

Introduction from our Chairman

I write to you following the great success of our 3rd international RFH Conference. I think we can attribute this success to the outstanding quality of all the speakers, good organisation and the response of and interaction between our delegates, many of whom were returning for a second or third time.



Our FEPOW and Internee guests

Particularly memorable moments were Maurice Naylor's eloquent FEPOW address, Roger Mansell's recorded sharing talk and the

moving performance by the girls of Pensby High School. Thanks to them and their teachers for attending.

We continue to be humbled by the willingness of highly regarded international speakers who, at their own expense, repeatedly support our Conference. We also appreciate FEPOWs and delegates travelling so far to attend. Countries represented included Australia, the USA, Canada, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, South Africa, Holland and all parts of the United Kingdom.

Thanks again to Antalis McNaughton Ltd for generously providing Conference pack stationary and thanks to the NMA staff and caterers for all their work.

We look forward to meeting you all again and welcome your support for the Liverpool Pier Head Memorial Project which now has the full approval of Liverpool City Council.

Jonathan Moffatt, Chairman

Disease and Medicine on the Burma Railway – experience and aftermath

Geoff Gill, Professor of International Medicine at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), opened the 2010 conference with a fascinating talk on the medical aspects of life - and death - for the men in the Thailand-Burma railway camps.

Based on his PhD thesis, *Coping with Crisis*, Geoff's concise delivery laid bare with gruesome clarity some of the detail behind the appalling mortality statistics: 20% mortality among British prisoners of war attributed to dysentery (36%), malnutrition (14%), beriberi (12%), and cholera (11%).

His images fascinated the audience, from a sketch of the Chungkai distillery - an almost industrial scale operation which provided alcohol for use as a cleaning agent (not for consumption) – to a post-mortem section of a large bowel showing ulceration due to

strongyloidiasis, definitely not one for the squeamish.



Geoff Gill

His account of the post-war health problems, and fight for pensions, that many FEPOW endured was equally illuminating and informative. Geoff outlined how, in 1967, having spent over twenty-two years treating numbers of FEPOW for recurrent tropical illness, the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine took on the FEPOW pension work started in 1946 at Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton. These two institutions have been at the forefront of medical support and care of FEPOW for over six decades and many FEPOWs admit to owing their lives and pensions to the LSTM and the doctors who worked with and for them.

Meg Parkes

Martin Percival introduced the Liverpool Pier Head Far East Repatriation Memorial, which is intended to mark the return of over 20,000 FEPOW and civilians to the UK. They returned in the main to Southampton and Liverpool and it was felt appropriate that their place of disembarkation should be marked by a memorial. The cost will be in the region of £8,000 and the first important stage towards approval has been met by Liverpool City Council. There will be updates on this project on the Researching FEPOW History Group website and in our forthcoming newsletters during 2011. If anyone would like to know more about the plans for the memorial please contact Meg Parkes, whose details are at the bottom of this newsletter, or on the website.

Women and Children First: Evacuation from Hong Kong in 1940

Tony Banham has lived in Hong Kong since 1989 and has become an expert on Hong Kong's Second World War story. He is the author of several books on the subject of the war in the Far East and was a very popular speaker at our conference in 2008. We were very pleased to welcome him back to the UK to give two separate papers on different aspects of his research.



Tony Banham

His well illustrated talk highlighted the fact that in the 1930s Hong Kong was regarded as a prime posting for British civil servants and military personnel. Money went a long way there and significant numbers of dependent families were therefore located in the area.

He presented a fascinating overview of the evacuation of women and children from Hong Kong. Planned in 1939 and, as the war developed, activated in June 1940 when the Governor General ordered the evacuation of women and children from Hong Kong to Manila. Over the space of several weeks some 3000 people were evacuated and in August that year they were sent from Manila to Australia although only 'English looking' people were selected. Some people never left Hong Kong, they literally missed the boat, while others chose to remain and a few returned from the first evacuation. The majority of civilians ended up in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. From there many families headed on to other destinations around the world with Tony's fascinating talk including many individual stories accompanied by family photographs as well as others sourced from photo archives.

This talk provided a vivid picture of a society in a state of flux and confusion in the face of the certainty of the threat of invasion by the Japanese. At the end of the war people were told they could go home. But where was home? For many it was the UK, for some Hong Kong but for a lot it was Australia where people remained in numbers after the war.

Martin Percival

The V-Scheme Unravelled



Rod Beattie

As one of the most respected experts on the history of the Thailand-Burma Railway, Rod Beattie is always warmly welcomed at conference. His talk about the V-Scheme, which was the secret operation to smuggle medicines and money into the prison camps along the Thailand-Burma Railway, did not disappoint. He revealed both the ad hoc nature of the scheme in its earliest days but also its considerable successes.



Help from local people

The desire to help the prisoners of war began as early as July 1942 when contact between civilian internees in Bangkok and POWs in Nong Pladuk was established using a middle man from the Chinese business community. As the need for help in the camps along the railways grew, so the ambitions of the civilian internees grew as well.

Rod explained the roles of the neutral embassies as well as the former employees of the

Borneo Company, who helped to raise funds, buy medicines and, most importantly, get these into the POW camps under the noses of the Japanese and Korean guards. The lynch pin in Kanchanaburi was a grocer and former town mayor, Mr Boon Pong. Another brave man was Mr Lee Soon. Both were decorated after the war with the King's Medal for Courage in the Cause of Freedom, by the British, and the Order of Orange-Nassau by the Dutch.



Nai Boon Pong



Nai Lee Soon

The prison hospital camps of Chungkai, Tamarkan and Kanburi received a total of over 150,000 ticals or nearly £10,000 over the summer months of 1943. In total over 300,000 ticals worth of assistance was passed to the prisoners via the V Scheme, with a value in sterling of £20,400 (in 1943).

Rod explained how the scheme was expanded to camps further up the railway as the monsoon rains allowed river traffic to run the rapids. Mr Boon Pong risked his life and that of his family by helping the POWs but he was honoured after the war and a fundraising appeal within the FEPOW community raised \$5,000.

A Q&A with Geoff Gill and Rod Beattie followed and Julie Summers asked both men how much assistance the V-Scheme had afforded the POWs. Both agreed it had been almost incalculable but most of all it had provided a much needed morale boost to the doctors. The Q&A touched on the inventiveness of the medical teams in the POW camps when it came to finding solutions to problems as well as the bravery of the senior officers and the few men who knew about the scheme and succeeded in keeping it secret from the guards and from the Kempei Tai.

Julie Summers

The Railway Story

Rod then brought us up to date with a fascinating gallop along the railway looking at his most recent archaeological and historical finds. He is launching a systematic satellite survey of the entire route of the railway and has now got an extraordinary collection of photographs taken in the last few months to compare with images he has dating back to his earliest excavations almost 20 years ago. This will provide an invaluable resource as more and more of the land is taken by the Thais into agricultural production.



Rod Beattie surveying the railway 'under water'



Tha Khanun

Following the talk several people wanted to record their thanks for the outstanding work Rod does both on the physical aspects of the railway but also with the families of FEPOWs who go to visit Thailand and benefit from his knowledge of where their relatives had been during its construction. Several, including Janet Jacobs, who stood up to thank Rod on Saturday afternoon, attest to having found closure on a difficult subject when they visited the railway and were so grateful for his patience and kindness in guiding them through their story.

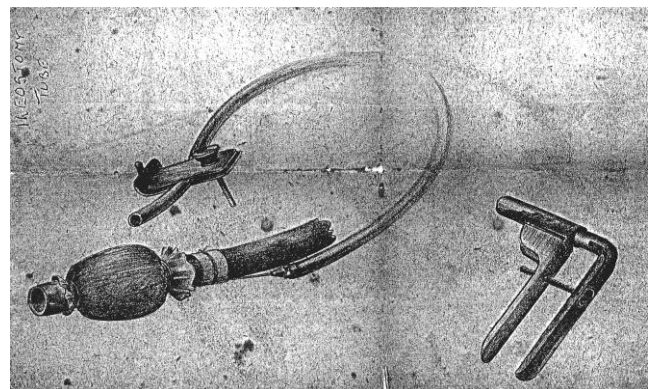
FEPOW Ingenuity and Lessons Learned

Meg Parkes, who is currently working as a researcher at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, has been studying medical innovation in captivity and has interviewed 60+ FEPOWs. Midge Gillies has been researching POWs in both Europe and the Far East. They were introduced by former RAF Medical officer POW Dr Nowell Peach, and came together to present an illustrated talk: FEPOW Ingenuity & Lessons learned.



Meg Parkes and Midge Gillies

Stories included that of Gordon Vaughan, a conscientious objector who joined the RAMC, and at Chungkai Hospital worked with Fred Marston, a plumber in civilian life, creating surgical instruments. His work was highly regarded by surgeons such as Weary Dunlop & Max Pemberton. Vaughan was awarded the British Empire Medal for services to POWs but always felt uncomfortable about this.



Self-retaining ileostomy tube

Hendrik Robbert 'Bob' van Heekeren (1902-1972) was born in Java and became a Dutch POW in Java and Thailand. An enthusiastic archaeologist, he found many ancient artefacts, including stone axes, along the Burma Railway. He returned to both Java and Kanchanaburi post war on archaeological digs.



Abt. 11. De schrijver in 1949 met een onderkaakfragment van een fossiele dwerg-olifant.

Hendrik Robbert 'Bob' van Heekeren

Medical officer Nowell Peach, in Java, built up a large collection of surgical implements and preserved extensive medical notes including a study of 54 patients with 'happy feet'. Peach was

also a keen bird watcher as was Jack Spittle in Changi and Kranji. Both made detailed drawings of their observations on any paper or card available, including cigarette packets.



Instruments given to Peach by Lt Col. Weary Dunlop

At Batu Lintang Camp, Borneo, Frank Bell, a Cambridge languages graduate, created 'Kuching University'. Initially 5 languages were taught, with Frank writing extensive notebooks. Later other subjects were offered including pig farming and poultry keeping. The story of Kuching University is told in *Undercover University* based on Bell's notes.

Jonathan Moffatt

The use of Japanese POWs as sources of Allied intelligence in the Far East

Kent Fedorowich presented on the subject of how Japanese Prisoners were used as a source of military intelligence. Kent described the psychology behind why the Japanese military were terrified of being captured and how this fear was used to great advantage by the Allies. The Japanese POWs would eventually realise that they were not going to suffer in the same way that their own captives would. This had a profound effect on these POWs who would soon freely talk to the Allies about the IJA capabilities. The information gained was collated at Bletchley Park and used successfully in the necessary intelligence gathering process.

Kent's talk offered a very different view of the Japanese experience, looking at prisoners of war from the other end of the kaleidoscope. The talk also offered a fascinating perspective on the psychology of the Japanese military, which inevitably impacted on the experience of the prisoners, both military and civilian. Kent is a

very engaging speaker and is extremely knowledgeable on the political aspects of POW.

Stephen Rockcliffe



Kent Fedorowich

The FEPOW Address

*This year the FEPOW address was presented by **Maurice Naylor CBE**. It is reproduced here in full by kind permission of Maurice.*



First of all I would like to thank the Organising Committee for inviting me to address you. It is a privilege and an honour to do so. And I would like to thank you – Jonathan – for your suggestion that I might focus on my experience of Liberation and Repatriation.

Let me start with a quotation from another FEPOW Jack Spittle who died in 2004.

“One cannot live for years under privation with inadequate food and accommodation, cut off from the wireless, newspapers and connections with the outside world, segregated from friends and particularly the opposite sex, harassed by long hours and hard work, rackets, atrocities, parasites, disease and death; not knowing whether we shall ever get out alive, or at the best when we shall get out – without in some way interfering with the normal working of the brain” Jack Spittle, former FEPOW (died 2004)

Whilst I was a prisoner one thought uppermost in my mind, especially in the quiet hours of the night, was how on earth we would get out of this mess alive. And a secondary thought, just as worrying, was how long would this war last. We knew by May 1945 that it had taken nearly six years to defeat the enemy in Europe; having learnt by experience a little about the culture and fanaticism of the Japanese, how

soon would they – could they - accept that defeat was inevitable? And where would that leave us?

In early August 1945 I was in a camp about six miles north of Ubon in Thailand about 380 miles north-north-east of Bangkok almost on the border between Thailand and what was then Indo-China. I had arrived there in May after spending two months in the Godowns (warehouses) on the banks of the river in Bangkok.

The camp at Ubon had been going for some time and held about 2000 prisoners. Our tasks were to dig defence works and to build an airstrip. The surrounding area was bristling with Japanese troops; reputedly some two or three Divisions.

We learned later that the Japs. intended to make a stand in this area in the event of an invasion of Malaya or Thailand by allied troops. We also learned later that the invasion was planned for September.

However none of this was known to us at the time and I was quite relieved to be in a well run camp away from the threat of constant bombing by our allied Air Forces to which we had been subjected in Bangkok and along the railway.

For most of June and into July I was working on the airstrip. The work was not unduly arduous, and the Japanese supervisors were reasonable; there was no “speedo” or sense of urgency as had been the case on the Thai-Burma railway in 1943.

In the camp itself the Korean guards were disposed to be friendly although they did not receive much encouragement from us. Food of course was lacking but rice was plentiful and we were able to purchase extra food. Looking back it was probably my best period in captivity. There was a general feeling of optimism amongst the prisoners which grew the more the Japanese became depressed.

In July work on the airstrip stopped abruptly; a few days later we were ordered to start digging trenches across the airstrip 10 feet wide and six feet deep. Significantly the work was supervised by the Korean Guards of the camp administration which was unprecedented. Although at the time we did not know it, the Japanese High Command was believed to have ordered the elimination of the prisoners of war in the event of an invasion of Malaya or Thailand.

On August 13th three of the Korean Guards deserted and there was great confusion amongst the Japs. Rumours of big allied successes in Burma and the Pacific became more and more persistent. One rumour was of a new and powerful weapon which had been used on Japan and had caused "black rain" to fall and immense casualties.

15th August was traditionally the official birthday of the Emperor; previously on this day we had been given a rest from working parties. So we were not unduly surprised that the same thing happened again. But there were no working parties on the 16th either.

The camp seethed with excitement. We were told by the British camp administration that the war was believed to be over and as there was a big Red Cross issue and sports were allowed all day we began to believe it too. However we were warned to remain calm and disciplined – it was not known how the Japanese locally would react for we were in a very vulnerable position. At the back of our minds were the trenches dug across the airstrip.

To our dismay working parties resumed on the 17th and 18th. I was working in a Japanese camp close by. But all was not well; there was obvious confusion in the camp; records and papers were being destroyed and it seemed that a major crisis had arisen.

At the evening "Tenko" on the 18th Major Chida the Japanese officer in charge of prisoners in the area announced to a full parade of prisoners that the War was over and that we were free men. It seemed like a miracle. We cheered. I think we sang "God Save the King"; we may have sung "Land of Hope and Glory" or maybe "Rule Britannia". We went back to our huts, very elated.

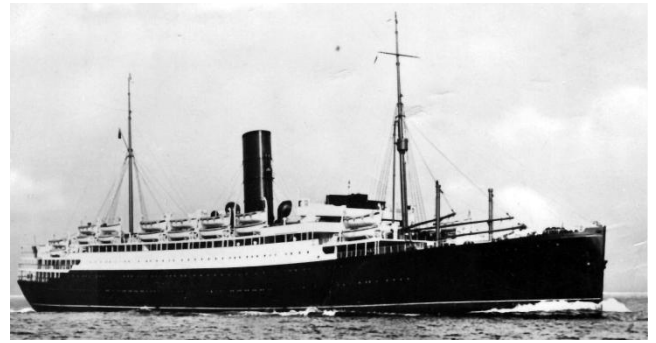
But we had not yet been liberated still less repatriated.

Two days after the announcement of our freedom (on the 20th August) a British plane circled the camp and dropped leaflets telling us to maintain discipline and promising to get us out as quickly as possible. On the 25th a group of officers led by Colonel Toosey arrived. He had found out in Bangkok that a majority of the survivors of his Regiment were in the camp. (He ordered 10,000 French Letters from India – we must have looked fitter than we felt)

On the 28th we had the first of several parachute drops of supplies and on the 30th August two officers and two NCOs from RAPWI were parachuted into the camp. So far, so good. But then we had to wait. The potential threat of reprisals by the Japanese failed to materialise

and on the 25th September we moved by train to Bangkok and the next day flew to Rangoon.

Only then did I feel truly liberated.



The journey home on the SS ORBITA is now a blur. We called at Colombo and Suez where we were allowed ashore; we cruised through the Mediterranean and stopped briefly at Gibraltar one evening to collect mail. We eventually arrived at Liverpool one afternoon towards the end of November.

My parents had been notified in advance of our expected arrival in Liverpool and were on the dockside to greet me, but they were not allowed on board. Nor were we allowed to disembark; whilst I could see them they could not spot me in the crowd; so they went home frustrated and disappointed. Rather an anticlimax to our repatriation.

The next day we were given travel warrants and sent home on indefinite leave. I cannot now recall being given any sort of medical examination at the time nor would I have wanted one. All I wanted was to get home.

I do not know what advice had been given by the authorities to the relatives of ex-POWs. All I do know is that something had been said about dietary problems. My mother, bless her, had prepared as good a meal as the ration allowance permitted. Part of it was Rice Pudding!

I found the next few weeks very distressing; naturally my immediate family were overjoyed to see me home but apart from them I got the impression that generally most people were indifferent or uninterested in what had gone on in the Far East. There seemed to be a conspiracy of silence. People seemed to be embarrassed when they learnt I had been a prisoner in the Far East and changed the conversation. Whether this was out of consideration for me or for other reasons I do not know.

I decided that the problem was with me. I found I could no longer socialise. I had recurrent nightmares about still being in captivity. I could not bear to listen to trivial conversations that went on, the grumbles about

rations, the difficulties in getting furniture, the hundred and one petty irritations that were common in the aftermath of six years of war. Many a time I fled to the privacy of my bedroom and burst into tears. My family must have had a difficult time with me. None of this was unique to me and I sympathise with the wives, children and grandchildren of former FEPOWS who had to cope with a "stranger in the house".

We had not heard then about post-traumatic stress disorder.

I had arrived home in time for my 25th birthday. In the New Year I went back to my old job. Gradually I got back to normal. I got married in 1948 along came children and I did my best to Forgive and Forget.

Over the next few years my physical health improved; in the early 50s I was invited to attend a hospital in Liverpool (?Sefton Park Hospital) to be screened by the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine for possible side effects of dysentery and other tropical diseases.

I was given a clean bill of health. I attended two medical boards in connection with my pension application the first of which included a psychiatrist but he asked me no questions about my mental health; they seemed to be more concerned about my broken nose and the loss of the tip of my left index finger.

It was 20 years before I could bring myself to eat rice again and nearly forty years before I could talk about my experience of World War II.

When I retired in 1981 I went back to Thailand visited the bridge over the River Kwai and the War Cemetery in Kanchanaburi. I decided then that I owed it to those who had died and their families for the story of those years to become better known and I started to give talks to organisations like Probus and Rotary in and around South Yorkshire.

It was not until 2007 when I visited the National Memorial here and saw the FEPOW building and heard about COFEPOW that I discovered the Researching History Group. So I came to the 2008 Conference to find out more and was overwhelmed by the welcome that I and my fellow FEPOWs received.

There are not many of us left now to tell the tale and soon there will be none. It is gratifying and comforting to know that there are younger people still around able and willing to give their time and energy to researching and recording the history of FEPOWS and civilian Internees and passing it on to future generations.

May I, on behalf of the FEPOWs and the internees' present today, thank you for inviting us to your Conference. May your work long continue and prosper.

Students Sharing Session – Pensby Girls

One of the great delights of the afternoon was a performance by eight Years 10 and 12 pupils from Pensby High School for Girls in Wirral. They presented a twenty minute concert which delighted and impressed everyone. They sang, performed drama and read poetry, all work that had come out of the first eight months of a two year FEPOW education project being run in conjunction with the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

This innovative cross-curricular Heritage Lottery funded project seeks to integrate aspects of the FEPOW story into subjects across the senior curriculum. So far subject areas that have worked on the project include art, English, science, history, design technology and drama. Pensby was chosen as it had already devised schemes of work for Year 8 English a few years ago based on a FEPOW diary.



When the girls sang their last song there were only a few dry eyes. It was a fitting tribute to the courage of FEPOW and internees but more than that it was heartening to know that their story will not be forgotten and has relevance for today's generation and beyond. Congratulations to Meg and their teacher, Mrs Thompson, for an excellent collaboration and a lovely performance.

Share or Be Damned



Roger Mansell, who was in the last stages of cancer, could not join us at conference this year but he sent a most moving and heart-warming tribute to the delegates and speakers. The overwhelming message of his videoed talk was to share. Share research, share ideas, share information, share experiences. He explained what would happen to his own archives on his death and urged others to think to the future about how their research can be made available to others. He paid his respects to his fellow researchers Rod Beattie, Rod Suddaby, Tony Banham and Jonathan Moffatt. The talk was extremely well received.

We are sorry to record that Roger died on 25 October 2010 in California. He will be sorely missed by the FEPOW community as well as many others, including, of course, his family.

A Patchwork of Internment

Dr Bernice Archer, author of *The Internment of Western Civilians under the Japanese 1941-1945 - a Patchwork of Internment*, focused her illustrated talk on the experiences of the 42,000 women captives across South East Asia and the Pacific region. This was a subject that had been largely ignored by post-war historians despite a wealth of material on the subject. There was a sense that heroes were always men and women were helpless and weak. The experiences of women captives told quite a different story.

Women like Mary Thomas, Iris Parfitt & Freddy Bloom recorded their experiences in Changi Gaol and Sime Rd camp, Singapore. Other women interned at Lunghau Camp, Shanghai and Stanley Camp, Hong Kong showed similar fortitude. The women interned in Java and Sumatra were subject to severe physical discipline and some into enforced prostitution as 'comfort women'.

Dr Marjorie Lyon and her friend Dr Elsie Crowe survived the Kuala sinking and were interned at Bankinang, Sumatra. With her group of nurses, Marjorie was determined to keep a record of their internment. They embroidered a large silk panel with their names and their captivity journey: dates, places, buildings.



Bra made from a single scout tie by Mabel Anslow

Given the ban on communication and the lack of paper, embroidered cloths, sheets & quilts became a successful & subtle method of record keeping. There was Daisy Sage's embroidered sheet in Stanley Camp with over a thousand names of internees. In Changi Gaol a tray cloth depicting the march from Katong to Changi, later to be found in a church jumble sale, was created together with the well known 'Changi Quilts': a quilt dedicated to the Japanese Red Cross displayed impartiality to allow for the quietly subversive British, Australian & Girl Guide Quilt.



Panel from Changi Quilt

We were pleased to hear from Conference delegate Olga Henderson, one of those original Changi Girl Guides who stitched a square on one of the Changi quilts.

Jonathan Moffatt

Julie Summers adds: Roberte Swain spoke briefly of her mother's internment in a camp in Java where she was forced to work in the fields and treated very harshly by the guards who burnt her flesh with cigarette butts on one occasion. This served as a reminder that the women internees were not spared by their captors and it is a tribute to their ingenuity and bravery that they were able to cope with the privations, as the men did. It puts paid to the idea that they were either helpless or weak.

Re-assessing the POW Experience: Changi POW Camp

Dr Rob Havers, Executive Director of the Winston Churchill Memorial and Library in the United States, spoke about his doctorate topic, the Changi POW camp in Singapore. No.1 POW Camp, the largest and best known of all the Far Eastern prisoner of war camps, was described by former inmate James Clavell in his novel *King Rat* as 'the most notorious POW camp in South East Asia'.



Rob explained how the population of Changi fluctuated during the war so that the character of the camp changed and went through several phases. In October 1942, for example, camp strength was 15,500 to 16,000 whereas in June 1943 it was as low as 5,000. Numbers increased again as POWs returned from working on the Thailand-Burma Railway.

Life in Changi was highly organised and complex and there was considerable freedom with POWs running their own affairs in a large area between barbed wire & sea. The Japanese posted guards on the gates but the POWs were left to run their own organisation. This resulted in the prisoners developing a sense of self-reliance early on.

The prisoners were allowed to organise concert parties and the education at Changi University, staffed by lecturers who in civilian life had taught at Raffles College and who had served in the Singapore Volunteers. All of this led to tangible and intangible benefits for the POWs but above all it kept morale high and showed the Japanese, to their apparent annoyance, that the prisoners were bowed but not broken.

Rob gave one of the clearest descriptions of the Selarang Barracks incident that anyone had heard. Far from being cowed by the Japanese the Allies wrung concessions out of their captors and the Japanese were forced to treat them as soldiers. Rob concluded that although the POWs had to sign the non-escape document they were the victors of the Selarang incident.

Changi was very definitely not a holiday camp but it was the camp that at times approached 'normal' POW camp conditions as might have been suffered in Europe. It was however far preferable to POW camps in Thailand and further afield and POWs attested to this in their diaries when they were away from Singapore.

Singapore Forum

Jeya, Bernice Archer and Rob Havers contributed to a session chaired by **Nigel Stanley**.

In keeping with the date: 10/10, this panel concentrated on the notorious Double Tenth Incident which resulted from Operation Jaywick, carried out by commandos based in Australia, in which 37,000 tons of shipping was lost. It was the most successful Allied raid against the Japanese but it had huge repercussions. 57 civilian internees were imprisoned (15 of whom died) and 25 Chinese.



Nigel Stanley, Bernice Archer, Jeya, Rob Havers

The panel also discussed the mortality peaks in the POW and civilian internment camps on Singapore. The first peak came at the beginning of captivity, when diseases such as dysentery claimed large numbers of lives; the middle period in the civilian camp was the Double Tenth incident and the third peak in death numbers occurred towards the end of the war when many starved to death.

Jeya explained that Changi POW camp became a Japanese POW camp for two years after the war. He also spoke briefly about the renegade Indian troops who were far fewer in number than some historians have supposed. He cited the figures thus:

Of 67,000 Indian troops in Malaya during the war some 12,000 joined the India National Army but the remainder refused to switch sides and soon became a problem for the Japanese who had hoped to get all non-whites on side. In the event the Indians who refused to bow to pressure were appallingly badly treated by the Japanese.

Julie Summers

The Secret War in Hong Kong

This was the second of Tony Banham's talks and opened up yet another aspect of the battle and occupation of Hong Kong. This is a book project that Tony started in 2006, thinking it would take four years to complete, and as Tony admitted it is still ongoing. This is part of the POW story that focuses on three areas, escape; evade and engage.

The early escapes were the Royal Navy ships HMS Thanet and Scout and of the 'high and mighty' flown out of Kai Tak before Hong Kong fell on 25 December 1941. Another important escapee was Admiral Chan Chak and his party of 80 people who escaped on MTBs. This is where the evasion part came into play as the party included people from the SOE who returned to Hong Kong to fight behind enemy lines. The Eurasian and Chinese troops were encouraged to go home and merge into the population, but not all took that opportunity.

After the fall of Hong Kong one of the early escapees was Lt. Col. L.T. Ride who set up the British Army Aid Group (BAAG) and would become involved with MI9 in China as well as MI6 and Force 136. The key role of BAAG was to facilitate escapes and to try to pull people out to order. There were other successful break outs.

Tony explained, however that it was not as easy as it sounds now: a ten day walk to China to a degree of safety. The last escapes in 1944 ended in disaster and executions.

Indian troops were also taken in Hong Kong and of those captured 200 joined the Indian National Army, 600 refused to do so, and around 1000 were willing to do guard duties. However the Japanese released the Chinese POWs from the Hong Kong Chinese Regiment, who then crossed over to China in large numbers to carry on the fight.

Tony then outlined the BAAG relations with Chiang Kai Shek and the plans Lt. Col. Ride had to liberate all POW's in Hong Kong which failed when two agents were captured, tortured and revealed other agents. He still wanted to liberate the POWs in Hong Kong, but the war finished before he was able to execute that plan. Intelligence gathering was another area that involved BAAG, which included listing buildings used by the Japanese, and coast watching.

This was a fascinating talk on a little known period of the war in Hong Kong and I await Tony's book to learn more about it.

Keith Andrews

Evacuation and Reorientation: a tumultuous event or a lifetime's adventure?

The talk by Julie Summers combined information from her book *Stranger in the House* and her latest research into the evacuee's experience that will be featured in her next book *When the Children Came Home*. Julie focussed on the often neglected area of the many problems that women experienced both during the war and the post-war years. Often women were separated both from their husbands and children who were evacuated from the war zones. Julie's presentation was very professional, using some previously unseen images of the Second World War evacuation from the Far East and others taken in the post war period of families whose lives were deeply affected by the war.



Nigel and Erika Stanley in Ipoh en route to Australia as evacuees

The underlying theme of this talk was the long-term and sometimes devastating effects that separating families has. The reuniting of FEPOWs with their families was often painful for both the men and their families. This was also true for the returning evacuee children who had been separated from home for up to five years to places like North America and Australia. The

strong message that Julie very ably got over was that of the mothers' role in rebuilding the family unit in the post-war period. This was neither a short-term nor easy task and it often led to great difficulties that in many cases lasted a lifetime.



Mary Rockcliffe and children in Sheffield

It is no exaggeration to say that the returning FEPOWs were changed men. Combine this with returning evacuee children who had grown up in a foreign culture and one must wonder how the family unit survived at all. The message of Julie's talk was that of the vital role that women played in rebuilding the family unit after the war. This was very well received by the conference and was especially relevant to the FEPOW story.

Stephen Rockcliffe

The Sharing Sessions

Two sharing sessions were held at the end of each day of the conference and the first followed Roger Mansell's video talk so that the tone was set for generosity in sharing information. Amongst those who contributed to the sessions were David Peck, whose father had been a POW in Japan and Stephen Fogden, whose grandfather was a Chindit POW and who died in

Rangoon Gaol. Both men are researching their history and offered to share information with others. Janet Jacobs gave a moving talk about her trip to Thailand where she was taken to camp locations along the railway by Rod Beattie. It was a visit, she said, that 'changed my life forever' and she was able to find closure.



Merle Hesp and Sally McQuaid

Rod Beattie talked about a visit he had made to Holland where the Dutch were in the process of translating all the Japanese information on the POW index cards. He said that the Dutch had not sought compensation from the Japanese after the war but had instead requested all the information they had on the Dutch POWs. This was forthcoming but not until the mid-1950s and the interesting thing was that the Japanese had continued to add information to the cards after the war. This, he explained, would have major significance for anyone interested in British POW index cards since the translations could be cross compared with symbols on the British cards at Kew. Both Ron Bridges and Keith Andrews expressed interest in this area.

Rod Suddaby spoke about the remarkable increase in material coming forward and talked about how the first floodgates had opened in the early 1980s. He further explained that he would be retiring in March 2011 but hoped to be allowed to continue working on the FEPOW and Far East collections in the Museum in order to put them in order, not least since such a wealth

of material had been sent in to the collection in the last few years and needed cataloguing.

Brian Spittle, who wrote an article for an issue of this newsletter in November 2009, spoke about the research he has been doing into the life of his father, Jack Spittle, who was a sanitation officer in the Far East before the war and a keen birdwatcher. He has been running a blog <http://bspittle.wordpress.com/> with details about all the discoveries he has been making and he urged delegates to share information as he was happy to do.



Bamboo tube

Jill Flemming produced an extraordinary collection of material from her father's archive, which she had been unaware of until after his death. This included a diary of his time on the Railway; a bamboo tube in which he had kept his precious papers, an award for a performance in Changi; the piece of gas cape in which all the material had been stored and a series of remarkable documents, all of which had been beautifully organised and conserved by her philatelist husband.

Jonathan Moffatt and Julie Summers

Two of the founding members of the International Researching FEPOW History Group are to step down after the 3rd conference.

Jonathan Moffatt, a highly respected historian who has co-authored and edited several books on FEPOW history related to the Malayan campaign and Volunteer Forces, has been chairman since 2005 when the Group was first formed. He has a wealth of knowledge which is generously shared with all who have an interest in the subject. Jonathan has been an excellent chairman whose steady hand and clarity of vision, especially in relation to programme planning and timetabling, has helped steer the growth and development of the group. He will be much missed by all of us but

we hope he will come to any future conferences as a welcome guest.





Julie Summers was asked to join the fledgling group on the night of the launch of her acclaimed book *The Colonel of Tamarkan*, at Birkenhead School, her grandfather's alma mater. Julie's

organizational skills and boundless energy have been in evidence from the outset. Together with her writing skills, as evinced in the superb newsletters that she has edited and produced, Julie has helped to shape both the Group and the conferences into a professional organisation of some renown.

As the organising team draws the 3rd conference to a close we say a heartfelt "thank you" to both Jonathan and Julie for their invaluable contributions in establishing this unique group and we look forward to welcoming them both back as guests in the future.

Meg Parkes

DVD from 2008 Conference

We have produced a DVD of the informal interviews recorded at the 2008 conference. It runs for 1 hour 52 minutes and features conversations with the following FEPOW guests: Fergus Anckorn, Jack Chalker, Harry Hesp, Gordon Smith, Maurice Naylor, Arthur White, James Wakefield, Fred Seiker plus a tribute by delegate Helen Monument to her father Geoffrey, and his response.

£7.50 plus p&p, cheques payable to Researching FEPOW History

Visit www.researchingfepowhistory.org.uk for details of how to order a copy.

Another series of interviews with FEPOWs and internee guests was recorded during the recent conference, and this second DVD will be available by the end of the year so please watch the website for details on how to order this newest collection too.

Meg Parkes

Note for all delegates

Delegate contact details:

One of the points raised in our feedback forms was a request by some of the delegates for a list of attendees and their contact details. Obviously we are mindful of privacy but also see that such a list could prove useful. Therefore, we are asking all delegates for permission to include their details - name, email address and/or postal address - on a list of attendees at the 2010 conference that will be circulated shortly. If you do **NOT** wish your details to be on this list please let Sarah Hawkin know **no later than** 31st December, 2010. (contact details on last page)

Liverpool Pier Head Far East Repatriation Memorial:

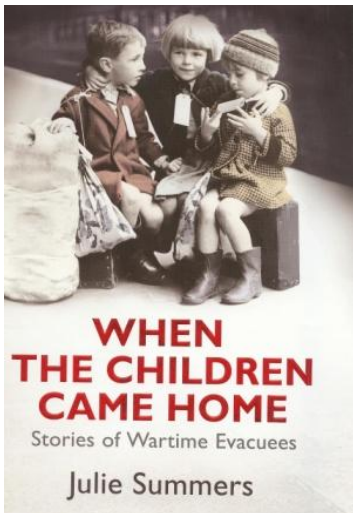
We had confirmation on Monday 11th October that permission has been granted for the Far East Repatriation Memorial at Liverpool's Pier Head. If you are interested in lending support, please refer to the website and encourage others to do so too. For further details about the background and press launch see www.researchingfepowhistory.org.uk

Sarah Hawkin

Forthcoming Books

The Forgotten Men of Guam Roger Mansell

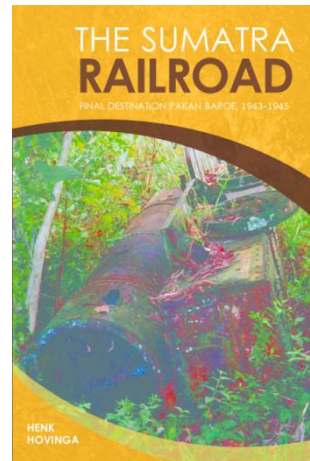
Roger's book is being edited by historian Linda Goetz Holmes, who has been writing and publishing works about prisoners of war in the Pacific for 30 years. Please keep an eye on www.mansell.com for the publication date, which has yet to be set. It will also be featured on the RFHG website.



Julie Summers's book about the effect of evacuation on 3 million British children is due to be published by Simon & Schuster in March 2011 price £18.99. It deals not only with the familiar evacuation of 1939 but those of early 1940s to the Dominions and from the Far East.



Lost Track by Raoul Kramer with contribution from Dutch FEPOW Felix Bakker is now printed and will be available for order shortly. Details will be posted on the RFHG website.



by HENK HOVINGA

ISBN: 978 90 6718 328 4

This is the gripping historical tragedy of the 220 km railroad that bored its way through the hot, humid Sumatran jungle during the Second World War.

Interviews conducted with nearly 100 men who worked on the railway gives a vivid picture of a gruelling but little known episode. The book is available from www.ktilv.nl and costs 35 Euros plus 10 Euros P&P.

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Raymond Poland with Rod Beattie



Delegates listening to Rod Beattie



Stephen Rockcliffe introducing Kent Fedorowich



Delegates listening to Tony Banham



Jeya speaking about the Double Tenth Trials



Mike Parkes and Stephen Rockcliffe in the bookshop



Patrick Toosey contemplating details of the V Scheme



l-r Jonathan Moffatt, Mike Parkes, Brian Spittle, Meg Parkes, Geoff Gill, Stephen Rockcliffe