Surviving Far East Captivity and the Aftermath:

70 Years On

5 – 8 June 2015

Conference Report
"What a wonderful weekend... the range of topics discussed was so broad and so appropriate. Too many people automatically associate FEPOWs with the Thailand Burma railway. That was indeed a major part of it but so many other areas were involved all over the Far East.... It was great to have talks on the poor civilians who were caught up in the cross fire... As for the venues, the LMI really is rather special. However, for me the highlight of the event was the joint work put in by the School of Tropical Medicine... The progress of the School is so wonderful to see and caused me to hark back to the days of my father and Brian Maegraith... to witness what their early initiative has grown into over a period of 60 years... to see the growth of the School both physically in Liverpool and also worldwide in the field. After all that the School have done for FEPOWs it was especially gratifying to see how they not only helped produce Captive Memories but also lent such wonderful support to the conference.

Well done to all concerned..."

- Patrick Toosey
FOR THE FIRST TIME in 10 years RFHG (as we will be known from now on) joined forces with the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) for this 70th anniversary conference. LSTM has been home to FEPOW medical and scientific research since 1945.

The School sponsored the conference in many ways; from the welcome packs, administrative support and photography throughout the weekend, to the official welcome at The Liner Hotel on Friday afternoon by the Director, Professor Janet Hemingway, followed the next day by another heartfelt welcome to the Old School by Chairman of LSTM Trustees, James Ross OBE.

This conference did what it set out to do: we explored Far East Captivity 70 years on. And we did so with the help of three FEPOW – Tom Boardman, Bob Hucklesby and George Reynolds – and former child internees – Olga Henderson, Romelia (Romee) Hindle and Dutch sisters Connie and Els Suverkropp. They were joined by a stellar cast of international speakers as well as locally-grown researchers and academics. The wide variety of lectures and talks were presented to an international audience, some of whom had flown in especially for the conference from Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, USA and Holland while others arrived from all corners of the UK.

In addition to updates from Singapore and Thailand there were new areas of research, including: Korea and Sumatra, the experiences of those who were children in captivity in Singapore and Java and also those who were children of captives here in Britain; entertainments in Changi and new research into the work of British FEPOW artists; RAPWI and the repatriation process; the work of Australian doctors across captivity and British doctors and scientists in Liverpool post-war.

Meg Parkes

The work of LSTM

LSTM is the oldest academic tropical medicine centre in the world, having been opened in 1899. The longest project undertaken by the School is its collaboration with former Far East POWs, which began in 1945 and continues to this day. Initially local ex-POWs were seen for treatment of malaria and dysentery relapses, but the School’s reputation gradually grew and referrals increased. From 1968 the LSTM became the official national tropical disease screening centre, and up to 1999 over 4,000 ex-Far East POWs had been clinically assessed. The information provided the basis for significant research into the longevity of a number of tropical conditions including worm infections and malnutrition-related neurological syndromes. Since 2000, the Far East POW project has moved into oral and medical history concerning these men’s experiences.

Geoff Gill

Meg Parkes
The Conference: Friday 5 June

Three fascinating and highly visual talks started the conference off at The Liner Hotel on Friday afternoon, as we were joined by Jon Cooper of The Adam Park Project (TAPP) in Singapore, Jeya Ayadurai, Director of the Changi Museum and Jane Davies, Curator at Lancashire Infantry Museum.

Updates from Singapore

University of Glasgow’s battlefield archaeologist, Jon Cooper is a newcomer to the RFH conferences. Now working as part-time archivist at Changi Museum, Jon has been based in Singapore for several years leading The Adam Park Projects (TAPP). He gave a whistle stop tour of the sites in and around the Adam Park area that he and his team have been working on in recent years. He focused on the tangible clues to the defence of the area by the Cambridgeshire Regiment – cap badges, buttons and officers’ pips – which were found lying just beneath the surface of the manicured lawns of the period houses in the estate. Most recently the focus has been on the search for the regiment’s chapel, situated in one of the iconic black and white houses on the estate. Jon is currently finalising preparations for the launch of Changi Museum’s online virtual museum as well as a book based on The Adam Park Projects.

Jeya Ayadurai, outlined his work over the past 20 years in helping to preserve Singapore’s WWII history, often in the face of bureaucratic ignorance, indifference and obstructiveness. Jeya’s background is in military history and he spent several years teaching new recruits to Singapore’s Armed Forces. He is passionate about the importance of educating the young about Singapore’s cultural past as well as its role in WWII history. When the original Changi Museum was threatened with closure he decided to invest both personally and professionally by taking over the running of it and in 2001 oversaw the museum’s move to a purpose-built home just a mile away towards Changi Village.

While Jon Cooper and his team are digging up Singapore’s military past, Jeya is walking all over it. His organisation has helped create a network of walking tours for pupils, students and the public, highlighting the visible remains of the occupation of Singapore as much as the battle to defend it. The museum’s latest acquisition is the Battle Box, the control centre for the defence of Singapore, situated in the grounds of Fort Canning in the centre of the city.

Meg Parkes
Jane's talk then concentrated on life as POW in Changi and Keijo in Korea. This was achieved through displaying some of the outstanding artwork by the prisoners. Of particular interest was the magazine produced by the officers entitled “Nor Iron Bars” which included caricatures, portraits of POW, comedic poetry and line drawings that illustrated daily life. One illustration was the marvellous Coats of Arms of the “Changi rice grinders guild” motto: RICE ET PRAETEREA NIHIL (Lit. “Rice and nothing else”). The final illustration was the image of HMS Implacable with a “Good Luck” message as they sailed homeward bound from Manila to Vancouver.

**Stephen Rockcliffe**

---

**Wampo Viaduct remembered**

“It was only two weeks before the Liverpool conference that I contacted Meg in connection with my research on the construction of an airfield by FEPOWs at Ubon Ratchathani in North East Thailand. Meg suggested that the conference would be a great opportunity to meet delegates some of whom might be able to help and listen to FEPOW presentations to widen my research. How right she was! Each speaker was inspirational, passionate and sensitive. Throughout the weekend they created emotional, thought provoking, insights of the developing FEPOW history. In between presentations I talked to like-minded delegates and left the conference knowing that the FEPOW spirit will always be remembered. I was humbled to briefly talk to FEPOW George Reynolds, and it was a privilege to show Tom Boardman, another FEPOW, my recent photographs of the Wampo viaduct on the Thai-Burma railway. Tom worked on the viaduct during his captivity but never expected it last as long as seventy odd years!”

**Ray Withnall**
A Night at the Flicks

After months of preparation and planning, an idea hatched originally by Meg Parkes came to fruition at the Liverpool Medical Institution (LMI) on the first night of the 2015 conference. The evening would open up themes that reverberated throughout the rest of the weekend: the creative and moving ways that different people – families and researchers alike – find to tell the stories of the camps, the rewards and challenges of reconciliation, and the impact of captivity on families.

Opened in 1837, the LMI exists to foster an environment for furthering medical and health education and knowledge – an idea very much aligned to conference. The 100-seat auditorium, a magnificent Victorian Lecture Theatre, was an ideal venue for the evening. Compered by Martin Percival, the evening was designed as an opportunity for documentary and film makers to screen short excerpts and then discuss their FEPOW-related work. The main guests were Helen Langridge, the creator of Building Burma’s Death Railway: Moving Half the Mountain and Frank Cottrell-Boyce, the screen writer of The Railway Man. Frank was accompanied by Charmaine McMeekin, the youngest daughter of Eric Lomax, the author of the book The Railway Man that the film was based upon.

The evening turned into a very poignant two hours, giving audience members a moving insight into the aftermath of captivity among families and those who work hard trying to tell the stories of the Far East. It began with Helen Langridge speaking eloquently about working not only with former POWs, but also travelling to Japan to interview former guards. Such has been the impact of Helen’s documentary that it recently led to former POW Sir Harold Atcherley inviting former guard Mikio Kinoshita to London, where the pair met in June, just a couple of weeks after Helen’s visit to the conference. Building Burma’s Death Railway: Moving Half the Mountain can be viewed here. Her next project is on the Hell Ships. More details here: http://hellships.hla.net/

After Helen’s talk, we were joined by Frank Cottrell-Boyce in conversation with Charmaine McMeekin. Cottrell-Boyce explained to the audiences about the kind of challenges involved in writing and making a film like The Railway Man, when such a difficult history is not always easy to translate to the big screen. Information on the film can be found at www.railwaymanmovie.co.uk.

There were deeply personal challenges encountered through Lomax’s story, too. Charmaine spoke bravely and openly about the effects of Far Eastern captivity on her family, the difficult relationship that she had with her father, and the way that – through Frank and The Railway Man filming – she had been able to learn about, and live with, the history of the camps. It was a thought-provoking and memorable beginning to what would be a profound weekend.

Martin Percival and Lizzie Oliver
The Conference: Saturday 6 June

The first of two days of talks at LSTM was a very busy one! We began with talks on ‘the two railways’: welcoming back Rod Beattie to give updates on the work of the Thailand Burma Railway Centre (TBRC), and Dr Lizzie Oliver spoke on some of the British medics on the Sumatra Railway.

The Two Railways

The first talk was by Dr Lizzie Oliver from the University of Leeds. Her recently completed PhD project concerned the “other” railway i.e. the Sumatra Railway. This area of Far East POW activity has received far less attention than the well-known Thai-Burma Railway. Primary source material is relatively scant, and as a large proportion of POWs on the Sumatra Railway were Dutch, not all is in the English language. Conditions during the railway construction were as bad, and possibly worse, than in Thailand and Burma. There was high mortality from malaria, dysentery and beriberi; though if it had not been for the heroic efforts of POW doctors, the death rate would have been much higher. Ironically, the Sumatra Railway was completed on the same day that Japan surrendered to the Allies, though news of capitulation did not reach some of the more remote camps until some days later. Lizzie has also compiled a nominal roll of British POWs on the Sumatra railway, now available at www.sumatrarailway.com.

The second talk was by Rod Beattie and concerned the Thai/Burma Railway. Rod is well known to many FEPOW researchers. He was the founder of the “Thai/Burma Railway Centre” (TBRC), and many years later remains its director. The centre is at Kanchanaburi and functions as a museum, archive and research centre. Rod gave an update on Thai/Burma Railway research. This included interesting work on “digs” on the site of some camps, revealing a variety of fascinating artefacts. Updated figures on POW mortality on the railway were also presented, particularly comparing officers and men, and different nationalities (British, Australian and Dutch). Despite common beliefs that Australian mortality was lower than British, Rod’s detailed research shows that death rates were almost identical. The TBRC is also active in facilitating visits to the area by the families of ex-POWs who worked on the railway.
The Conference: Saturday 6 June

The ‘two railways’ were swiftly followed by talks on stunning work by FEPOW artists by Meg Parkes, and Dr Nigel Stanley. Tom Wills-Sandford gave a summary of his research on Palembang camp.

FEPOW Art

Giving lively insight into just a few of the treasures uncovered through the FEPOW Art Study, Meg Parkes explained the idea of ‘documentary art’ that evolved in the Far Eastern camps. This form of art – using whatever materials that were to hand, or could be fashioned by the artists - enabled men to record, portray and express their experiences through visual depictions of captivity. The study has so far been able to identify over 32 artists working in the camps across the Far East, and Meg noted the importance of works held not only in private collections, but also to be found at IWM, the Wellcome Library and Glasgow City Archives. If anybody knows of any more artwork that is yet to be considered and can be included in the study, Meg would be very pleased to hear from them.

Dr Nigel Stanley followed Meg with a talk specifically examining the artwork of Leo Rawlings, which he has been re-evaluating to inform the publication of an updated edition of Rawlings’ And the Dawn Came Up Like Thunder, which will include a detailed commentary by Nigel on the work of Rawlings (forthcoming, 2015).

Nigel’s talk included exquisite examples of Rawling’s medical studies, including the detailed observations that were made of POWs with ocular deterioration and the impact that visual impairments had on other aspects of POW appearance such as gait and posture.

Finally, Tom Wills-Sandford, the son of a POW in Palembang camp on Sumatra, provided a summary of the research he has been carrying out into the experiences of POWs on Palembang, particularly in reference to the detailed collections of Frank Brewer, another campmate in Palembang – including contemporaneous notebooks, memoirs and extensive oral history recordings – that are held at IWM.
Updates from Imperial War Museum

Phil Reed. Director of the Churchill War Rooms and long-term friend and colleague of Roderick Suddaby – former Keeper of the Department of Documents at the Imperial War Museum - joined us to give the Rod Suddaby Address. Rod’s death in the summer of 2013 was greeted with much sadness, and it was wonderful to have the chance to remember such a generous spirit who was a friend of the FEPOW research community for so many years.

Following the tribute to Rod, Stephen Walton, Senior Curator in the Department of Documents and Sound at IWM provided an update on research news from the museum. This included a summary of the holdings available for FEPOW research.

Although the current focus at IWM remains the 1914 – 1918 centenary commemorations, Stephen let delegates know that this will change over the next couple of years as the Second World War galleries are redeveloped. We hope that the history of captivity in the Far East will have a strong presence in this redevelopment: with many FEPOW and civilian internee collections yet to be entered onto IWM’s publically accessible database, the next few years are likely to see a continued interest in this aspect of the Second World War at the museum.

Stephen also confirmed that the recent plan to close the IWM library has now been dropped, and there will be no charge imposed on researchers wanting to access holdings. However there are new arrangements for using the research facilities at IWM that readers should be aware about:

The research room is now open Mondays to Thursdays (except Bank Holidays). On each day there are two bookable sessions:

- 10am - 1pm
- 2 - 5pm

The room is closed for lunch, 1 - 2pm.

Information on how to book a seat in the research room, and to access other facilities such as the photography archive can be found here: www.iwm.org.uk/collections-research/research-facilities

The IWM’s Research Blog is also worth keeping an eye on, for up-to-date summaries of the projects going on across the museum, and among academics who remain connected to its Research Department. This can be found at blogs.iwm.org.uk/research.

Lizzie Oliver
On Saturday afternoon, Dr Bernice Archer presented a very special afternoon in the company of former civilian internees Connie Suverkropp, Romee Hindle, and Olga Henderson.

Child internees in the Far East: An introduction.

Bernice Archer. Photo: LSTM/Brian Roberts.

Bernice gave an overview of the differing experiences of children interned in the F.E during World War II. She argued that the new found freedom of some, and the brutal conditions and treatment by the Japanese faced by others, had such a profound effect on them that they struggled to fit comfortably into the post war world.

Connie (born in Java in 1932.). Her grandparents died in one camp, her father died on the Burma Railway and her mother died in a hospital camp. Connie was ten years old when the Japanese came to her parent’s house in Java. She recalled: ‘I had thought my father was more or less a giant and could do everything. He could speak many languages, but I soon recognised he could not speak Japanese...Then in June 1942 in the middle of the night my father was taken away by the Kempeter’.

Connie spoke movingly about her experiences of being, at the age of 12, a ‘mother’ to her two younger sisters, aged five and two, in Struiswijk Camp, Java.

‘I taught my sister to reckon [add up] and a bit of reading and writing but we had to do it with some wood in the sand. I taught them to sing several songs. I told them fairy stories. It was difficult. My little sister would ask ‘What is a horse?’ ‘What is a sofa?’; ‘What is a father?’ This was so difficult...That was the only education we had’.

Olga (born in Singapore in 1932.) Recalled her family’s march to Katong Singapore and the 8 mile march to Changi jail where they remained interned until May 1944 when they moved to Sime Road camp “which was much nicer, more room, trees and grass”. Her whole family survived the war.

Romelia (Romee) (born in Java in 1941.) Her father died during the war. She was too young to have memories of the camp but when she read of her mother’s experiences in Lampersari with two young daughters in her book published in 2008, she “just wept”.

Bernice Archer
The Conference: Saturday 6 June

Obituary: Professor Rupert Wilkinson

Sadly, Rupert Wilkinson, interned as a boy in Santo Tomas, and who planned to speak at the conference, died in December 2014. Bernice recommended delegates to read Rupert’s book Surviving a Japanese Internment Camp.


It was intended that Rupert would be one of our main speakers at conference and it was with great sadness that we learned of his death from his wife Mary.

Rupert and his family were living in Manila when Japanese soldiers invaded the city in January 1942. His father, Gerald Wilkinson, ran a sugar company while also working for the British secret intelligence service.

Rupert, along with his mother, Lorna, and older sister, Mary June (aged eight), were taken to Santo Tomás Internment Camp, an old Dominican university-turned-prison for “enemy aliens”.

After being liberated at Santo Tomás he went to America, where he studied government at Harvard, followed by a PhD at Stanford in History and Social Science. Heavily influenced at Harvard by the sociologist David Riesman, Rupert found his academic niche somewhere between sociology, political theory and history, which prepared him perfectly for teaching and writing in the relatively new interdisciplinary field of American Studies. He was appointed to a lectureship at Sussex University in 1966. Rupert spent his entire career at Sussex, becoming a reader in 1973 and professor in 1989.

He was a key figure in the growth of American Studies in the UK. He published 10 books ranging from analyses of political elites to studies of the American character. His most recent, Surviving a Japanese Internment Camp (2014), is not only Rupert’s account of his wartime experience but also a breathtaking history the Santo Tomás internment camp.

After retirement in 1999 Rupert worked as hard as ever, producing an exhaustively researched and pioneering volume on the financing of American higher education, Aiding Students, Buying Students: Financial Aid in America (2005). As with his other books, his interest went far beyond the academic, reflecting his passion for social justice, education and student welfare. Care for his students was much in evidence during his time at Sussex where he set up a year-abroad scheme for American Studies students and co-founded an international summer school.

He is survived by his wife, Mary, children, Matthew, Camilla and Clara, and six grandchildren.

Rupert Hugh Wilkinson, scholar of American Studies, born 18 May 1936; died 21 December 2014

Stephen Rockcliffe and Bernice Archer
Update from The National Archives

Research at the National Archives (TNA) continues to reveal extraordinary, intriguing and at times perplexing information. On Saturday afternoon, Keith Andrews gave a summary of his most recent discoveries, as well as an overview for delegates on the sorts of information that can be found at TNA. The son of a FEPOW and a member of the RFEPOWH team, Keith has spent the last 15 years researching FEPOW history, mainly at TNA – previously known as the Public Records Office (PRO). He explained the intricacies (and oddities) of nominal rolls stored at Kew, and the importance of double-checking any information against other sources to verify the facts as they are discovered.

Important files that Keith mentioned in his talk included:

- WO345 – Japanese POW Index Cards
- WO344 – Liberated POW Questionnaires
- WO347 – Nong Pladuck Hospital Records
- WO361 – Enquiries into Missing Personnel including the BRE Files compiled at Changi
- WO367 – The Changi Registers
- WO392 – British POWs in Japan or Japanese Occupied territory

Keith Andrews

Musical interlude

Meg had arranged a very special and moving surprise back at The Liner early on Saturday evening before dinner, with a reworking of pieces from the Sumatran Women’s Vocal Orchestra and the music of Margaret Dryburgh. The interlude included the ‘Captive’s Hymn’ and Dvorak’s Largo from the New World symphony, performed by members of the Meols Vocal Orchestra (VO) with Meg taking to the stage with them. This had been in rehearsals for over a year and was only the third time the Meols VO had performed in public.

Lizzie Oliver and Meg Parkes
The Conference: Sunday 7 June

On Sunday, we returned to LSTM. In the morning, we heard fascinating talks from Michiel Schwartzenberg of the Netherlands Red Cross, Martin Percival and Stephen Rockcliffe; and Professor Sears Eldredge treated us to a glimpse of his ground-breaking work on camp entertainments.

Remembering RAPWI – Repatriation of POWs and Internees (C.I.)

Michiel Schwartzenberg
(right, facing) who works at the Netherlands Red Cross Second World War Archive, specializing the PoW and Civilian Internees, gave an overview of the RAPWI organisation, their plans for the recovery of POWs and C.I from the camps in Asia, the implementation of those plans and the enormity of the task facing RAPWI personnel in locating all the camps and repatriating the POWs and C.I.

Stephen Rockcliffe, son of a FEPOW and member of the RFHG team, discussed the planned Allied invasion on Kyushu in South West Japan, the attempts to locate the FEPOW camps in Japan and the role of the US hospital ship “The Haven” that, in spite of the unknown dangers of radiation from the atom bomb and the heavily mined area around Nagasaki bay, helped evacuate, give essential medical treatment to and eventually repatriate POWs via various routes to the USA, Canada and the U.K.

Martin Percival, son of a FEPOW and another member of RFEPOWH team, gave graphic examples of the very long and convoluted journeys home of FEPOW and C.I., focusing on two particular examples; Private Geoff Monument RASC, author of ‘An Angel at my Shoulder’ and Private Frank Percival RASC (Martin’s father).

Martin also pointed out that sadly, POW deaths continued on the journeys home. Sometimes planes crashed and there were cases of death by suicide as well as ill health on the boats home.

Bernice Archer
Professor Sears Eldredge returned after his wonderful presentation at the ‘Afternoon at the Theatre’ lectures held at the LMI in 2012, to delight us with another whistle-stop tour through some of the phenomenal examples of camp entertainments that he has uncovered. For this year’s conference he spoke about a few of the musical recitals and theatrical productions that were staged at Changi, including:

- The work undertaken by the AIF Concert Party entertaining troops in Changi.
- The drawings of artists and cartoonists such as George Sprod, Ronald Searle and Fred Brightfield, whose illustrations document the entertainment parties.

Sears continues to be amazed at the examples of entertainments that continue to come to light and delegates were once again able to help him fill in more of the back stories to the shows he researches.

Lizzie Oliver

Sears Eldredge’s Captive Audiences / Captive Performers: Music and Theatre as Strategies for Survival on the Thailand-Burma Railway 1942-1945 is an interactive online multimedia book that reconstructs the untold story of the entertainment produced by prisoners of war along the Thailand-Burma railway during 1942-1945. This ground-breaking study is about the performers, their audiences, and the imperative to create musical and theatrical performances in order to keep morale up and hope alive. Downloadable as a whole or in part and searchable by keyword, Captive Audiences / Captive Performers is published online at a free-access website by Macalester College at http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/captiveaudiences/.
The last plenary session on Sunday afternoon focused all of our attentions on the medical aspects of captivity and its aftermath, with talks from Professor Geoff Gill and Dr Rosalind Header.

Professor Geoff Gill described how the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (the oldest such School in the world) had become the designated centre for “Tropical Disease Investigations” or TDI assessments, following discussions between Brigadier Toosey and Professor Brian Maegraith soon after the war. Dr Dion Bell had been particularly energetic in promoting these assessments and the welfare of FEPOWs, the last TDI (of over 4000) being in 1999. Dr Khan had characterised the psychological problems affecting many FEPOWs, long before the similar post-traumatic stress syndrome had been described elsewhere, and the School developed special expertise in diagnosing infection with the Strongyloides worm that could persist for more than 50 years after captivity. The many scientific publications from the School about both infectious and non-infectious problems experienced by ex FEPOWs had benefitted many other people, so that some long lasting general benefit had been derived from this dreadful “natural experiment in privation”.

Dr Rosalind Header had travelled the furthest of any delegate, from her base in Melbourne. She contrasted the differing responses of Australian and British medics to the demands of captivity. Both groups found themselves with medical responsibilities outside their usual comfort zones of training and specialisation and showed great ingenuity in constructing medical and surgical equipment from available materials. Neither group acknowledged the expertise of their Dutch counterparts, who had much greater familiarity with local illnesses and medicinal plants. The British were more likely to be career officers and maintained a more formal relationship with their patients and “other ranks” than their Australian counterparts. Both nationalities had to take on non-medical leadership roles that conflicted with medical responsibilities. The biggest challenges were protecting the sick from being forced into working parties and distributing rations of scarce foodstuffs. Despite differences in medical approach, survival rates of British and Australian FFEPOW groups were very similar.

Nick Beeching
Encouraging questions, discussion and debate...

As much time as possible was given throughout the weekend for interaction among delegates. Audience discussion followed every session, with dedicated question and answer/sharing sessions after each group of talks. These sessions, as always, brought wide-ranging contributions from delegates.

The talks across the three days prompted thought-provoking, moving and stimulating discussion about issues such as:

- personal experiences of families affected by the mental and physical health of their former FEPOW parents
- possible transmission of infections, fertility problems or mental health issues within FEPOW families
- opportunities to listen to our FEPOW and civilian internee guests share their perspectives and experiences
- ways for members of the audience to harness the spirit of the conference, stay in touch and share information with one another beyond the weekend

Creating research leads...

The conference has also already instigated new areas of research for delegates. Walter Tuttlebee wrote afterwards to say that:

- I discovered that Olga Henderson came back on the Almanzora - the same repatriation ship as my Dad. I’m hoping to visit her in July.
- Julie Aldrige showed me an RA regiment document that was part of her father’s service record that showed him (& 20 other RA officers) transferred to other UK units with dates corresponding to dates of repatriation ships arriving in Liverpool & Southampton. If we can find similar documents it could be a way of finding out on which ships folk were repatriated
- And, Keith has tracked down some new info on my Dad from his regimental nominal roll...

All just in one weekend – brilliant news!

Walter Tuttlebee
Delegates out and about...

Mersey Ferry Trip
For over 40 delegates, including FEPOW Bob Hucklesby, the conference concluded on Sunday evening with a glorious river tour on one of the famous Mersey Ferries. But first they had to navigate across a heaving Pier Head, full of happy Scousers celebrating the final day of the Mersey River Festival. The sunshine and musicians played to waving crowds while Meg tried to find recipients for the ferry tickets she had purchased!

At 5pm sharp the ferry cast off from the landing stage in front of the world famous Three Graces (Liver, Cunard and the Port of Liverpool buildings). Suddenly, out of the clear blue sky and flying in formation, loomed two white monoplanes heading straight for us... another part of the River Festival programme was underway! The tour lasted 50 minutes and the party stayed on the top deck throughout, soaking up the party atmosphere and the sunshine. Once back on terra firma the group walked along the Pier Head towards the new Museum of Liverpool where, on a stone edifice facing out across the Mersey, they stopped to pay respects at the Repatriation Memorial. What a memorable way to end an extraordinary weekend.

Lancashire Infantry Museum
To round off the conference, on Monday morning a group of 18 of us set off by car and train for Preston to meet Jane Davies at Fulwood Barracks in Preston, home to the Lancashire Infantry Museum. Jane had outlined the scope of the museum in her talk on first day of the conference and the group made the trip to see the extensive archives relating to The Loyal Regiment. The 2nd Loyals were captured in Singapore and later shipped to Korea. The museum has several contemporaneous diaries and photographs in the collection but by far the largest element is a huge amount of artwork created in captivity. This museum is a treasure trove for those researching FEPOW history. Visit the website - http://www.lancashireinfantrymuseum.org.uk

Meg Parkes
Other news and information

Appeals for information...

Poole Flying Boats
The Poole Flying Boats Association is looking for any information that you may have about the work of the Flying Boats during the Second World War and in particular the return of the first FEPOWs after VJ Day to Poole via Sunderland Flying Boats to Poole in September 1945. For more information see: www.pooleflyingboats.com.

RCOS – 27 Line Section
Hilary Custance Green is looking for relatives of 69 men of the Royal Corps of Signals, 27 Line Section for her current project researching the letters written between the relatives of these men during the duration of their captivity. A full list of men is available from Hilary, and more about her project can be found at threadgoldpress@waitrose.com; www.greenwritingroom.com

85th Anti-Tank/SS Almanzora
Walter Tuttlebee is looking to be in touch with anybody who has information, or a connection to, 85th Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Artillery, or with the SS Almanzora.
If you would like to be in contact with Walter, please let us know via the RFHG website and we will put you in touch.
VJ Day Commemorations

To honour veterans and their families on the 70th anniversary of VJ Day – 15 August 2015 – a range of local and national commemorative events are taking place around the country. For brief details of some of these events see below. Please check the websites of the different organisations for the latest updates or changes.


Java Club/Portslade British Legion: Sunday 16 August, 2.45pm. Assemble 2.30pm, Easthill Park War Memorial, Manor Road, Portslade, BN41 2FA

Malayan Volunteers Group: Saturday 15 August, 12pm, Millennium Chapel and Malayan Volunteer Force Memorial Garden, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire.

COFEPOW: Saturday 15 August, 2pm, Lichfield Cathedral, Staffordshire.

Liverpool: Saturday 15 August, 11am, Liverpool Parish Church (Our Lady and St Nicholas), Chapel St, Liverpool L2 8TZ.
RFHG: New Website

Researching FEPOW History

The RFHG team is updating its website and has created a new blog. Please follow us for the latest updates, and keep checking back as we add more information to our new home on the web! This will include a ‘first port of a call’ for people carrying out their own research, with links to existing resources for each theatre of captivity.

The blog can be found at fepowhistory.wordpress.com. For smart-phone users, the QR code for the new website is copied to the right.

We also have a Facebook page at ‘Researching-FEPOW-History’ and are on Twitter: @FEPOW_History

RFHG

Treasurer: Mike Parkes – mike.parkes@talktalk.net

Chair: Meg Parkes – mm.parkes@talktalk.net

Report/newsletter editor: Lizzie Oliver – lizzie.oliver@outlook.com

Conference coordinators: Bernice Archer, Keith Andrews, Martin Percival, Stephen Rockcliffe

Web: Stephen Rockcliffe and Lizzie Oliver: fepowhistory.wordpress.com

Editor’s note: If you have any suggestions for articles, or wish to submit an article for the next edition of the newsletter, I am very happy to hear from you. Either email me using the address above, or via the ‘contact’ page on the RFHG website.

Lizzie.