APA KHABAR

6TH EDITION APRIL 2006

The first edition of "Apa Khabar" in January 2005 was a very tentative attempt to find out if there was any interest in forming a group to commemorate the Malayan Volunteers and for Volunteers families to keep in touch with each other. The result of that first Newsletter was to find plenty of interest in both fields. The other question was whether there would be sufficient information to write 3 Newsletters per annum, let alone 4. However, these fears have been totally unfounded, and you have sent in a mass of information for inclusion in the Newsletters -- so much so that some may have to be left until another time. If you have sent in an article or asked for news about someone, and it has not been included, please be patient, and it will be printed another time. Thank you very much for sending in such a wealth of interesting, and hitherto unknown or forgotten, facts about your families. Please go on doing so!

In January, this year, soon after the 5th edition of "Apa Khabar" went out, Phil Crawley, Administrator of the Burma Star Association and Editor of their Newsletter "Dekho" contacted the MVG with the offer of a full page article about the Malayan Volunteers, for inclusion in their next Newsletter. As Phil Crawley said, the article was to inform his members about the role of the Malayan Volunteers during WW2. The offer was gratefully accepted, and "Dekho" is due to be published sometime soon. Photographs of the Armoured Car Squadrons were supplied with the article, by kind permission of Paul Riches, researcher of the Malayan Campaign and Malayan Volunteer Medals.

We have an interesting Conference on "Researching FEPOW History" to look forward to at the end of April, at the National Memorial Arboretum. This is being organized by our own Jonathan Moffatt in conjunction with Meg Parkes, (author of "Notify Alec Rattray ---" and "--- A.A. Duncan is O.K.") and Julie Summers (author of "The Colonel of Tamarkan. Philip Toosey and the Bridge on the River Kwai.") Rod Beattie is just one of several eminent authorities on the FEPOWs and their captivity, who will be giving a lecture or taking a workshop. He will be talking about the Thailand/Burma Railway Centre Museum at Kanchanaburi in Thailand, and his role in its foundation. While Rod is in England, it is hoped to finalize the plans for the MVG Sponsorship of the Library books in the TBRC. A full report on the 2-day conference will be given in the next Newsletter.

MVG PLOT at the NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM.

As reported in the last Newsletter, MVG plans to create its own memorial plot at the National Memorial Arboretum, provided members give this proposal their whole hearted support. It will be an expensive project, but with our numbers growing, it should be possible to raise the money to meet the costs involved.

The Arboretum authorities have been very helpful and accommodating in encouraging MVG to go ahead with the plot. Following Jonathan's visit in January to discuss our plans, they have offered:-

a) To hold the 8m by 15m plot for us until we have sufficient funds to pay for it, on receipt of a small deposit of £200
b) To reduce the "donation" for a plot of this size from £3,000 to £2,500
c) To allow a friend to design the plot for us (to allay costly landscaping fees), provided the plans are submitted to and approved by the Trustees of the Arboretum.

An on-site meeting with Paul Kennedy, the Grounds Manager of the Arboretum, is taking place on Friday, 28th April, to view the plot and discuss how to proceed.

The Arboretum is still growing and expanding and it would be a shame to let slip this opportunity to create a living Memorial to the Malayan Volunteers, which future generations can visit and enjoy. The depth and range of organizations with plots in the Arboretum is enormous, and the Malayan Volunteers should be included, without a doubt. We have been offered a plot adjacent to the NMBVA Plot which contains our Memorial Stone, and near the Royal Malaysian Police Plot. It is, therefore, appropriately placed, and if we defer the decision to accept the offer, we may lose this particular plot, and the chance to commemorate the Volunteers altogether.

Some of you may have visited the Arboretum in its early days, and feel less than impressed with its development and the possibilities for its future success. Since it was taken over by The Royal British Legion, there has been a much needed injection of money, and the benefits of this are now beginning to show. There are plans to build a new Education Centre and talk of Government funding. The Arboretum is used for all kinds of functions and events. Over 30 took place there last year, including the opening of the FEPOW Memorial Building on V-J Day. The site may look bare in places, and perhaps uninteresting, but this is because new plots are still being created, new trees and shrubs are being planted, and established plots are being altered and improved. Once the trees start to grow, the Arboretum will be transformed, and those of us who have made visits over a period of several years, have already seen an enormous improvement.

PLEASE WOULD YOU LET ROSEMARY FELL KNOW:-

1. **If you DO NOT WISH MVG to pursue this project.**
2. **If you have any ideas for FUND RAISING.**

With your full support this project will come to fruition.

MEDICINE, WAR and CAPTIVITY -- SOUTH EAST ASIA. 1941-1945.

This was the title of an absorbing half day Conference, which took place in London, on 16th January 2006, at the Royal Society of Medicine in Wimpole Street. Attended by nearly 200 people, including many eminent FEPOWs, Professors and Doctors of Medicine, it was a unique opportunity to hear, first hand, how medical officers dealt with the day to day problems faced by sick and starving men, and the prevalent illnesses they suffered from and endured. Despite the appalling circumstances of their lives as war time prisoners of the Japanese, the lack of food, overcrowding and forced labour provided the medical officers an ideal chance to monitor the effects of starvation on the human body. The problems faced by doctors, dentists and medical orderlies by the lack of even basic medicines and equipment, stimulated a level of inventiveness in medical practice which probably has not been seen before or since that time. Many doctors kept records of their treatments and experiences, and these have proved invaluable to post-war physicians in helping to understand certain aspects of POW ill-health immediately after the war and, more recently, in old age.

The Conference started with Registration at 1.30 p.m. and coffee before we all filed into the adjacent New Lecture Theatre for a welcome by the President, Air Commodore Rainsford, MBE., and an introduction by the Chairman Sir John Baird, KBE, DL, Surgeon General (retd.) at 2p.m. Dr. Nigel Stanley, MVG and COFEPOW member, and organizer of the Conference, was the first speaker. In his talk on "Clinical Background of the Campaign and Captivity," Dr. Stanley recalled how casualty rates among doctors, dentists and nurses were higher than for combat troops during the military campaign. He followed this up with a fascinating insight into the effects of dietary change on the European constitution and the gradual deterioration in health due to avitaminosis, causing a condition known as "Changi Balls." The onset of other deficiency diseases was accelerated in places such as on the Burma/Thailand Railway, where conditions were even more horrific.

Professor Hugh de Wardener, CBE, MBE (mil) followed with an absorbing account of his "Personal Recollections of a RAMC Officer." It covered his time at Changi Camp and various jungle and base camps along the Burma/Thailand Railway, and his experiences in dealing with the cholera outbreak at Takanun Camp on the River Kwai Noi.

"Medical Artist and Physiotherapist on the Burma/Thailand Railway," was the title announcing the next speaker, and there was no mistaking who it would be. Artist, Illustrator, and Physiotherapist at Chungkai and Nakhom Pathom Base Hospitals in Thailand, Jack Chalker needed no introduction. His talk, illustrated by his own drawings and paintings of diseases, surgical instruments and prostheses, was equally fascinating and memorable.

After a much needed break, and cup of tea to restore the brain cells which, in my case, were not used to such a lengthy period of concentration, we returned to the lecture theatre to listen to a very well prepared talk by Sybilla Jane Flower, Historian, on "Sources of Aid for the Prisoners : the Official and the Clandestine." This lecture traced the role of British internees in Bangkok in liaising with Chinese-Thai pharmacists and others, and the setting up of secret networks which enabled urgently needed medical supplies and food to get through to the doctors in the camps along the Railway.

Dental Surgeons David Arkush and Eric Martin provided a slightly lighter touch in a Question and Answer session chaired by Dr. Nigel Stanley, on "Dentistry at Chungkai and Nong Pladuk." Despite their lack of equipment, we were amazed at the ingenuity of the camp dentists in making chairs and other vital equipment out of bamboo, and in learning how they repaired dentures and set broken jaws. One amusing story involving one of the dentists caused much laughter. In addition to his dental work, he had been placed in charge of the camp latrines. Whenever he had to meet his captors, he found that for some strange reason, the Japanese always laughed at the combination of "Teeth" and "Latrines," dealing, so to speak, with each end of the human body. Fortunately for him, it made his contacts with the Japanese easier.

The final talk was given by Geoffrey Gill, Reader in Tropical Medicine at the University of Liverpool. His analysis of "Post-war Health Consequences of Captivity in South-East Asia" gave a factual appraisal of the years he had spent dealing with recurring FEPOW diseases, and other disorders which developed in later life as a direct result of their years of starvation and trauma. He picked out strongyloidiasis as of particular interest, in that very few cases had been reported, yet there was a real danger to those carrying the nematode worm if they subsequently needed steroid treatment. It was thought to be much more prevalent amongst FEPOWs than had been diagnosed and treated over the intervening years. Another interesting fact which had emerged was the low level of coronary artery deaths amongst FEPOWs, possibly due to their nearly fat-free diet in captivity, resulting in beneficial blood lipid patterns.

The conference ended at 6.30 p.m. and was followed by a Buffet Supper to round off a stimulating and informative afternoon.

THE CONTINUING DEBATE ON THE DISBANDING OR NOT OF THE FMSVF.

Audrey McCormick has sent the following report about the Revd. James Paisley's evacuation from North Borneo in December 1941.

An interesting snippet about Volunteers disbandment has come my way from Roderick S. MacLean, OBE. It is from a Borneo Chronicle, about an evacuation led by Revd. James Paisley a missionary priest in British North Borneo, instructed to undertake the evacuation of nine women and six children from Kuching on 21st December 1941, heading for Dutch Borneo in hope of getting to Batavia and then on to Australia. His wife Gladys (formerly headmistress of St. Agnes Jesselton) and their 5-year-old twins joined it. They travelled by launch, on foot (with difficulty) and by prahau and houseboat and were given into

the care of the Dutch Government at Pontianak on 4th January 1942, housed at a convent. On 16th January the women and children got away to Batavia by plane chartered for them. (Another plane took out a party of male evacuees the next day, and what was said to be the last plane, left on the 18th). He remained behind. But the neutrality of Batavia and Java was "very thin ice" he said, Sarawak having been occupied on Christmas Eve. So after much soul-searching – for he wished to return to Kuching to join his colleagues – he finally left to join his family still waiting in Batavia, taking a steamer on 27th January, arriving two days later. They got to Fremantle on 23rd February.
During their Borneo evacuation they heard common criticism of police and Volunteers for being among the first to leave. The police maintained they could not make a stand owing to inadequate equipment – including only 50 rounds pre rifle. "And the Volunteers say they were **'more or less disbanded'** by Colonel Lane at the Dutch border".....! Perhaps they weren't keen on the disbandment themselves, as with the FMSVF whose duties as Line of Command troops in Malaya came to an end along with the Line of Command, and were left to make their own way to Singapore – or, like some remaining FMSVF Armoured Cars, were nabbed by the Argylls for use with them prior to crossing the Causeway. But what was liked and what was not liked, did not come into it. The earlier disbandment of the major part of the FMSVF Asian troops was disputed among the FMSVF European troops, some of whom understood the need for it in view of the desertions taking place as men got further away from their families now left in occupied territory, but other Volunteers were considerably angry. Noticeably, however, this is not recorded thus in the replacement War Diary of the Command, but appears in individual Volunteer diaries. Colonel Lane was a Volunteer Force officer, apparently sent to Borneo to encourage Volunteer recruitment and training, but few details found.
Paisley did return to Sarawak, trying to get schools re-opened. When he returned to England he was on the Committee of the "BMA" – British Malaya Association I take that to be, and had a living of a church near Newbury, Berkshire. In summer 2005 he was still alive in his daughter's care in Devon. He was born in 1905.
Audrey Holmes McCormick.

An interesting copy of a document was sent in by **Richard Yardley** in January this year, with a letter in which he said:- "Attached is a copy of a letter received from The Colonial Office after I was discharged from the Army. It arrived about the same time as my campaign medals and proves that the FMSVF was still in existence in March 1946 just before I returned to the Far East."

COLONIAL OFFICE

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

(Name) Frederick Richard Yardley

served as an embodied member of the Federated Malay States Volunteer Force

from 12 : 41 to 22 : 2 : 46

and last held the rank of Lieutenant

Lieutenant Colonel
Military Staff.
Colonial Office.

Richard Yardley went on to say:-

"There has never been any doubt in my mind that the FMSVF existed throughout as well as in name immediately after the war. However, I am aware that some of those who were embodied into the Volunteers during the campaign and just after the surrender were given the opportunity of returning to civilian status, but no member of my Unit did so, and I am not aware of any others who might have done the same. In the prison camps there were many Volunteers some of whom seem to have been attached to various army units during the fighting. Their knowledge of the country, language, the people, and infrastructure was invaluable to Commanding Officers. I can well remember during the retreat, a number of us from the Posts and Telegraphs Department were invited to dinner by the Divisional Commander of the Australian Division, which had established a defensive line well to the south of Kuala Lumpur. He suggested to us that we should join his forces."

BATTLE OF KAMPAR.

This first hand account of the involvement of the FMSVF in the battle of Kampar was sent by **John Mackie.**

"I don't think it is very well known that two platoons of the **Perak Battalion (1/FMSVF)** were posted to the British Battalion (amalgamation of the remnants of the 1st Leicesters and 2nd East Surreys) after the early fighting in Kedah to make up the numbers. The British Battalion was astride the Main South road a short distance north of Kampar and bore the brunt of the full Japanese attack. The battle lasted four days (late Dec.1941 to early Jan. 1942) and held up the Japs for that time, and the BB had to withdraw only because the enemy landed a large force behind it at Telok Anson on the W. Coast. One of the platoons (machine gunners) was commanded by 2/Lt. Bill Greetham of Ipoh and the other by me. Unfortunately I have no record of Bill's men, except that he, himself, died of malaria in Changi about 6 months after Singapore surrendered.

I do, however have the names, but unfortunately not the Nos., of all my chaps. They were riflemen. Complete list is:-

Platoon Cmdr.: 7704 Lieut. J.B Mackie

Platoon HQ: Sgt. Longmore, Pte. Storch, and L/Cpl. Milne.

No.1 Section: Sgt. Clemetson, Cpl. Freeman, and Ptes. Graham, Walker-Taylor, Joaquim, Lamb.

No.2 Section: Sgt. Shelton, L/C Hubble, Ptes. Drew, Carey, Kemp, Morris, Mitchell.

No.3 Section: Cpls. Lowe and Cameron, L/Cpl. Cameron, Ptes. Rawson, Cassells, Bell, Caldwell.

No.4 Section: Sgt. Currie, Cpl. Hayes, L/Cpl. Silley, Ptes. Gillespie, Stevenson.

Drivers: Ptes. Booth, Spence and Sullivan.

Supernumerary: CSM Cameron (transferred to BB HQ)

I regret not having initials and numbers for better identification of the men. I have tried to identify some of them from "When You Go Home," a book by Arthur Lane, and found the following:-

Bell, Pte. A.J. (no number)
Cameron, L/Cpl. James Wallace, 6169
Gillespie, Pte. William, 6637
Graham, Pte. L. Frank, 7988
Hubble, Cpl. Peter Wintworth, 13007
Storch, Pte. Adolph George, 13411
Lamb, Pte. J.B.G., 6026

Whether or not these were in my platoon I cannot say for sure.
From records I brought back from the Batu Lintang POW camp in Sarawak I found that Cpl. Hubble and Pte. Storch died on Labuan Island, Borneo. They were in a Japanese working party of over 300 from which there were no survivors. Their ranks and numbers tally with those in Arthur Lane's list. A L/Cpl. A.S.Cassells died in the Batu Lintang POW camp on 4th July 1945.

The two platoons remained with the BB until about 20th January 1942. We had a few casualties (3 wounded I think and 8 or 9 sick). Finally, Lt.-Col. C.E.Morrison, MC, CO of the BB, was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his inspired leadership of the British Battalion in the Battle of Kampar. I admired him as a leader and a man."

SOME WARTIME MEMORIES OF A VOLUNTEER IN THE FEDERATED MALAY STATES VOLUNTEER FORCE (FMSVF).

Early in 1941, prior to the commencement of hostilities against Japan in December of that year, I had taken up an appointment with the Posts and Telegraphs Department in Malaya and I was posted to Kuala Lumpur as an Assistant Controller of Telecommunications, responsible for internal and external radio communication services, including broadcasting for an hour each Sunday evening. Apart from being an engineer I was also the announcer during that hour, reading information and news produced by the Government's Information Service. If there were no announcements I played gramophone records. It was all very primitive. I well remember announcing the news about the sinking of the battle ship HMS Prince of Wales and the battle cruiser HMS Repulse.

Bill Stubbs and John Wagstaffe were two of my many colleagues. They, too, were based in Kuala Lumpur and were responsible for telephone and telegraph services. My office was in the radio station on Petaling Hill, almost within the City, and I occupied a house there. A new radio station was in the course of construction at St. Michael's Road, outside the City, and John Wagstaffe lived there. I recollect that he married late in 1941, his fiancée having arrived in Malaya, either from the UK or Australia. They were married almost immediately after her arrival but unfortunately she had left her wedding dress on the plane or ship. Not to be outdone, arrangements were made for a Chinese dressmaker to make a replacement for her. This he did within 24 hours and by all accounts it was more beautiful than the first one.

Both Bill Stubbs and John Wagstaffe were already volunteers in the FMSVF before the Japanese invaded Malaya whilst I and other P and T personnel were not embodied into that force until afterwards. Occasionally on Saturday evenings we all went out together to the local dance hall. I developed a loose friendship with John. We got on well together but after the war started I never saw either of them again until we had retreated on to the island of Singapore. Almost certainly they were both fully engaged during the campaign on maintaining communications for the Royal Corps of Signals in particular and the British Army in general.

During the retreat down the Malayan Peninsula some of my P&T colleagues and I were invited by the Australian Divisional Commander to join him and his staff for dinner at his HQ some way south of Kuala Lumpur where he had established a defensive line against the Japanese Forces. He suggested to us that we join his Division. Neither the Australian nor the British Forces were well equipped to handle communications during the retreat and the communications network already established and manned by the P&T Department was invaluable to Army Commanders. In this connection Bill Stubbs and Henry Cornish did sterling work as volunteers (FMSVF) for the British Army. After the surrender and in the early days of our incarceration as POWs in Changhi, I can well remember how proud we all were when it was announced that both Stubbs and Cornish

had been awarded the Military Cross. As they were not taken prisoners of war, neither of them was aware of that fact until the Japanese surrendered in September 1945.

Colonel Morice our Commanding Officer, who died in Changhi in 1943, was also Director of Posts and Telegraphs, Malaya, based in Kuala Lumpur. He lies in the War Cemetery in Singapore and I always visited his grave, when working and living on the Island and on holiday visits afterwards. During the afternoon of Sunday 15th February 1942 five of us who were volunteers were instructed by Colonel Morice, who was in his HQ in the Fullerton Building, to take up defensive positions in the Singapore telephone exchange. The Japanese had then reached the outskirts of the City and, although we did not know it at the time, General Percival was negotiating terms of surrender with them. Thus the maintenance of telephone communication within the City was vital, and being a Sunday, the civilian staff at the exchange were few and far between as well. Bill Stubbs, John Wagstaffe, Bill Trafford , one other colleague whose name I cannot recall and I formed this defensive group. There were rumours of surrender, particularly after the events of black Friday, 13th February, when defeat seemed inevitable. However, very strict instructions from General Percival's Command HQ in Singapore had been issued to the effect that no military personnel were to attempt escape without permission, there having been some attempts during the previous few days. During the early evening of 15th February, we in the Exchange learned of the actual surrender and Stubbs, being the senior officer–a Captain- decided that we should immediately return to the Fullerton Building. Whilst in his car, he and Wagstaffe discussed a plan for escape, which they must have devised earlier and I asked if I could join them. Trafford said he did not want to be involved as did the other unknown member of our group. Stubbs was somewhat wary of increasing the number of those taking part. Wagstaffe said why not let me join them but Stubbs wanted just the pair of them. I was an unknown quantity to him whilst he knew Wagstaffe well. He felt a third member of the escape party would jeopardise their attempt. In the event their escape was successful. They took a sampan from the river just behind the Fullerton Building finding their way to Sumatra, probably with the help of a junk or other vessel to assist them on their way. They crossed Sumatra on foot to a small port called Padang from whence John Wagstaffe sailed on the SS Palima to Ceylon, embarking on the 1st of March and arriving in Colombo on the 10th of March. I do not know how Bill Stubbs reached Ceylon or maybe elsewhere. Both men were eventually promoted to the rank of Major.

When Japan surrendered in September 1945 I was in a POW camp on the western shores of Japan. Following my repatriation to the UK, I returned to the Far East in April 1946 and was posted to Singapore. Those members of the P&T Department who were not taken prisoner or who were not made civilian internees, returned to Malaya almost immediately after the Japanese surrender in 1945, in order to restore the communication systems throughout Malaya and Singapore. Most of them were on home leave at the time of the British surrender in 1942 and some were escapees. We, who were ex-prisoners or internees, returned later in 1946, in order to help in the takeover of the civilian services from the Navy, Army and RAF.

Richard Yardley.

RETURN JOURNEY.

This is Audrey Holmes McCormick's moving account of her return to Singapore in her quest to find her father's grave. I'm sure you will all shed a tear with her, as you follow her on this journey. You may even have a sense of *déjà vu.*

My Volunteer Forces research work followed my first remarkable - "dramatic" even - return home to Singapore for the Fiftieth anniversary of 15 February 1942, after over 50 years. I was born there in 1931. At Miss Griffith-Jones' school, Tanglin, I learned my "loops"; only visiting Scotland on family leave. I had someone called "a brother" there. I didn't find him terribly interesting then! He was 9 years older, and what the point of a brother was I had no idea, and (not surprisingly) he was known sometimes to tip me out of my pram..... He ran away from boarding school twice which sounded more fun. When adult (both of us!), he told me how (having lived only a year or so in Singapore alongside our parents) he had sold the new bicycle his father had given him when on a leave, so as to buy a ticket back to Singapore. Robert, our family loss, I came to realise was a price of many a colonial living.

Later I was at King's School in Scott Road. It was a crammer, stuffing in algebra, "trig" and French before I was 10. Dr. Honeywell was the principal. We attended 8 a.m. to noon so were under pressure. Come 1941 vegetable patches were given us to cultivate. They looked incredibly dusty. We hoed them apathetically. (I don't recall anything growing.) Come mid 1941 my father sent my mother and me to Australia. This was became a journey forever without him. "There is going to be trouble", he had said. He was past retiral age I believe, but had been asked to stay on as engineer i/c the Straits Trading Co. tin smelter on P. Branni, its product long world-famous. He was not going to run away he told us. What happened to him at the Fall, my mother never knew. A telegram got to us in Perth from Fullerton Post Office, dated 11th February. It said "Well. Love. Courage". We heard nothing more, ever. I thought that as a crack shot he might have been in the Volunteer Forces. Our neighbour was CSM W.A. Corkhill, whose children were my playmates. He died. But my father Robert John Trotter, vanished. Eventually he was declared dead, presumably to settle his estate. He had been asked too, to re-open the mothballed smelters at Butterworth - probably another reason for us to be sent early to Perth. The smelters were ceremoniously re-opened just as the Japanese invaded, and the work force ran away two days later. His last letters told of demolition work, but I never did see those letters.

Our departure from Bushy Park stays crystal clear. Our road was on a hill above Keppel Harbour, near the Signal Station on Mount Faber. (Dad took a daily launch to P. Brani. It seemed like a six day week he worked.) On our last night there, occurred a very wild storm. The nightly frog chorus was silenced. An areca palms outside my window crashed onto my bedroom roof. The previous night a small owl had flown in. It had sat on our fan, regarding us. I thought him gorgeous. Mother's Highland family were notably "fey" with a bad habit of foretelling events (usually disasters of course). This owl symbolised bad luck, which upset my mother even more.

Two Bushy Park was a superb house. It was in Malay-Dutch style, all open teak-work through which cooling breezes filtered, unlike the stuffy European-style houses. I lay on polished teak floors to listen to the wind-up gramophone. That last morning I kissed the amahs goodbye. There was a remarkably strong, very odd ache in one's middle. Dad drove us down to the docks. He wore khaki shorts and stockings, with white shirt. A slim, tidy man. My mother and I stood at the top of the gangway as he left us. She was holding my hand tightly, and said nothing at all. He walked away round the corner of the go-down, and didn't look back. We stood a moment or two longer, gazing where he'd been, and that was that last moment.

The ship carried cattle. One was killed behind deck screens for our use (but of course I peeked, and refused beef tea thereafter...no-one was going to tell me the beef tea we had was not from that beef...) The ship was probably the "Centaur" one of a trio on a regular run, picking up cattle in Darwin: bringing schoolchildren to and fro as well. (Our JAS Brown did some of that journeying!) From Fremantle we went to a small hotel – a favourite with Singaporeans – at Claremont (or could it be Cottesloe?) People here all seemed to eat steak and fried eggs for every meal including breakfast! I went to the PLC (the Presbyterian Ladies College....it had an impressive games war-cry: it dug trenches in the grounds.) This lasted as long as Singapore funding did.

But we moved on. We went via an "anonymous" Queen Elizabeth troopship to Cape Town and to her sister in Germiston, S. Africa. When my brother came out to train for the RAF, we moved to a dorp in the karoo near him. I was happy: I didn't go to school for those months, then took undiagnosed jaundice instead. We moved on to Cape Town and Grootes Schur hospital for me. Mother needed funds. Unfortunately, I don't know for

certain what the funding method was for evacuees. She took a housekeeper's job in Hill Street which my doctor found for her. There was a magnificent view of Table Mountain. If the owner lived at the house, I met him only once. My aunt sent a weekly postal order allowing me to ride at weekends: on the beaches, under the mountain. What bliss she gave me! After an appalling first school, mother took part-time office work in an office and I moved to a stunning girls' school where education – and sports – suddenly was absolutely great!
The Malayan Association, was in a flat in town. Always there was the hope and the enquiries; the names on lists. Later, mother hoped dad would be found on an isolated island.
She never knew – no-one had the concern to tell her despite her letters everywhere possible - that a company history published years afterwards by Professor Tregonning, included information from B.J. Cramer, General Works Manager, that he and Sir John Bagnall with the three men from P. Branni who were disabling the smelter – my dad and two Halls (H.B. and W.A., unrelated) with S.Waltho and J. Millar – were all told to leave early on 13th February. Dad and the Halls were killed together in a raid on the docks that midday. Either Sir John who had gone ahead, did not know, or did not say. Cramer and Bagnall reached South Africa. Waltho and Millar later died, also Corkhill, S.W. Gooding, J. Newman, P.J. O'Dwyer, F.G. Stiff (Brigadier SSVF I believe) and P.B. Taylor, also Messrs. Armstrong, Cornelius, Monteiro and Aeria.

But now, finally and at last, was the time for me to return. Home? Home! How strange! I wrote to the occupiers of 2 Bushy Park: could I call - even stay perhaps?. The letter returned. It was stamped the house had been demolished. And just then, personal disasters submerged us. My husband's business was made bankrupt. The bank, one of two funding agencies, had been bought over and was having a clean sweep. The other funding agency, a South African finance house, protested vigorously but unsuccessfully. They felt strongly enough to give him a referencewhich declared they would willingly do business with him again... everything matters to a man in this situation. But all of it was bizarre. Everything whirled madly around and downwards.

At this time many business bankruptcies were happening and nerves were taut. In addition, my husband for a second time went into a high-dependency ward after a heart attack - where his fellow directors continued to visit him for advice. He even emerged one day, collected by them, and returned to it in the evening.... The business went; 16 workers lost their jobs. In due course our farmhouse – jointly owned, and available as funds and mortgage repayment, not forgetting our mutual bank account – I sold at short notice while my husband went into shock. Our furniture was pitchforked into my main shed and farmer friends' attics, by their help. Quickly we were stony broke, living in an ancient caravan on my farmland (my own business fortunately) alongside my flock of pedigree Charollais sheep. A former German POW on a smallholding nearby was in caravan haulage. This blessed, practical man gave me marvellous support. He found an ancient but cheap and very sound caravan and sited it on my land, (an Illegal settling-in, of course, without planning permission, but that was as nothing at such a time.) There was no doubt however, in relating some of this chaos and worry, one could tell that no hope existed now of reaching Singapore again, and hoping to trace my father's death. Only free library services were keeping us sane and there was little else..... And yet. And yet....it was not over.

First a neighbour loaned me "the egg" - a little yellow caravan to act as my office. Various small miracles began to occur, all out of the blue. My first pedigree ram lamb twins, won an important show: a road construction firm announced it had underestimated the volume of stores they'd kept on a corner of my land - and enclosed a cheque. (I and my business, after all, were not bankrupt, although you might not have guessed it at times.) By some miracle money began to come to hand from unexpected sources. A single woman hill farmer, came to help. Another woman friend, a strong feminist I might say, insisted on contributing to a replacement pick-up, repayable any time later. A tight budget – but I would go!
I was seen off by my husband and we were both in tears. My flight was the cheapest possible, via Istanbul with an extra 8 hours on the journey. We flew down the east coast of Malaysia, my nose squashed on my window. (I'd have ousted anyone for that window seat! I was shaking so) And Singapore below. Singapore? It felt so right. Every step seemed recognisable and I was home again. Why ever diidn't Passport Control smile and say "Welcome Home!"?? I beamed at her anyway. I recognised everything from the reflection of heat on the tarmac, to the voices; the colour of flowers, trees; the feel of the air. It was Mine!! There were capital letters to everything.. A Taxi.... immediately to go find the swimming club – did it still exist?! (Not only was it there, it had the same entrance!) Keep on breathing I told myself, delirious. Finally on – only temporarily however - to the splendours of the Goodwood Park Hotel .

I stayed in that gorgeous old hotel having bartered some travel articles for accommodation. (The hotel was the original German Club. When the war started we simply took it over. Naturally.) It was little changed in comparison to the makeovers of Raffles. The verandah was glassed in: the unusual tower was rebuilt for safety, barely altered. In it a Japanese sniper had been shot. (In fact the builders were unable to repeat the way the Singapore architects originally constructed it.) I had a genuine "wet room" the full room shower with drained floor. Luxury! Meals too – but such afternoon teas as WE never ate before out East, with rich cakes and British puddings galore! Oddly, I felt obliged to sneak in and out of the side door to avoid tipping the splendid doorman. I really couldn't afford tips if I wanted to stay in my old home town every extra

possible day. (Dear me - the awful embarrassments of poverty!) Fortunately I quite liked daily diet after I left Goodwood – almost unrelieved chicken-fried rice..... an afternoon Tiger Beer knocked me flat.

I had a day as a former member, at the Swimming Club, still with its art-deco architecture. (They no longer had Johnson's Baby Powder in the cubicle however.) I showed pre-war photos of we schoolchildren putting on a dance-show there. The ballroom was not only the same, but contained the self-same fans. Alas the splendid diving structure was gone. (So was the beach and pagar). I chatted to the groundsman. He told me how his uncle had told him, that when we had our tea and coffee, it was served us in different shaped pots! He told me too, about the Indian officer beheaded in the grounds when he refused to fire his gun on British planes.

From the hotel I went to the YMCA. in lower Orchard Road, (ex Kempetai HQ). I couldn't dodge the hotel doorman this time, although I left very early hoping to sneak out again to avoid embarrassment..... He called up the first taxi in the queue. The smart driver was putting a final polish on his car for the rich visitors. Poor man, he was so displeased to lose his position in the queue merely for the YMCA, and you can believe that I felt suitably crushed too! (For a moment!)

At the YM I entered my little bedroom and in its window was the most perfect view. It overlooked the orange roof-tiles of the little Presbyterian Church. My mother and father married there: I was christened there: my mother – a fine contralto singer, opera-trained – sang solo there. I attended now, for Sunday service. Under the porch and up the stairs. I saw its barrel roof come into view, then the world fell in on me. A woman was singing. She was singing superbly. Of course – of course – she was a contralto soloist. I was deeply shaken, trying so hard not to arrive in yet more tears. I really wanted just to hug someone, anyone, in such gratitude. The person was a slim Chinese woman, singing with a deeply rich voice. She was wearing a traditional – perhaps Peranakan – style dress – shimmering gold, I thought. She stood probably somewhere where my mother would have stood. Only the stoical Scot stopped me running in to hug her. But I couldnt find her again after the service. Just how blessed can one be? The church was packed. I sat at the back remembering all it held for me to remember. People greeted me and I stayed for coffee. Later I found my christening announcement in the Church News. Volumes had been gathered in after the war, sought from worldwide.

Staying on, the next move was uphill to the old YWCA. It was perfect - worn and shabby but intact, it was an old European colonial house. (Now demolished). A garden; a chair on its verandah. I even allowed myself a boiled egg for breakfast....once or twice. A lunchtime treat of a Tiger Beer with my fried rice, knocked me out for the afternoon.... Everyone smiled everywhere it seemed. I couldnt keep the smiles off my own face. It was different, but so familiar. New Orchard Road buildings were still a-building then. There was an underground! Splendid! The first 'skyscraper' (then) of Cathay House we had watched being built under arc lights from our house, fearing it would be a landmark for bombers. It was dwarfed now of course, but still there, then. I believe the façade is now changed. The cinema was still below it. Buses now were fun: and orange street seats to sit on.. I walked past a park of tri-shaws. An elderly man with knotted calf muscles, cycled past me in the mid-afternoon sun and we exchanged large smiles. He didn't try to hassle for a passenger. I saw cage birds on a hotel balcony, being sprinkled with water...yes – memory stirred again. We'd had birds too! Then there were night cicadas. And evening oleander scents. Most especially, I felt the velvet night on bare skin. It was totally familiar. And balm on my heart. The pang was for wanting of heading for home each night, as instinct desired. By then I was ready for the main task. I would search for my father's grave.

Dad had died by bomb blast on the dockside I ascertained, and later it was confirmed. His skeleton therefore, was little damaged. They had been on P. Branni, but with his expertise on the smelters he could not have been left for the Japanese. How I went about finding where he went into a mass grave at Pearls Hill Park, in Chinatown, below the Pearls Hill reservoir, in a trench which measured 60' x 10', is another story. Not for now. Finding the place was nerve-wracking. Would it be built over? I took a taxi, pointing to my map. As we turned into Cross Street, the corner flats hid the position from view. The tension was so hard. What, what, would I find? But then, there round the corner was the sward, the trees and tree ferns, and terraced steps up to the reservoir. Where the taxi drew in, was almost exactly where the main trench started. This was the site. It was unbelievable I had found it and could confirm it.

I laid flowers of course. Strange experiences did not come to a stop however.. I met the ancient Chinese kabun as he swept there, and haltingly explained to him – heavens knows what he understood – that these flowers were not to be thrown away because my father had been buried here in the war...or that was what I intended to tell him. Maybe he understood. So when I came back to remove the old flowers I discarded them on his rubbish heap. When I returned with fresh flowers, the withered bunch had been carefully picked up, and once more was laid out neatly against the nearest tree trunk, where he'd had it. Bless him. As I sat by the grave site that first morning, considering this deeply emotional event. I now had my first fright. I found myself being pelted, and felt momentarily scared, then furious....who was throwing what at me? Ire arose. Some object had hurtled past my ear and landed by me on the grass with a thud. I was sketching at the time.

Now, another thud occurred, this time behind me. Why? I couldn't see anyone nearby. Then I saw what had fallen. Two ripe mangos lay beside me. Next to me! And only there. Above, a very cross bird was peering down through the top branches. I hadn't even noticed the fruit up there. Both mangoes were ripe. Of course. Why be surprised? Werent our Macdonalds fey?? This was the fruit my father used to buy me for a treat. I adored mango. Well of course I took them back to eat. It only happened on that one day, although I have returned.

The day held one more event yet, however. Old hands from the Far East should recognise the thoughts I was having – quite a dilemna for me. I was now desperate for a reviving cup of tea. But this would be the first time ever, that I had entered a Chinese cafe. Alone too! So I hovered, quite remarkably uncertain, on the pavement outside the first one I could find nearby. I was hearing my mother's voice loud in my ear.....scandalised! She was saying: "You can't go in THERE Audrey!!!" Well of course I did go in, feeling quite ridiculously guilty at first. (I doubt if "ladies" from Singapore ever went in then, or rarely.) Inside this cafe, the last surprise awaited me... (did I say "last"? Untrue really – they were never ending.) This surprise was an amah. She had to be! And I had been seeking her. She was clearing tables. She was v. elderly. Her hair was drawn back in the traditional bun, although she was not wearing the white jacket and black trousers. I had not seen that bun anywhere in Singapore thus far, despite looking.

So I asked her, "Were you an amah?" She confirmed it. She spoke English but whispered as if she didn't want it known. She whispered a little more about herself. The cafe proprietor glared at her. Was she neglecting her cleaning? Did they not know she knew English? Did it matter? I went back the next day to give her money: "No husband": "A China baby" And so frail. I wanted to meet her again where we could talk. But she was gone. I did not hear clearly whose amah she had been, and now I couldn't find her again. The proprietor pretended (perhaps?) that he couldn't speak English. I hunted for her every day. She is fixed in my memory. A ghost. And like the other amahs - ours - I dont know what happened to her either. For the two young amahs in our house pre-war, I could guess. I hoped I was wrong, but unlikely. If only – if only – I could recall their names.....I was so damnably ashamed that I couldn't. Our former domestic staff had a rough time during the occupation. Their previous employment did not endear them to potential Japanese employers.

I attended of course the anniversary remembrance: busloads of us. The dawn came after the schoolchildren's torches lit our way up the steps of Kranji war cemetery to the memorial, the shadows of gravestones shortening as the dew evaporated and the sun rose. Flowers and poppies were being laid among the stones after the service.. I had a lot more to learn yet. Our history: my history. I met my first Argylls there.

I only realised on this return that my life had greatly concerned a search for home again: the eternal restlessness: always another side of the hill to see. Why settle? How to stop and what for? But here, now – well I belonged here, now. Home all around me in its subtlest of meanings: street sounds, the air – the heat of midday, the scent (fewer smells), the light on the sea, the dawn, the sharp thundercracks of afternoon, enjoying the Singaporeans, talking to them – they hugged one easily. Heavens, there was still even gula malacca, even if not quite as cookie made it. Everything now was clear. I loved it. If I could never live here again, peace had arrived, astounding me: what was mine was found again, and our small shared part in it lived again for me. To have found home, to discover all it meant – I was intensely happy. Inner restlessness went; uncertainties that I had always found hampering my final confidence, vanished. It was hard to explain: yet, now I could stand confidently on rock and my feet were not on shifting sand. If only my mother had been alive now, of course. But it had not been *her* founding home, nor dad's come to that although it was his life. But it *was* my founding home.. And how extraordinary that it could prove so important.. I had often wondered why Russians should exile fellow Russians as punishment. Wasn't the world elsewhere surely so full of interest, to see and do? What matter? I hadn't known such an exile could lose the heart's answer to home. I could understand it now – even if I could not explain this peace, this confidence, further.

I knew almost no-one in Singapore, but met a classmate of Kings School, Harry Dine. He'd been imprisoned in Sumatra with his mother. He returned, professionally educated, and was able to make his business and life in Singapore, in common with others. He took me to the Tanglin Club (all this "returning" outdid Alice and her rabbit hole I thought, feeling sometimes as bemused as she was.) Young women at the YWCA became long term friends. The Singaporean receptionists, I learned, could now have trouble with their domestics..... The YW phone broke down when I tried to contact my husband with the first news – I could have burst. Later came the research work, the visits for interviews, the Public Record Offices etc., intermittently; interleaved with my farm work. My husband was recovered before I went to Singapore of course, dealing with his hardships from which he rose, recovered (somewhat) and made us another home before he died, having killed himself working to secure our next home. I had had the good luck to have been tutored in services matters by a very fine Highland Major General, while researching a war documentary for BBC. And there were still FMS and SSVF Volunteers alive, willing to take on the explanations I needed. I am grateful to them, for sharing their lives with me.

Audrey McCormick

INFORMATION EXCHANGE.

Lachlan J. MacKinnon writes:-

I have been trying to find out more information about my father, Lachlan MacKinnon. He returned to Malaya after the war, and my mother joined him after their wedding. My elder brothers (twins) were born in Kuala Lumpur and celebrated their 1st birthday on the boat bringing them back to the U.K.
The only information I have regarding my father's imprisonment is as follows:-

MACKINNON L. [Lachlan] b.24.6.1918 Scotland. Assistant Planter, Jugra Land & Carey Ltd., Carey Island, Port Swettenham. Pte 13224 2/FMSVF [Selangor Battalion] POW Singapore. 1952: Planter, Carey Island, Port Swettenham.

Will Holland writes:-

My Grandfather 2 Lt. **Donald Menteith Holland** served with the Federated Malay States Volunteer Rifles in 1915, before going out to serve with the Royal Field Artillery in WW1.
He returned to Malaya as a rubber planter after the war. Any information on Grandpa Donald would be wonderful.

Christine Edmondson writes:-

The latest issue of APA KHABAR arrived in January very shortly before we left for S. Africa so I haven't had a chance to write to you until now. I found the issue most interesting and informative. I was particularly interested in John Mackie's letter to you. My mother and I also escaped on the "Aorangi" to Australia and spent time in Rockingham, WA before returning to England in 1944. My father was captured at the Fall of Singapore and was a POW in Changi for the duration of the war. He returned home safely and after a period of rest etc. returned to his job at MTD, Batu Gajah. We returned a little later and I went to school in Ipoh and later BG before returning to boarding school in Brighton in 1952.
However what really caught my eye was John Mackie's reference to the Greethams. I believe that they were friends of my parents and that Mr. Greetham was probably best man at their wedding. I have e-mailed John Mackie and hopefully he will put me in touch with Margaret Greetham's daughter, Ann Dolan.
Recently Ian Stitt gave me a web site for the Australian Archives which gives (if you're lucky!) details of incoming ships' passengers. I couldn't get access but at least I now know that we arrived in Australia on 23rd January 1942.

In a further e-mail, Christine writes:-

I have found a letter from the Rev. S. Kell who married my parents – Frances Elizabeth Bateman and George Philip Bean on 7th February 1940 at the Church of St. John the Divine in Ipoh, Perak. In his letter he notes that one of the witnesses was Mrs. Greetham, wife of a Govt. Mines Inspector – the other witnesses were 'young engineers, friends of the bridegroom, the names of whom I do not remember'. The Church was totally destroyed by the Japanese in December 1941 hence the lack of original marriage documents. I have a wedding photo of my parents, witnesses and small bridesmaid who may (or may not be) Jennifer Greetham.

Rosemary Lloyd-Williams writes:-

I've heard from my cousin, Geoffrey Brown, about the two photos in the October Edition of Apa Khabar. He thinks it could be Jack Brown at Mark John Kennaway's Tiffin Party. But he says it definitely isn't his father in the bottom photo.

Winston Matthews writes:-

I now live in Perth, Western Australia, but in 1941, I belonged to the 1st Battalion SSVF and was imprisoned with the other Volunteers at the fall of Singapore. In May 1943, I was sent to Thailand with "F" Force. There were 1700 of us, a mixture of Volunteers, British soldiers from the Manchester Regiment, Australians, Indians and Dutch. When we arrived, we had to walk 120-130 miles to the borders of Thailand and Burma, where we were put to work on constructing the Railway. The conditions were terrible, and out of the 1700 work force, only 112 of us were still alive in December 1943.

Ian MacLeod writes:-

Jonathan Moffatt may have forewarned you that I would be contacting you with the object of becoming a member of the Malay Volunteer Group. My provenance is pretty sound, having been born in Singapore a long time ago where my mother's family the Polglases go back through my grandfather John Polglase, to the 1879s! My father, after service in the Indian Army in the First World War, settled in Singapore.

Donald MacLeod founded "C" Company, the Scottish Company in the beginning of the 1920s. He went on to be one of the first two officers to be promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, with Tony Shamier. He then commanded the 2nd Battalion from the late 1930s through to the Fall of Singapore, after which he was made a POW ending up in one of the Chungkai camps on the Burma/Siam Railway, being made POW Commandant with all the horrors that entailed.
All this started with the recent write-up of my book "I Will Sing to the End" in the website of COFEPOW which Jonathan noticed and wrote to me for a copy. Amongst some of the documents including pictures which he very kindly e-mailed and/or posted to me, are some showing my father seated with his Battalion Officers, as well as my mother presenting Rifle shooting prizes to members of the Scottish Company.
The book which was launched on the anniversary of the Fall of Singapore in February 2005 from the British High Commissioner's Residence concerns my life with two marvelous parents leading on to 50 years of searching for how, when and where my mother died in Indonesia as a POW. I am also hoping to enlist the help of Paul Riches in tracing my father's medals which were disposed of by my stepmother without telling me, some years after he died prematurely in 1950 as a result of POW treatment!

OBITUARY OF LT-CDR VICTOR CLARK. Naval Officer who took part in guerrilla operations against the Japanese.

Lieutenant-Commander Victor Clark, who has died aged 97, played a dashing role in the defence of Singapore as the Japanese closed in on the British garrison in 1941. In 1938 Clark was made first lieutenant of the Tribal-class destroyer Punjabi. She suffered more casualties than any other British ship in the Battle of Narvik in 1940, but was repaired in time for the evacuation of troops from St. Nazaire when Clark was awarded his first DSC.
He was given command of Anthony, but this ended when she was damaged in rough weather, and he was sent to Repulse, where his action station was "A" turret, whose 15-in guns were not used. Following the sinking of the Repulse and the battleship Prince of Wales off the east coast of Malaya, Clark was sucked down from the bridge several times before managing to swim to a raft, where he helped Repulse's captain, William Tennant, haul others from the water.
Having survived the sinking of Repulse on December 10th, Clark became naval air liaison officer at the combined headquarters in Singapore. Studying maps with Major Angus Rose of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, of the Japanese advances, they proposed to make commando raids behind enemy lines.
Within a week, Clark was commanding the Straits Steamship Company's Kudat as well as a flotilla of gunboats, with 40 Royal Marines and 50 Australian Volunteers. In their joint Boxing Day raid at Temerloh, on the west coast, Rose ambushed and destroyed a Japanese column, including a staff car containing a general. Six days later Kudat was sunk, and with his remaining motor launches under mortar fire, Clark moved south to Batu Pahat. There he volunteered to take the river gunboats Dragonfly and Scorpion to rescue 2,000 Australian, British and Indian troops who were cut off at a swampy inlet overlooked by the encircling Japanese.
For four nights Clark swam and waded to lead his men in hauling native craft through the mud to bring the exhausted soldiers out to waiting ships. Lt-Gen. Arthur Percival, GOC Singapore, described Clark's feat as "a most difficult operation reflecting the greatest credit on the Royal Navy", but one of Dragonfly's seamen was overheard to say, "Too bloody brave for my liking!"
Two days before the surrender of Singapore, Clark was sent to Java in a motor launch with 60 troops to continue guerrilla operations; but at daylight on February 15 he found the Durian Strait, off Sumatra, guarded by a large Japanese destroyer. Closing the range to 400 yards, he aimed his four-pounder gun and every rifle and Lewis gun at the enemy's bridge, hoping to kill the captain. But several accurate rounds from the ship soon reduced his launch to a shambles, with fires in the fo'c'le and engine room. The gun was knocked off its mounting, and the rudder jammed hard a starboard, and she finally sank.
Despite a broken wrist, Clark lashed other survivors to planks, and told those who had not been wounded to swim towards the mangrove. Soon he was alone and, taking an empty ammunition box as support for his useless arm, he started to swim towards a distant lighthouse. After spending a night in a fishing hut, he went ashore at Sumatra some 36 hours later. He then stole a canoe to go upriver with a small party of other escapees who had rallied to him.
After 6 weeks in the jungle they were betrayed by natives to the Japanese for 40 silver guilders each. By Clark's own account this did not make "a very heroic story, but I did at least make as big a nuisance of myself as I could for the next three and a half years!"
Clark was awarded a Bar to his earlier DSC, though he only found out when a rare Red Cross parcel arrived from his mother, with his latest decoration underlined on the address label. The end to Clark's prison term was signalled in January 1945 when his camp was overflown during an attack on the oil depots at Palembang: Clark was cheered to see an aircraft with "Royal Navy" emblazoned on its underside. A few weeks later he was transferred to Changi prison, at which he said the food and conditions were luxurious compared to Palembang.
Clark wrote an outline of his life story, "Triumph and Disaster" in 1994. He died on 14th December 2005.

SANDAKAN HERITAGE TRAIL.

With the title, "British POW death march is marked by heritage trail," the following article appeared in the Telegraph Newspaper on 5th March 2006., written by Nick Squires.

One of the most brutal episodes of the Second World War, the Sandakan death march in Borneo, has been commemorated with a heritage trail retracing the last steps of hundreds of emaciated British and Australian prisoners of war.
Tourists will be able to trek the same route taken by the POWs, who were forced to walk 155miles from Sandakan, a coastal town in what was then British North Borneo, into the rugged jungle interior.
The servicemen had been shipped to Borneo after the fall of Singapore in 1942.
They were initially forced to build an airfield, but in early 1945 the Japanese decided to move the POWs west of Sandakan along primitive jungle tracks to the village of Ranau, on the flanks of Mount Kinabalu, south-east Asia's highest peak.
The prisoners, around 640 of whom were British, were severely malnourished and many were suffering from diseases such as malaria and beriberi.
The Japanese soldiers guarding the ragged column were ordered to execute all those who faltered, for fear that they would tell their story to advancing Allied forces. Even those who made it across the razor-back ridges and mountain passes were not safe.
They were later shot by Japanese commanders who decided they had become "cumbersome" and wanted to cover up the atrocities of the march. Some were executed 12 days after the war had officially ended.
Of the estimated 2,434 British and Australian POWs taken to Sandakan, only six escaped, all Australian. There were no British survivors.
The route of the forced march, lost to the rainforest for 60 years, has been uncovered by Lynette Silver, an Australian military historian.
She discovered the route with the help of a hand-drawn map and charts which plotted the spot where each Allied prisoner died of hunger, sickness or mistreatment.
A section of the track has been cleared and opened to organized treks of up to eight days for adventure tourists.
"The atrocities suffered by Australians and their allies at Sandakan should never be forgotten," Miss Silver said.
"Their heroism, sustained over a three-year period, was extraordinary and certainly equals that exhibited on any battlefield."

ALL BRITISH INTERNEES DESERVE JUSTICE.

This article was printed in the Telegraph Newspaper on 30/1/06, written by Philip Johnston. Extracts have been taken from it.

There has been a great debate recently about national identity and what it means to be British. But you would hazard a guess that one infallible way of identifying a Brit is if they are locked away in some Godforsaken, insect-infested prison camp solely on the grounds of possessing a British passport.
Sixty years ago, when the Japanese army marched into China, and then Malaya and Singapore, thousands of British subjects ended up in just such camps. They were not soldiers, but civilians, either members of the colonial administration or the flotsam of empire that had washed up on a far-flung shore. Many had not been to the mother country for years. Some had never been at all. But of one thing they were certain and that was their Britishness.
So, too were the Japanese, which is why they put them in prison. For many years after the war, the thousands of soldiers and civilians held captive unsuccessfully pressed the Japanese for compensation. Then, out of the blue, in 2000 the Government announced that Britain would honour Japan's debt and make a £10.000 ex gratia payment to all POWs and civilian internees. It was an extraordinary gesture, partly justified by the failure of the British government after the war to pursue the Japanese for proper reparation. It is open to question whether it was a proper use of some £200 million of taxpayers' money to atone for a crime committed by the Japanese 60 years ago on the other side of the world. But the decision was taken: and the recipients were grateful for the public acknowledgement of what they had endured.
But out of this magnanimity the Government successfully conjured a complete and utter mess. When it became clear that far more than the 16,700 claims they had estimated were being lodged, officials at the Ministry of Defence suddenly changed the qualification criteria.
Months after details of the scheme were published, the Government decreed that civilian claimants should show a "blood link" with this country. To receive a payment, they had to have been born in the United Kingdom or prove that a parent or grandparent was born in this country. This disqualified about 800 people whose forebears worked and lived in the Far East, often for the Armed Forces or the colonial administration.
Claimants were rejected even though they possessed British consulate birth certificates and passports. Many of those excluded were sons and daughters of empire, a concept that may be difficult to grasp today, but which was perfectly valid in 1942. One unsuccessful claimant, held in the Lungwha camp near Shanghai, was born in China. His father, who worked for a telephone company, was from the British West Indies, and both his grandmothers were Chinese. His passport and birth certificate were issued by the British consulate, and Red Cross documents showed he was interned as a British subject. It was a not uncommon imperial experience never to have set foot in Britain, yet be British.
After the war, many internees came to live and work in Britain. Yet, 50 years later, they were told: sorry you're just not British enough. As many are of non-European origin, they considered this attitude pretty racist, and so it is.
Since this newspaper first brought their plight to public attention in the summer of 2001, the former prisoners have, both individually and as a group through ABCIFER, fought tooth and nail for justice against a Government whose intransigence has been little short of breathtaking. Few care little for the money any more, but are determined to have their Britishness recognized. Were they, and we, not led to believe by those politicians who have swathed themselves in the Union flag

recently that national identity matters, or was that only when a photo-call beckoned or an easy political point was to be made? Over the past five years, the internees have been through the courts and to the Ombudsman. After initial setbacks, their case has gathered strength. Last summer, the High Court ruled in the case of one 81 year old internee, that the compensation scheme "was unlawful and indirectly discriminated against those of non-British national origin". Then, the Parliamentary Ombudsman savaged the way the MOD had changed the rules. She found maladministration leading to injustice in the administration of the scheme. As a result, the latest defence minister to inherit this shambles, offered a £500 payment to those left out, which was rejected by most as insulting.
Latterly, there have been some pretty odd goings-on. It transpired that documents which should have been disclosed in court have been withheld. Then, it was admitted to the Commons defence select committee that previous statements about the way the rules were amended had been incorrect and some relevant papers had not been divulged to the Ombudsman. These showed that some 200 people who did not fit the criteria had already been paid, something the MOD had denied on numerous occasions, both in Parliament and in court. On top of everything else, therefore, do we detect the smell of a cover-up?
Last month another enquiry was authorized. There is, of course, a simple remedy available and that is to make the £10,000 payment to those who should have qualified from the outset and apologise for the way they have been treated.
If this injustice is allowed to continue, then you know what to do the next time you hear a government minister blathering on about his belief in the importance of Britishness and that is to blow a very loud raspberry. After all, among our defining national characteristics is a belief in fair play.

BOOKS.

"CAMP FOUR – KANBURI." By Irene-Anne Monteiro. Published by The Pentland Press in 1997. ISBN 1 85821 457 2
The true story of a POW and Survivor of the infamous Death Railway on the Siam-Burma border.
In 1942, the 31 year old Cleaver Rowell Eber was a member of the Singapore Volunteer Corps. He was captured by the Japanese and spent the next three and a half years a POW on the notorious Siam Death Railway. Inadequate and often inedible food, vicious beatings and a myriad of deliberate cruelties, including a 600km forced march, were endured with calm fortitude. Illness and overwork amid appalling jungle conditions sapped his strength, but never his indomitable spirit. This is Irene-Anne Monteiro's fascinating story of her relative's survival.

"A SPOONFUL OF RICE WITH SALT." By George Patterson. Published by The Pentland Press in 1993. ISBN 1 85821 073 9 In 1941 George Patterson was commissioned in the Royal Artillery and appointed to the Malayan Civil Service, where he was posted to Trengganu, one of the northernmost states in Malaya. When the Japanese invaded he escaped to Singapore where he re-joined the Army. He was promoted to Captain and appointed ADC to General Percival.
This is his story of his experiences in prison camps in Changi, Formosa, Japan and Manchuria, compiled from a small pocket diary which he kept illicitly during captivity, and which was miraculously never discovered.

"THE AMONOHASIDATE or THE GATE OF HEAVEN." BY Richard Yardley.

Reviewed by **Jonathan Moffatt.**

Richard Yardley went to Malaya in early 1941 as Assistant Controller [Radio], Posts & Telecommunications, Kuala Lumpur. He joined the FMSVF Signals Battalion and became a POW at Singapore in February 1942.
The first part of his book is a straightforward account of his captivity in Singapore and Thailand. What is, perhaps, special about this book is what follows: the nightmare voyage in July 1944 from Singapore bound for Japan of the Asaka Maru. Not only did the POWs aboard endure horrific conditions but the ship was wrecked in a typhoon off Formosa and the POWs rescued by the Japanese Navy. In 1946 Richard Yardley appeared as a witness for the prosecution to describe these events at the Singapore War Crimes trials.
Arriving in Japan, Richard was a POW at Amagasaki and in the final months of the War at an officers' camp at Oeyama. He notes the often courteous behaviour of Japanese civilians which contrasted with the brutality of their military personnel.
If you are wondering, as I was, about the unusual title of the book, well. Read it and find out.
Copies available from Richard Yardley.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

APRIL 2006
Saturday and Sunday 29th-30th April.

RESEARCHING FEPOW HISTORY CONFERENCE.
As advertised in the January edition of "Apa Khabar" This takes place at the NMA in Staffordshire, at a cost of ~~£50~~ £55 per delegate, for 2 days.

Speakers include: Roger Mansell, (founder of mansell.com, the FEPOW research website) Rod Beattie, (of the Thailand/Burma Railway Centre Museum in Kanchanaburi.) Roderick Suddaby (IWM London) Alan Bowgen (National Archives Kew) and Julie Summers (on Col. Philip Toosey, her grandfather)
Workshops will be run by Jonathan Moffatt, Meg Parkes, David Tett, Paul Riches, Dr. Nigel Stanley and Pieter Tesch.
For information contact Meg Parkes – mm.parkes@btinternet.com

MAY 2006
Sunday 9th May 2006.

FEPOW MEMORIAL CHURCH, WYMONDHAM, NORFOLK.

The 9th Annual Service of Remembrance will be held on Sunday 9th May at 2.30 p.m. at the FEPOW Memorial Church of Our Lady and Saint Thomas of Canterbury, in Wymondham, Norfolk. The Memorial Books in the FEPOW Chapel, will be open to visitors from 11.00 a.m. and it is certain that the Church will be full. Those of you hoping to attend this annual event, should write to the FEPOW Secretary of the Church, to request a seat.
The address is:- The FEPOW Secretary, 1, Norwich Road, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 0QE.

ADDRESS LIST.

The address list for 2006-7 will be sent out with the July newsletter. We are hoping to try out a new format this year. If there were no family details, or other entries which you would like recorded on the first list, please would you send them to Rosemary Fell, in good time for inclusion this year. In particular, please send details of Volunteer units, if they are not already recorded.

"APA KHABAR" SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Your subscriptions for 2006 – 2007 are now due. Please would you send your subscriptions for £10 to Rosemary Fell, if you have not yet done so. Receipts will not be sent for subscriptions, unless requested, but donations will be acknowledged. Cheques should be made payable to:- Mrs. Rosemary Fell Volunteers Bench Fund.

THE VOLUNTEER FORCES OF THE FEDERATED AND UNFEDERATED STATES OF MALAYA, AND THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS: 1941 - 42.

BY AUDREY HOLMES MCCORMICK.
(Copyright)

This comprehensive document has been compiled by Audrey Holmes McCormick, co-author of "Moon over Malaya". It summarizes the state of the Volunteer Forces in Malaya and the Straits Settlements at the outbreak of WW2 and immediately afterwards.
The document has been included as a separate section, so that it can be kept for reference. We are very grateful to Audrey for allowing us to have this copy of her detailed and thorough research into all the various Volunteer units, before publication. It shows very clearly how Volunteering became a way of life for much of the population, in the lead up to the second world war, and involved not only British Malayans but also the local people of all races and creeds.

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