

**Chairman - Mr Keith Andrews, Treasurer - Mrs Margaret Walton, Secretary - Mrs Barbara James  
Committee Members - Ms Angela Lane, Mrs Annette Hughes, Rowford Bowditch, Anthony Truett,  
Richard Gibbs**

### **BAFEPOW NEWS SHEET FOR APRIL 2026**

#### **WE WELCOME TWO OF OUR AUSTRALIAN MEMBERS TO OUR MEETING**

On Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> we looked forward to having our friends, Jann and Martyn from Perth, Australia joining us once more at our meeting and we had a really interesting and enjoyable time. We were also fortunate to be joined by Ray Withnall who has just seen the launch of his latest book that he has written in conjunction with Ron Boardman.

After getting ourselves settled and with our refreshments at the ready we began with the usual round of introductions. Now this can be a bit mundane and something we all dread BUT this is BAFEPOW and for the next hour and a half we were all absorbed in listening as we all told each other about ourselves and our FEPOW links – there was also a fair amount of hilarity over various things and I'm sure that the FEPOW would have totally approved of our discussions. Lyndsey doesn't have a direct FEPOW connection but, with encouragement and reassurance that she wasn't the only one present without a direct link, she told us about a relative who had been in Europe after the Normandy landings. (Ray's father had also served in Europe in WWII and had taken part in the D Day landings and the push through France and Belgium) Jann was also not sure about her FEPOW link until Martyn reminded her about her Uncle whose remains lie in a grave close to where his Grandfather lies after his remains were transferred from the jungle grave where he had been originally laid to rest to the CWGC cemetery at Kanchanaburi. Phil was with us and he talked about his research into the 196<sup>th</sup> RAMC in which his grandfather had served. Phil was also very happy to be able to meet up with Richard Webb whose father had also served in the RAMC and had been captured at the Fall of Hong Kong on Christmas Day 1941.



On the right you can see Ray deeply engrossed in looking through my copy of his latest book – ‘The Ukulele Man’ which I had brought along with me.

It tells the story of Ron’s father, Tom, who, whilst in captivity had managed to built a ukulele from scrap bits and pieces that he managed to pick up around his POW prison camp. Amazingly this was the first time that Ray had seen a copy in its final published form so he was very pleased to get a close look at it. I am enjoying reading his book and some of you may remember also that Ray joined us some time ago in Birmingham and talked about the ukulele in the IWM North and how he was going to be present when it came out of the display cabinet for close examination. His book is available to purchase from Pen and Sword.



Richard (one of the committee) was interested to hear about Martyn’s keen interest in aerial photography although not so sure about Martyn’s one time hobby of parachuting - Richard prefers to remain in the cockpit as the pilot! Martyn talked about how he has used various aerial photographs taken by allied pilots as they tried to locate the POW camps along the Thai/Burma Railroad and he had used these himself to help him locate the various sites which have long since been overgrown and hidden by the jungle. He had traveled up to Scotland on a previous trip and gone to visit the National Collection of Aerial Photography which is based in Edinburgh and he managed to obtain evidence which has since helped him to discover the exact location where his Grandfather had been laid to rest until he was later exhumed and transferred to his permanent resting place. Martyn said that, strangely, on previous attempts to locate this place he had stood just by it and to finally return and be exactly where he had lain was a very emotional but also a very satisfying experience.

So much chatting and so much interesting FEPOW history talked about and some very good humour shared between us that it was really sad when we all had to leave to make our way home again. So it just remains to say that we had a great meeting and we all hope that it won’t be long until Jann and Martyn come and join us again.

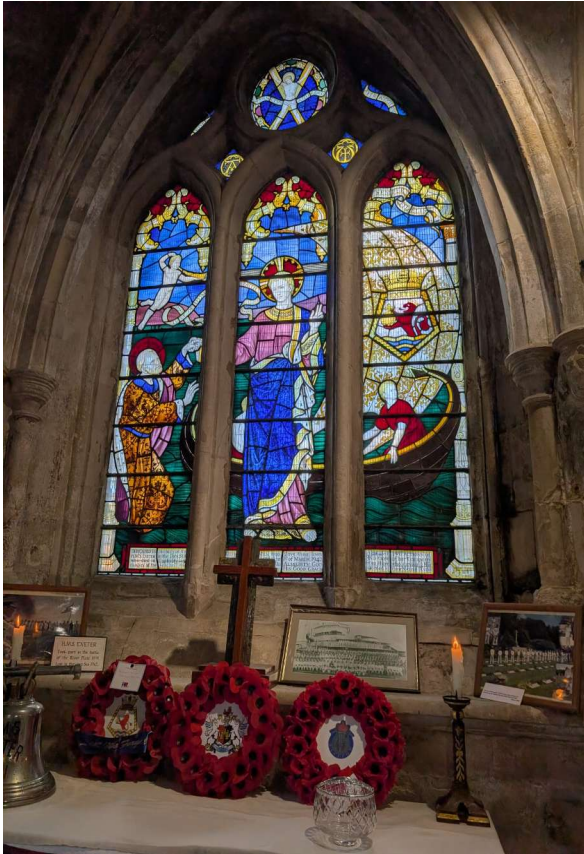
*(I am very hopeful that one of our other Australian members, Arlene, will be back with us in September – so we will have yet another extremely interesting meeting when we catch up with her)*

### **NEWS FROM BAFEPOW MEMBERS**

**News from Tony Truett** :- Tony has received an invitation to attend a remembrance service and to lay a wreath at the Commonwealth War Cemetery in Cambridge on Anzac Day next month on 25/04/26. He has been asked to say the Kohima Epitaph during the service. He had last attended this service and laid a BAFEPOW wreath in 2024. He was contacted by David Bailey who is 93 years old and who said in the invitation that BAFEPOW is now the nearest FEPOW Association connected to the Far East War. We are very pleased to have Tony doing the honours on our behalf.

Tony has also been invited to attend the annual FEPOW Remembrance Service by Peter Wiseman. This year it will be held at the FEPOW Church in Wymondham on Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 12.30. Peter has also asked if anyone else from BAFEPOW would like to attend as they will made very welcome. For more information about this annual event please contact Tony or myself (BJ) I have attended this service in the past and it is a very special and very moving service and it is well worth going to it if you can. Also, this is where a roll of honour is kept where those who died as POWs is kept and, more recently, a new roll of honour is there for the details of those who returned and you can add your FEPOW to it.

**News from Tom Jowett** :- As mentioned in previous newsletters, the annual Remembrance Service for the crew of the HMS Exeter took place at Exeter Cathedral on 28/02/26 and it was organised by our member, Tom Jowett. He has been arranging this annual event for a few years now and successive years have seen the attendance grow and this year saw yet another increase. Another of our members, Martin Horwell, whose dear father was also serving on HMS Exeter when it was sunk eighty four years ago on 01/03/42 and was, like Tom's Dad, taken prisoner by the Japanese. This year we asked Tom if he would like to lay a wreath during the service on behalf of BAFEPOW and he said that it would be an honour but, as he would be busy during the service, he would like to pass the honour over to Martin. Martin has very kindly forwarded a photograph of the wreath in its place on the altar within the chapel dedicated to this ship.



The photograph on the right above shows the Lady Mayoress of Exeter alongside a very special young lady called Samsun. After last year's service at the Cathedral, Tom and others who had attended the service went for lunch at their usual hotel just across from the Cathedral and they were chatting about the service and various other things related to HMS Exeter and the war in the Far East. At a nearby table were a Chinese Family who, by chance had picked up on the conversation that Tom and the others were engrossed in. With the Chinese lady that came over and spoke to Tom was her granddaughter named Samsun and they said that they were interested to hear about that day's service and about the sinking of HMS Exeter etc. Tom asked if Samsun would like to attend the service in 2026. He then asked her to read out the first reading that had been included in that day's service and she was word perfect. And so, at this year's service this confident nine year old was present and she took part in the service by doing a reading again in the Cathedral and, once again, she was word perfect!

Tom also let me know that the service had gone really well and he was pleased to see so many people attending it and he sent me the following about the service :-

*Many thanks to all that supported Saturday's service.*

*From previous years it had been suggested that the numbers would drop, but a full chapel has proved the forecasters wrong -again.*

*Extra thanks must go to our excellent new readers, Samsun & Yvonne.*

*Just in case you missed a bit, have a look at the link:-*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NL9DhyWNo4>

*I hope you have all arrived home safely & have 27th February 2027 (subject to the Cathedral's confirmation!) marked in your diaries.*

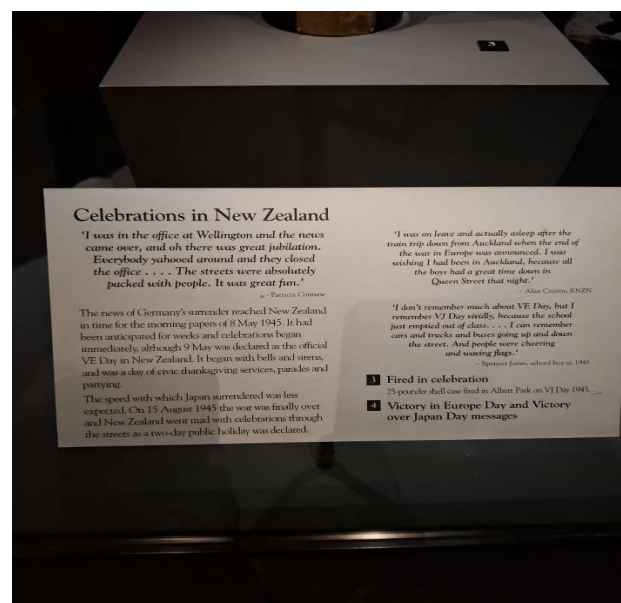
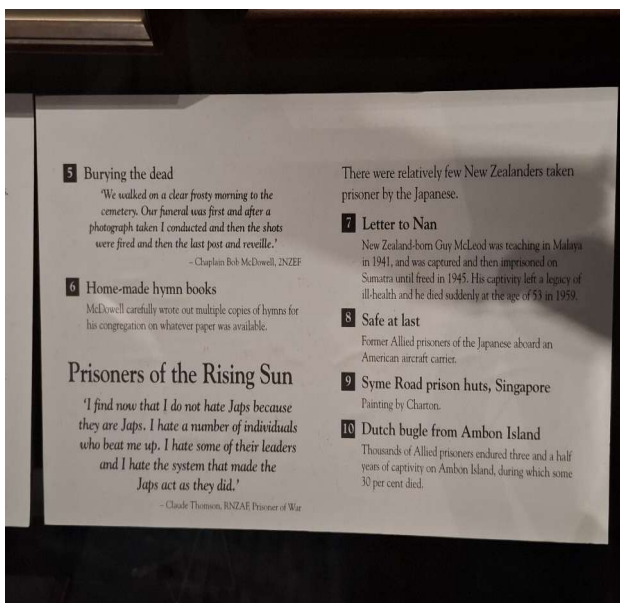
### News from Angela Lane :- 'Lost Soldiers of the Pacific'

The above headline in a newspaper must have caught the attention of Angela came to our recent meeting with an article from the Daily Mail on 28/01/26. It featured a question from a reader about the date of the surrender of the last Japanese soldier following the end of WWII and if they were paid/rewarded with back pay. This was an interesting topic as it has been mentioned several times at our meetings during the quite frequent discussions about the repatriation of the FEPOW to home and if they received any compensation and we often also ponder over when the last enemy troops came out of their hiding places in the jungles. Keith has always got the answer to queries like this one and would answer so many of our queries straight off which is just one of the reasons we're really missing him at the moment, but it is interesting to relate to you briefly what the answer was to this reader's question:- Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda – this man had been considered to be the last Japanese soldier to be discovered still in hiding. He had been an intelligence officer on the Labuang Island and he believed the surrender leaflets that were dropped calling for the Japanese troops to surrender but he thought that they were mere propaganda and continued to follow orders to never surrender. He had survived in the jungle along with a small group until he was the final survivor and in early 1974 he was located by the explorer, Norio Suzuki, but he still refused to surrender until his former commanding officer, Major Yoshimi Taniguchi personally withdrew his 1945 order and he surrendered on 09/03/1974. He returned to a hero's welcome and was awarded a large sum of money as compensation which he refused and then he emigrated to Brazil where he became a cattle rancher. Later he returned to Japan and remained as a public figure until his death in 2014.

However, Hiroo Onoda was not the last survivor as another solitary camp was discovered quite by accident in mid 1974 and its occupant - Nakamura, an indigenous Taiwanese conscript in the Takasago Volunteer Unit, was found on Morotai Island – on 18/12/1974. He had been presumed dead by the IJA in 1944 after the Island fell. He did not receive a hero's welcome on his return and was only paid a modest amount of compensation although this was later increased following widespread criticism. He returned to Taiwan where he lived quietly under his original name, Lee Kuang-hui, until his death in 1979.

So now we know!

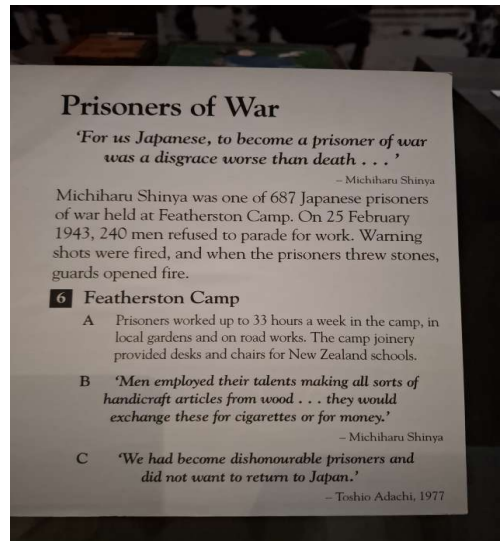
More news from Angela :- whilst on her travels, Angela came across the following in the War Museum in Auckland and she sent these pictures to us.





**Air Chief Marshall Sir Keith Park was present at the signing of the surrender**

**Angela found out that Japanese men were held in New Zealand during the war and this photo on the right describes this. She commented that they received far better care than they gave to the FEPOW.**



**New BAFEPOW member – Tony Bourne:-we have good news - we are now in contact with the son of Alex Bourne who for a long time was a member of BAFEPOW and who served on the committee for a number of years as the treasurer.**

**You can read about Alex in the VJ80 pamphlet that Margaret and Keith put together last year as part of BAFEPOW's VJ80 commemorations – if you haven't got a copy then it can be sent to you via email or, if you're attending a meeting, and you let us know prior to that, you can pick up a copy.**

**First contact was by Margaret and she then asked me to send the March news sheet to Tony which I did along with a message welcoming him as one of our members. I had frequently heard about Alex and his wife through my Mom who was a regular BAFEPOW meeting attendee and then I was aware of another contact with Alex and his wife via acquaintances who lived locally and mentioned their friends, the Bournes, who lived in the next road to them and they knew that he had been a FEPOW. After being in touch with Tony we soon realised that we had attended the same local primary schools**

and knew our local area well as we both grew up there. I then plucked up the courage to ask him if he knew of his parents' friends who lived in the next road. The surname didn't mean anything but Tony recalled that he had often been given the task of delivering the odd note to what must have been 'the other couple'. This was, of course, back in the days before we all had a phone in our home and definitely before we all had mobiles and this would be a way of keeping in touch. Even more of a coincidence, the other couple had a son and he is actually my son-in-law and his Dad also worked at 'The Austin' in Longbridge and knew my husband, George, in Vehicle Development. What a small world! Tony also very kindly let me have the details of a recording that Alex recorded with both Tony and also Tony's son – Alex's grandson with additional comments from Nancy, Alex's wife. In the recording they spoke about the time that they married and where Alex was trained before setting off on a sea journey that eventually took him to Singapore. It is a very interesting read and if you would like to read it, I will just check with Tony if he is happy to make it available to members as we have to appreciate that this is a very personal account from the oral recording made over quite some time during which Alex became ill and continued it whilst in hospital.

Tony also very kindly forwarded the photograph below to me which was taken at the Burma Star memorial in Bromsgrove. I am unable to put names to all of these gentlemen. It is most likely to have been Tom McKie holding the BAFEPOW standard as he was the standard bearer for many years. The standard was laid up in the FEOW Hut in the FEPOW Grove at the NMA in Alrewas.



We do hope that we will be able to meet up with Tony and also perhaps his family at some point but we hope to learn more from them about what they possibly remember about the time that Alex was an active committee member. I gathered from reading his memoirs that he had spoken to fellow FEPOW about the conditions that they encountered in the various camps that they were held in. He mentions that he spoke to some who had been sent from Changi to Saigon in the French East Indies (Vietnam) and they had said that they were thankful that that camp was better than the camps on the Railway or in other areas – my own Dad could well have been one of them or it could have been George Wills, another Birmingham FEPOW.

**News from Barbara about a talk on in Birmingham:-** since after going to a talk at the Birmingham and Midland Institute in the city centre last December, Ian Binnie, who was part of the organising team got in touch and he has invited me to come along and, if possible, add to his presentation. It will be interesting as he is talking about the war in the Far East from 1931 to 1947! He has an hour in which to achieve this. I have attached the flier for the event below and you would be most welcome to come and join me if you can.

**Birmingham**  
**People's History Archive**

([bpha.online](http://bpha.online))  
presents:

### **Clash of empires: the Far Eastern War revisited**

An illustrated talk by Ian Binnie on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026, 1.00 pm at Birmingham & Midland Institute, 9 Margaret Street, Birmingham B3 3BS.

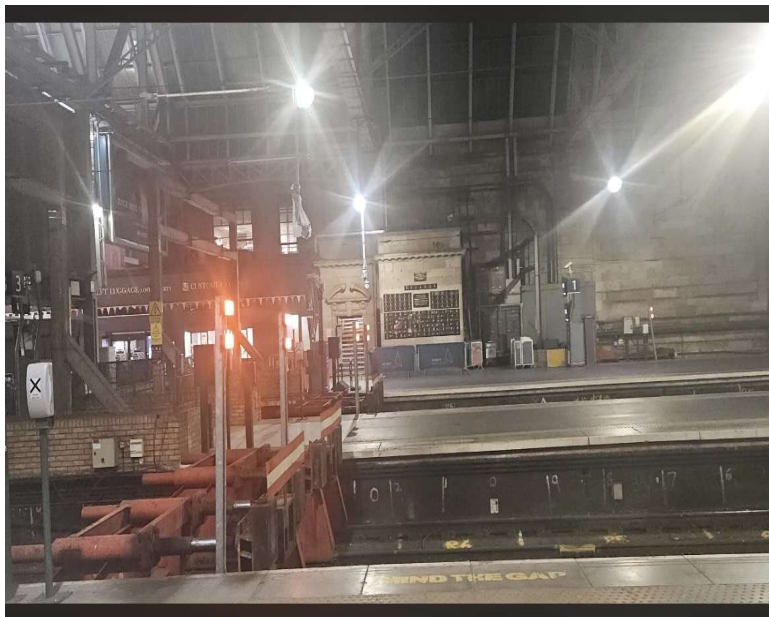


Last year many countries commemorated V.J. Day, the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War 2 in the Far East. However, the conflict in Asia did not end in 1945, nor did it begin in 1941 with the attack on Pearl Harbour. Only the Soviet Union suffered more casualties than China during the war. Ian will bring a new perspective to this topic, outlining recent research and writing on what was a vicious conflict, fought on a massive scale.

Ian is a retired history teacher, amateur historian and member of several local and national history groups. He regularly gives talks on subjects as diverse as the American Civil War in film and the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in World War Two.

**All welcome:** either pay £5 on the day at BMI or book through <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/clash-of-empires-the-far-eastern-war-revisited-tickets-1980070340691?aff=oddtcreator>

### **SAD NEWS FROM GLASGOW RAILWAY STATION (BJ)**



**Many of you will have heard on the news about the awful fire that has burnt down parts of Glasgow Central Station causing catastrophic damage to this beautiful old building. What you may not have been aware of is the amazing Memorial Wall that was only opened a few years ago and one of our**

Scottish member, Mary, had had a plaque made to go on the wall to commemorate her dear father, FEPOW Dr Edward Alexander Murray – known as Alex. Her father sadly passed away in Lockerbie on January 25<sup>th</sup> 2021 just a few months short of his 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday. He had taken an interest in BAFEPOW after Mary had told him that she was in touch with myself and had even said that he would love to come and meet with us. However it wasn't to be but I did include an item about Mary's trip out to Taiwan and Japan to follow in her father's footsteps and it was in the BAFEPOW News Sheet for February 2021. As soon as I heard about the fire that was raging in the railway station, my first thought was about the memorial wall and then what a tragedy it would be to lose this fabulous building. Mary soon contacted me about it and I asked her to keep me updated and she has forwarded me a photograph taken by her friend which shows the wall in the centre but it isn't clear how much damage it has sustained if any. Fingers crossed that the wall will be restored to its original condition. *(I have since heard that the Memorial Wall was not damaged in the fire – good news)*

#### NEWS FROM BRIAN WILLIAMS, AUTHOR AND BAFEPOW MEMBER

I was very pleased to hear from Brian with the news that he is going to give a talk about researching FEPOW history which he thought might be of interest to our fellow members.

Many of us met with Brian and his wife, Jeanette, who is the daughter of a FEPOW, and they came and joined us a few years ago when we celebrated dear Ken Coy's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday and on our behalf Martin presented Ken with a copy of his book that he had researched and written in honour of Jeanette's father who, like Edwin Coy – Ken's Dad – was a Kings Own Hussar. The book is entitled "The Forgotten Squadron: The Story of B Squadron, 3rd The King's Own Hussars in the Far East 1942-45" and it documents the history of this squadron which was sent to Java in January 1942 to help stem the Japanese advance but they were forced to capitulate.

This will definitely be a very worthwhile event to attend and I do hope that some of you will be able to go to it. Brian's book demonstrated his skills as a researcher and I'm sure he will make his talk extremely interesting. The booking fee also includes free entry to tour the Hussar Museum situated there and there will be a buffet.

Please see the details for this event at the bottom of this page.



Brian has been 'persuaded' to give a talk entitled 'Researching Far East Prisoners of War' at the Royal Hussars Museum in Warwick on Thursday, May 7th  
Here is the link to book tickets :-

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/the-queens-royal-hussars-museum-96136355553>

### THE NAMES OF FOUR LOCAL FEPOW DISCOVERED

(BJ) I discovered the first two names below on Facebook on the COFEPOW Forum and it is a post by Carl Scattergood. He has got a tiny diary that was kept throughout the time that his grandfather, H. Scattergood, endured as a FEPOW. There are several pages of addresses and I discovered the following two quite local ones:-

G.E. Riley – Hardwick Road, Streetly, Nr Sutton Coldfield                      I have searched for the Repatriation Questionnaire for this FEPOW but it does not appear on the COFEPOW site so he may have opted not to complete one – more research needed

H. Davis – Lowbrook Lane, Tidbury Green, Wythall, Nr Birmingham                      This FEPOW does have a questionnaire on the COFEPOW site and perhaps more work may lead to finding more about him.

The following two I have come across in Ray's new book in the flight list of Ex-POWs flying from Phetchaburi to Rangoon in September 1945 – so far I have not taken a look to see if I can trace more about them as I haven't had the book very long.

Pte Thomas Hemming 7638756    RAOC   Birmingham

Pte Kenneth Knight 7612435    RAOC   Birmingham

### DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

#### Social Meetings

April 14<sup>th</sup>

May 12<sup>th</sup>

June 9<sup>th</sup>

July 14<sup>th</sup>

August 11<sup>th</sup>

September 8<sup>th</sup> – BAFEPOW AGM

#### Discussion Group

April 28<sup>th</sup>

May 26<sup>th</sup>

June 23<sup>rd</sup>

July 28<sup>th</sup>

August 25<sup>th</sup>

September 22<sup>nd</sup>

All members are welcome to attend any or all of our meetings and you are welcome to get in touch with the secretary if you have any queries about doing so – looking forward to seeing you soon,

### WELFARE GRANTS FOR FEPOW, WIVES AND WIDOWS

If you need help with a grant towards hospital stays, Nursing Home Costs, alterations to the home, mobility aids etc, then please get in touch with:-

Mr Stephen John, the Java Club by email:- [stephen.su.47@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.su.47@gmail.com)

Mrs Pauline Simpson, NFFWRA by email:- [enquiries@nationalfepowfellowship.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nationalfepowfellowship.org.uk)

The BAFEPOW news sheet is put together by the association secretary, Barbara James, and, hopefully, it contains items of interest to all members. You are very welcome to suggest future topics or to submit items for future inclusion. You can contact me via email:- [bmjames142@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bmjames142@yahoo.co.uk) or by phone:- 07954104857

