**FEPOW MEMORIAL STEAM LOCO “SINGAPORE” RETURNS TO PUBLIC DISPLAY**

Having been closed to visitors since October 2019, Rocks by Rail – the Living Ironstone Museum based near Cottesmore in Rutland LE15 7FF will re-open to visitors from **Sunday 1 August 2021.** The volunteer run Museum is home to Far Eastern Prisoner of War Steam Locomotive named “SINGAPORE”. Having worked at the naval dockyard in Singapore since supplied new in 1936 the loco, in common with 80,000 allied servicemen, became a prisoner of war of the Japanese following the Fall of Singapore.

The Museum is open to the public between 11 am to 4pm on *Tuesdays* and *Thursdays* and *advertised open days on Sundays and Bank Holidays.* The “SINGAPORE” locomotive is displayed to visitors in the Simon Layfield Exhibition Centre at the museum being adjacent to a display entitled “The Singapore Story”. Admission prices apply at the Museum as advertised on the museum’s website *rocks-by-rail.org.uk*

The Museum Trustees are mindful of the dislocation caused last year to the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of VJ Day. Despite the strict regulations on social distancing the Museum was, however, able to mark VJ Day with a modest commemorative ceremony including the SINGAPORE locomotive. The Trustees have noted plans by COFEPOW to mark VJ76 in an appropriate fashion this year with their own commemorations on 14 and 15 August 2021.

To supplement these commemorations the Museum Trustees would like to extend a special invitation to COFEPOW Members to visit the museum for a special FEPOW commemorative event to take place on **Thursday 26 August 2021.**

Diagram

Description automatically generatedOn 26 August 1945, British Liberator bombers flew low over the Changi Gaol Prisoner of War Camp in Japanese occupied Singapore. As the thousands of emaciated prisoners looked up leaflets, dropped from the aircraft, fluttered down bringing official confirmation that Japan had surrendered, the war was over and help was on its way. In great excitement and relief thousands of prisoners stood within the PoW camps and with tears running down their faces sang God Save the King and Land of Hope and Glory. Their legend of endurance was over – they were going home.

The Museum intends to mark this anniversary by way of a special commemorative event and participants will have the opportunity, as part of a remembrance service, of approaching the steam locomotive and placing a white jungle orchid beneath the FEPOW Memorial Plates on the steam locomotive in memory of their loved ones and/or relatives.

The Museum will be open to visitors from 12 noon with the ceremony to start at 1.30pm. This will give visitors time to have a look around our industrial heritage museum and to view the “Singapore Story” exhibition. After the ceremony light refreshments will be served.

To book a place for this event please email [chriswills@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:chriswills@blueyonder.co.uk) or by telephone on 0121 244 7263 or email the museum directly Curator@rocks-by-rail.org

As the volunteer museum has received some very welcome grant aid from government to help it weather the difficulties caused by the pandemic lockdowns and restrictions the Trustees have resolved that entrance to this event for COFEPOW Forum Members will be free. The Museum is still engaged in fund raising so that the SINGAPORE loco can be repaired and return to steam as a working memorial and any donations left on the day or separately sent to the Treasurer would be most welcome in that respect.

Unfortunately, the planned trip in the Box car will not be able to take place.