



# CoFEPOW Quarterly

## Carol Cooper

**1939 - 2025**

The trustees of COFEPOW were shocked and saddened to learn of the passing of the COFEPOW charity's founder, Carol Cooper, on November 10th 2025.

Carol, and her husband Ron, created COFEPOW in 1997, following her chance discovery three years earlier in a local newspaper, that a diary written in a POW camp had been sold at auction. Intrigued, she sought out the purchaser, only to find the diary had, in fact, been written by her own father, L/Cp William Smith of the Royal Norfolk Regiment, who was sent to war when Carol was only two years old. Her mother and sister had died some years earlier, so no-one was aware the diary existed. The family only knew that William died working on the Thai/Burma Railway and was buried in Burma.

Carol set off on a determined mission to buy the diary, but the purchaser refused to sell and temporarily lodged the work in the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum in Norwich. A transcribed copy, provided by the museum, showed daily entries - all written in letter form to her mother with many moving poems - and had been kept from the day her father left England on the 28th October 1941, to the last entry on 8th December 1943, following his death from malaria, malnutrition, dyptheria and cardiac beri-beri, around that date.

A BBC producer saw the story and embarked on turning it into a documentary, taking Carol to Thailand to retrace her father's steps, with the resultant 'The Diary' broadcast in August 1997. Subsequently, Carol became increasingly determined to erect a permanent memorial to men like her father and commenced a campaign

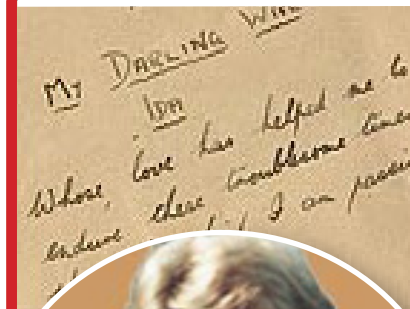


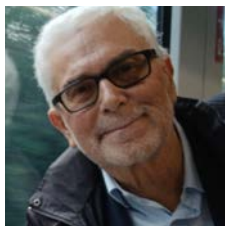
to the Government, with her own MP bringing up the matter in Parliament.

COFEPOW was formed in the same year in Norfolk, with just 25 members, becoming a registered charity a year later. Today, members hail from across the world, helping to sustain the original objectives of the charity: to perpetuate remembrance of the FEPOWs and to educate new generations of their sacrifice.

In 2019, Carol retired from her position as Chair to spend time with husband, Ron, as his terminal illness progressed. After he passed away, she continued to attend a number of COFEPOW events, until spending her remaining years living a quieter life in her home town of Gorleston, Norfolk.

The trustees and members of COFEPOW express their sincere condolences to Carol's family, and to honour her legacy, a comprehensive feature of the contribution she made to FEPOW remembrance will be included in this newsletter's April edition.





## Chair's New Year Notes

"Well, what a year we've had! Our hopes for a proper celebration of VJ80 were well and truly realised and we've had genuine recognition from the highest sources in the land.

"Following the amazing events around VJ80 in August, we were promised further recognition and this month many of the personnel that created and supported the events were summoned by the King to a reception at Windsor Castle, no less. The Queen, the Prince of Wales and Prince Edward were also in attendance, along with the Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer and the Secretary of State for Defence, John Healey.

"Eight members of COFEPOW attended and we were pleased to be introduced individually to the royal party and senior politicians. All these persons were very forthcoming in their appreciation of how VJ80 was commemorated and how the lessons of the Far East campaign and what the FEPOWs suffered should be carried forward. This is apropos, as the government is currently carrying out a review of the curriculum for schools. This is something I would encourage members to help with, by contacting their MPs and pressing the case.

"The Cenotaph March on Remembrance Sunday was very successful, having a virtually full attendance and on a wonderfully fine, bright day. Already there are members signing up for next year, so get your name on the list if you want to be part of it.

"Finally, may I wish all members and their families a very Happy New Year."

**David Brede**  
Chair



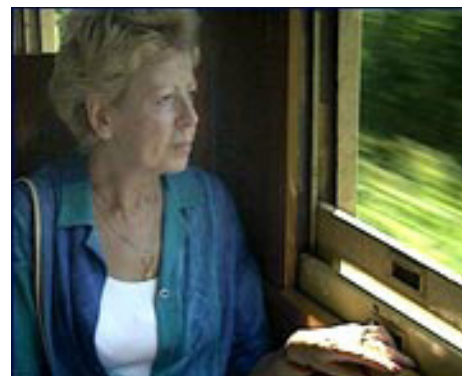
# The Cooper legacy - a call for your memories and tributes

As reported on the cover of this edition, COFEPOW founder and former Chair, Carol Cooper, sadly passed away in November 2025. Her funeral took place on Wednesday 10th December, at Gorleston Crematorium near Great Yarmouth in Norfolk and afterwards at the Pier Hotel. Tributes can still be paid at <https://carol-ann-cooper.muchloved.com> and any donations made will be to COFEPOW.

Such a significant event in the 30-year history of this charity cannot go unrecognised, and a full tribute to the tireless contribution made by Carol in her crusade to erect a permanent memorial to Far East Prisoners of War must be made. Her story is fully documented on the COFEPOW website at [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk) and outlines the astonishing coincidences that first drove her to embark on this journey.

## Carol's efforts helped ease the FEPOW family experience.

Her story does not need to be retold here. Instead, we have asked for those people who accepted roles of patron, trustee or officer of COFEPOW, to reflect on Carol's achievements over the lifetime of the charity, for inclusion in a feature in the April edition of the newsletter. But a comprehensive homage to Carol would not be authentic if the thoughts of members were not included. If you would like to pay tribute to Carol's work in founding and maintaining the charity, and have a short anecdote, reflection or memory of her, please forward by email to Chris Wills at [events@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:events@cofepow.org.uk) before **31st January**. Thank you.



## Memorial Service

COFEPOW is holding a memorial service for Carol Cooper at Our Lady and St Thomas of Canterbury, Wymondham, Norfolk, the National Memorial Church of Far East Prisoners of War, known as the FEPOW Church. The service will be held at 1.00 p.m. on Sunday 15th February 2026 and will last an hour. We are hoping to arrange light refreshments afterwards. You can watch the service on [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmPstVjBimy3NooC3Zmln8g/videos?live\\_view=502&view=2](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmPstVjBimy3NooC3Zmln8g/videos?live_view=502&view=2) Everyone is welcome, so if you would like to attend, please inform Chris Wills at [events@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:events@cofepow.org.uk) or tel: **0121 244 7263**. Peter Wiseman, the Archivist of the church, which holds approximately 200 people, will provide a Special Entry Certificate for anyone who is attending and has a FEPOW relative. If you would like your FEPOW entered into the book and receive a certificate, please contact Peter by email at: [fepow@wymondhamrcchurch.org.uk](mailto:fepow@wymondhamrcchurch.org.uk)



# Torquay turnout heartening for all

Attendance encouraging for 2026 rebooking



“ Old friendships are renewed and new ones made.



Another successful weekend in Devon in early October. Wenda Kiddle reports...

"Friendship, fun and laughter, sums up an amazing weekend at the Livermead House Hotel, in Torquay, last October, and for those of us who took the opportunity to stay on for longer, it became a mini holiday. Yes, of course, there was a more serious side: Sunday morning is always set aside for the opportunity to share memorabilia and stories of our relatives, who were POWs in the Far East. Of course, this is not the only time this happens, as throughout the weekend it is the common thread in our conversations. You always come away having made new links, heard new stories and gathered more information. Old friendships are renewed and new ones are made.

This year there was a special focus on our Area Co-ordinators and worthwhile discussions took place. As for the Livermead House Hotel, it prides itself on 'captivating the timeless traditional charm of the Riviera'. It does this in abundance! It's like going back in time to traditional charm and elegance. A first class chef delivers a five-course meal every evening, which is accompanied by classical tunes played on the grand piano.

Then there is the opportunity to enjoy coffee, served in the bar, followed by live music. Some just listen, others dance the night away.

This was my third visit; some have been coming for many years. This time we were a party of twenty-seven. The first time I came, we were forty-five. It would be fantastic if we could increase the numbers again.



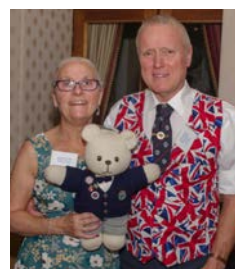
Thanks to John Rutherford for all photographs.

You see the advert every year in the COFEPOW magazine. So next year, don't just read it, but book to experience it! Don't hold back if you are on your own: you'll find it very welcoming. If you don't drive, come by train; the station is just round the corner from the hotel. Frequent buses stop right outside, making it easy to explore the beautiful Devon coast and the many attractions that are within easy reach.

We are indebted to Chris Wills, who found this venue many years ago, and has continued to build a very good relationship with the owners. As always, everything was organised to perfection. On behalf of all of us who enjoyed this weekend, 'a very big thank you.'

I will be there in October 2026. I hope to see you there, too!"

**Wenda Kiddle**



# COFEPOW trustees attend informal Windsor reception



COFEPOW trustee, Chris Wills, reports on an informal evening reception at Windsor Castle, on Remembrance Day, November 11th, 2025. A small number from the charity were invited to the event, alongside other FEPOW organisations and some former FEPOWs and civilian internees, which was held in the presence of His Majesty King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

Chris reports on the whole experience and was keen to emphasise what a tremendous honour the invitation meant for the charity. At long last, COFEPOW is being recognised for the work it does in remembering all FEPOWs. She also wished to convey her personal excitement of attending such an event. She succeeded!

"The formal invitations dropped through the letterbox (one for Alan and one for me!) on Wednesday 5th November - what a thrill! Fortunately, they gave me a clue as to the dress code, so my sister, Angela and I were ready to go shopping.

**“ Do you know how difficult it is to find something to wear? Day dress it said - no hats, no gloves!**

"For women readers, do you know how difficult it is to find something to wear? Nothing too sparkly as that would be over the top and too formal, but then nothing understated as it would be too informal and not acknowledging the seriousness of the event. Very difficult - but we succeeded.

"Alan and I travelled down to Windsor on the Monday prior to the Tuesday of the event, and the weather was horrendous. It poured with rain the whole way and the spray was almost like a fog. We arrived at our hotel, the Sir Christopher Wren, which was very nice and located at the bottom of the hill to Windsor Castle. Not too far to walk, we thought. We met fellow trustee there, Karen Brown, and spent the evening with her, excited at the prospect of the following day.

"On the Tuesday morning, we went for a walk up the hill, just in time to see the band disappearing into the castle for the two-minute silence at 11.00 o'clock. We waited there for them to come out and parade back down the hill and then went to find a nice hot cup of tea/coffee. We made our way back to the hotel at about 3.00 p.m., to get dressed, arranging to meet at 5.30 p.m.

"Karen, Alan and myself, walked up to the castle, passing fellow COFEPOW members, George and Barbara James in their car, and just in front of them, Tom Jowett, in the queue to park. We meandered up to security, gave them our passes and proof of ID and walked into the castle grounds. A very nice chap, driving a golf buggy, took us up to the entrance of the castle, telling us to have a nice time and that he would be outside when the reception had finished.

"We walked in and handed our coats to the cloakroom, collected our name badges and then set off up the grand staircase into a huge hall. Some very nice people with trays offered us elderflower wine, orange juice or champagne! No contest - the champagne won!

"We stood by some chairs and a little occasional table, just by a side door, whilst George and Barbara joined us, as did David Brede and Jill Robertson. Tom had gone walkabouts elsewhere. At 6.15 p.m. the door by us opened and Queen Camilla walked in and started to talk to people. Her equerry, Major Oliver Plunkett, moved over to Karen and asked her name and after the Queen had spoken to a few people, he introduced Karen to her. After asking her about her connection to the FEPOWs, Karen proceeded to tell her about her mother-

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in-law, and how she had been a child internee.

"The Queen moved on and spoke to myself and then to Alan, who told her about his father being a FEPOW for 3½ years. She then moved on to George, Barbara, David and Jill.

"His Majesty the King had entered through the main doors and started working his way down the room, he came over and said he'd been wanting to do this reception for some time, and this was the first opportunity.

“His Majesty the King came over and spoke with us....he was charming and stayed chatting for several minutes.

"When he'd moved on, Karen and I spied Prince William, so we made our way over to where he was speaking to a group of soldiers and waited to see if he would talk to us. Unfortunately, he went along in a different direction. After he'd moved on, one of the young soldiers walked away with her hands on her cheeks, saying "He is so lovely". Sadly, we missed him.



"To our surprise, Prince Edward, the Duke of Edinburgh, stepped into our circle and said hello. The six of us talked to him for at least 15 minutes and he told us his wife, Sophie, is a patron of the Java Club. He was lovely, and hopped from foot to foot like an excited child!

"The champagne and the canapés were free flowing. The staff were delightful and so friendly. As I was walking through the crowd of people, I accidentally kicked the foot of a

man kneeling down, talking to a FEPOW who was in a wheelchair.

I apologised and walked on, thinking I knew him, convinced he was an MP. Two plain clothes security guards stood by the wall, so I asked them if they knew who he was as I had accidentally kicked him, that he had a pointy nose and I thought perhaps he was an MP. The man replied "No love, sorry I don't, but why don't you go back and kick him again". I looked him up later that night and it was John Healey, the Secretary of State for Defence!

At about 7.45p.m., a young man worked his way down the room and asked everyone to make their way to the exit. Just outside the hall, we managed to get our photographs taken and then made our way out.

"As we went outside, there was a very nice young man in uniform, in a kilt, whom Karen insisted on having her photograph taken with! I saw David and Jill to say goodnight and they were deep in conversation with actor, Mark Rylance.

"It was pouring down as we left, so as we started to walk towards the castle gates, we saw Ian again, who we'd met earlier in his golf buggy.

"As he picked us up, he asked where we wanted to go. We replied "the Sir Christopher Wren hotel, please" but unfortunately, he apologised as he couldn't go beyond the gates. We agreed that was a good compromise, so afterwards, thanked him very much and then walked down to the hotel. Karen, Alan and myself arrived back at the hotel bar to have a relaxing drink and chat about a remarkable and rewarding evening.

"The whole event was photographed and we were given a QR code and password, and told that we could download one picture at no cost, but any others would need to be paid for.

"As far as Alan and I are concerned, the entire event was an absolute privilege. Attending an informal reception with the King and Queen has to be one of the highlights of our lives.

"We'll be dining out on the stories for a very long time to come!"

**Chris Wills**

Photographs: Left top: Barbara James, Tom Jowett, George James, David Brede, Chris Wills, Alan Wills and Jill Robertson.

Centre: Karen Brown and myself chat with Queen Camilla.

Top: Karen with her kilted friend!





# March to the Cenotaph

Surrey Area Co-ordinator, Jill Robertson, reports on the Remembrance Day Parade on November 9th, 2025, in Whitehall.

"What a lovely, mild morning as we stepped out of our hotels, front doors, off trains and out of our cars. Whichever way we all managed to get into London, the day for us all seemed very promising, as we descended on to Horse Guards Parade. A beautiful day to remember our fathers, grandfathers, great uncles, uncles or even aunts, mothers and grandmothers: those who went through the war, no matter where they were. The day was about remembering them, and not about us.

"The walk through St. James's Park from the Storeys Gate end deserves a mention, as we walked past the sparkling water, the 'Hansel and Gretel' cottage and the pelicans waking up on their island about 100 feet away. Walkers and joggers mixed with military personnel making their way to their mustering points, as were we. The London buzz made you feel alive.

"We were allocated column F6, which was at the top of the parade ground at Horse Guards, just off to the left of the arch. Several

**“ We quickly stepped off the sandy gravel of Horse Guards Parade, through the dim arches, at quite a pace... ”**

of our party arrived within five minutes of each other and gradually the initial bunch of six turned into over fifty COFEPOW members with family and friends. The blue lapel markers for the groups were obtained by 9.15am., so the front and back of our group was indicated for the media and the organisers - a small thing but very important to make sure COFEPOW gets mentioned in the broadcast - with contingent lead David Brede, Chair, at the front and Sharon Baker towards the back, as

usual. Fellow COFEPOW members from Wales and Lancashire joined, with more 'local' members, from Essex, Hertfordshire, Surrey, Sussex, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire, arriving, too. It is appreciated that so many make the long journey to experience the highlight of the Remembrance calendar.

"Swiftly swerving right, moving down Whitehall towards the WW2 Women's Memorial, we stopped in between statues of General Slim and Field Marshal Montgomery - a usual spot.



"The sound and vision recordists with their boom and other equipment were all around, and we were back, ready to remember and take in the Silence for two minutes, when the royal party arrived. It was now only 9:50am., so we had some waiting to do. Boiled sweets, wine gums and bags of treats were at the ready.

"Other late-comers found their way to us, and told accounts of bad bus and train services, so some had to stop further away and get on another form of transport, to get as close as they could. Many had stayed overnight and just had to walk or leave earlier, but there seemed to be a transport shut-down around the capital.



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"It was great to see former trustee, Brian Hume, making the journey from Norfolk with his family. Unfortunately, newcomers Marion and Peter Symonds, who had travelled from Cornwall for the weekend to stay with friends in Wandsworth, were through security but had difficulty getting through one of the other columns and couldn't reach F6. They observed the proceedings from a point further back instead, as there were television screens everywhere; they were able to keep in touch via the Cenotaph What's App group. The upside was that they were one of the first to be at the pub! We hope this report helps to fill in some of the gaps for them. It shows that it pays to be mustering on the gravel as early as possible.



"When the Silence came, after the canon salute in Horse Guards, the only sound normally is birdsong, but this year there were squawking noises, which, it's believed, were from the lime-green parakeets that are spreading over London, year on year. There stood the gleaming Elizabeth Tower, newly 'polished' last year, as the 11 o'clock 'bongs' rang out, signalling the hush - the two minutes Silence: time for reflection and remembrance of our loved ones.

"After the service, came the hymns and laying of wreaths by dignitaries - one was laid by our patron, General James Everard - as the columns move forward one by one. Some BBC radio correspondents were mingling amongst the crowd and Christine Lees and her granddaughter Polly, who is a Venture Scout with the youth column Y, were interviewed. You can listen to their recording on **BBC Sounds - The Ceremony of Remembrance from the Cenotaph with Paddy O'Connell**. Scroll forward to 1:003 just after the two minutes silence.

"The columns started moving off, to much excitement, as each remaining column clapped the veterans, Ghurkas, Chelsea Pensioners and multitudes of other well-deserving



servicemen and women as they went in the direction of the Cenotaph. Soon it was our turn, almost on the dot at 12:30pm. As our COFEPOW party moved forward towards the Cenotaph with the Royal Balcony on the other side, we looked to the white obelisk and saluted, if you will. The steps and calls of "left, left, left"; keep with the beat of the drum's timing, and though the rhythm is well-intended, us less-practiced civilians weren't always as tight a unit as we could have been, but we got by.

"Soon we were out of the world's spotlight and turning right on to Parliament Square, into Storey's gate, then back towards Horse Guards Parade. Marching in earnest started again, ready for the last salute from one of the royal family - this year HRH Prince Edward - before we are all stood down on the parade ground, where photos are taken and we disperse.

"All who attend, year after year or for the first time, enjoyed meeting new faces and hearing new FEPOW stories. So thank you to everyone who came to be included in this remarkable experience, and for helping to educate the world about COFEPOW and the Far East POWs - our serving older generation servicemen and women. Now it is our turn.

**Jill Robertson, Area Co-ordinator, Surrey.**

Jill apologises for the omission of several names, but word-count limits and data protection laws restrict unauthorised inclusion.

Photographs: COFEPOW extends its thanks to Jill Robertson, David Brede and Carol Bailes for providing photographs. Others are unattributed.



# Remembrance at the NMA



Left to Right: Shirley Barnes, Alan Wills, Jack Blay, Michael Wilson, David Sartin, Chris Wills and Caroline Aston.

Chris Wills reports on the gathering of members at the FEPOW Memorial Building and Grove, to commemorate Remembrance Day.....



"Alan and I went to the National Memorial Arboretum on Remembrance Sunday, November 9th, for the Memorial Service. When the principal service had finished, all who attended either dispersed or wandered over to the large war memorial or to individual memorials to lay their wreaths. We made our way to the FEPOW Memorial Grove, where we met a small collection of fellow COFEPOW members who had braved the cold Autumn day to pay their respects.

Alan laid the wreath on behalf of the COFEPOW trustees and members, and others laid their own tributes. On our way out of the NMA we passed the band of The Rifles, playing some very uplifting music".

**Chris Wills**

## Keith's request during recovery

Head of COFEPOW research and former trustee Keith Andrews has recently undergone surgery, having broken his back. As a consequence, he has informed the trustees that he "will be out of commission" for some time. Keith asks that members please refrain from contacting him for information or research, until further notice. The surgery has taken a considerable toll and access to his computer currently is severely restricted. Any emails sent to him are liable to remain unanswered for the foreseeable future.

We wish Keith the very best for a speedy recovery and thank all members for your understanding.

**The COFEPOW trustees.**

## The Repair Shop's bookbinder revives 'magazines'

Chris Shaw, the bookbinding regular on the BBC peak-time programme, "The Repair Shop", has been commissioned to bring back to life 'magazines' called 'Raggle Taggle', originally created in the POW camps of the far east and submitted by Peter Moss.

**Peter takes up the story...**

"After Singapore fell, my father, Capt. John ('Jock') C. Moss, 9/11th Indian Army, Royal Corp of Signals, was one of the many thousands of POWs shipped around camps, including Shirakawa in Formosa (Taiwan). In late 1943, a camp magazine, 'Raggle Taggle,' was created. Like 'Reader's Digest' in content, it contained stories, articles, poems, jokes and puzzles, illustrated in colour, often hand-written and then ingeniously bound together with rice-paste glue, brown paper and covered in mosquito netting.

"Every monthly 'issue' was unique, with 500 or so readers given barely 30 minutes each to read it, before handing it on. Every issue had to pass the Japanese censor, with some seized and destroyed until, in August 1944, banned completely."



"Jock secured a few remaining books and, despite more hell-ship transportations and camps, he brought home four months' issues.

"In 1947, he had 400 copies of sections of "Raggle Taggle" printed privately (Gale & Pol-den, The Wellington Press, Aldershot). The foreword notes were written by fellow prisoners, RAF Vice-Marshal Maltby, Maj-Gen G. Parker (US Army), and Maj-Gen. P. Cox (Netherlands Army). Now, thanks to the skill of Chris Shaw and the production team at 'The Repair Shop', these tatty octogenarian survivors are being rebound and saved".

**Peter Moss.**

# COFEPOW Break Rebooking for 2026!



## Weekend of 2nd to 5th October 2026.

The Livermead House Hotel in Torquay is an elegant hotel, built in 1820 on the edge of Cockington Valley on Torquay Sea front, in the heart of the English Riviera, Torbay, Devon.

The hotel offers a traditional flavour, breathtaking sea views, and high standards of service and cuisine, with an award-winning chef. The Livermead House is one of two 'Rew' Hotels, a family-owned and managed group of hotels on Torquay's water's edge.

There's a pleasant walk to the town centre, free on-site parking (as long as you provide your car registration number on arrival) and free Wi-Fi internet access in all public areas.

A full English or continental breakfast will be served each morning and a four-course table d'hote dinner each evening. On the Saturday, there will be a complimentary drinks reception before dinner with entertainment on Saturday and Sunday nights and a complimentary meeting room provided for the Sunday meeting.

**The Livermead House Hotel, Sea Front, Torquay TQ2 6QJ.  
Friday 2nd to Monday 5th October, 2026.**

**2 nights' dinner, bed and breakfast @ £190.00 per person**

**3 nights' dinner, bed and breakfast @ £280.00 per person**

**Extra nights @ £70.00 per person per night for dinner, bed and breakfast, for up to a maximum 7 night stay in total. If you live locally and would like to come to the Saturday dinner, there is a special price of £30 per head, £9 less than the normal price. Reservations are on a strictly first come, first served basis.**

There is no supplement for the first 6 single rooms (on a first come, first served basis) but any single rooms over this will incur a supplement of £15 pppn. Sea-view rooms carry a supplement of £10 pppn. To secure your place, simply send your name, address, email (if you have one), phone number, the number of people attending, the number of rooms required, the number of nights you wish to stay, the type of room, special requirements, i.e. sea-view, walk-in shower etc., together with **a deposit of £25 per person to: Chris Wills, 74 The Greenway, Sutton Coldfield B73 6SG. Tel: 0121 244 7263. email: events@cofepow.org.uk** Cheques should be made payable to COFEPOW. For more information or to book, contact: Chris Wills, details above.

We look forward to seeing you there later this year!

## Please remember when booking

Last minute cancellations are still costing the hotel revenue and although the management of the hotel understands the difficulties involved in having to look after someone who is ill, or being ill yourself, if cancellations are made close to the date of the weekend, it is impossible for the hotel to re-let the rooms or use food already bought.

As part of the contracted agreement with the hotel, guests in the COFEPOW party who cancel within one calendar month prior to 2nd October 2026, will be liable to pay the full amount directly to the hotel. Therefore, it may be beneficial for you to take out holiday insurance.

Thank you.



Name	
Address	
Post Code	Tel no.
email	No. of people
No. of rooms	No. of nights
Type of room (special requirements)	



# All on board humbled by huge Far East trip

The first in a new, two-part serialisation of a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Second World War POW camps and battle sites in Thailand and Singapore. Nick Bullen-Bell, COFEPoW Merchandise Secretary, reports in fascinating and illuminating style, on this special trip. Organised by Gerry and Linda Norden, the party of 38 ventured out on a comprehensive and relentlessly moving tour to the far east, which took place in November 2025. The second part of the report will be included in April's issue of the newsletter. Nick starts the story...



"At 6.00am on a chilly, damp November morning, our son Christopher picked up Sylvie, my brother, Nigel, myself and 'FEPOW Ted' (the Bullen-Bell's FEPOW teddy - see the April 2025 edition of the newsletter for the full story) and we were off on our pilgrimage to Singapore and Thailand, not knowing what to expect. We drove to Cambridge, to Owen Phillips' farm, and there to catch a minibus for the journey to Heathrow, collecting others on the way. Gerry and Linda Norden, the trip organisers, joined us; being in a minibus, we had priority at Heathrow and sailed through the crowds.

"The 1.40pm flight to Dubai, aboard an enormous A380 Airbus, was excellent, although we almost missed the connecting flight after waiting for the 3.15am flight when it was 2.15am! It was the first time I've had to run in years!

"Arriving in Singapore on the 3rd November at 1.40pm, we met our guide, Jeremy, and trusty coach driver, Anthony, not yet experiencing the Singapore heat. Along with the other 35 pilgrims we were taken to our hotel, called the Paradox. After many introductions

and instructions, the rest of the day was ours, so we walked into the 'town' for some cold refreshments and a further walk into 'Chinatown' Wow!

"Tuesday the 4th, and the serious tour started. First off, a coach journey to Kranji War Cemetery and our first real experience of the stifling heat. What an incredible and amazingly-emotive place it was and we started to understand the reasons why we had made this long journey. It became a recurring theme, and the memorial to the thousands of fallen, with no identifiable final resting place, was humbling.

**“Not a blade of grass was out of place amongst so many headstones...”**

"On to see the Johore Straits and Roberts Hospital/Barracks, where we could view the stunning wall murals, uncovered and restored with Singaporean Military consent, by the very same POW, Bombardier Charles Stanley Warren, 135th Field Regiment, R.A., who, as a very sick inmate, had painted the originals. Then the first of many outstanding lunches, served by the most welcoming locals at the Bark restaurant, next to the Changi Museum, which we also visited. To bring the day to an end, we added an evening visit to Alexandria hospital, the scene of the infamous Japanese massacre of inmates.

"The reality began to dawn on us.



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The group with our Chinese hosts at the Wai Siew Peck temple.

"Refreshed next morning, the former Ford factory was on the agenda, the scene of General Percival's surrender of the British and Commonwealth troops.



The Kranji War Cemetery.



British Ambassador to Singapore, Nikesh Metita OBE, with Nick Bullen-Bell and FEPOW Ted at Ranjit Cemetery.

"We found it hard to believe we were really there. Then on to Adam Park, the location of fierce fighting between the Allies and Japanese. The Allies didn't give up and only the capitulation ceased the fighting, although many continued on bravely.

"The day after started with a morning swim in the rooftop pool, and on to visit Fort Canning and the 'Battle Box'. There, the dark and tense atmosphere was palpable below ground, where the site has been kept as authentic and realistic as possible in what was one of the darkest hours for the British and

Commonwealth armies. The aura of the place contributed to my own increasing feelings of desperation.

"On to Sembawang Naval Dockyard, where we were given a tour by a Royal Naval Officer (known as Tats), then a brief but poignant wreath-laying ceremony and a visit to the enormous dock where SS Mount Vernon docked on 13th January 1942, and from which our father disembarked with many other 18th Division comrades. We ended the day in the company of Defence Advisor, Colonel Eddie Maskell Pederson, at Ridley Park, a high security residence.

"The tour continued with visits to the Labrador Gun Battery, Keppell Harbour and the 'Four Pillars' civilian memorial, to honour the thousands of innocent people massacred by the Japanese army of the time, shown on the opposite page.

"Next, on to Kent Ridge, Pasir Pan- where the Malay Regiment fought a courageous and ferocious rearguard battle with the enemy, suffering appalling losses in the process.

"A second poem was read here by Sylvie, the first having been at Kranji, taken from the COFEPOW 'Poems of Hope' anthology, in honour of all those who fought so bravely here.

"A delicious lunch followed at the Raffles Institute, followed by a talk about an astonishingly brave man called Lim Bo Seng, given by the Institute's students and their tutor, Cheryl Yap. Moving on to the Wai Siew Peck temple Gallery, we were greeted by two excellent Chinese gentlemen who showed us around. Here we learned about the Braddell-Thomson area and the desperate fighting between the British 2nd Cambridgeshires, the 5th Royal Norfolks and the 5th Beds and Herts Regiments, for control of the MacRitchie reservoir. It's thought that only the capitulation on the 15th February stopped the British soldiers inflicting a severe bloody nose on the enemy invaders.



Group photograph taken after the Kranji Remembrance Sunday Service.

We were then invited to the Singapore Freemasons Lodge for an interesting talk, and again were made to feel very welcome. Each of us was given a book about the society in the region. Our free afternoon was then spent visiting the Botanical Gardens - what a stunning place  
**Part II of the report of this trip will appear in April's edition of the COFEPOW Quarterly newsletter.**

# Changi-born Jenny recalls her release

One of COFEPOW's members' most fascinating stories is that of Scotland's Jenny Martin (nee Jennifer Davidson). Jenny was born in Changi and spent some of her childhood under the yoke of Japanese war-time captivity.

Her story is truly illuminating...

"My name is Jenny Martin, and I was born in July after my mother, Daphne Davidson, was interned in Changi Prison, Singapore, in 1942, with nearly a thousand British and Allied women and children who had been taken prisoner, with many more men held in a separate part of the prison.

"I would like to share with you one of my earliest memories. We were moved to Sime Road Camp when I was two. There was more open air there, but the diet was much the same, just a little rice every day. In the afternoons, everyone sat on their camp beds to escape from the heat, in a large hut that housed about 15 women. When I was barely three years old, I remember sitting on the end of the bed I shared with my mother and looking around.

**“ Every bed had a woman on it, all looking very miserable.**

"Suddenly I heard a distant humming noise, which came nearer and louder until it was very loud indeed. Everyone sat up and began to go out of the hut. So I went too and suddenly, an enormous object flew right over our heads. The adults all knew it was an RAF plane, because of the markings on the wings. A hatch opened beneath it and out fell hundreds of pieces of paper, like confetti. They floated down to us and everyone was saying "Thank God, thank God!" and hugging each other. Nobody told me what was written on the paper, but I know now that it said:

**"THE WAR IS OVER. JAPAN HAS SURRENDERED.  
WE WILL BE COMING FOR YOU SOON."**

"This was followed by a warning, which read, 'When you are free, don't go and eat a normal meal, however good it tastes. After three and a half years of near starvation, it could seriously damage your health'.



The circular photograph alongside was taken for Japanese propaganda purposes in Cell Block 'E' in Changi Gaol. It is of Jenny's mother and Jenny as a baby, and is so badly worn, fold-marked and torn that only the recognisable part of it has been shown here. Jenny's mother agreed to the picture being taken, as otherwise she wouldn't have had any photos whatsoever of Jenny as a baby. A meeting was arranged with Jenny's father at Easter 1943 and he was given the picture, folded it, and carried it in his shirt pocket throughout the war.

Above left: Jenny in the bath, aged 2, at Sime Road Camp. No-one knows who took the photograph.

Left and below: Mother and Jenny on board the 'SS Monowai', as per the handwritten caption. As Jenny's father took all the pictures, he was never in any!

**“ I remember being taken to a truck at the gate, which I had never seen open before.**

"A British soldier lifted me on to the back of a lorry, where a metal bench went right round, and my mother and a number of other people got on up a short set of steps and we drove away to Raffles Hotel, which, at that time, was a simple transit camp with 5 or 6 camp beds in every room. We were all given a medical exam, and then a gradually increasing diet. It was all new to me and I revelled in the vegetables and bits of meat and fish that we were finally allowed.

"My father had come down by train from Burma where he had been

Continued overleaf...

## John becomes trustee and Co-ordinator lead



John Rutherford has been appointed as a trustee of the COFEPOW charity (subject to ratification at the next AGM) and will have special responsibility for Area Co-ordinators.

John plans to engage with all current Co-ordinators and to help identify those members who wish to assume the role, where there is a vacancy in their territory.

He takes up the story...

"I have been a member of COFEPOW for 15 years, during 10 of which I have been Area Co-ordinator for Derbyshire. I am a member because my father and uncle were captured in Singapore in 1942, then from 1943 to 1945 they were held in Fukuoka Camp 9D and forced to work in the coal mines in Mizumaki. They both survived their captivity.

"I am totally committed to COFEPOW's aims to ensure that the legacy of all Far East Prisoners of War is never forgotten and that their stories are passed on to future generations. I am proud to have been a small part of what COFEPOW does nationally to meet these aims. I have also had considerable first-hand experience of the important role that area groups play in this work. When we have our local 'get-togethers' we share the stories of our family members and friends who were FEPOWs. We also learn much from the stories of other local people, including how we can find out more to add to our own stories. There is a special camaraderie in the group because of our shared knowledge of the cruelty endured by our predecessors. We support our informal conversations with an annual programme of member-led presentations, visiting speakers and visits to places of interest. In doing all of this, we actively involve a number of COFEPOW members who cannot always attend national events.

"As I have benefitted considerably from my membership of the Derbyshire Area Group, especially through my role as Area Co-ordinator, I was delighted to be offered the new position of COFEPOW trustee with special responsibility for area co-ordinators. My first and most important job is to pass on to all those currently carrying out that responsibility, the gratitude of the board of trustees for all that they do in meeting the aims of COFEPOW at a local level, not only in the UK, but also in the USA and New Zealand. I believe my new role continues to be one of 'co-ordination'. I would really like to learn about all the interesting and successful activities that take place in each COFEPOW area so that these can be disseminated for all co-ordinators to consider. I would also like to explore ways for area co-ordinators to meet occasionally as a group, virtually or in-person, to discuss and share views about what's going well and what isn't. This will also give me an opportunity to learn how I can best represent them as a trustee.

"There are a number of areas without a co-ordinator. If this applies to your area I would urge you to consider taking on the role. It's very satisfying and I will be happy to talk to you if you want more information."

**John Rutherford, tel: 07454 121447. Email: [cofepow.derbyshire@gmail.com](mailto:cofepow.derbyshire@gmail.com)**

Ed: please join in congratulating John on his appointment and, in the spirit of COFEPOW, offer him whatever help you can. Thanks.

Continued from previous page...

**Below: Mother, father and Jenny, arriving at Edinburgh Caledonian station. Taken by Jenny's Auntie Rena Davidson, her father's sister.**

sent to work on building the railway. He was very thin and weighed about 7 st. He came to see us for a short visit, but must have had



accommodation elsewhere. Raffles was only for women and children.

"By September, we were thought fit enough to go back to the UK. I boarded the SS Monowai, the first ship out, with both my parents. Each person was allowed only one small suitcase that she/he could carry. After three and a half years in a tropical climate, everybody's clothes were tattered and worn virtually to rags, being made of thin fabric in the first place.

"So it was very good to arrive in Port Said, where we were taken to a huge shed, like an aircraft hanger. It was full of trestle tables, all covered with warm clothes, in all sizes, for men, women and children, thanks to the Red Cross and the kind people who had donated them. So when we arrived in Liverpool and took the train to Edinburgh in October, we were prepared for the cold weather.

"My father's sister, Rena Davidson, met us at the old Caledonian station and took us in a taxi to the home she shared with my grandmother in Corstorphine. We were there for Christmas, and I saw a Christmas tree for the first time and enjoyed playing in the snow with my Granny."

**Jenny Martin**

# Area Co-ordinators - how to turn a journey into a chance to meet



Surrey Area Co-ordinator, Jill Robertson and COFEPOW Chair, David Brede, were travelling south from Northampton in November, to meet relations the next day. Why not use the opportunity, they thought, to ask regional members to a casual meet-up on the way?

So they put the word out a few days before, inviting Surrey members to an informal get-together at a what was a 'pit-stop' for them in Shepperton on the way. Jill describes the meet to illustrate how members can get together, whatever the circumstances...

"It was a Sunday, and although short notice, several members answered the call. Fortunately, three were able to join us: Tony McQuaid from Ewell, Pauline Ridgway from Shepperton and Jenny Prosser from Weybridge. Tony's grandfather was Jill's father Stan Moore's captain, of the RASC 18th Division HQ. He was Captain Ronald Horner, who was held in Changi, and with H Force, sent to POW camps at Songkurai and Konkuita, to name just two. Pauline's father was Peter Bolton, a Royal Artillery gunner, who was held at Changi, and at Taiwan in Haito, Kinkasaki and Mountain camps.

"The lesser-known civilian internee captives from Hong Kong, such as four year-old Gillian Guess, Jenny's mother, her uncle, Gillian's brother, Michael, and Jenny's grandmother Mabel and Frank Guess, her grandfather, a municipal policeman in Shanghai, were all held in Haiphong from November 1942. Initially, Jenny believes they were all together and treated reasonably well, until Mabel and her children were moved to Ash Camp in Shanghai, possibly around March 1943, with Frank being moved to Fengtai, in 1945.

"Members of the group were fascinated with each other's stories, and how the Far East theatre of war impacted our relatives. It was very enjoyable, and cathartic to talk about about it.

"Further venues will be selected for future meet-ups and these will be notified in due course for 2026."

**Jill Robertson**  
Surrey Area Co-ordinator

## VJ80 pin badge despatch

In previous newsletters, a competition was held for children to design a new lapel pin to commemorate VJ Day plus 80.



The competition ran in schools and was very successful, and the winners were announced at the COFEPOW AGM in August. The winning pin design was then manufactured and the trustees were delighted with the finished product.

As part of the VJ80 commemorations, the trustees decided to mail one of the pin badges to every member, at no cost. Additional badges could be ordered, and still can, at a minimal cost. The pins were duly distributed over the last two months, but regrettably, after despatch, a problem was discovered with how each was labelled and distributed, resulting in a number not being received by members. The trustee team has actively investigated the issue internally and with the delivery company, so now needs a comprehensive picture of who has been affected and has not received their pin.



The pin is presented in a box as above with an accompanying descriptive card. If you do not receive the pack within the next 60 days, please contact the Membership Secretary, Graham Robertson, so he can check the errant delivery listing and forward a replacement to you, if relevant.

Please accept the trustees' apologies for this delay. We assure you the situation will be rectified as soon as possible and all members will receive their VJ80 pin in due course.

Graham Robertson's email is:  
**membership@cofepow.org.uk**

# Lanarkshire Yeomanry FEPOWs remembered

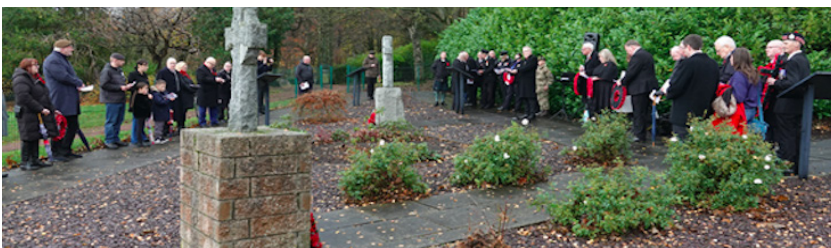


Following the Remembrance Sunday Service at the War Memorial in the Market Place, Carluke, a short service of commemoration was held at the nearby Lanarkshire Yeomanry Memorial.

In the Second World War, two regiments of Field Artillery were formed, one of which, the 155th Lanarkshire Yeomanry, was to lose many men in the Far East, following the fall of Singapore and three years of captivity as POWs.

## The Market Place, Carluke Memorial.

Frank Morrison spoke in his address of the dreadful time suffered by Yeomanry servicemen, which was followed by the Kohima Epitaph, read by Derek Edmond. Tributes were then laid at the Memorial: Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Gavin Whitehead, laid a wreath on behalf of the Lieutenancy of Lanarkshire and a tribute was laid by Pamela Nash, MP; a wreath on behalf of South Lanarkshire Council was laid by Councillors Eileen Logan and Poppy Corbett, followed by Derek Edmond with a personal tribute to the men of the Regiment. Campbell Thomson laid the Lanarkshire Yeomanry wreath and to complete the service, Bethany Black read from Binyon's Poem "For the Fallen".



## Belhaven Park, Wishaw.

Later in the day, the Community Service of Remembrance was held at the War Memorial in Belhaven Park, Wishaw. The gathering remembered the heroism of brothers, Richard and John McEwan, who enrolled in the regiment at Wishaw in May 1939 in anticipation of hostilities and with the hope of serving together. Owing to the vagaries of war they were separated and John went with the 155th Lanarkshire Yeomanry to the Far East. Both men survived, although John experienced almost four years of hell in Japanese POW Camps.

Thanks go to David Cranstoun, for his generous donation, and to Frank Morrison, for the photos and for "always being available to help".

# May Japan trip planned

Doshisha University in Kyoto recently invited Keiko Holmes to speak to economics students and public audiences during its 150th anniversary commemorations. Her speech focused on the Pacific war and her continuing reconciliation work. Japanese schools do not teach about the war, so few people know about it. Once they learn about it, however, they appreciate the work of Agape World (Keiko's reconciliation-based ministry).

## Keiko explains:

"One of the university's professors of economics, Masao Ogaki, is a supporter of Agape World and is helping us bring together FEPOWs, internee families and others interested in joining a 'Trip to Japan' in May 2026. Daniel, my son, experienced in taking Europeans to Japan for their holiday, will be on board, as will I, like last year. At this stage, we would like to know how many members would be interested in joining us. Although hotels in Japan are always full and expensive, Japanese currency is quite cheap now. So if you'd like to go, now is the time to exchange currency.

## Outline of the trip:

**15-day trip to Japan - late May/early June '26. £1,000 each deposit, to be paid by the end of February. Additional £2,000 to be paid each at the end of April (dependent on how many commit). Each participant will fund the cost of their own return flights to Japan. China Eastern Air is 1/3 of the price of BA, JAL and ANA. We will convene either at a hotel or Haneda Airport, Tokyo. The trip will include Tokyo, Hakone, Kiwa-Cho, Hiroshima and Osaka, with four nights' stay in Kyoto, where Doshisha personnel will take us on a sightseeing tour.**

**Professor Ogaki would like to do something for us on Monday, the 1st of June, since his seminar is on that day. We will stay in Kyoto from May 29 to June 1st.** Keiko and Danny are arranging the trip now. If any Iruka-related people wish to join us, we will stay in Kiwa-Cho, Kumano City and Mie prefecture for a little longer. Please let us know as soon as possible if you wish to join the trip. Also, email any enquiries or recommendations you may have to:

**Tel: Keiko on 07968 057 059 or email: kch-4jc@icloud.com Or Daniel, phone 07939 565 491. email: c.danielholmes@gmail.com**

We look forward to you joining us!

# Where it all started - the Norfolk group remember

Norman Craik reports on a particularly poignant meeting of members, in the light of recent news.

"On Sunday 26th October 2025, a small group of COFEPOW members gathered once again, for the 27th year running (apart from one missed year due to COVID), to hold a Remembrance Service at Norwich Crematorium. The Service is held around a tree, planted there by COFEPOW as a memorial 27 years ago. This short service is always very moving and provides an opportunity to meet up with other members who have not seen each other for a while.



"As usual, the Service was followed by a visit to a local pub for lunch and a good old natter.

"Our thanks, once again, go to Thelma Johnson, our COFEPOW Area Co-ordinator, for organising the Service and lunch."

**Note:** "While writing this article, I was informed by Carol Cooper's daughter, Adele, that Carol has very sadly passed away.

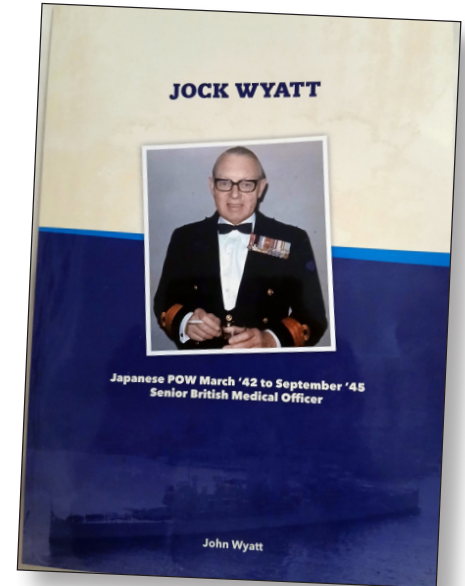
"I am sure that a great deal of further information will be written in the newsletter. It was here in Norwich, Norfolk, in 1996, that Carol arranged the very first meeting, attended by about 20 people (some of whom were here at our Service this year). At a later meeting around that time, it was decided the gathering would be called 'Children of Far East Prisoners of War' (COFEPOW) and so the organisation was formed.

"Just look at the size of the group today. Thank you, Carol, you are going to be so sadly missed by all of your friends here in Norfolk.

**Norman Craik**  
norjud14@gmail.com

## New book tackles new perspective

### 'Surgeon Commander 'Jock Wyatt' MBE OStJ'



A4 in size, this 40-page biography was written by his son, Lt. Col. John Wyatt MBE PhD RE (Retd). Three quarters of the book covers his father's 3½ years as a Japanese POW, following capture after the sinking of HMS Exeter in the Battle of the Java Sea. This event is described in the biography, in significant detail.

Jock (known to many as 'Doc Wyatt') was taken from Macassar to 'Bicycle Camp in Java, and spent his final 18 months of the war as the Senior British Medical Officer on the Pekanbaru 'Death Railway' in Sumatra. The work gives a unique insight into many of the health issues experienced in the far east. Indeed, details of Jock's work appear in many other publications, too.

He retired from the Royal Navy in Cape Town in 1963, and continued to practise as a Medical Officer of Health in Southern Africa, returning to the UK in 1975.

For interest, on VJ Day in August, the Duchess of Edinburgh met with Jim Wren (aged 105) in Salisbury. Jock Wyatt treated him after the sinking of HMS Repulse and HMS Prince of Wales, when he was the Surgeon Lieutenant on HMS Exeter in Singapore, before its sinking. He and Jim were almost certainly in the same POW camp in Pekanbaru.

**The cost of the work is £6 plus £2.50 p&p.**  
**Contact John at [jwyattassociates@live.co.uk](mailto:jwyattassociates@live.co.uk).**

# Harrow tree re-dedicated

Gerry Mahaffey writes in with pictures of the re-dedication ceremony of the giant redwood (Sequoia) tree planted as a living memorial to all those who died in captivity in the Far East in the war. The memorial plaque was originally unveiled by the Mayor of Harrow in 1996.

Gerry writes...

"On behalf of the Harrow Recreation Ground Users Association, and our Tree Awareness Team, I wanted to extend our thanks for your support of our re-dedication event, and for David G's keynote speech.

**“Your words were very moving and much appreciated by all at the event.**

"It was also good that you were able to stay for the refreshments, as many people wanted to speak further. It was also lovely to meet your wife, Lesley, on the day.

"We have many pictures to record the day. For those interested, more are available to view at [www.gerardmahaffey@yahoo.co.uk](http://www.gerardmahaffey@yahoo.co.uk)

**gerardmahaffey@yahoo.co.uk**  
**Gerry Mahaffey**



## A new poem...

Conceived and written by Andy Sharpe, Area Co-ordinator for Cambridgeshire

Through steaming jungles, blind with rain,  
 They marched through fever, mud and pain,  
 Where leeches fed and rivers burned,  
 And every mile, no glory earned.

No crowd to cheer, no bands to play,  
 Just whispered prayers to end the day,  
 Their boots dissolving into clay,  
 As comrades fell and hope gave way.

They fought the monsoon's endless roar,  
 The choking vines, the fever's sore,  
 Against an unseen, ruthless foe  
 And hunger was the harshest blow.  
 Imphal, Kohima - names like scars,  
 Etched deep beneath forgotten stars,  
 While Europe blazed with light and song,  
 They held the line, unseen, so long.

When victory came, no flags unfurled,  
 Their triumph shadowed by the world,  
 But still they stood, though few recall,  
 The ones who gave their nearly all.

So let the jungle hum their hymn,  
 Through ruined camps and memories dim,  
 For though the world let silence fall,  
 The Burma men remember all.

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)

Long-time members of COFEPOW may notice a new design approach has been adopted with this issue of the newsletter. We hope this simple, fresh style continues to reflect the gravity of the daily work undertaken by the charity, in advancing its original aims.

We hope you like the new look.

## Apology

The editors wish to apologise sincerely for errors made in the October issue of COFEPOW Quarterly, regarding the article submitted by Keith Nichols. The feature, entitled "Keith's Probus talk explores the legacy of POW captivity" incorrectly listed the birth year of his father, William Coates, as 1910, instead of 1919. It also stated that his home town was Bridgwater, not Bridgewater, as printed, and that Keith had a sister. This is not the case. We apologise unreservedly for any upset or distress this may have caused.

## The Burgess cathedral visit inspires a moment of reflection



“  
She introduced herself and said “I just want to say I’m sorry”.

Pictured is Arthur Burgess, son of Lance Corporal William Arthur Burgess, 1st Battalion, Manchester Regiment, service no. 3527592, who was captured in Singapore on 15th February 1942.

Arthur is wearing his father’s medals (for the first time) before he set off for Lichfield Cathedral for the VJ Day commemoration on 16th August. It was a very emotional and proud moment for him and his wife, who wrote to Chris Wills to describe a moment before the service, which had a profound impact on the couple. The letter reads...

"Dear Chris

Arthur and I would like to thank you and your team for the wonderful VJ 80 commemorations. We are new to COFEPOW and had no idea what to expect but all the events were expertly planned, and we enjoyed it all. We had never met anyone else who had a FEPOW in their family - we thought we were the only ones! It was very interesting to meet other families in the same situation and hear their back stories.

A very strange incident happened in the cathedral, as we were looking for our seats, a lady came up to us and asked if we had a FEPOW in our family. I replied "Yes, my husband's father".

Immediately, she introduced herself as Japanese and said: "I just want to say "I'm sorry"; which took us by surprise. I thanked her and said how much we appreciated her apology and it wasn't her fault. We couldn't find her after the service, to thank her again, as she must have gone.

This apology went a long way to healing our family and we don't know if she said it to anyone else. It was very brave of her to attend a service with all those FEPOW families. She was a different lady to the one that attended the Saturday evening meal.

Once again, thank you for all you have done".

**Doreen & Arthur Burgess, Urmston, Manchester.**

**Ed note:** the lady in question was Keiko Holmes, a Japanese co-ordinator for a charity named Agape, which helps to promote reconciliation between Japan and its enemy's former World War II Prisoners of War. The other Japanese lady referred to in the letter was Tomoyo Nakao, a university researcher.

Doreen and Arthur would like their names putting forward for the Peace and Reconciliation event at the Japanese Embassy in London in June. Their Christian faith advocates forgiveness and peace, and they feel it would be a positive and appropriate adjunct to his father's captivity and years in a Japanese POW camp.

## Member Dariel alerts charity to potential scam

COFEPOW member Dariel Francis suspects the email account of COFEPOW Chair, David Brede has been hacked. She recently received emails purporting to be from him, asking for help. Dariel experienced this type of fraudulent activity at her own town council, where councillors received a message, as if from the Mayor. If the recipient replied, a request to buy a low value gift token. followed, which enables the scammer to get their bank details. She makes some recommendations...

"COFEPOW members may not always be aware of these ever-more sophisticated cyber-tactics. The trustees believe therefore that it would be sensible to alert all members to the potential receipt of this apparently genuine message and advise that if you receive an unsolicited email purportedly from David Brede asking you to contact him or asking for help, DELETE the email immediately, without opening if possible. If your email provider allows you to add the scam address to a blocklist, it would also be sensible and safer to do this before deletion.

"The trustees and their digital controllers also have to be aware of the risk that COFEPOW may be in breach of GDPR regulations (data protection legislation). Dariel's initial concern was that her bank details might be hacked as well. However, COFEPOW has reassured her that the list of members and their personal details is held on a separate App, to which David Brede doesn't have access.

"David has tried to eliminate this spoof address, but there seems to be no way to prevent scammers from setting up these seemingly-realistic email addresses."

**Dariel Francis**

# The diary of a doctor, from Dunkirk to the 'Death Railway'

'A Cool Head in Hell - The Wartime Diaries of a British Doctor from Dunkirk to the Burma Railway' by Harry Silman and Jacqueline Passman. This new book, issued in October, is a compelling historical narrative, based on Harry Silman's diary, one of few contemporaneous accounts by a POW under the Japanese, to survive WWII.

The book is an expanded and re-edited version of Jacqueline Passman's book, 'Harry's War,' which is based on her father's experiences as a POW in the Far East. Mere months after enlisting in the British Army in 1939, Leeds-born medical officer, Harry Silman, was one of the last soldiers to be evacuated from Dunkirk. In 1942, his division arrived in Singapore, just before the island fell. Captain Silman would spend nearly four years in Changi and in the northern camps of the Burma Railway. Throughout, he kept diaries in secret – illegal and highly dangerous for a POW. Silman's accounts of his incarceration describe the power of camaraderie and the importance of self-improvement, despite the circumstances, as well as the bleak realities of near-continuous death, cruelty and disease.

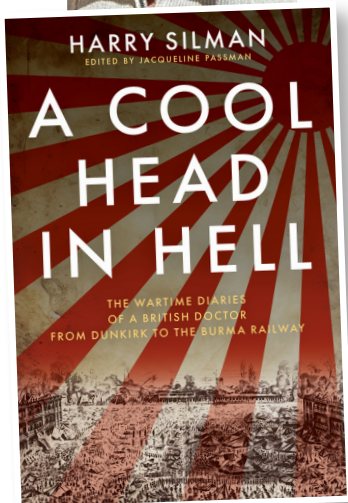
“One of the fullest accounts by a Japanese POW to survive the war.

He tended to Allied prisoners forced to labour on the railway, even as he himself was weakened and exhausted. The narrative is graphic, yet compassionate, and lit with humour. These remarkable diaries have been carefully transcribed by Silman's daughter, Jacqueline Passman, who has added illuminating commentary throughout. 'A Cool Head in Hell' is one of the fullest accounts by a Japanese POW to survive the war.

**About the author and editor.**

Harry Silman served with the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers during the war, attaining the rank of Captain. From 1942–45, as a POW, he cared for ill and dying men in the camps on the Burma Railway. His post-war years were spent in general practice as a beloved physician in Leeds. Jacqueline Passman taught in both mainstream and deaf education. The discovery of her father's wartime diary sparked her interest in the experiences of POWs in the Far East, and she gives regular talks on this subject.

'A Cool Head in Hell' is published by Extraordinary Books. It's 208pp long, features 32 photographs and illustrations, and is priced at £14.99. Contact: **Claire Handscombe at: [claire@extraordinarybooks.co.uk](mailto:claire@extraordinarybooks.co.uk) T:0203 951 3177. [www.extraordinarybooks.co.uk](http://www.extraordinarybooks.co.uk)**



# The hunt goes on for family 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 Ray, and her daughter, Linda Cracknell, is trying to trace any of his family to ask if they want them. If anyone knows anyone called Hubbard who may be able to help, please contact Chris Wills at: [events@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:events@cofepow.org.uk) or by telephone on: 0121 244 7263.

**Information already known.**

The Membership Secretary has analysed the current membership list and there doesn't appear to be anyone with a connection to Raymond. For the benefit of any member who thinks their FEPOW relative might have known this POW, the following is information that has been discovered about him so far.

**Name: Raymond Stanley Hubbard.**

**Service number: 1491871.**

**Rank: Sergeant.**

**Unit: 239 Battery, 77th HAA, Royal Artillery.**

**Service history: Captured on Java, possibly around Jakarta. Shipped to Ambon, but his card gives no clue as to when. In October 1944, he was shipped from Camp 3, which was at Ambon, back to Batavia, but again no exact date. A roll in WO361, shows he went from Batavia to Bandoeng Camp in September 1945.**

The liberation date on his card is shown as 27/10/45. Please contact Chris Wills at the above email address if you suspect your FEPOW may have known this man.

Thank you in advance.

# Former COFEPOW organist's search for accessible archiving for papers

Member, Andrew Watson played the organ for COFEPOW at the AGM service, and did so every year for over a decade. He's retired from this particular function now, as advancing years and geographical difficulties make it increasingly trying to convey the instrument to the NMA and back home each year.

During his time as an active participant in COFEPOW's charity work, Andrew also helped Chris Wills reproduce some of the FEPOW Album Pages, after a previous member withdrew several from the FEPOW Building, including that of Andrew's father.

Andrew possesses literally hundreds of papers and artefacts regarding his father's incarceration in the Far East during the Second World War.

The following is his quest to find a suitable archiving base for them, before he, in his own words "departs this world". Andrew takes up the story...

"More than 20 years after my father's death, and nine years after my mother's, I finally got round to opening a box which I had inherited, which I only knew vaguely as 'some stuff from the war'. This was the prelude to a major project which has just reached its fruition, with my parents' war papers being featured in an Oxford University online archive, entitled 'Their Finest Hour'.

**“ I finally got round to opening a box which I had inherited, but which I only knew vaguely as 'some stuff from the war'.**

"The collection contains over a thousand letters written during the war, mainly by my mother, but also some from my father, both before his capture in Java in 1942 and also after his liberation in August 1945. Also included are several original documents, including telegrams from the War Office, messages from the Red Cross and



**Left: Frank Watson, photographed in Singapore in 1942, prior to escape and capture.**

**Bottom left: Frank and May, Andrew's parents, at their wedding in 1938.**

**Bottom right: Andrew's parents after the war, with children Dorothy (b 1947) and Andrew (b 1950).**

**Next page: The landing page of the Watson Collection at Oxford University's archive.**



updates on my father's situation, during the period when he escaped from Singapore, immediately prior to its fall. He made it to Java after a very dangerous sea journey, but was subsequently captured, temporarily incarcerated in a number of different prisons and POW camps, and finally held captive in a coal mine in Japan (Fukuoka 8) until liberation in August 1945.

"It was during one of the Covid lockdowns, whilst my wife (Mary) and I were going through old photographs with a view to placing a selection into albums, that we chanced across the 'WW2 box' again. It was immediately apparent that it contained some important historical items, along with a great deal of personal material.

"My parents had married in 1938 and were still a young married couple when the war led to a painful, enforced separation. The box contained, among other items, literally hundreds of letters written by my mother to my father, but which had apparently never been sent. But why? Our best guess is that she wrote them as a way of 'keeping in touch', even though he was (at first) reported missing and (later) confirmed as a POW and, as such, would have been unable to receive letters from home. Whether she hoped he might read them one day in the future is unclear, but I suspect that he didn't.

"Many of her letters were still in a writing pad and I would imagine they had been put in

*Continued overleaf...*

Continued from the previous page...

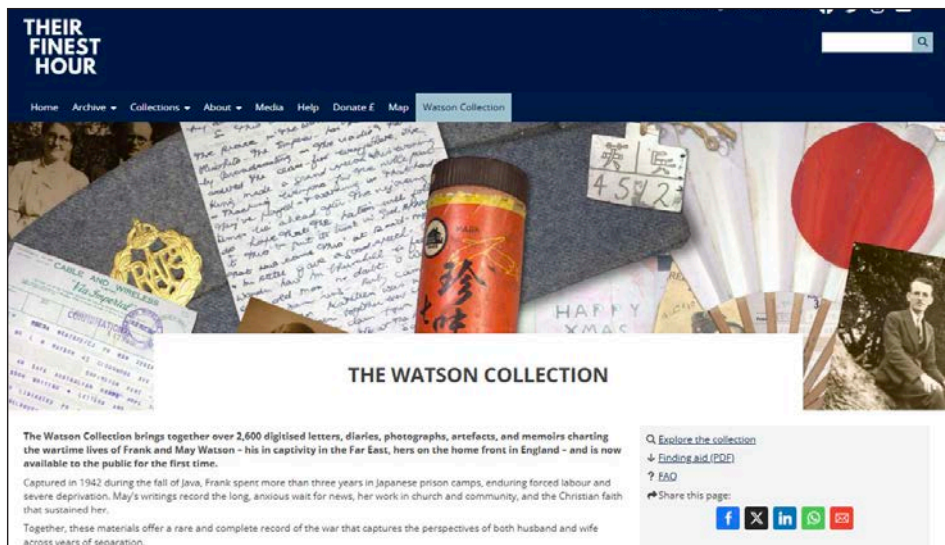
a box simply because she felt emotionally unable to throw them away. Added to which, as many COFEPOW members will be aware, returning prisoners were told not to talk about their experiences, with the whole emphasis being about 'moving on'.

"But the letters were only a part of the collection. For example, there was a New Testament, which father had kept with him throughout the war (it was tiny and he had presumably hidden it on his person somehow). He had scribbled in it the names of prisons and camps he had been kept in, along with the relevant dates. I would never have been able to piece together the complex chronology without this important source of information.

“There can be little doubt that my parents' strong Christian beliefs were a key thread...

...binding them together (even whilst being thousands of miles apart) and enabling them to believe in a happier future through some very dark days.

"We began this lockdown project by getting all the material out on to our large dining room table and sorting the various items into groups (e.g. letters, not only from mother and father, but also from



relatives and friends sent at the time; official documents and telegrams; service records and selected press articles).

"The next step was to sort all the items within each group into chronological order, then to place each item into transparent files (so they could be protected but remain readable) and, finally, to deposit each group of items into large ring files.

"These were then catalogued for ease of access and a chronology added, showing where both parents were and what they were doing individually throughout the war years. The question remained as to what we should do with the box now. We discussed with our (and my sister's) children whether they would like to take over stewardship, as and when Mary and I had both died; but we all agreed that simply storing the box in an attic or a loft for another generation was not optimal. At this point, one of our friends (Gill Turner) offered to type up some of my Father's letters (those sent both before and after captivity and kept by Mother); his handwriting is not great and it was a

far from a straightforward task.

"We contacted several institutions and two (King's College London and Oxford University) responded positively, much to our surprise and delight. Following several discussions between all parties, it was agreed that the Oxford team would digitise the entire collection (a mammoth task), then commission a researcher (at our expense) to produce a summary which 'told the story', and finally to showpiece the entire collection (with text, graphics and a brief video) in time for a launch on VJ Day 2025. The full collection (including all the digitised original letters) will now be available for access by researchers at Kings College, other institutions and indeed COFEPOW members and the general public.

"Mary and I are very pleased with the outcome and much credit goes to Matthew Kidd, who led the project. Here is the link to the 'Watson Collection': <https://theirfinesthour.english.ox.ac.uk/watsoncollection>

"There is a rich collection of other material about 'ordinary people' caught up

in WW2 in the Oxford archive as a whole ('Their Finest Hour'). This can be accessed from the home page: <https://theirfinesthour.english.ox.ac.uk/>

Links have also been added from the COFEPOW website's research page <https://www.cofepow.org.uk/news/the-watson-collection>

"Oxford used their specialist skills and media contacts to raise awareness of the collection around VJ Day, when the launch was planned. I was pleased to be invited to do radio interviews with LBC and BBC Radio Oxford and TV interviews with ITV

(Calendar and Meridian local stations) in the week before the Lichfield Cathedral Service. Given the relatively low-key welcome accorded returning FEPOWs, my parents would be astonished at the interest shown in their stories 80 years later.

"So there remains one loose end which is still outstanding. The institutions to which we have offered the original documents and artefacts as identified here, have turned them down, largely on the grounds of not having the space. My family would be pleased to hear from any institution which would be interested in housing this material, so it remains accessible (alongside the digital versions) to researchers in future generations."

**Andrew Watson**

Contact email: [thewatsons87@icloud.com](mailto:thewatsons87@icloud.com)

## 'The Ukelele Man' book launch, meet and greet - April 2026

The story of a FEPOW, who built his own rudimentary ukelele from an abandoned mandolin, which kept him going through the horror of captivity on the Death Railway...

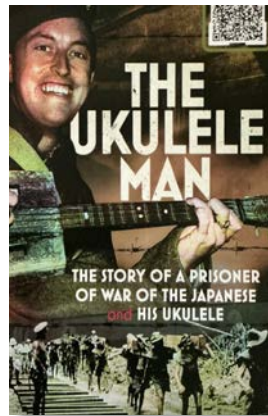
Tom Boardman was a skilled ukelele player from Lancashire. At the start of the war, he joined the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and after training, was posted to Singapore. For the early months, he enjoyed the vibrant, yet easy-going atmosphere of a city where cultures mixed and bright lights shone. As the growing threat of Japanese invasion came to the fore, Tom wondered why preparations to resist such an attack appeared unhurried, disorganised and complacent. Within weeks, Singapore had surrendered and Tom was taken into captivity, losing his treasured ukelele in the confusion and chaos of the fighting which ensued. He managed, however, to cleverly conceal the cherished ring his wife, Irene, had lovingly given him as he left England.

Luckily, Tom found a broken mandolin and, by using its tuning pegs, made a homespun replacement ukulele. Although it was small and too quiet, surprisingly it survived for two years and gave Tom great solace whilst he slaved on the infamous Thai/Burma railway. Work in the heat and humidity of the jungle was arduous, and he suffered several life-threatening tropical diseases and illnesses. The food was sparse and minimal, and the discipline meted out was brutal. But his captors could not take away his powerful will to survive and his unending enthusiasm to entertain. Despite continuous adversity, he mustered the energy to sing popular songs to his fellow prisoners and raised spirits by performing at camp concert parties.

After the railway's completion, Tom built a second, more robust ukulele, sketching its design and technical specification in his rough notebook and paying careful attention to the precise positioning of the frets. By scouring the camp, he collected discarded items and, with endless ingenuity, improvisation and patience, crafted a remarkable ukulele.

Concert parties provided an important distraction from the harsh realities of incarceration. Tom thrived in the 'orchestras' and 'choirs' and performed in comedy routines, plays and musicals. After the Japanese surrender, he revealed the gold ring he had successfully kept hidden since his capture. Soon after returning home back to the UK with his ukulele, he was reunited with Irene and his family.

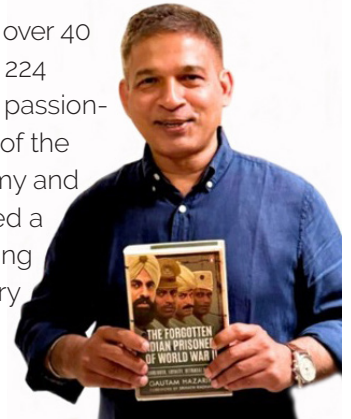
'The Ukulele Man' is a true story of Tom's triumph over adversity through his passion for music and not letting an enemy defeat him. The Imperial War Museum North permanently displays the instrument. There will be a 'Meet the Authors' day at the Imperial War Museum North, on Saturday 4th April 2026, where the co-authors, Tom Boardman's son, Ron, and Ray Withnall, will be on hand to talk to interested parties. Expected publication date is 30th March 2026. ISBN 9781036142575. 224 pages. £22.00. **The book is published by Pen & Sword Books. Email: [enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk)**



## 'The Forgotten Indian Prisoners of World War II: Surrender, Loyalty, Betrayal and Hell'

A fascinating new perspective by Gautam Hazarika

This new work with over 40 illustrations across 224 pages, analyses in passionate detail, the role of the Indian National Army and of those who played a major part in it during the war. It's the story of Captain Mohan Singh, 14th Punjab Regiment, the first



commander of the INA, supported by Japan to help expel the British from India. It details the great risk he took in breaking with the Japanese when they reneged on their promises and writes of the thousands of INA men who died of sickness and starvation in Burma and of those who fought bravely when they got a chance and how the INA won the hearts of the people of India and hastened independence, even though they lost the battle.

It's the story, too, of Lieutenant M. M. Pillai's daring escape from Singapore and of Warrant Officer John Baptist Crasta, one of 17,000 Indian POWs sent to hard labour camps in the Pacific, of whom over 10,000 died. The book includes descriptions of the war crimes trials held by the Australians for atrocities against these POWs, where Subedar Chint Singh was a key witness. Finally, it is the story of wives waiting for five years, with meagre news of their soldier husbands.

This is a lesser-known chapter of Indian history that deserves more telling. Hazarika's narrative, using largely unpublished words and interviews with family members, is a gripping story of loyalty, of daring escapes and double crosses, and genuine adversity in captivity.

**Available from Pen & Sword Military at the introductory offer of GBP £20.00.**

**For any questions on the story, contact Gautam at [ghazarika70@yahoo.com.sg](mailto:ghazarika70@yahoo.com.sg)**

## Brian hands over rudder of Lisbon Maru remembrance

"On 2nd October, the service commemorating the 83rd Anniversary of the sinking of the Lisbon Maru was held at the NMA, followed by lunch at the Alrewas RBL Club. The service was attended by relatives of POWs who had been on the ship, members of the Chinese Embassy in London and Ms Yang Linlin, a native of Zhoushan, who had travelled to the UK especially. She brought with her a bottle of water from the sea where the ship had sunk in 1942, which was sprinkled in front of the Memorial during the service.

"I am handing over the task of informing relatives about Lisbon Maru events. This does not mean I will be taking any less interest so please contact me and when I have information to pass on, I will forward it to LIMMA.

"I know that many are frustrated at not having had the opportunity to watch Fang Li's documentary film "The Sinking of The Lisbon Maru". The team is continuing its search for distributors. Would those living overseas who are interested in seeing the film please write to me with your contact details, which will, of course, not be passed on to the Chinese authorities.

**Brian Finch. tel: 07740 844666.**  
**email to: bfinch1941@gmail.com**  
**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UDpZ7ZnrYU**

## FEPOW Book of Remembrance

The COFEPOW Book of Remembrance is open for visitors to view within the FEPOW Memorial Building at the NMA. There are two dates per page and it is turned over every fourth day, when the FEPOW Building is opened to visitors.

If you haven't yet submitted an entry for your FEPOW to be included, the cost will be £16.50 per entry, from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. The date of entry is up to you. If you're interested in commemorating your FEPOW's name in this way, please contact **Chris Wills by phone on 0121 244 7263 or by email at events@cofepow.org.uk**

## Somerset Tea'n'Cake meet raises a refreshing donation

The COFEPOW Treasurer, David Brown, has emailed to say that Irene Stone, Treasurer of St Michael & All Angels Church in Somerset, has forwarded a cheque for £190 raised during a 'VJ Tea and Cake' event, as a donation to COFEPOW.

The trustees offer their sincere gratitude to the church and its members for this kind and thoughtful gesture, and for taking the time and trouble. Please thank everyone who took part.

For further information or if you would like to glean any tips on how to organise a similar event in your COFEPOW community, please email irene at **irene12009@hotmail.com**

## Chinese soldier's first hand account of brutal life in Singapore, in Charles (Stuart) James' "Rising Sun Memories - 1942-45"

The book features a genuine narrative of the author's own experiences whilst serving with the RAF in Singapore, 1962-64, and tells of stories related to him about the horrors committed by Japanese occupiers who ruled there during the war. Several of these stories were told reluctantly, as many did not wish to remember, nor re-tell them. Most were told by civilian staff who worked with Stuart at RAF Tengah, Singapore.

Whilst serving in the early '60s, Stuart got to experience first-hand how the effects of World War II changed that part of the world. Landing in a country he knew nothing about, he quickly struck up a friendship with a Mr. Goh, a reserved Chinese soldier who witnessed the majority of the war in Japanese-occupied Singapore. Goh gives Stuart an insight into the horror of brutal Japanese military rule, which Stuart deftly weaves into his own perspective.

With stories focussing all the way from the heart of the conflict to its sobering aftermath, **'Rising Sun Memories'** follows Goh on clandestine operations fighting the Japanese in Malaya and in his quest for revenge against a military organisation that took everything from him. Based on true events, Stuart perfectly captures two different perspectives of the biggest world-changing event in modern times. It is fictional, but based on fact and with real historical detail.

**Available as a paperback for £8.94 on Amazon.**



## Donations

On behalf of COFEPOW, thank you for your renewed generosity, particularly in these difficult days when finding spare cash for charity donations places extra stress on family budgets. Of course, the COFEPOW charity depends on membership fees and donations received through the year, and we are delighted to have accepted a number of bequests in recent years. Contributing to a favoured charity is a decision now made by many when preparing their Will.

Listed below are one or two 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.

To pay for her father's name to be entered into the Book of Remembrance, Mary Evans forwarded £33.50 of which £17.00 will be a donation. Sybil and Pheobe Shaw donated £14.00. Thank you.

## Letters this Quarter

Following August's commemorative services around the country and the report carried about events in Scotland, member Jenny Martin wrote to the editors to add to the information provided elsewhere about the country's VJ Day services.

Her email read...

"We also had a church service at North Leith Parish Church in Edinburgh, and a donation to the Surgeon's Hall Museum of some of the medical instruments used by Jackie's father during his time on the Burma Railway (refers to Jackie Sutherland, Scotland Area Co-ordinator for COFEPOW). This was just one of the many other events up and down Scotland to mark VJ80".

**Jenny Martin**

# Reminder note: paying for membership and making donations

COFEPOW Membership Secretary, Graham Robertson, would like to bring to attention various issues currently being experienced regarding the payment of annual membership fees and the gifting of donations.

### **COFEPOW no longer takes Payment by PayPal:**

Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, COFEPOW closed its PayPal account in early 2025. The administration and costs made this system untenable for the charity.

If you are still paying your membership fee by this means, please revert to either paying online or by cheque. The charity's preferred means of payment is via the COFEPOW website at [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk) where a simple guide to joining and donating is included. Once you join online, you will automatically create a Direct Debit for renewals a year later. For cheques, please see below.

### **Payment by Direct Debit:**

Currently, some Direct Debits are being received into the COFEPOW bank account, with no reference to, or identification of, the payer. Could you please amend your bank DD to indicate your name.

### **Payment by Bank Transfer (BACS):**

For anyone paying their membership via BACS, please ensure that you clearly indicate what your payment is for, and give your name, e.g., 'Membership and John Smith'. The Membership Secretary will then be able to easily identify who has made the payment.

### **Payment by cheque:**

For those who prefer to pay their membership subscription by cheque, please send your cheque made out to COFEPOW, when it's time to pay.

The fees are £15.00 for single membership and £21.00 for joint. Please include a note of who you are paying for. For more details, please see the back page of this newsletter or visit us online at [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk)

Please forward all payments to: **Graham Robertson, Membership Secretary, 1 Curlew Close, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 6TQ. Telephone: 07786 051573. email: [membership@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:membership@cofepow.org.uk)**

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 bravery, suffering and sacrifices our Servicemen and women made during the Far-East war. Every penny we receive by way of membership fees and donations goes towards ensuring that we can maintain the building and its grounds and environment, 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.

**Graham Robertson, Membership Secretary**

# New members

## DATA PROTECTION.

COFEPOW only publishes new members' details in this newsletter. Each new member can stipulate that their name, general location, email and FEPOW relationship are either included or withheld, during application. If your details are included when you join, your local Area Co-ordinator will also be informed. Each Co-ordinator is conversant with data protection legislation and your details are not shared again. Only officers of the charity have access to this information going forward, all of which 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. All new memberships are up to and including 12th December 2025.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING MEMBERSHIP LISTINGS.

Following the switch to the new Memberstack membership recording system, an error in the way the computer viewed applicants' completed forms was discovered. Members have been ticking the check box on the forms for details to be included in the newsletter, but the logging system misinterpreted instructions. This has now been rectified. Any new members of those listed below without details, or indeed those going back to last September who would like to have their details included in the next newsletter, please contact Graham Robertson, Membership Secretary, by email at: [membership@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:membership@cofepow.org.uk) The charity can then 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 new member and offer thanks for the financial contribution each membership fee and donation provides to the continuing work of the charity.

Name	Location	e-mail	FEPOW (if applicable)
Richard Collings	Abingdon	<a href="mailto:rtcollings@googlemail.com">rtcollings@googlemail.com</a>	Father - WRK (Dick) Collings & Uncle - Hector Ross.
Isla Brown	Worcestershire	<a href="mailto:islabrown59@outlook.com">islabrown59@outlook.com</a>	Grandfather - William Noble Frazer - Royal Scots.
Chris Buckley	Nova Scotia	<a href="mailto:chrisbuckley@mail.com">chrisbuckley@mail.com</a>	Father - Harry Hall Buckley - Royal Indian Ordinance Corps.
William Elsworth	Cheshire	<a href="mailto:jeremy.elsworth@pobox.com">jeremy.elsworth@pobox.com</a>	No relation - Patrick Michael Power - Royal Artillery
Kevin McAspurn	Sowerby Bridge	<a href="mailto:kordobel@gmail.com">kordobel@gmail.com</a>	Uncle - Alec Shaw - Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders.
Philip Gleeson	Cardiff	<a href="mailto:tygleeb@gmail.com">tygleeb@gmail.com</a>	Father - Frederick Gordon Gleeson - 18th Div. RASC.
Robert Golding	Hampshire	<a href="mailto:golding.associates@gmail.com">golding.associates@gmail.com</a>	Father - William Golding - Royal Corps of Signals.
Gordon Mills	Merseyside	<a href="mailto:gordonm43@gmail.com">gordonm43@gmail.com</a>	Grandfather - Ronald Lyon - 77th HAA Bty., RA.
Laura Dunning	Gr. Manchester	<a href="mailto:laura.dunning1@btinternet.com">laura.dunning1@btinternet.com</a>	Father - John Hancock - 14 Sec. RADC Southern Area.
John Moulton	Oxfordshire	<a href="mailto:johnmoulton@blueyonder.co.uk">johnmoulton@blueyonder.co.uk</a>	Father - John Moulton - RAF.
Jayne Arrowsmith	London	<a href="mailto:Jaynearrowsmith1@gmail.com">Jaynearrowsmith1@gmail.com</a>	Father - Cyril Arrowsmith - 2nd Btn., the Loyal Regiment.
Richard Gibbs	Bromsgrove	<a href="mailto:rjgibbs1710@gmail.com">rjgibbs1710@gmail.com</a>	Gt. Grandfather - Thomas (Ted) Millon - 118th Field Regt., RA.
Samantha Ritchie	Victoria, Australia	<a href="mailto:samritchie@hotmail.com">samritchie@hotmail.com</a>	Gt. Grandfather - Grandfather - Geoffrey Osca Ritchie.
Sarah Derry	York	<a href="mailto:l33ybe@gmail.com">l33ybe@gmail.com</a>	No details supplied.
Anthony Fulwood	Singapore	<a href="mailto:amfulwood@hotmail.com">amfulwood@hotmail.com</a>	Relative - Albert Edwin Edward Fulwood - 211, RAF.
Charles James	Bognor Regis	<a href="mailto:charlesjames1937@gmail.com">charlesjames1937@gmail.com</a>	N/A.
Joanne Lambert	Lancashire	<a href="mailto:russjlambert@yahoo.co.uk">russjlambert@yahoo.co.uk</a>	Father - Leonard Arthur Seaman - 4th Btn. Royal Norfolks.
Mark Guy	Essex	<a href="mailto:markguy57@btinternet.com">markguy57@btinternet.com</a>	Father - Leslie Desmond Guy - Cambridgeshire Regt.
Philip Boiling	Sussex	<a href="mailto:philcgull@yahoo.co.uk">philcgull@yahoo.co.uk</a>	Great Uncle - Frank Tingley - Royal Artillery.
Brendan Docherty	Argyll and Bute	<a href="mailto:brendandocherty@hotmail.co.uk">brendandocherty@hotmail.co.uk</a>	Father-in-Law - McFaden (no details provided).
Matt Simpson	London	<a href="mailto:mattsimpson23@yahoo.co.uk">mattsimpson23@yahoo.co.uk</a>	Grandfather - Ernest Warwick - 4th Battalion, Suffolk Regt.
Siobhan Gilliland	Edinburgh	<a href="mailto:siobhan.gilliland@gmail.com">siobhan.gilliland@gmail.com</a>	John Walter Gilliland - Royal Navy.
Steven Podmore	Portugal	<a href="mailto:podhome@hotmail.co.uk">podhome@hotmail.co.uk</a>	Father - Norman Podmore - 21st LAA, Royal Artillery.
Hazel Mindham	Norfolk	<a href="mailto:hazelmindham@btinternet.com">hazelmindham@btinternet.com</a>	FEPOW - Reginald Blackwood - Royal Norfolk Regt.
Richard Batey	Wiltshire	<a href="mailto:richard.batey@icloud.com">richard.batey@icloud.com</a>	Grandfather - Percy E. Toms - RAF.
Martin Smith	Yorkshire	<a href="mailto:itram@blueyonder.co.uk">itram@blueyonder.co.uk</a>	Father- Gordon Smith - RAOC.
Owen Phillips	Cambridge	<a href="mailto:owen@pug-media.net">owen@pug-media.net</a>	Grandfather - Stanley Lesley Phillips - 2nd Cambs. Regt.
Angela Skelcher	Suffolk	<a href="mailto:a_skelcher@hotmail.com">a_skelcher@hotmail.com</a>	Great Uncle - Bernard Philip Pearce - RASC.
Eric and Anne Porter	Surrey	<a href="mailto:aporter1128@gmail.com">aporter1128@gmail.com</a>	Father - Edward Eric Porter - Bdr Unit 124 A/Tank Regt. RA.
Elizabeth	West Sussex	<a href="mailto:lizzyhallett@gmail.com">lizzyhallett@gmail.com</a>	Father - Eric Davies - Signals, 22nd Mountain Regiment.
Patricia Clayton	Kent	<a href="mailto:patriciaclayton185@gmail.com">patriciaclayton185@gmail.com</a>	Father - Wilfred Branchett - RSSC.
Lin Craddock	Kent	<a href="mailto:lincraddock@aol.com">lincraddock@aol.com</a>	Father - Bertie Craddock - Civilian.
Mark Smith	Tyne & Wear	<a href="mailto:marksmudgersmith68@gmail.com">marksmudgersmith68@gmail.com</a>	Grandfather - George Smith - no regiment given.
Isabel & Josh McAleer	Wiltshire	<a href="mailto:isabelmcaleer@icloud.com">isabelmcaleer@icloud.com</a>	Great Grandfather - James Stanton Gray - no reg't given.
Mich Maroney	Cork, Ireland	<a href="mailto:michmaroney@mac.com">michmaroney@mac.com</a>	Father - Michael Charles Maroney - Civilian
William Scrimshaw	Nottinghamshire	<a href="mailto:lesscrimshaw@googlemail.com">lesscrimshaw@googlemail.com</a>	Grandfather -Thomas Leslie Smith - RA.
M & M Harrison-Smith	Wales	<a href="mailto:harrisonmarlene0@gmail.com">harrisonmarlene0@gmail.com</a>	Father - Thomas Eades - Royal Artillery.
Gerry & Lynda Norden	Cambridge	<a href="mailto:yasume@hotmail.co.uk">yasume@hotmail.co.uk</a>	Uncle - Harold French - 1st. Cambridgeshire Regt.
Clare Ward-Smith	Hertfordshire	<a href="mailto:clarewardsmith@hotmail.co.uk">clarewardsmith@hotmail.co.uk</a>	N/A - Mark Hutchinson - No details supplied.
Stephen Poulter	Wiltshire	<a href="mailto:poultersteve1@virginmedia.com">poultersteve1@virginmedia.com</a>	Grandfather - Reginald Grant Brown - 118th Field, RA.
Phil Bainbridge	Greater Manchester	<a href="mailto:home.bainbridge@gmail.com">home.bainbridge@gmail.com</a>	Grandfather - Henry (Harry) Bainbridge - 137 (A) Field Regt.
Stephen Woodrow	Norfolk	<a href="mailto:remling56@icloud.com">remling56@icloud.com</a>	Uncle - Geoffrey Leonard Woodrow - RE- 18th Div.
Kathryn Hitchen	Greater Manchester	<a href="mailto:vicky_hitchen@hotmail.co.uk">vicky_hitchen@hotmail.co.uk</a>	Father - Eric Andrew Heywood - Royal Corps of Signals
Heather Tustian	Essex	<a href="mailto:heatherbizet@gmail.com">heatherbizet@gmail.com</a>	Father - Philip Tustian - no reg't given.

New members Freddie Cluskey, Serena Askew and Christopher Jones wished for their details to remain private.

# Help us raise the revenue



**NEW! Smart casual sweatshirt** featuring the chest-borne emblem of COFEPOW and the 80th anniversary of VJ Day. Unisex sizes S, M, L, XL and XXL, manufactured in washable 50%/50% polyester/cotton. Navy blue. **£25.00 plus £3.99 p&p.**



**NEW! High Quality polo shirt** featuring the COFEPOW VJ Day 80th anniversary emblem on the left chest position. Unisex sizes S, M, L, XL and XXL, in washable 50%/50% polyester/cotton. Pale grey. **£20.00 plus £3.99 p&p.**



**NEW! Branded wooden pens** individually hand-made in differing woods, so no two are the same. All are inscribed with 'VJ80 - 2025' in white on the barrel, with gilt decoration, gold coloured nibs, clips and tips. Parker refillable, 'biro'-effect action, with dark blue ink. **£35.00 plus £3.99 p&p.**



**NEW! White china mug** with red and blue VJ Day 80th logo to the front and the tale of a FEPOW's arrival at Heaven's Gate on the reverse. Each weighs 11 ounces. **£3.50 plus £3.99 p&p.**



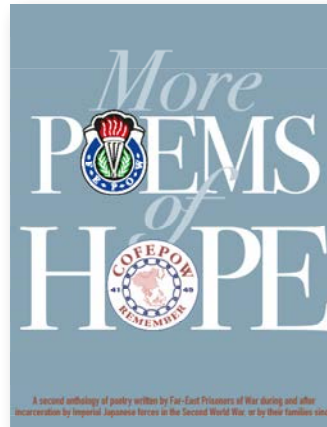
**NEW! Fridge magnet** Sunset picture with motif which reads: 1945-2025: At the going down of the sun And in the morning "We will remember them" plus the VJ 80 and FEPOW logos. **£3.50 plus £1.55 p&p.**



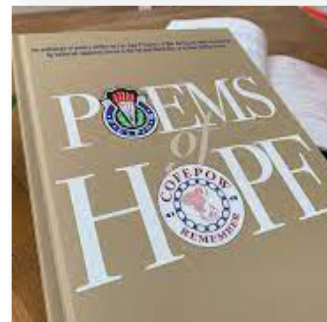
**NEW! Coaster/beer mat** in compacted, water-resistant card, featuring the Union Jack and VJ Day 80th logo. Stocks for both are limited. **£2.50 plus £1.55 P&P.**



**Trolley coin** Featuring general logo and key ring connector. **£3.25 plus £1.55 p&p.**



**NEW! More Poems of Hope** A new glossy hardback book, oversized A4, which features over 50 poems written by FEPOW's and their families. The anthology was launched on the VJ Day 80th anniversary, and incorporates almost 60 pages, including numerous accompanying pictures and illustrations, supplied either by members or by the Imperial War Museum library. **£12.99 plus £3.99 p&p.**



**Poems of Hope** The original anthology launched in 2020 and featuring over 80 poems by FEPOWS, many of which were written in captivity. Additional poems by FEPOW family members are also included. **£11.99 plus £3.99\* p&p.** VJ70 medallion FREE with every sale of either of the 'Poems of Hope' books! See the Merchandise Office online at [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk)



**Cloth shopping bag** Sized at 37cms (14½") x 47cms (16") and manufactured in hard-wearing linen, printed one side only. The bag is in a neutral beige to reflect the house colour of COFEPOW, with a red and dark blue logo image and website/charity. Help save the planet! **£2.50 plus £1.55 p&p.**



**Notelets** A small selection of handy paper notelet pads. Two different packs of 10 are available, featuring the FEPOW Memorial Building or the Thai/Burma Railway memorial including envelopes. **£2.50 plus £1.55 p&p.**



**Key ring** Featuring metal logo attached to a black, quality leather fob. **£3.50 plus £1.55 p&p.**



**Car Sticker** Plastic suction-adhesive sticker for the interior of a car window. **£1.00 plus £0.87 p&p.**



**Lapel Pin Badge** Pound-coin size, metallic badge with rear connector for lapel. **£2.00 plus £1.55 p&p.**

# Help us ensure remembrance



**White polo shirt**  
Unisex polo shirt in sizes M, L, XL, manufactured in washable 50%/50% polyester/cotton and featuring a COFEPOW logo to the left chest area.  
**£16.00 plus £3.99 p&p.**

## How to order.

COFEPOW produces a range of merchandise to promote the charity, out in the community.  
The profit from all sales goes directly to COFEPOW to maintain its work, in line with its original objectives. 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.

**All items are not to scale.**



**Black polo shirt**  
Unisex polo shirt in sizes M and L, (XL sold out) manufactured in washable 50%/50% polyester/cotton and featuring a COFEPOW logo to the left chest area.  
**£16.00 plus £3.99 p&p.**



## NEW! Cards for Christmas!

Designed by member, Louise Cordingly, with all sales made via COFEPOW offered at a reduced price. The cards feature a FEPOW Christmas, in three festive colours, plus one of 'Scrunchball' and an angel figure in wood, sculpted in the camps. £5 for a variety pack of 5 cards, including envelopes. The overall folded size is approx. 15 cms x 10.5 cms.  
**£5.00 per pack plus £1.60 p&p.**



**Poppy woven badge**  
featuring the COFEPOW name.  
**£2.50 plus £0.87 p&p.**

**Woven COFEPOW badge**  
Can be attached to clothing.  
**£3.50 plus £0.87 p&p.**



**Tie clip**  
The logo on a brass effect clip.  
**£3.00 plus £1.55 p&p.**



**VJ 70 mugs**  
Produced to commemorate the VJ Day 70th anniversary, these mugs feature both COFEPOW and FEPOW logos  
**£8.50 plus £3.99 p&p.**



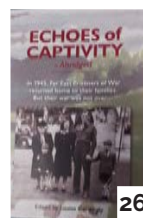
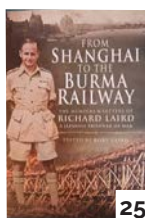
**Tie**  
High quality, blue and red with small logo repeat and stripe.  
**£12.99 plus £1.55 p&p.**

**Enamel pin badge**  
75th anniversary of VJ Day special enamel 'keepsake' pin badge, in attractive display box.  
**£4.00 plus £3.99 p&p.**

**Blue pen**  
'Biro'-effect ink, with replaceable cartridge and printed logo and website.  
**£1.00 plus £1.55 p&p.**

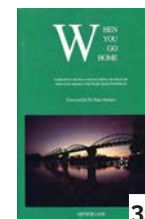


**VJ70 medallion**  
VJ70 medallion FREE with every sale of either of the two 'Poems of Hope' books! Visit the Merchandise Office online at [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk)  
**£7.50 plus £3.99 p&p.**



## Books.

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 'From Shanghai to the Burma Railway' **£12.00 plus £3.99 p&p.**

26 'Echoes of Captivity' **£9.50 plus £3.99 p&p** and 27 'Eric and Scrunchball' **£4.90 plus £3.99 p&p.** Both by Louise Reynolds. Normal retail price £12.99.

28 'Surviving the Japanese Onslaught' **£6.50 plus £3.99 p&p.** Normal retail price £19.99.

29 'Escape from the Japanese' **£6.50 plus £3.99 p&p.** Normal retail price £19.99.

30 'When You Go Home' **£5.00 plus £3.99 p&p.**

31 'Nagasaki' **£20.00 plus £3.99 p&p.**

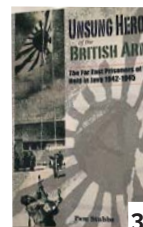
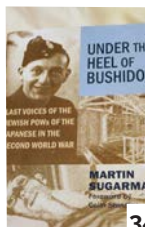
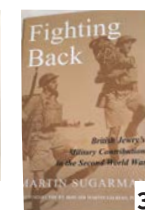
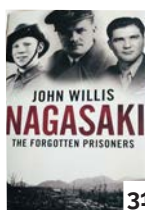
32 'In the Shadow of the Rising Sun' **£9.00 plus £3.99 p&p.**

33 'Fighting Back' **£10.00 plus £3.99 p&p.**

34 'Under the Heel of the Bushido' **£10.00 plus £3.99 p&p.**

35 'Unsung Heroes of the British Army' **£10.00 plus £3.99 p&p.**

36 'Unsung Heroes of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines' **£7.50 plus £3.99 p&p.**



## Help and information

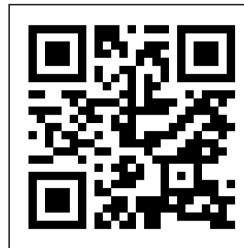
While researching personal information, the following members have accumulated data which they are happy to pass on and share with others.

- 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, [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.

## Patrons, trustees and officers.

- 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](mailto:cofepow.chairman@gmail.com) Website: [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk) Registered charity, number 1074474.
- The charity was founded by:** CAROL COOPER.
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- Chairman and interim Secretary:** DAVID BREDE: email: [cofepow.chairman@gmail.com](mailto:cofepow.chairman@gmail.com)
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- Treasurer:** DAVID BROWN email: [treasurer@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@cofepow.org.uk)
- Padre:** REV. RICHARD BROOKER.
- Merchandise Officers:** NICK BULLEN-BELL & SYLVIE BULLEN-BELL email: [merchandise@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:merchandise@cofepow.org.uk)
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- Education Officer:** ALEXANDRA METCALFE-HUME email: [education@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:education@cofepow.org.uk)
- Area Co-ordinator Officer:** JOHN RUTHERFORD email: [co-ordinators@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:co-ordinators@cofepow.org.uk)
- Membership Secretary:** GRAHAM ROBERTSON email: [membership@cofepow.org.uk](mailto:membership@cofepow.org.uk)  
M: 07786 051573. Address: 1 Curlew Close, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 6TQ.
- Honorary Life Members:** PATRICK TOOSEY, PAM STUBBS, RON TAYLOR, BRIAN HUME AND KEITH ANDREWS.
- Far East Travel Advisor:** MARTIN PRECHNER email: [roquefort44@hotmail.com](mailto:roquefort44@hotmail.com)



**Membership fee** per annum - £15 per single or £21 per joint (for 2). Please visit the COFEPOW website at [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://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](http://www.cofepow.org.uk)**

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

**Access to the Building.**  
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](mailto:scubaka@yahoo.co.uk) or on 01530 450621. (Please see page 2.)

**Area Co-ordinators.**  
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 here, 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.