



Honorary Chairman - Mr Ron Mockford

Treasurer - Mrs Margaret Walton

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Vice Chairman - Mr Kenneth Coy

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BAFEPOW NEWS SHEET OCTOBER 2021

REPORT ON THE BAFEPOW AGM HELD ON 14/09/21 AT THE BIRMINGHAM HOLIDAY INN

All members had been invited to attend the AGM which had been postponed from August 2020 due to the Covid 19 lockdown. Seventeen members were present and the Vice Chairman, Ken Coy opened the meeting and, having observed that there were some new members present, he asked everyone to go round and introduce themselves and to tell us of their FEPOW connection/interest. It was good to refresh our knowledge of each other's dear FEPOWs and to learn about the ones connected to our newer members.

Importantly, the agenda included the financial report by the treasurer, Margaret Walton and she distributed copies of the BAFEPOW accounts which combined the report for 2019 - 2020 and 2020 - 2021 within one document. She was very grateful to Tony Truett for ratifying the accounts and we all thanked him most warmly for doing this on behalf of the association. Copies of the 2018 BAFEPOW Constitution and the proposed changes to it had been circulated in advance to all members, and after discussion, the new Constitution was unanimously accepted. The existing five committee members were willing to continue and were duly re-elected unanimously and we were really pleased to also welcome two new members - Angela Lane and Annette Hughes - to join us.

Apart from the AGM business we all joined together for lunch which was in the form of High Tea. The Holiday Inn staff had, as usual, made the table look amazing and the food was delicious. We are so grateful to Bernie and her staff for the way in which they always make us so welcome and they really look after us.



A FOLLOW-ON FROM LAST MONTH'S NEWS SHEET (BJ)

In last month's news sheet there was an item on the dedication on 10/08/21 of the FEPOW memorial in Leicester. This had been the result of much hard work and determination by FEPOW daughter, Shirley Barnes. I had the pleasure of sitting next to Shirley at a recent VJ76 lunch at the NMA and she told me about her next project which is to try to get a blue plaque placed on the original home of a WWII heroine - not linked to the Far East but still a really interesting and brave young woman, and I do wish Shirley success with this. It is for a woman called Eliane Plewman. She lived and worked in Leicester for a number of years in the 1930s. During the war she volunteered for the Special Operations Executive. She was parachuted into France and but was eventually captured by the Germans. She ultimately ended up being executed by them at Dachau.

Last year Shirley had also been involved in a VJ75 display at the museum in Leicester to commemorate FEPOW from the Leicestershire area. One of these, Dr Cuthbert Stanley had been murdered by the Kempetai in prison in Singapore as part of the Double Tenth Incident and I had been able to put Shirley in touch with his son, Dr Nigel Stanley, who I had met in Liverpool at a Researching FEPOW History Conference in 2018. Shirley had included Dr Stanley on a display board which she has now let me know is on display at the Hinckley Museum until the end of October. It mainly focusses on POWs in the Far East as well as in Germany, which is great news. As time is short for people to visit this exhibition, I have included some photos from it and a paragraph that accompanies the pictures:-

Hinckley & District Museum, Lower Bond Street, Hinckley LE10 1QU

✉ hinckleymuseum@hotmail.co.uk

☎ 01455 251218 [open days only]

The museum will only be open on Saturdays and the entrance fee is £2

WWII Prisoners of War

Beyond the Wire - Our POW experience







Whether your standpoint is from beyond the wire looking in or beyond the wire looking from the inside out, the Prisoner of War experience of World

War Two massively effects the lives of local people. This exhibit explores this experience both from the perspective of those who were captured and imprisoned but also those at home, all of whom had to wait four years and more for the incarceration to end.

The display focuses particular attention on the experience of local Prisoners of War in the Far East under Japanese rule. The exhibit's artifacts have been loaned to the Museum by local families and reflect the themes of loss, bravery, courage, isolation and yet hope and in some cases reconciliation.

The exhibit examines the post war rehabilitation or otherwise of the returning freed prisoners as the POW experience became part of popular culture.

The display will also include local testimony to the fact that our local area played host to POWs from the Axis forces and that German and Italian personnel were to be seen as a common and accepted sight in our area.

(copied from the Museum site)

DID IMPRISONMENT CHANGE THE POTENTIAL CAREERS OF MANY FEPOWS? (BJ)

I had been looking back over the FEPOW history that I have for my own dear Dad recently which I really must complete but, as I had been intending to include the FEPOW story of one of our members in a previous news sheet, it had set me pondering on the effect that those long tortuous years had made on them when they returned to civilian life. Many were professional service men and so returned home to complete their service but for those who had enlisted voluntarily like my Dad or who had been conscripted, they returned to either continue their career or to look for other work. My Dad was fortunate to be welcomed back by his previous employer where he had been a clerk in a metal foundry with the potential to become an accountant. Somehow, and again it's a question that, sadly, I'll never be able to ask him now, he changed from the office environment to working in the actual foundry and rolling mill as a manager. It was a hot and dangerous job but he loved the challenge and was held in high regard by 'his men'. Was there a similarity with that environment and his experience in the heat and humidity of the prison camp alongside his comrades and perhaps he felt more 'at home' in that situation? He was involved in the casting of some lesser known metals in conjunction with the Department of Metallurgy at the nearby Birmingham University and really enjoyed the challenge. Below is one example of another FEPOW's experience bringing about a change of career and I begin it with a query -

LARRY ADLER - DO YOU REMEMBER HEARING HIM ON THE RADIO?

As you will know I have included items from the artwork of Des Bettany in the past and he had originally been an Analytical Chemist before the war but, on return, he decided to change his career and became an art teacher before emigrating to Australia. However, there was yet another string to Des's bow and I came across a post on Facebook that told of his passion for playing the harmonica. As well as producing the amazing pictures depicting life as a FEPOW, he had set up a trio of harmonica players in Changi camp and they were appropriately known as 'The Maggoty Rice Trio'. After repatriation he continued to play and you can even still hear him on YouTube. He was a fan of Larry Adler as you will see if you follow the link below to this other world of Des Bettany and I do hope that his son, Keith, won't mind me featuring his Dad yet again:-

https://harmonicariffraff.blog/2021/09/04/des-sketch/?fbclid=IwAR3-F0U4Z38w9FAy_RGHosaYU0u17X4UWRSGkuY5LmKEc1bSxhIrYCcQli0

And so I have put off including my intended item until next month as it is relevant to this subject and I would love to hear from yourselves you know of a FEPOW whose future also took another route from what would have been expected had they not been held prisoners in the Far East. I would love to include them next month too. Another thought - was their job still open for them to return to anyway? Strange to think that many jobs had been taken on by women and they must have found it hard to give up their jobs for the ex-service men to take over again.

A BLUE PLAQUE IS UNVEILED IN REMEMBRANCE OF A PREVIOUS FEPOW CLUB

Tony Truett attended the dedication of a blue plaque in remembrance of the Yasume FEPOW Club that closed some time ago and is now the site of the Beth Shalom Synagogue and he sent us this report

and some photographs. Tony, proudly wearing his BAFEPOW badge, was there as he had fond memories of his Dad being a member and he used to go there with his parents.

THE BETH SHALON SYNAGOGUE, CAMBRIDGE

The Beth Shalom (House of Peace) Synagogue was opened in 2015 on the Former site of the Cambridge Yasume (Far East Prisoners of War) Club. On Sunday 3rd October 2021 Council Leader Lewis Herbert unveiled a plaque provided by the Beth Shalom Synagogue to commemorate the Yasume Club remembering the suffering of the Far East Prisoners of War and the Jewish people During WW2.



Thank you, Tony, for attending this special dedication event and sending the photos etc. Tony also sent me some more details and other photographs from when the Yasume Club was open. If you would like to see what he sent, let me know and I'm sure that Tony won't mind me emailing them on to you,

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

It is important to remember those who were imprisoned, tortured and murdered in Singapore in the notorious Double Tenth Incident, including the Bishop of Singapore, Leonard Wilson, who later became the Bishop of Birmingham. As mentioned in the item about the display at the Hinckley Museum, Dr Cuthbert Stanley lost his life at the hands of the Kempetai as a result of the intense torture that he was put through and it wasn't until years later that his son found out by chance that his father had died as a result of torture. His mother had tried to shield him from the truth while he was a child and he had believed that his father had died from a tropical disease.

WELFARE GRANTS FOR FEPOW, WIVES AND WIDOWS

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

Mrs Margaret Martin, the Java Club by email:- margaretmartin1944@sky.com

Mrs Pauline Simpson, NFFWRA by email:- enquiries@nationalfepowfellowship.org.uk

(The BAFEPOW news sheet is put together by the association secretary, Barbara James, and, hopefully, it contains items of interest to members. You are very welcome to suggest future topics or to submit items for future inclusion.)

