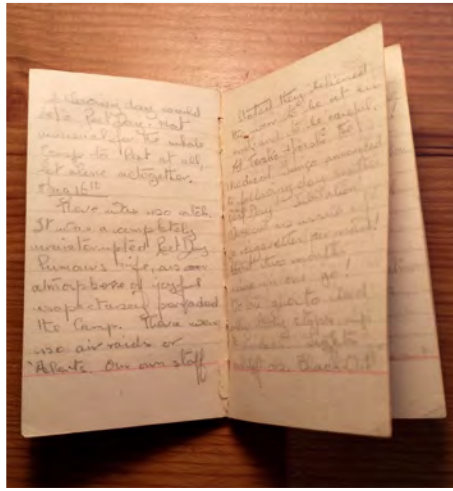
**December 21st 1943** Arrived Takao in Formosa.

**December 26th 1943** Changed ship to the Toyama Maru and sailed Biel harbour, north of Shanghai.

**January 1st 1944** Arrived at Moji, Japan. Ferry to Shimo Saki.

**January 6th 1944** Entrained - spent 17 ½ hours in train.

**January 7th 1944** Arrived at Oeyama.



## The days of liberation.

**August 15th 1945** Ceased work. Had been working at Asaki Kojo since April. One of the honchoes - an old boy and rather pro-British (at least not anti-British) always gave us small bits of information on the war and said it would finish in the eighth month. Nevertheless, we have no real indication that hostilities would cease when they did.

Food got tight, we had two cuts in rice, down to 600g. This was not enough to work on, let alone the type of work we were called upon to do, among coal, rock and timber. Rest men, that is men unable to work through either temporary illness or permanent incapacity, received exactly one half of the working ration, 300 g. This was considered enough to live on and was made into three porridge like meals.

Sometimes potatoes were issued and when they were rice was deducted. We had no vegetables at all. Had the war continued for a long period the results of this diet in our camp, where malnutrition was already prevalent, would have been awful to contemplate. August 15th, we went to work as usual but during the morning received a garbled account of events in camp by the Bamboo Telegraph. It was rumoured that all in camp were confined to huts, blackout curtains drawn. Men were forbidden to leave even to use the latrines.

Later we learned that at this time the Emperor was broadcasting and the Nips (sic) in camp were listening. At the factory we worked as usual. Rice was brought up and eaten, when the honchoes informed us that all Japanese

were going to the Kiln(?) during the afternoon. Sure enough at 2.00pm the work was shut down and all machinery stopped and we were left alone, so got down to sleep. Shortly after 3.00pm we were rudely awakened and shouted into action and started one of the hardest afternoon's work we have had. It was obvious that something was up! We knocked off work at the usual time and before leaving were searched. Marching out through the factory gate we observed the girls in the office were crying - some said jokingly "the war is over boys". Very definitely one felt that something unusual had happened. In camp other working parties described similar experiences. At Tenko, the evening roll call, we were told that the following day would be a rest day. Most unusual for the whole camp to rest at all, let alone altogether.

**August 16th 1945** There was no catch. It was a completely uninterrupted rest day. Rumours rife, an atmosphere of joyful expectancy pervaded the camp. There were no air raids or alerts. Our own staff stated they believed the war was to be at an end and to be careful. At Tenko Hoiashi(?) the medical jungo(?) announced the following day another rest day! Jubilation! Moreover an issue of 40 cigarettes per man! About two months issue in one go. No one goes to bed. Everybody stops up to discuss. Lights are left on. Blackout curtain not drawn. Playing cards are issued and gambling schools commence. Instruments are also issued, and not a word from the Nips.

At 3.30am the air raid siren goes. Hopes are shattered. Disappointment. At 4 o'clock, the all clear. At dawn we observed the sentries tearing down all notices and orders printed in Nipponese. They have no arms! At about breakfast time we learn that the air raid siren was a signal for a period of remembrance.

During the day we learn authoritatively that the war is over. Can't describe our feelings, but for myself I won't believe it until the Nips announce it officially. During following days the administration of the camp is turned over to us. Of Red Cross stuff (what they haven't pilfered), we have more than we ever saw. No Nipponese parades, more cigarettes issued each succeeding day a rest day, more food issued. It must be over.

**August 23rd 1944** the camp commandant

returns and makes a speech, interpreted as usual almost unintelligibly, but which confirms our hopes. He says "the actual fighting has ceased and peace will be signed shortly. Your days as prisoners of war are at an end. I realise that it has been a hard life for you (the swine) and sympathise with you for those of your number who died. I thank you for your cooperation. You'll be kept in the camp as we are uncertain of the civilian reaction. Your planes will fly over the camp and drop things to brighten the remainder of your days in this camp."

He looked pretty glum and went on to say that whereas yesterday we were enemies, today we must shake hands and be friends (the bloody murderer). A factory official also made a speech expressing his appreciation of our work (after sweating us like beasts) and stated that although things were very short they wish to make us a present and concluded by presenting us with a very annoyed pig. The first one I have seen in this country.

**August 24th 1945** Our lives at last are worth living. We have complete freedom within the camp. All day to laze around and no one to worry us. Nips are pleasant to us. Men stay up all night singing gambling, all lights on. There is more food and increase of 100 grms. We are able to go swimming. Most of us sort out our kits and throw out everything except the things we aim to walk out in. It's all filthy rags anyway. Rumour has it that representatives are on their way to the camp. Personally I say "Balls!" Time proves I'm right. Of course, there's more rumour in the camp than a mother's meeting.

**August 25th 1945** CC organises trips on a factory coal barge to Amanohashidate (the "Gateway to Heaven"). Two parties each day. I go this p.m. The Gateway to Heaven fails to impress me (we have been through too much to appreciate anything in this land) but we are allowed to roam at will through the town. What poverty and what indescribably joyful freedom. We see Miangu(?) (recently bombed severely) but in camp the reaction sets in. Time begins to hang heavy - when are we going home - rumours of the army of occupation landing. This morning's breakfast the most I have had as a POW. Sugar and Beans.

**Aug 26th/Aug 27th 1945** Two uneventful days. Promised planes not shown up to disappointment of majority. Food stock however better than we have ever had before in quantity and quality. Get rice, beans and yams. Giving half my chow away to friend Dinty but probably down to diarrhoea of which I am a chronic case. Amazing freedom in camp. Spend time (?) and in companionship of Dinty.

**Aug 28th 1945** Red Letter day. American bomber appeared over camp during afternoon. Dropped food. Camp wild with joy. Nips most glum. Received three packs Yank cigs, 3 of chewing gum, matches and chocolate. Never been so well off in years.

**Aug 29th 1945** Three bombers visited us this a.m., escorted by two pursuit planes. The size of the bombers and the terrific speed of the fighters astonished even the Yankee airmen in camp. More supplies were dropped with better luck than yesterday.

**Aug 30th 1945** We now have more cigarettes and chewing gum than we know what to do with. We have civilised food and we have belly ache and diarrhoea. For the first time on record rice is being returned to the galley and it is no longer necessary for each man's measure to be carefully measured out: those who want it can help themselves. We actually have chocolate: there is a lot of vomiting as a result. We have clothes and boots, socks, shirts underwear and even handkerchiefs. We live in a new and indescribably wonderful world. They even dropped us flea powder, so determined attacks are being made on the lice and fleas. How wonderful to have chicken soup, peas, peaches again and cocoa with milk and sugar. As for the Nips, well they don't worry us at all.

**Aug 31st 1945.** Pleasant sight to see the former Nipponese camp staff on fatigues carrying old clothes out of camp. B29 did not show up - weather bad - low cloud, heavy rain - rumour said supplies were dropped at Myanu(?). Then plane had crashed - as usual, all rumour.

**September 1st 1945** Retribution visits Dinty who has been eating like a horse. He has joined the rest of us with the squitters - weather still bad, raining. According to members of camp staff who returned from HQ at Osaka, this is our last day as prisoners: tomorrow we are free soldiers. Army of occupation will land. Camp tailor busy making Union Jack and Stars and Stripes. We learn we are to go to Manila - great surprise to learn that Churchill is no longer PM of Britain. 11.00am planes about. 11.30am two planes appear in spite of low cloud. Some supplies dropping as I write - in the sea! Hooray! There are four planes dropping supplies just as fast as they can turn round. It is dropping all round the camp and vicinity. Doubt that it can all be recovered. Local air raid siren goes - very necessary as a lot of the parachutes tangle and do not open, the supplies come down with a terrific thump destroying the stuff. A lot has just come down - a case of tomato soup or juice smashing - like blood. Back in 7 hours. Another plane disaster. Load dropped

in camp. One man injured. Case of cigs, pork and beans smashed through roof and floor (?). that man was absent. Food being served out: ruined. Self covered in tomato juice and peaches. Camp square pock-marked with holes like shell craters. Three loads dropped distant: swiped by locals. Hasty making of flags.

**September 2nd 1945** Activity making and erecting quadruple flag pole. Chow more plentiful using up smashed tinned rations. Received over 600 Yank cigs. Approx 30 odd assorted chocolate and candy bars. Soap, blades, etc. Boxes of chewing gum. Our people take over guard room. Today camp commandant officially hands over to our officers. At 3.00pm a flag-raising ceremony. Camp Cmdt made a short speech handing over to Major Martin, US Army, and British, American, Dutch and Norwegian flags were raised to the roll of the drum. New clothes - Reading new orders - Bullshit. Camp Cmdt presents Saki - trading for chocolate - suspected stool pigeon (name withheld) beaten up - WE ARE NOW FREE SOLDIERS - (technically).

**September 3rd 1945** Wet rainy - flags raised to bugle sound but not Union jack - Halyards wonky. During night, truck which was presented by the Nips changed from Carbide to gas, painted US Army, used to bring in more supplies which dropped several miles distant. Three loads more to come today - one American died during night (TB). Bad tooth ache lately so went sick. Was sent to the Nipponese dentist in the village; infection have to go daily for 1 week. Gave him a deck of smokes and a bar of chocolate - out again p.m. for stroll. No animosity or hostility (with Dinty) of civilians. On the contrary, was invited into one home and entertained with tomato.

**September 4th 1945** Company supply taxi labelled "For use of allied troops only" Large car. Self and Dinty to Mianu (?) (Self to dentist first). Dinty ill - suspect tinned rations. All children and young women seen to be chewing gum, choc - train ride to freedom - notes or cigs will buy anything but sexual intercourse and saki available (?) - the night club.

**September 5th 1945** Truck still making trips bringing in grub. L. Col. Fowler(?) made trip to mines. Visited Chinese POW camp. They were happy to see them. Conditions bad - living in hovels - ages 17-70 starved - ill treatment, excessive punishment.

*.....Unfortunately, as the notes end, Bob admits that he was unable to decipher and transcribe the last page.*

*Bob adds that 80 years to the month since the date of this issue's publication, his father was still recovering in Canada, prior to being shipped home across the Atlantic (see page 14 for story).*

# Canada's heartfelt welcome.



*Bob Sawyer shares with members, this testament received by his father, K.F. Sawyer, in Canada, on his arrival after captivity in Hong Kong and Japan, beginning the final stage of a round-the-world journey from initial embarkation to the Far-East before the war, to home across the Atlantic 80 years ago this month. The citation echoes the warmth given, and attention paid, to POWs, as they made their long way home to the UK. Many were feted and cosseted on their return via north America, especially by Canadian officials whose comfort helped British POWs start their difficult rehabilitation. The transcription is below...*

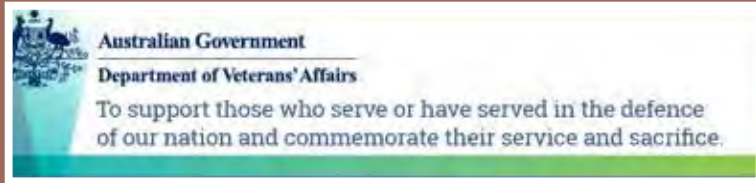
## “Welcome!

British Columbia meets you with a cordial welcome, and a deep appreciation of your sacrifice in defense of all that free men cherish and hold dear.

We who were spared the actual physical impact of war give thanks, humbly and gratefully, for all the safety and security which we enjoyed in those years when you, and whole peoples, endured with grim patience the heel of the aggressor.

You have come out of the Shadow of the Valley of Death, to be with friends whose warm good wishes will follow you wherever you go. May Good Fortune attend you, and may you find the contentment in which to rebuild your lives and to go on, in the peace and happiness which you have done so much to win for yourselves and for us all.

The Government of the Province of British Columbia.  
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.”



# Brian's campaign continues.



*Brian with daughter, Natalie, boarding the Solomon Airlines plane on the trip.*

In 2024, Brian Hill travelled to Bomana War Cemetery, near Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, in an attempt to locate the site of his Prisoner of War father's grave. Since his return to the UK, he has campaigned tirelessly on behalf of COFEPoW and FEPOW relatives, to encourage the Office of Australian War Graves to establish and maintain a permanent memorial to the 517 British POW's who died, and particularly, make reference to the accompanying contingent of RAMC medics who also perished with the Artillerymen on Ballalae Island, during the Pacific war.



*The Bomana War Cemetery showing in the foreground, the 438 Ballalae British POW's headstones unidentified by name.*

Here, he reports on progress made, including the latest response from the Operations Manager, Papua New Guinea & Solomon Islands, at the Office of Australian War Graves.

**From:** Rowan.Foster@dva.gov.au  
**August 18th 2025.**  
**Subject:** British High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea  
**re:** Brian Hill family visit 15/08/2024.

Dear Mr. Hill,

Thank you very much for sharing your continued research and reflections following your visit to Bomana War Cemetery.

The experiences and insights you've provided, along with the materials and photographs, are both moving and invaluable in helping to preserve the memory of those who served, in particular your interest in the British Artillerymen and RAMC medics at Ballalae Island.

Regarding the proposed signage at Bomana, I can confirm that this remains under active consideration. At present, the concept is still in its early stages of development, and as such, it may take some time before any implementation can take place.

These projects involve a number of steps, including design, consultation, and approvals, but please be assured that your input continues to be an important part of this process.

I will keep you updated as the work progresses and will be in touch as soon as there are further developments to share.

Thank you once again for your commitment and for ensuring that these stories are not forgotten.

Regards  
Rowan

**Rowan Foster**  
**Office of Australian War Graves**  
**Department of Veterans' Affairs.**

## Searching for family of Raymond Stanley Hubbard.

COFEPoW Honorary Life member, Pam Stubbs, is looking for the family of Raymond Stanley Hubbard (Ray) who was with the 77th HAA and was captured in Java.

Pam has some items that belong to Raymond, and her daughter Linda Cracknell is trying to trace any of Ray's family to ask if they want them.

If anyone knows anything about the Hubbard family, please contact Chris Wills by email at: [events@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:events@cofepow.org.uk) or by telephone: **0121 244 7263.**

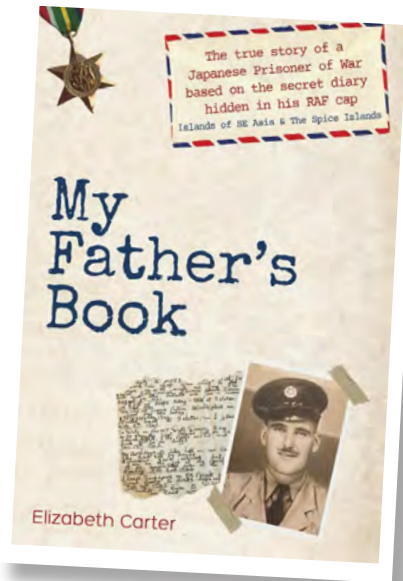
# 'My Father's Book'.

A title which will strike a chord with many COFEPOWs. This new work both documents a Far-East POW's redoubtable impulse to catalogue the depravity of captivity in south east Asia, whilst committing events to a secret diary hidden in his RAF cap, whilst living with the fear of its discovery. Compellingly told by daughter, Elizabeth Carter.

'My Father's Book' is a profound, moving, and honest story that brings to light the forgotten voices of Far-East POWs during the war. Author, Elizabeth Carter, relates the story of her father, Tom, and is told through his secret wartime diary, personal letters and government telegrams. The book traces the harrowing journey of an RAF crewman, from the hopeful early days of his and his wife's courtship in wartime Birmingham, to being captured half way across the world by the Japanese in 1942 and imprisoned for over 3 years across the remote islands of south-east Asia.

Transported through prison camps in Java, Sumatra, Haruku and the Spice Islands, Tom endured starvation, disease, torture, and forced labour. Yet, at great personal risk, he kept a secret diary, hidden in the lining of his RAF cap. Through his words, the daily realities of captivity are witnessed - brutal beatings for minor infractions, starvation, untreated tropical diseases and the dreaded "Hell Ships" that carried POWs across the Pacific. Yet, there are moments of humanity - whispered jokes among prisoners, secret kindnesses from locals and the unbreakable camaraderie of those captured.

Liberation in 1945, however, did not end Tom's struggle. Like many former POWs, he returned home physically free but emotionally scarred and advised by the authorities to stay silent about his experiences. Decades later, his daughter Elizabeth fulfilled her father's



wish by compiling and completing his story. It's a memoir of Tom and his devoted wife, Joan, but also a tribute to the men who showed extraordinary courage and to the women who waited and endured.

This remarkable book ensures that the history of an entire generation is not lost to silence. It is an essential read for historians, descendants of FEPOWs, and anyone seeking to understand the enduring human cost of conflict. **The work is 352 pages long and is priced at £12.99. ISBN-10-1738423409. The book is available from Amazon. Hardback and paperback versions are also available directly from the author - please email: Liz.carter54@btinternet.com**

## Andrew to coordinate Cambridgeshire

Andrew Sharpe has agreed to establish a new area in England for COFEPOW, by accepting the invitation to become Area Co-ordinator for Cambridgeshire. COFEPOW would like to welcome Andrew and wish him well. Any members in the region please contact Andrew. His email is: [andyjames@hotmail.com](mailto:andyjames@hotmail.com)



## Karl's immersive story of love, hope and fear.

First issued in March 2025, *All Will Be Well* is a self-published, historically grounded chronicle of the intertwined lives of the writer's parents, Peter Clare and Peggy Burleigh, during the chaos and uncertainty of war.

Drawn from letters, diaries and family documents, Karl Clare creates an intimate portrayal of two people's love and experience, leading to Royal Norfolk serviceman Peter being taken as a Japanese POW following the fall of Singapore. His journey is marked by terror, comradeship and the desperation for survival against overwhelming odds.

Back home in Norwich, Peggy navigates the challenges of wartime Britain; rationing, air raids and the uncertainty about Peter's fate. Her devotion is tested when she finds she is pregnant, unaware of Peter's capture, whilst he remains oblivious to her pregnancy. The book captures the contrast between the brutality of war and the quiet endurance of those left behind, as Peggy clings to the hope embodied in the phrase "all will be well".

The narrative weaves anecdotes with historical events, offering both a poignant love story and a compelling historical account. Part one concludes with Peter's capture, setting the stage for a second instalment that promises to delve deep into Peter's captivity and the couple's post-war lives.

*All will be well* is 291 pages long and is in paperback. The ISBN number is: 9798339513292. It is available from Amazon at the following link: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Will-Well-Karl-Nigel-Clare/dp/BoDZ6XYNLM/>

## The film of 'The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru'

Brian Finch has announced that Fang Li's long-awaited award-winning documentary film will be available to view online from Friday 15th August, in the UK and Ireland.

To watch this extraordinary film, simply add this link to your search engine: "The Sinking of The Lisbon Maru" Watch Online

## COFEPOW plans to create Military Nurses database.



*New concerns that, despite all of COFEPOW's huge archive of research material on those who participated in the Far-East war, there is very little data available about military nurses who became embroiled in the conflict, very often serving on the front line. The trustees are therefore launching an appeal for information...*

It's become pressingly obvious that there's an enormous gap in information about military nurses who served in the Far-East. Despite several attempts to unearth a list or record of these personnel, no such definitive material has been identified. Many of these nurses were either killed or taken into captivity as Japanese prisoners of war and often treated equally as brutally as their combat colleagues.

COFEPOW trustees have announced that they wish to rectify this matter by devoting a new level of intensity to compiling a database.

If you have, or know of, someone with a relative who was a military nurse in the Far-East during or before WWII, please contact either **Chris Wills at [events@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:events@cofepow.org.uk) or on 0121 244 7263, or COFEPOW Researcher, Keith Andrews, at [scubaka@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:scubaka@yahoo.co.uk)**

Thank you.

## Keith's Probus talk explores the legacy of POW captivity.

*The Thursday prior to the VJ80 commemorative weekend, member Keith Nicholls attended his Probus meeting in Nailsea, Somerset, to present a talk about his FEPOW father, Able Seaman William Coates Nicholls, RN. Keith's father was interned following the fall of Singapore.*

*Keith believed the talk was concise enough to interest other children of FEPOWs and help them understand a little more of the FEPOW experience. His presentation, precised below, started with the status of his father prior to captivity. His talk continues...*

"Born on the 29th April 1910, in Bridgewater, Somerset, my father, William Coates Nicholls, left school at 14 years of age to become a hairdresser. He joined the Royal Navy on 25th October 1939 and, in time, was drafted to 'HMS Sultan', at the Singapore shore base. A strapping lad, 23 years old, 5'10" tall and weighing 11 stones, William was stationed as a security officer at the dockyard. And until then, the world was his oyster.

"In 1942, the British Forces were instructed to capitulate and all servicemen were taken into captivity. After trying to escape on an Australian ship, Dad told me the captain ought to have been shot, as instead of sailing directly south he kept sailing round the islands until they were torpedoed. Dad spent 16 hours in the water clinging to debris, before being picked up and taken into Japanese captivity.

"Suffering with shrapnel wounds and a bullet in his back, near his spine, as soon as he arrived in Singapore he was operated on. He has always had great praise for the surgeon who removed the bullet and saved him from being in a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

"Most of the army prisoners were sent north to build the infamous railway, but as Dad had previously served in the navy, he spent the first two years of his incarceration on a ship bringing wood from Burma back to the island. Every time the Japanese did something wrong on the journeys, they blamed the prisoners, who were then beaten mercilessly.

"He spent the last nine months in the infamous Changi Gaol and each day, 6.00a.m. to 6.00p.m., they were marched to the site of the new Changi Airport to be subjected to hard labour,



digging out the foundations of the new airport with picks and shovels.

"Thankfully, the USA dropped two atomic bombs on Japan, bringing the war to an end. The emperor had been warned that this would happen if he did not surrender, but he refused. Had the bombs not ended the war, the emperor was assembling a 5000-strong army, ready to go into all prison camps on the 1st of November, and murder all prisoners.

"At the time of the surrender by the Japanese, Dad weighed seven stone and could count every rib on his body. He was almost blind and suffering from several tropical diseases.

"On returning home to Bridgewater, he regained his weight, putting on one and a half stone during the six week sea trip home. His health and eye sight improved by eating lots of Marmite. He married Aileen Balsdon in 1946, going on to have two children, Ally and Keith.

"Mum and Dad tried to have another baby but were unsuccessful. Mum went for numerous tests but they found nothing wrong. Dad refused to go for any, which was unfortunate, but probably the war years had caused a problem (this was not part of my talk).

"After suffering with various skin cancers, which no doubt were caused by wearing nothing but shorts for three and a half years in Singapore, with continuous exposure to tropical sun, he passed away at the age of 87.

"Due to his bravery and good luck, I am here today and have two lovely grown-up sons, two grandsons and two granddaughters (and two luscious daughters-in-law!)"

[keithnicholls@gmail.com](mailto:keithnicholls@gmail.com)

# Claiming due medals - plainly a matter of pride.

David Sartin has submitted a helpful breakdown of the method of claiming relative's medals for service in the Far-East during the war. David has previously reported on this matter in a much earlier newsletter, but having seen a letter in July's issue of COFEPOW Quarterly about considering how to claim a relative's medals, he has been kind enough to bring this matter to the general attention of COFEPOW members again, both current and future, who may be in a similar position.



He suggests...

"It is still possible to obtain a relative's war medals and the process is as follows:

1. As the claimant you must first of all be able to prove that you are the legitimate next of kin (usually by attaching copies of your relative's death certificate, or your own birth certificate, etc.).
2. Establish, if possible, that no one else in the family has already claimed the medals (if so, you can go no further).
3. Ensure that the relative whose medals you are seeking undertook military service which would have qualified them for the medals in question (include name, rank, serial number,

unit, date of enlistment etc. - as much information as possible).

4. Find and complete the application form at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-for-medals>

5. Attach the supporting information and documentation you have and submit the form with a covering letter.

6. Despatch to the MOD Medal Office at Innsworth Barracks (the address is on the application form)."

David successfully applied for and received the Defence Medal, to add to the 1939 - 45 Star, 1939 - 45 Pacific Star, and the 1939 -1945 War Medal, already held by his father, to accompany the Military Cross, as shown above.

The medals come in individual boxes with appropriate ribbon, but unmounted. David was able to get his father's all mounted at **Award Medals** in Shropshire. They can be found online.

Good luck!

## And a word from Graham...

Graham Robertson, trustee and Membership Secretary, offers his thanks for the presentation made to him at the AGM.

"I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to all COFEPOW officers and members for giving me this memento of my Dad. The picture frame with his image, his regimental badge, the prayer and a poppy is testimony of Dad's service and his experiences during the war. Unfortunately, at the recent AGM when presented with the frame, I was overtaken by emotion and unable to express my appreciation. So, I will now say thank you to all. The frame will be treasured by myself and my family."



The trustees would also like to take this opportunity to thank retiring Membership Secretary and fellow trustee Karen Brown, for her work managing the membership roster. Her contribution was much appreciated especially as she undertook the role whilst managing a full-time job.

Thank you, Karen.

## VJ80 call for members' entries into FEPOW Building Book of Remembrance.



A substantial COFEPOW Book of Remembrance is laid out and open for visitors to view on a presentation table within the FEPOW Memorial Building at the NMA.

There are two dates per page of this impressive document and it is turned over to the next leaf every fourth day, when the FEPOW Building is opened to visitors.

If you haven't yet submitted an entry for your FEPOW to be put into this special volume, the cost will be £16.50 per entry, from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026.

The date of entry is entirely up to you and is generally chosen to be on either the date of birth or the date of death of the FEPOW.

The trustees would like to accumulate as many FEPOW names as possible and include them within the book.

If you're interested in commemorating your FEPOW's name in this way, to appear alongside the many that are already honoured here, please contact Chris Wills by phone on 0121 244 7263 or by email at [events@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:events@cofepow.org.uk)

**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 name, general location, email and FEPOW relationship is either withheld or 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.

NAME	LOCATION	E-MAIL	FEPOW (if applicable)
<i>Revised listing: the following four members joined during the previous quarter. The editors apologise as, unfortunately, their surnames were incorrectly spelled.</i>			
Andrew & Elizabeth Nicholls	Royston	andynicholls5@gmail.com	Grandfather - William Coates Nicholls - Royal Navy.
Ian & Jay Nicholls	Hove	inicholls@outlook.com	Grandfather - William Coates Nicholls - Royal Navy.
Jennifer Upshall	Shropshire	jennyupshall@gmail.com	Father - Alenby Douglas Lummis - 4th Btn., Suffolk Regt.
Georgina & John Lawson	Yorkshire	glaw414@outlook.com	Father - James Stanley Fort RAF.
Leslie & Elizabeth Jewkes	Gr. Manchester	lesjewkes@hotmail.co.uk	Father - Leslie Jewkes - Royal Engineers.
Matthew Englefield	Northants	matthew.letts2000@hotmail.com	Gt Uncle - David George Englefield - Royal Engineers.
Christopher & Gillian Barford	Norfolk	barfordc270@gmail.com	Father - Fred Barford - Bedford Regiment.
Selina & Philip Williams	Norfolk	selina.williams@live.com	First cousin - Cecil James Emms - RASC.
Melanie & Peter Martin	Lincolnshire	mesamar1951@gmail.com	Father - Ronald Carter - Royal Corps of Signals.
Sue Nightingale	N/A	Sue-nightingale@hotmail.com	Father - John Yardy - Cambridgeshire Regt.
Muriel & Sheila Wigham	Sunderland	m.wigham737@btinternet.com	Father - Robert Keith Wigham - 125th Tank Regt.
Bernard & Susan Webb	Norfolk	webbontheweb@me.com	No FEPOW details.
Alan Cookson	South Wales	cookson53a@gmail.com	Father - Cyril Cookson - 46th Sqn, RAF.
Marilyn Watts	Norfolk	m.watts782@outlook.com	Father - Jack Gould.
Susan Millard	Cambridgeshire	millardexpress@aol.com	Father - Eric Walden - Royal Corps of Signals.
Andrew Scoble	Gloucestershire	andy.scoble@blueyonder.co.uk	Grandfather - Cyril James Churchward - HMS Exeter.
Thomas and Caroline Frankland	Staffordshire	t.frankland146@btinternet.com	Father - Thomas Frankland - Royal Artillery.
Jeremy Condor	Dutch Caribbean	jchcondor@protonmail.com	Father - Robert Thomas - Civil Engineer.
Nancy Parks	Herefordshire	nancyparks71@gmail.com	Grandfather - Lionel Margrave - 5th Btn., Beds & Herts.
Alastair Durden	Devon & Cornwall	alastairdurdan@gmail.com	Father - Richard Joseph Durden - Royal Corps of Signals
Terry McHugh	Bedfordshire	terrymchugh@live.co.uk	None given - 5th Battalion, Beds & Herts Reg't.
Andrew Walters	Devon & Cornwall	andyjeffwalters@btinternet.com	Uncle - John Garnham.
Dr. Richard de Soldenhoff	Edinburgh	rdesoldenhoff@hotmail.com	Father - Richard Davis de Soldenhoff - IMS/RAMC.
Jean Keay	Cambridge	jeankeay@yahoo.co.uk	Father - Charles Henry Lewis - 2nd Cambs Regt.
Christine Jones	Cambridge	alan.jones5073@gmail.com	Father - Gunner William Turner - 5th Search Lights, RA.
Julie & Shane Gray	Lincolnshire	juliegray1@hotmail.com	No FEPOW details - Lincolnshire.

**Donations** *On behalf of COFEPOW, thank you for your generosity. Listed below are donations made to COFEPOW during the last quarter of the year, which can be identified as being from specific members or friends. Every penny goes towards the maintenance of the FEPOW Memorial Building and Grove at the NMA in Alrewas, Staffs., and for other memorials in the UK.*

Dianne Williams forwarded £30 to pay for her father's name to be entered into the Book of Remembrance - £13.50 of this will be a donation: Mary Evans forwarded £50 to pay for her father's name to be entered into the Book of Remembrance - £33.50 of this will be a donation: Roger and Kay Harbird donated £1,000: David and Jill Everett donated £100.00: Brian Hill gave £50: Other identifiable donors this quarter include: Christine and Archie McLaughlan, Dianne Williams, Rebecca Johnston, Ann and Roger Powles, Debby Byam, Barbara James, Myra Beczkowicz, Gordon Bestwick, Karen and Bernie Ingrams, Barry Townley, Margaret People, Elizabeth Hale, Greta and Walter Palmer, Enid Jones, Kathleen and Idris Booth, Henry Langley, Christine Harfoot, William and Marion Thompson, Brian Buick, Marian Lowe, Mary Boswell, Linda Peach, Raymond Thorogood, Anne Wilson, Hazel Luscombe, Marion Love, Jeanne Kelly, Sybil and Pheobe Shaw. Very many thanks to all.

# More New members



## IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING MEMBERSHIP LISTINGS.

Following the switch over to the new Memberstack membership collation and recording system, an error in the way the computer viewed applicants' completed forms has been identified. Members have been ticking the check box on the forms for name, location, email and FEPOW relative details to be put into the newsletter, but the logging system has misinterpreted instructions. This has now been rectified. If any new members joining from mid-September onwards, or any of those below who have gone through the application process prior in the run-up to the deadline date for inclusion in this newsletter would like to have their details included in the January newsletter, please contact Graham Robertson, Membership Secretary, by email at: [membership@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:membership@cofepow.org.uk) This will allow the charity to remain compliant with data protection legislation, whilst providing an email address should one member wish to contact another, in full confidentiality (one of the original benefits of COFEPOW). The trustees of COFEPOW welcome each and every new member and offer thanks for the financial contribution each membership fee and donation provides to the continuing work of the charity. All new memberships are up to and including 15th September 2025.

Ian Cox	Murdoch Macleod	Ruaraidh Munro	Steven Mills	Charlotte Mitchal
Les Mitchal	Richard Gibbs	Lucy Jones	Frances Ramsey	Valerie Smith
Geoffrey Caldwell	Jayne Rae	Sally Ann Blackburn	Stewart Blackburn	Lucy Roue
John Hine	Mairwen Haxton	Nigel Coote	Simon Anckorn	Keith Gascoyne
Diane Godfrey	Ian Godfrey	Robert Taylor	Michael Wilson	Lewis Herbert
Murdoch Macleod	Ruaridh Munro	Margaret Brooks	Geraldine Edwards	Peter Cole
Maryann Williamson	Terence Dear	Gillian Leighton	Josephine Razzell	Darryl Banton
Ron Powell	Graham Waters	Lesley Serrao Da Veiga	A Susan J Vince	Andrew Sutherland
Simon Perks	George Brander	Carole and Marcia Trickett	Lucy Britner	Ann Pinnock
Anne Merton	Karen Arnold	Bridget Stevens	Susan Wagner	David Northey
Jane Northey	Rachel Bullen	Patricia Ireland	John Milson	Bridget Stevens
Diana Thompson	Joy Stearn	Angus Waugh	Clive Jackson	Terry Yardy
Andrew Finn	Denise Gaye	Ian Hickinbottom	Nicola Troake	Georgina Eames
Deirdre Coulthurst	Sarah Kirk	Leonard Cole	Justine Blakesley	Gerald Ashmore
Raymond Firman	Leanne Sharp	Celia Smith	Wendy Finch	Samantha Ritchie
Wendy Coston	Louise Jones	Clair Perfect	Robert Galley	Neil James
Clare Cattle	Sharon James	Stephanie Brightmore	Kevin Gibbons	Andrew Bryan
Lariss Nash	Jenni Prosser	Stephen Blay	Alan Edwards	Darren Little
John Ritchie	Stephen Healey	Geoff Hudson	Sue Wiggins	Digby Owen
Jacqueline Whitmore	Lindy Isherwood	Zoe Jardine	Alan Slater	Colin Elliott
Judy Elliott	Joanna Wardle	William Healey	Roger High	Georgina Paris
Helen Wrench	Chris Littler	Mary Boswell	Michelle Connolly	Eileen Kelly
Jim Wood	Kim Wassell	Carol Green	Mervyn Askew	Dianne Shepherd
Gale Hope	Simon Best	Michael Simcock	Jane Wearne	Dr. Rachel Lewis
David Gofton	Sue Wearne	Liz Wearne	Anthony Haley	Linda Cracknell
Lucinda Bishop	Iain Wilson			

## Reminder to all paying for membership

*COFEPOW Membership Secretary, Graham Robertson, would like to start issue a reminder to members and new joiners, about payment by cheque...*

"On behalf of all within the COFEPOW association, I would like to start by issuing a reminder to members who pay their membership subscription by cheque rather than online. Please note that when it's time for those who pay, or wish to join using a cheque, to send the relevant fee to me.

"The FEPOW Memorial Building and Grove at the NMA in Staffordshire is a wonderful achievement and greatly admired, and acts as a physical reminder of the suffering, bravery and sacrifices our Servicemen and women made during the Far-East war.

Every penny we receive by way of membership fees and donations, therefore, goes towards ensuring that we can maintain the building and its surrounds and pay for

the daily running of the site into the future.

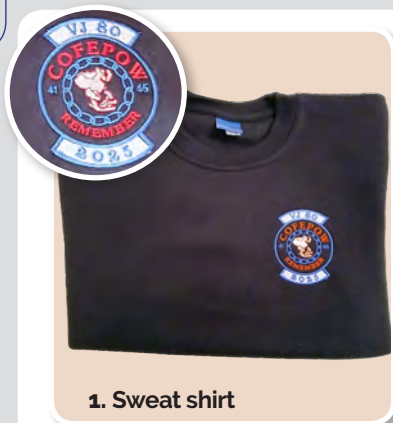
"COFEPOW thanks you for your support over the past year and we sincerely hope you will feel able to continue with your membership."

To do, so please forward your payment of £15.00 for single membership and £21.00 for joint, with a note of who you are paying for, to Graham Robertson, 1 Curlew Close, Watton IP25 6TQ. email: [membership@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:membership@cofepow.org.uk) See back page for more details. Thank you.

# New to mark VJ Day 80th.

## Revised price list

	Item	Price	P&P
	<b>NEW!!</b>		
1.	Unisex navy sweatshirt (Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL)	£25.00	£3.90
2.	Unisex grey polo shirt (Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL)	£20.00	£3.90
3.	Branded wooden pen	£35.00	£3.90
4.	VJ80 mug	£3.50	£3.90
5.	Coaster/beer mat	£2.50	£1.55
6.	Fridge magnet	£3.50	£1.55
7.	New Anthology of FEPOW poetry Volume II	£12.99	£3.90*
8.	Poetry Anthology	£11.99	£3.90*
9.	Cloth Shopping bag 14.5" x 16"	£2.50	£1.55
10.	Pack of 10 Notelets, inc. envelopes	£2.50	£1.55
11.	Key ring, fob	£3.50	£1.55
12.	Car Sticker	£1.00	£0.87
13.	Trolley coin	£3.25	£1.55
14.	Unisex Polo shirts B/W. M, L, XL (No XL in black)	£16.00	£3.90
15.	Tie	£12.99	£1.55
16.	Poppy Woven Badge	£2.50	£0.87
17.	Woven COF'W Badge	£3.50	£0.87
18.	VJ 70 Mugs	£8.50	£3.90
19.	Tie clip	£3.00	£1.55
20.	Lapel Pin Badge	£2.00	£1.55
21.	Blue pen with logo and website	£1.00	£1.55
22.	Special VJ Day 75 pin badge	£4.00	£3.90
23.	VJ70 Medallion	£7.50	£3.90
24.	Christmas cards (pack of 5) 15cms x 10.5cms when folded and inc. env.	£5.00	£1.60
	<b>BOOKS</b>		
	Title List Price COF'W P&P		
25.	'From Shanghai to the Burma Railway'	£12.00	£3.90
26.	'Echoes of Captivity'	£9.50	£3.90
27.	'Eric and Scruncheon'	£4.90	£3.90
	Both Louise Reynolds £12.99		
28.	'Surviving the Japanese Onslaught'	£19.99	£6.50
29.	'Escape from the Japanese'	£19.99	£6.50
30.	'When You Go Home'	£5.00	£3.90
31.	'Nagasaki'	£20.00	£3.90
32.	'In the Shadow of the Rising Sun'	£9.00	£3.90
33.	'Fighting Back'	£10.00	£3.90
34.	'Under the Heel of the Bushido'	£10.00	£3.90
35.	'Unsung Heroes of the British Army'	£7.50	£3.90
36.	'Unsung Heroes of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines'	£7.50	£3.90



5. The coaster/beer mats are made from compacted, water-resistant card, and feature the Union Jack and VJ Day 80 logo and the sunset, prayer and logos design. See alongside for P & P.



Smart casual sweatshirt and polo shirt, featuring the chest-borne emblem of COFEPOW and the 80th anniversary of VJ Day. Available in men's and women's sizes S, M, L, XL and XXL, both shirts are manufactured in 50%/50% polyester/cotton and are washable. The sweatshirt is available in navy blue and the polo shirt in pale grey. See alongside for prices and P&P.

Branded pens - bespoke individually hand-made pens each in a different wood, so no two are the same.

They are all inscribed with 'VJ80 - 2025' in white along the barrel. The pens feature an ornate gilt decoration, gold coloured nibs, clips and tips, and elegant, with stylish wooden barrels for the main body.

The pens have a Parker refillable, 'biro'-effect action, in a dark blue ink.

See alongside for prices and P & P.

Mug in white china with red and blue VJ Day 80 logo to the front and the tale of a FEPOW's arrival at Heaven's Gate on the reverse.

Each mug weighs 11 ounces.

See alongside for prices and P & P.

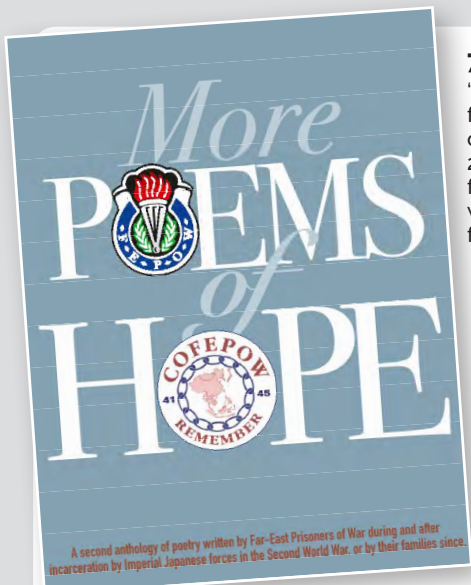
6. The fridge magnet features a sunset and poppy scene with: "At the going down of the sun And in the morning We will remember them" and COFEPOW VJ80 and FEPOW logos. Stocks for both are limited.



**How to order** The profit from all sales of merchandise goes directly to COFEPOW to help maintain the work of the charity. For further information or to order any of the items shown here, please visit the COFEPOW website at [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk) Details of ordering/payment methods are also available by emailing Merchandising Officers, Sylvie and Nick Bullen-Bell at: [merchandise@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:merchandise@cofepow.org.uk) or by phone on 01245 222 604/mobile 07721 067501. Thank you.

\*Postage to anywhere in mainland Europe will cost £6.00. Elsewhere in the world will cost £10.00.

# Help us raise the revenue to ensure remembrance of all FEPOWs.



## 7. New issue!

'More Poems of Hope' - following the success of the original anthology, issued in 2019, a second volume, which features over 50 poems written by FEPOWs and their families, was launched to coincide with the 80th anniversary of VJ Day. Now on general sale. The book, almost 60 pages long, includes a variety of pictures and illustrations to accompany the various authors' work.

## Out and about...

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



10. A small selection of handy notelets

8. Alongside, the original Anthology - 'Poems of Hope'. **VJ70 medallion FREE with every sale of either of the 'Poems of Hope' books!** Visit the Merchandise Office or online at [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk)



11. Key ring



12. Car sticker

13. Trolley coin



Merchandise to help promote COFEPOW out in the community.

## To use and wear...



14. Polo Shirt



Black XL SOLD OUT!



19. Tie clip



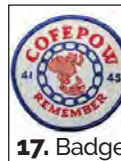
20. Lapel badge



15. Tie



16. Badge



17. Badge



18. VJ70 mug



21. Blue pen with logo

## To cherish...



23. VJ70 Medallion

22. 75th anniversary of VJ Day enamel pin badge in box

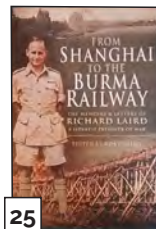


24. **New cards for Christmas!** Designed by Louise Cordingley with all sales via COFEPOW offered at a reduced price. Just £5 for a variety pack of 5, including envelopes. The overall folded size is 15 x 10.5 cms.

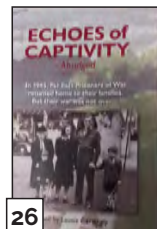


## To read or to give...

24. A wide range of books written by FEPOWs or their families over the last 80 years and available to COFEPOW at a reduced price.



25



26



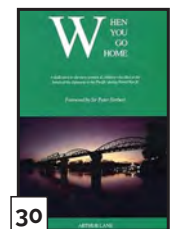
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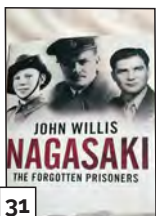
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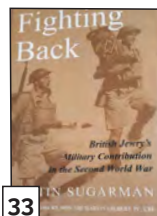
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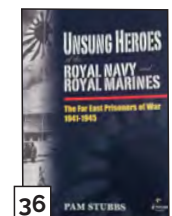
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36

# 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.

Patrons: **SIR TERRY WAITE** CBE, **LIEUTENANT COLONEL C.G. STALLARD** (Rtd.),

**SIR HENRY EVERY** Bt. DL FCA., **GENERAL SIR JAMES EVERARD** KCB CBE.

Trustees: **DAVID BREDE, DAVID BROWN, KAREN BROWN, NICK BULLEN-BELL, SYLVIE BULLEN-BELL, ALEXANDRA METCALFE-HUME, GUY METCALFE-HUME, GRAHAM ROBERTSON, ALAN WILLS AND CHRIS WILLS.**

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

Secretary: Vacant at time of going to press.

Treasurer: **DAVID BROWN** email: treasurer@cofepow.org.uk

Padre: **REV. RICHARD BROOKER.**

Merchandise Officers: **NICK BULLEN-BELL & SYLVIE BULLEN-BELL**

email: merchandise@cofepow.org.uk

WebMaster and Social Media: **GUY METCALFE-HUME** email: webmaster@cofepow.org.uk

National Events Co-ordinator: **CHRIS WILLS** email: events@cofepow.org.uk

Area Co-ordinator Officer and Education Officer: **ALEXANDRA METCALFE-HUME**

email: education@cofepow.org.uk

Membership Secretary: **GRAHAM ROBERTSON** email: membership@cofepow.org.uk

M: 07786 051573. 1 Curlew Close, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 6TQ. Membership fee per

annum **£15** per single or **£21** per joint membership. Please visit the COFEPOW website at

**www.cofepow.org.uk** for easy online payment. Cheque payments can also be made for

annual membership, which will need to be renewed in August. Cheques to be made payable to:

COFEPOW and posted to the Membership Secretary as above, with your membership details.

**Donations are also welcome and can be made to the Membership Secretary by**

**cheque, payable to COFEPOW, or at the COFEPOW website at www.cofepow.org.uk**

Honorary Life President: **CAROL COOPER**

Honorary Life Members: **PATRICK TOOSEY, PAM STUBBS, RON TAYLOR, BRIAN HUME**

**AND KEITH ANDREWS**

Far East Travel Advisor: **MARTIN PRECHNER** email: roquefort44@hotmail.com

If you would like access to material held at the FEPOW Memorial Building Archives at the NMA, you must be accompanied by a COFEPOW officer. If you would like to visit, on a Sunday preferably, please arrange with Keith Andrews at: scubaka@yahoo.co.uk or on 01530 450621.

**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.



## Help and information

While researching personal information, the following members have accumulated data which they are happy to pass on and share with others.

**Amanda Johnson:** Haruku/Ambon and Moluccas (Spice Islands)

email: [amanda@dcodetranslations.co.uk](mailto:amanda@dcodetranslations.co.uk)

**Agnes Dougan:** 155th (Lanarkshire Yeomanry)

Field Regiment, Royal Artillery.

email: [agnes.dougan@live.com](mailto:agnes.dougan@live.com)

**Jean Roberts:** 3rd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Saigon Party.

email: [jeanadrianroberts@gmail.com](mailto:jeanadrianroberts@gmail.com)

**Steve Mockridge:** Jesselton, Sandakan and Kuchin.

email: [smockridge@sky.com](mailto:smockridge@sky.com)

**Keith Andrews:** Singapore Coast Regiments and A.A.

Artillery and Thailand. email: [scubaka@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:scubaka@yahoo.co.uk)

**Colin Docketty:** Rabaul and Ballalae Island.

email: [colin.docketty@gmail.com](mailto:colin.docketty@gmail.com)

**Frank Clark:** Saigon.

email: [paghamfrank@gmail.com](mailto:paghamfrank@gmail.com)

**Thailand-Burma Railway Centre:**

All things related to the Thai-Burma railway.

email: [admin@tbrconline.com](mailto:admin@tbrconline.com)

Address: Thailand-Burma Railway Museum,

Kanchanaburi, Thailand: [www.tbrconline.com](http://www.tbrconline.com)

**Derek Lawson:** Deaths in captivity.

email: [lawsonderek@hotmail.com](mailto:lawsonderek@hotmail.com)

**Michael Hurst MBE:** Director, Taiwan POW Camps

Memorial Society. email: [society@powtaiwan.org](mailto:society@powtaiwan.org)

Web: [www.powtaiwan.org](http://www.powtaiwan.org)

**Hong Kong:**

Tony Banham, email: [tony@hongkongwardiary.com](mailto:tony@hongkongwardiary.com)

Web: [hongkongwardiary.com](http://hongkongwardiary.com)

**David Tett:** The subject of 'mails'.

Also: [www.fepowmail.com](http://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:

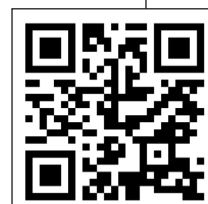
**Stephen John** of the Java FEPOW Club

email: [stephen.su.47@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.su.47@gmail.com)

or **Pauline Simpson** of NFFWRA,

email: [pauline761@btinternet.com](mailto:pauline761@btinternet.com)

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



Area	Name	Email
1. Birmingham and the Black Country	Annette Hughes	cranedriver1964@live.com
2. Cambridgeshire	Andrew Sharpe	andyjames@hotmial.com
3. Derbyshire	John Rutherford	Joruth27@gmail.com
4. Devon and Cornwall	David and Val Warner	davalofcedartree@gmail.com
5. Dorset	Ann Whiteside	louisewhiteside7426@gmail.com
6. Essex	Nick Bullen-Bell	bullenbell@btinternet.com
7. Gloucestershire	Diane Vear	dianevear@yahoo.co.uk
8. Greater Manchester and east Cheshire	<i>New vacancy</i>	<i>Please apply to David Brede, Chair.</i>
9. Herefordshire and the Wye Valley	Kerry Bird	hanjoem@gmail.com
10. Kent	Brian Faulkner	faulkner2021@btinternet.com
11. Leicestershire	Shirley Barnes	shirleyb60@virginmedia.com
12. Lincolnshire	Hazel Taylor	hazel.taylor@yahoo.co.uk
13. Merseyside and Lancashire	Colin Coleman	colin.colemanuk@mac.com
14. New Zealand	Hilary Cunningham	hilarycunningham1@gmail.com
15. Norfolk	Thelma Johnson	tjohnson4@btinternet.com
16. Northamptonshire	David Brede	davidbrede@yahoo.com
17. Oxfordshire	Mike Clarke	mikejclarke27@hotmail.com
18. Scotland	Jackie Sutherland	skyscape96@gmail.com
19. South Wales	Tony Jukes	bajukes@tiscali.co.uk
20. Surrey	Jill Robertson	cofepow.surrey@yahoo.com
21. Sussex	Elizabeth	cofepowsussex@gmail.com
22. Yorkshire	<i>New vacancy</i>	<i>Please apply to David Brede, Chair.</i>
23. USA (East coast)	Jan Slimming	jslimming@comcast.net
24. USA (West coast)	Sharon Cusumano	lestweforget1941@gmail.com