



'EASTWARD'



The newsletter of the
RAF Butterworth & Penang Association

Chairman: Tony Parrini Treasurer: Len Wood Secretary: Rowly Christopher
(Formed: 30th August 1996 at the Casuarina Hotel, Batu Ferringhi, Penang Island)

EASTER 2011

The Association aims to establish and maintain contact with personnel and their dependants who served at Butterworth or Penang by means of annual reunions in the UK and the circulation of a membership list. The Association may also arrange holidays in Malaysia from time to time.



Issue 29



'EASTWARD'



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Young visitors discussing bygone sights of RAF Butterworth during an 'Open Day' held at RMAF Butterworth, 6th November 2010

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER



It is humbling to read one's own family story as I have just done on receipt of the draft copy of the newsletter. For many years I have encouraged members, whatever their vintage, to tell or record their military experiences for posterity. The lesson I have learned is clear to see on pages 21 and 22, 'if only I'd talked with my mother.'

Some of you will be aware of '*The Legasee War Veterans Project*', a social history project that aims to record on film the stories of military people such as ourselves for the future generations. The film footage taken will be used to provide on-line archives for use by schools, colleges and researchers of military history for generations to come. With this in mind I have invited *Legasee* to attend our reunion in June in the hope that some of you will tell your stories 'on camera'. We would prefer volunteers! We don't want it to be a wasted opportunity when everything finally gets 'firmed up' with *Legasee*. Without sufficient volunteers we might be 'pressing' a few people to tell their stories to cover the period 1946 to 1971. Please let me know if you are willing to be a volunteer and the period, subject or event from your Malayan/Malaysian service that you wish to talk about. The first interviews of the project are already 'in the can'. To view them, go to www.legasee.org.uk and click on 'Films'. Select the person you want to view. Once you've watched the first video, go to 'Click here to watch more films of....', or to view other videos.



Many of you will not be aware of the work that has been going on behind the scenes to develop a RAFBPA archives web site, using members' materials already in the Association archives. Both Bob Margolis and Dave Croft have already spent many hours on this project in order to ensure that the wealth of information and photographs are sorted into a suitable order for display to a wider audience. Work on the development site is progressing and Laurie Bean and Don Donovan are also to be involved with the project. We plan to launch of the web site at the forthcoming reunion. On a parallel project, Rowly Christopher has been working on a means to easily access information from past Association newsletters, a task that provides for a rapid release of information when requested.

All this activity is intended to provide easy access to information held in the RAFBPA archives/records and is intended to run along side the general information web site set up for the Association by George Gault.

In addition, progress is being made by the Royal Aeronautical Society National Aerospace Library to use the already-donated electronic copies of our archives to form the nucleus of a FEAF section. I am confident that, at a later date, our hard copy photographs, documents and records will also be donated to the RAeS to ensure they will be safely archived for use by future generations.

No doubt we will get a full update during the Reunion weekend (4th and 5th June) which I encourage as many of you as possible to attend. Anne and I both wish a speedy recovery to health to those members and their partners that we know are going through a tough time, and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible again in June.

Tony Parrini
Chairman.



John May, a staunch supporter of the RAFBPA, passed away in January 2011. John, along with his wife Marion, was a long term-member of both the RAF Butterworth & Penang and Seletar Associations and his cheerful greetings and humour were familiar features of the many reunions he attended. He had an enquiring mind and liked to think things over before committing himself to comment or answer. This was evident at the many AGM's he attended where he often put forward carefully thought out questions that showed his deep interest in the proceedings of both associations.

With an enquiring mind John took an active interest in everything around him. For example, when he visited Coventry Cathedral and decided, with another Association member, to investigate the routing of the public address system within the main building. John's voice carried, he was oblivious to this as he discussed the routing of the wires beneath the flooring and under cathedral furniture often laying down on the floor to investigate more closely. This attracted the attention of cathedral staff who gathered around him, smiled and then walked away to leave him to his 'detective' work. He was that type of person, enthusiastic, engaging, ready to laugh and having a great sense of humour. He will be sadly missed by all those who knew him.

Mystery solved!

The following e-mail from Hugh (Bunny) Dade arrived after this issue of the newsletter had been prepared and therefore appears slightly out of context to normal.

'I refer to your question on page 9 of the newsletter, Spring 2007, where is the propeller now? I visited RAF Benson at the invitation of the current 33 Squadron CO in July 2010, together with Des Clifford, and other members of 33 squadron from 1954-55. I am pleased to say we found the propeller in the squadron office reception area. I have attached a picture of Des and myself in the same position some 56 years later. The propeller has worn better than either of us!'



Many thanks to Hugh (and Des) for solving the mystery and letting the Association know.

From the Editor

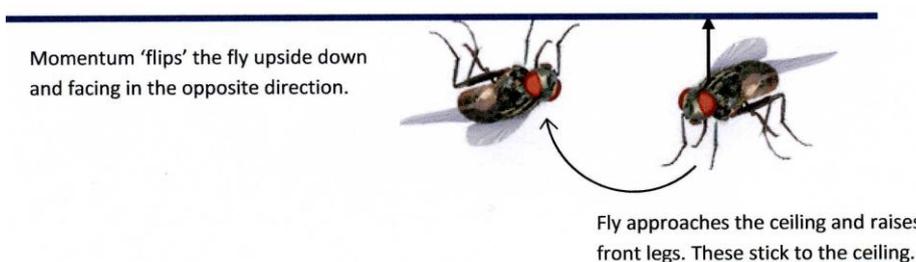


I know you have been waiting expectantly (!) since the last issue of *'Eastward'* for the answers to the Christmas puzzles. Well, here they are!

From page 8, the aircraft is a Handley Page Victor and a puggaree is the cloth band found around a solar topee. From page 29, the aircraft, looking very similar to a Mosquito was the Argentinian IAe.24 Calquin (Royal Eagle) constructed in wood and powered by two Pratt & Whitney Twin Wasp engines. Only one was ever built and this unfortunately collided with a freight train working the Buenos Aires docks during take off (from the dockside)



following an aeronautical exhibition. The new venture was swept into the gutters, forever! And a fly, when approaching a ceiling for landing (upside down) raises its front legs above the body to 'grasp' the ceiling, swinging the body into the upside down position to land...a sort of paratroopers' roll in reverse I guess!



Also a reminder that the 2011 Reunion and AGM of the RAFBPA is to be held at the Ramada Bradford and Bingley Hotel (address: Bradford Road, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 1TU) over the weekend 4th and 5th June. Any member wishing to attend and not having received a reunion form please contact Len Wood for a copy.



Further archive material destined for the National Aerospace Library has started to be put together for future delivery to the Royal Aeronautical Society. At this stage there is some Butterworth material with the rest comprising Tengah and personal Seletar photographs, including FEAF related books. Regarding the original archives materials sent on DVD to the RAeS, I have now been informed that the RAF BPA archive copies are to be moved (*February*) to the National Aerospace Library at Farnborough where they are to be formally catalogued.

Member Don Mallaby asked if it was possible to provide the colour layout to the 487 Signals Unit badge (motto: *'Always at the ready'*) shown as a line drawing in a recent copy of *'Eastward'*.



Unfortunately at the time the archives didn't have a coloured copy, but it does now thanks to Doug Robb from the RAF Air Defence Museum at RAF Neatishead (*above*).



Member Tam McCrorie received his Pingat Jasa Malaysia (PJM) medal at a ceremony at Perth on the 13th October 2010 (front page and left). Following this I met Tam (and Brian Lindhoe) at the Yorkshire Air Museum on the 25th October where we spent a pleasant day talking of aircraft (no surprise there!), the

RAF Fire Service and the pranks we performed in our younger Air Force days. I was especially pleased to 'discover' a photograph of 77 Squadron when based at Driffield in 1940. Somewhere on the photograph is my father and Tam kindly took the necessary photographs for me as the photograph frame was screwed (at height) to the wall.

Laurie Bean attended the RMAF Butterworth Open day on 6th November 2010 and sent the following report: *‘The “Open” in this context applied to local people only it seems. The gate was the one that opens into the old Astra compound. The guard was helpful but wouldn’t let me enter. He suggested that I go to the main gate and try to get a pass. This I did, and after about an hour, managed to get a special pass for entry. The entrance to the static display had an area covering the recent Perajurit magazine article about the history of Butterworth supplied from the Association archives. The display article appeared to be well read by those passing. There is a second part to the article that appears in the November issue which I will forward for the archives.*

The static display itself had a few aircraft in it but I was not able to get any really good photos of the aircraft because of the numbers of people around.’ One of Laurie’s pictures appears on page 2 being of great interest to two young visitors to the ‘Open ‘Day’. All taken at the open day will be displayed at the 2011 Reunion.

An e-mail from member Brian Watkinson makes reference to the pre-war ‘sentry box’ featured in the Easter 2010 issue of *‘Eastward’*, page 4: *‘I spotted the photo of the sentry box. I was billeted on the domestic site of RAF Butterworth in the fifties, we had no sentry box on the main gate but the advertising board takes me back to the local cinema which I often visited. I believe this is a “what’s on” notice for Zanzibar at that cinema. It was situated some 300 yards south of the main gate. The name of the cinema was The Shanghai Talkies.’* My thanks to Brian for this information.

Tony Parrini’s ‘Mystery Member’ suggestion.

A member of long standing has sent in a 1952 photograph of himself (in uniform) with the thought ‘can he be recognised from the photograph taken 58 years ago?’ Tony has written to suggest a ‘guess who’ feature offering a bottle of good wine to the first member who submits the correct answer. Members please note that neither the Chairman, or the Editor, are eligible to enter the ‘competition’ and cannot be bribed...well perhaps not! Answers directly to Tony Parrini please.

Should other members wish to participate in a similar activity we can do it for the forthcoming reunion. Photographs, e-copies etc. please, to me in plenty of time to prepare them for the display board.

Also from Tony: ‘Des Smyth (known as Carrington-Smyth) is trying to trace Chief Tech Reg Foley. Both served together on No.52 Sqn from 1961 to 63. Reg Foley was proxy godfather to one of Des’s sons. Any information, please, to Des Smyth, 65 Hartwell Green, Kill, County Kildare, Republic of Ireland. Des Smyth went on to serve 22 years finishing as 589 Sgt Smyth D K.



A request from Mick Perkins (Seletar 1966-1968) for photographs of HSL 2755 to assist in his building of a model of this RAF marine craft. Several pictures of the ‘boat’ were provided from the archives.

Member Sydney Rogers has presented to the Association archives a CD of photographs taken during his tour of 1956-1958. Derek Hartshorne of the RAFSA has also presented the archives with e-copies of his visit to Penang and a Power Point presentation of Penang today. Our thanks to both for their excellent photographs.

Photographs that belong to the RAFBPA/members have appeared on the Flickr® website with a claim to ownership by another party. Laurie Bean has followed this up with Flickr®.

Photographs used in this issue of *‘Eastward’* are by courtesy of: Laurie Bean, Derek Hartshorne, Roger Hughes-Jones, Tam McCrorie, John Muter, Tony Parrini and Steve Wynne.

An interesting e-mail from Steve Wynne (not a member) reads: *'I have just discovered the Butterworth website and have been reading the very interesting newsletters. Enclosed is a picture (below) which might be of interest since there well might be some of your members in it? I can only identify some of the people in the photograph.'*



*L to r, front row: 1. Flt Lt Fred Stanford (pilot), 4. Flt Lt Bob Westhead (pilot), 7. Flt Lt Harry Capp (pilot), 13. Flt Lt Crompton-Batt (Nav leader).
Second row (seated): 6. MPlt Jack Wynn, 8. MPlt Bill Owen, 9. MAE Op Jock Milne*

Steve continues: *'My late Father was a pilot on 52 Squadron from 1964 until it was disbanded in 1966. He then became an ops officer at Butterworth until May 1967. During this period I was sent to the boarding school in Singapore, but as I was a cadet in the ATC, in the holidays I used to spend a lot of time at the base. I did go flying quite a bit in the Whirlwind helicopter and the Valettas. Later on I became an airline pilot and in the 1990's spent some time based at Bandar Seri Begawan as Captain in the Royal Brunei Airlines.*

It is really great to be able to read about peoples experiences of those times, the last of the "old colonial days!"'

A further e-mail from Steve adds: *'My father was promoted to Master Pilot shortly after arriving at 52 Squadron so I think the picture was taken towards the end of 1964 as he is still wearing his Flight*



A 'dry' Tam McCrorie surveying the remains!

Sergeant's uniform. I have just looked in my Father's logbook and here are a few more names but I cannot put faces to them; Sqn Ldr Elliott, Sqn Ldr White, Fl Lt's Luby, Baxter, Gospill, Beevor, Oldham, Brown, MSig's Napper, Robertson and Wheeler.



Incidentally, the Twin Pioneer that crashed at Butterworth, shown in a previous newsletter, had a double engine failure shortly after take-off. The right engine probably ran down first as the propeller is feathered. The pilot was the very

experienced Fl/Lt Fred Stanford (above right) who had transferred to this type after 52 Squadron was disbanded.

Tam McCrorie adds to the story. *'There were four crew on the Pioneer, two pilots and two Army dispatchers. They said it got to 600 feet and fell out of the sky as someone had put the fuel cocks in the wrong way round, but I do not know how true that is! Maybe just a story that went round. I think a couple of the crew lost expensive watches as the SIB came to the fire section a few days later asking if we had seen any watches. The locals in the padi field got the crew out if I remember correctly as it took us a few minutes to get to the scene. I don't think there were any serious injuries, just shock, cuts and bruises.*

Thanks to both Steve and Tam for their inputs to this accident and thankfully no serious injuries.

Gordon Carle (also not a member) writes of the Western Hill photograph that appeared on p5 of the



Christmas 2009 issue of the newsletter: 'I'm ex-RAF and did a detachment to Western Hill in 1970. I also did a tour at RAF Saxa Vord before that where Sqn Ldr Ron Sparkes was my CO for a while. My father-in-law worked as a civilian at Saxa for many years and kept scrap books of photos and cuttings associated with the Unit.

I recognised the photo you had on p5 of the 2009 Newsletter and have scanned in a copy of the attached picture,

obviously from the RAF News, in case the data is of any use to you'. The text reads: 'It was a double occasion at RAF Penang when the CO, Wg Cdr R. G. Sparkes, handed out on behalf of (the) Air Commander FEAF a Certificate for Meritorious Service to WO J. H. Hudson (r) and a Testimonial to Mr Wahidin (l). At the same time he congratulated FS F. J. Walker and Mr Narendran on being awarded the BEM.' Our thanks to Gordon for sending this information for the archives.

'Trawling' through the archives produced yet another small mystery as to the identity of the aircraft shown in the photograph (from Mike Ward) of His Royal Highness on a short visit to RAF Butterworth in 1956.

The story of the visit was unfolded by Mike, with the help of Don Breerton. 'The date of the visit was 31st October 1956. HRH disembarked from 'Brittania' at Penang and was flown by Sycamore helicopter to RAF Butterworth, where HRH inspected the Guard of Honour (which included both Mike and Don). Following the inspection HRH then departed in the C-in-C's Hastings to KL. The Hastings flew into RAF Butterworth because the runway on Penang was too short and this was the reason why HRH visited us. HRH rejoined 'Brittania' at Port Swettenham for the onward journey to Port Moresby, New Guinea.'



The photograph appeared to show a well polished Hastings (with 5 stars) and an unusual set of 'steps' compared to the 'ladder' used on non-VIP aircraft.

According to the RAFBPA archives, four C4 VIP Hastings were built for the RAF, WD 500, WJ 324, WJ 325 and WJ 326. Entering service in 1951 the 'Shiney Ships' had luxuriously fitted out interiors and a rear entrance hydraulic 'air stair' that folded up into the fuselage. This particular aircraft was originally thought to be WJ 325. However Don, looking closely at his photographs, has identified the aircraft as being WJ 324.

Many thanks to both Don and Mike for their help on this matter.

De Havilland Hornets at Butterworth. For members with access to the internet there is a superb preview film of 33 Squadron Hornets at Butterworth on *YouTube*, approx running time 7 minutes. Just type in *De Havilland Hornets at Butterworth*, scroll down to *YouTube - De Havilland Hornet* and enjoy the short film. Apart from the aircraft, both groundcrew and aircrew are included, as well as the Squadron Battle Honours propeller. Maybe some of you will recognise faces from the past?

Late News: we have just been informed of the death, on 11th February 2011, of member **Cyril Voisey**. Our condolences to Cyril's family

Members stories

In addition to John Manny's continuing diary account of his passage to Singapore aboard the troopship *Empire Fowey* in 1957 this issue has the story of the long journey made by Derek Hartshorne in a RAF Hastings in 1952, and the return in 1954 by the same mode of transport.

To and from Singapore in a R.A.F. Hasting November 1952 – July 1954

The journey began from Lytham on a cold frosty Saturday morning in November 1952 arriving late afternoon at snow carpeted Swindon. The only food we had during the day was the R.A.F. "cake box iron rations", nothing to drink and as the train did not stop at any stations we had no means of supplementing our meagre rations. We were transported from the station to R.A.F. Clyffe Pypard where we spent a very cold and snow dominated weekend huddled in our great coats confined to camp. Sunday was quite a nice day if one ignored the cold and snow. The sun was shining in a blue sky and as the camp was on a Wiltshire plateau the view of miles and miles of snow covered fields was quite spectacular. In the very early hours of Monday morning we were transported to R.A.F. Lyneham, processed and embarked on a R.A.F. Hastings aircraft. Not long after we had to disembark due to an electrical fault and spent an uncomfortable half hour jogging on the runway in our great coats trying to keep warm. Travelling in an aeroplane of us. To leave Lyneham under a at Castle Benito watch the sun during what I can only describe as English summer evening was quite was equivalent to being on the two persons at a time were allowed very primitive toilet in a small tail section. Each day we had our drinks were served from flasks. me was the highlight of the whole Baghdad allowed an excellent view buildings. It reminded me of a film Baghdad" and Sabu on his magic flying carpet. The transit billets were tents with duck boards over the sand. An amusing incident occurred during the night. One of my companions had draped his pullover over the bed head rail but whilst asleep must have disturbed it so that it slowly descended onto his neck. He woke us screaming that a snake was attacking him. Why were we only ones issued with one blanket and one sheet?



was a new experience for most carpet of snow and 8 hours later setting in the Libyan Desert equivalent to a very warm amazing. Flying in a Hastings Cake Walk at a fun fair; only to be in the aisle. There was a compartment in the juddering cake box rations and hot or cold The next stage to Habbaniya for journey. Flying very low over of the city and its Arabian I had seen "The Thief of

Baghdad" and Sabu on his magic flying carpet. The transit billets were tents with duck boards over the sand. An amusing incident occurred during the night. One of my companions had draped his pullover over the bed head rail but whilst asleep must have disturbed it so that it slowly descended onto his neck. He woke us screaming that a snake was attacking him. Why were we only ones issued with one blanket and one sheet? Mauripur was our next stop where we changed into K.D. I was surprised to find miner's tin baths in the showers. En route to Negombo we flew just off the west coast of India where Bombay with a heat haze overhead was another memorable sight. There was nothing very memorable about our last stage to Changi, we were all very tired having spent approximately 8 hours flying time per day for 5 days and having to get up each day in the very early hours to compensate for Singapore being eight hours ahead of U.K. time.

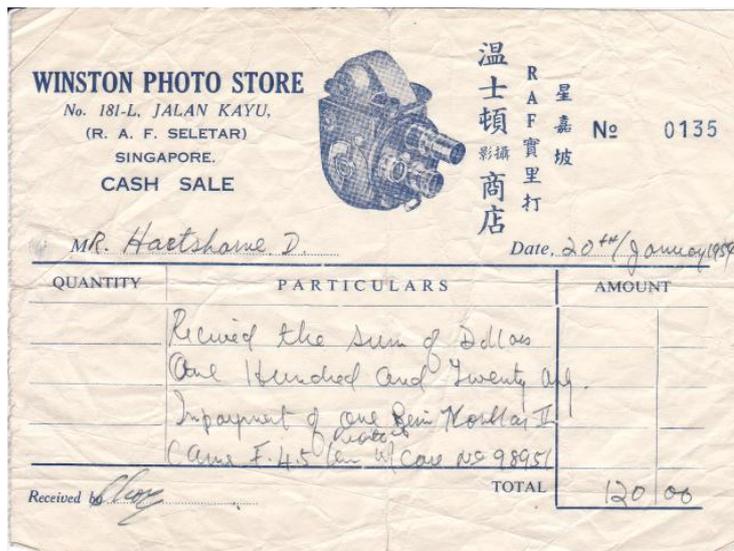
Next day we were told of our allotted camps and about twelve of us arrived Saturday lunch time at Seletar to be greeted by chants of "moon men", accompanied by cheers, whistles and jeers from established sun-tanned airmen lining the billet balconies.

The journey home was also in a Hasting; same stages but with a surprise short stop at El Adem for Sunday lunch in the Libyan Desert. During the first stage we encountered trade winds, cumulus cloud and received quite a buffeting. At Habbaniya I visited the



Hastings at El Adem

open air cinema but before the film started I was able to witness a spectacular sunset as the sun like a huge ball of fire gradually fading into the desert. The highlight of the return journey was flying over Portland Bill and then gazing down upon the English patchwork quilt countryside before landing at RAF Lyneham.



I declared my camera and gave all the details requested to a vicious customs officer. He knew full well where it had been purchased from and how much I had paid but insisted on seeing the receipt which I could not find. I had to empty all my pockets but missed the receipt. I found it at a later date and still have it in my possession (right). As intended all along I paid the excessive duty tax. Ironically he never asked about a brand new holdall I had placed in front of him and forgotten to declare. I understand it was not unusual for service personnel returning from abroad to be subject to special treatment by customs officers.

The remainder of our journey was by train to R.A.F. Innsworth, arriving very tired and hungry. As I had missed the mess evening meal I went to the N.A.A.F.I. for food and not long after several friends from Changi and Seletar arrived after travelling six weeks on an aircraft carrier.

From the Editor: in addition.

This issue of *'Eastward'* was 'put together' during the bad weather we experienced last November and December, hence the space being utilized for newsletter 'odds and sods'. Firstly, with Bob Margolis, a generalised structure was discussed in respect of a RAFBPA archives website. This is a separate project to the general RAFBPA website set up and run by George Gault. A step towards realising this was the converting of a large number of archive files in November to TIFF format which was also made into a DVD of RAFBPA archives for the Royal Aeronautical Society. Although, at the time of writing, nothing has been further discussed with the RAeS, it is intended that members should still have access to the archives through me as before. However outside agencies that request archive materials will be expected to liaise with the RAeS and pay their going rate.

New members

We welcome the following new members to the Association:

Brian Johnson - Cpl Air Wireless Fitter, MAFF, April 1958 to February 1959.

Ron Curley – Cpl Electrical Fitter (Air) 110/52 Squadrons, January 1963 to July 1965.

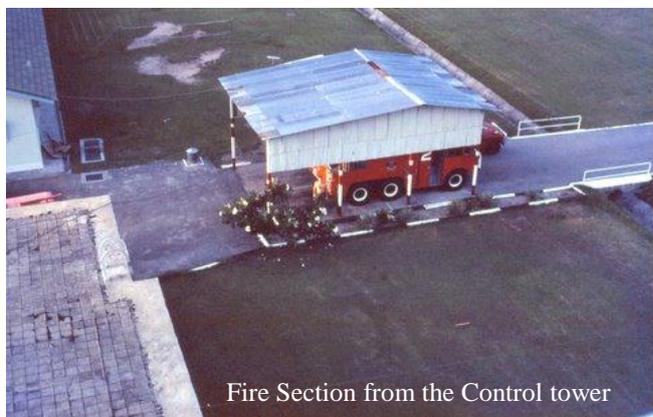
Barry Woodgett – SAC Telephonist, RAF Penang (ADC Penang) PBX, May 1971 to October 1971.

With a few days to go to Christmas a bored editor (snowbound) produced an e-copy Christmas card with (unfortunately) a limited circulation. The picture was of a Belvedere helicopter with an aircraft co-pilots poem added. Of the picture and poem, Tony Reale comments: *'In the helicopter world the captain always sits on the right!'* Further to this Tony adds *'Apparently it's all to do with the cabin door and troop movements. During emplaning, deplaning and winching operations the captain would be unable to observe what was happening, hence the helicopter captain sits on the right (starboard) side.* Many thanks to Tony for this information.

Tam McCrorie describes the life of a RAF Fireman based at RAAF Butterworth in the 60's.

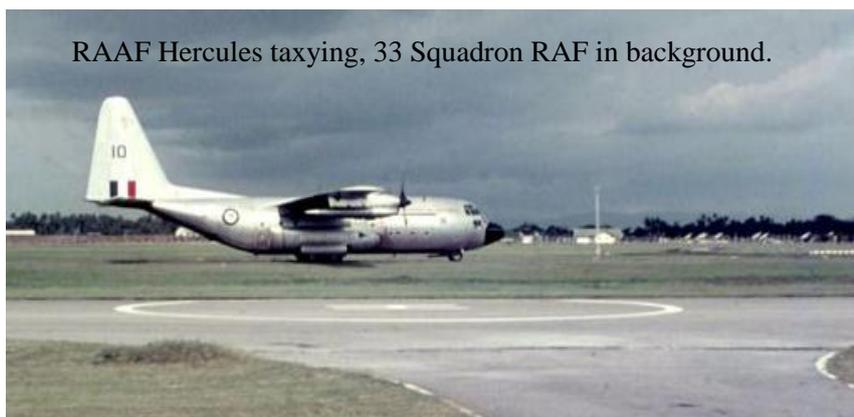
RAAF Butterworth October 1965 to April 1968

I arrived at RAAF Butterworth in October 1965 from RAF Ballykelly. I travelled out by boat and train to London, then by British Eagle Airways on a Britannia aircraft to Singapore. The journey via Bahrain (RAF Muharrag) and Gan took 23 hours and we ran out of beer twice on the flight (not good news). We spent four to five days in Singapore waiting for a flight to Butterworth in a Bristol Freighter of the RNZAF or as we called it Kiwi Airways. RAAF Butterworth was an Australian Air Force base comprising 50% Aussie and 50% RAF Element



as we were called then. The fire section only had two Australian firemen, a Sergeant Lofty Sweapman and a Corporal Ron Fuedaloff, a Yorkshire Aussie. On the RAF side we formed the rest of the fire section which was managed by Warrant Officer Tam Patterson, a Scotsman from Ceres in Fife, a brilliant Warrant Officer who was well liked by all the men and he looked after us very well. Flight Sergeant John Arthur was in charge of the fire section at 33 Squadron

Bloodhound Missile site. John Arthur was one of the founder members of the RAF Fire Association, and another well liked and respected senior NCO. Butterworth had all types of aircraft; on the Australian side were the Sabre, Mirage, Dakota, Canberra plus the Hercules going to and from Australia to Vietnam. RAF aircraft were Javelins of 60 Squadron, Varsity and Valetta, Twin Pioneer and also a large amount of visiting aircraft Royal Navy from the aircraft carriers when they were in the area, and Vulcan bombers visited once. Also Pan-Am DC6 brought in American service personnel from Vietnam for four to five days rest and recuperation leave on Penang Island. Hardly a day went by without some sort of aircraft incident. I was on



duty crew the day a RAF Twin Pioneer with two RAF crew and two Army dispatcher's took off to supply Army personnel located in jungle forts by air drops. The Pioneer climbed to about 600 feet before it stalled crashing heavily into the padi fields at the end of the runway. Ginge Scurrrell was the crew commander that day and along with Cpl's John (Pompey) Kingston and Bob Webster; I was driving the Mark 5A with John Kingston. Luckily the Twin Pioneer did not catch fire, but landed heavily in the padi field about two hundred yards into the fields. John and I stopped at the edge of the padi fields. John said that I should stay with the vehicle and relay all radio contact between the tower and the crash crew at the scene while he would help with the rescue of the aircrew.

John asked me how deep was the padi fields, to which I replied that the workers are only up to their knees in water, but what John and I did not know was that the ditch that ran all the way round the fields for draining and flooding the fields was quite deep. A couple of hundred yards from where we were was a narrow bridge into the padi fields, but John decided to take the

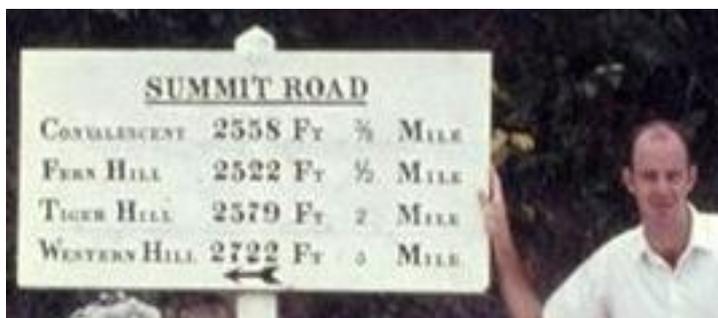
short cut over the ditch that was five or six yards wide. As he stepped into the water he disappeared under the water to come up a few seconds later muttering a few choice words at me who was nice and dry watching all what was going on (see page 6). John has never let me forget his swim in the ditch.

On another day, on crew with the Australian Sgt Lofty Sweapman, we were watching two American Sky Hawks coming into land; the first landed and deployed a drogue chute. I asked Sgt Sweapman if Sky Hawks always deploy a drogue chute to land and he informed me yes they always do. The second aircraft landed but no chute deployed and I thought to myself what a load of waffle. I watched the Sky Hawk travel down most of the runway, when both the starboard and the port wheels burst with in a few seconds of each other and the Sky Hawk ended in the barrier at the end of the runway which meant another deployment for the crew. The runway barriers at both ends of the runway for catching aircraft in trouble were frequently in use. The crash bays were pretty basic and primitive and no running water although we had a putting green and a Sappa Ragga court which was a Malaysian game a bit like across between volleyball and football only you use your feet and head to get the ball over the net. The ball incidentally was made of woven cane. The Malay's played in their bare feet and we played with our crash boots on.

Life at Butterworth was great, all of the fire section personnel lived on Penang Island in hiring's at Chee Seng, Hillside and Vale of Temple being the main areas. A place you would pay a fortune to holiday in today. Buses were laid on to take you from the estates to Georgetown the capital of Penang, then we got the ferry across to mainland Malaysia, to Butterworth town where a fleet of buses were on hand to take RAF and RAAF personal to the air base at RAAF Butterworth. On the island there was a large Australian hostel where all the facilities were located; doctor, health care, dentist sports facilities etc and of course the 'Bar' where drinks and meals were served. There was also a sports night every Tuesday and dances every now and then and I remember it as a place we spent a lot of time at Penang Airport (a place where you could be eaten alive by mosquitoes) also operated as a diversion airfield for the Javelins when they undertook night flying. The fire section provided a two man crew operating a Crash One Dry Powder truck.

You would not recognize the place now. My wife Anne and I returned to Penang for a holiday in October 2001 after thirty three years away. We tried to retrace old footsteps, but alas it had all changed drastically, you would not recognize Georgetown.! Penang Hill was much the same and the funicular railway still took you to the top.

The highest hill was Western Hill which was 2722 feet. The RAF & RAAF had a radar station



at Western Hill where one fireman was stationed. The only way up was by the funicular train or helicopter. The top of the hill had not changed much in the thirty three years we had been away. The Botanical Gardens or as we called it in the sixties, the Monkey Park was still much the same and still as nice. We stayed at

the Shangri La Golden Sands Hotel at Batu Feringgi beach where in the sixties I would go fishing with John Kingston and Bob Webster We had the beach all to ourselves in those day's, only a grotty old wood hotel there then, but today it is very much tourist orientated. With hotels and restaurants everywhere and a night market every night, but Butterworth air base is still there as a Malaysian airfield and the ferries still run, but now there is a bridge from the main land to the island of Penang - **Pearl of the Orient!**

Tam McCrorie. RAF Fireman 1961 to 1983

THE TRAVELS OF JOHN J. MANNY

ROYAL AIR FORCE
ENGLAND – MALAYA
1957 TO 1959

Voyage of the *Empire Fowey* from Southampton to Singapore
July 18th to August 10th 1957

In this issue of 'Eastward' we continue with part 4 of the Travels of **John J. Manny**, from July 18th to August 10th 1957 onboard the troopship 'Empire Fowey'.

Thursday, August 1st

No ships, no land, not nothing until late afternoon.

12.00pm Covered 329 miles from Aden. Water temperature is 88°F and deck temperature 110°F. Still perspiring heavily and drinking gallons of water.



2.00pm Coast of British Somaliland visible of starboard bow.

3.00pm Cape Guardafui – N.E. Somalia sighted out of heat haze. Nothing further until late evening.

10.00pm Passed close to island of Socotra [*Suqutra*] which is about 120 miles east of Guardafui. Looked quite sinister in the moonlight. About 70 miles by 20 miles in area.

10.30pm Sea getting very rough and breaking over the bows. Suffered second bout of sea-sickness but not too bad thank goodness.

11.00pm Tried to get some sleep but the ship is pitching and rolling a lot tonight. Not at all like the Red Sea.

Friday, August 2nd

Saturday, August 3rd

Sunday, August 4th

These three days were the most boring of the voyage. No shore line in view and nothing of interest in sight gave the chaps a chance to think. A lot of boys were getting fed up with the voyage and feeling homesick now they had been away two weeks or so. As a result tempers got frayed and many silly arguments sprang up.

To make matters worse the cinema projector had gone u/s, so we had no film shows.

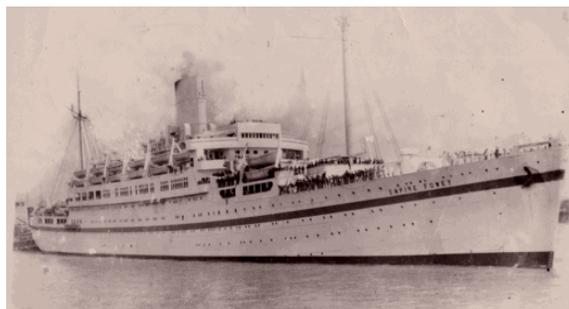
Surprising how long one can go without seeing another ship.

The only thing of any interest was watching the porpoises which followed the ship but even that got tedious.

Mileage:	Friday	384 miles
	Saturday	376 miles
	Sunday	380 miles

Monday August 5th

A very enjoyable day after the last three boring ones. Also looking forward to seeing Colombo to-morrow. Although it's August Monday there is no difference on this ship.



- 10.00am** Party allowed up on the bridge. Discovered that the Fowey was originally a German troopship – The Potsdam. Also found that the ship was steered by a push button system and not with a wheel.
- 12.00pm** By noon we had covered 374 miles since noon yesterday.
- 1.15pm** Abreast of H.M.T. Oxfordshire taking troops home from the Far East.
- 3.00pm** Children had a fair and party. Hoop-la, darts, throw a penny, guessing games, blind mans buff and may other games for the kiddies. I looked after dart stall and had as much fun as the kiddies.
- 7.00pm** Fair for the Adults. Still in charge of the dart stall. Made about £4 including £1 from Commandant and S.W.O. who were both merry. Another good time had by all.
- 11.00pm** Everyone packed up so I handed the cash in and went to bed.
- An excellent day. Even the sea was calm despite it being the monsoon season. After tomorrow only four days to go.

Tuesday, August 6th

- 5.30am!** Awakened by Steve. We had arrived in Ceylon. Looking out of a porthole discovered we were anchored quite a way off shore so didn't really see much. We had travelled 252 miles since noon yesterday making Colombo 6550 miles from Southampton, 5420 from Gibraltar, 4420 from Malta, 3500 from Port Said, 3400 from Suez and 2100 miles from Aden.
- 7.00am** Observed warship heading for harbour. Decided it was a cruiser.
- 7.30am** The Indian cruiser 'Delhi', the late 'Achilles', entered harbour and tied up to the wharf. Due to go ashore at 8.00a.m. but luxury liner in at same time and had commandeered all ferry boats. Only two boats in service and the trip took about 20 minutes in each direction so we had a long wait.
- 10.00am** Finally got ashore. Got legs back fairly quickly this time. An official guide offered to take us round the city. Saw Govt. House and the shopping centres of Chatham, York and Princes Streets. Also visited the centre of ivory and rosewood carvings in Ceylon. Bought a pair of elephants.
- 11.00am** Had a cold drink in a nice little café just off York St.
- 12.00pm** Entered Victoria Gardens and wandered round for a while. Very pleasant place with many and varied flowers. Plenty of bananas, coconuts, pineapples and melons up for sale at cheap prices. However advised against buying fresh fruit so we left it. The city seemed very clean in most areas. As in Aden the old and the new clashed with streamlined taxis sided by side with rickshaws.
- 12.15pm** On way back to ship saw a huge mob of people cycling round the place carrying placards. Informed by locals that they were Post Office workers looking for higher pay.
- 12.30pm** Man came out of shop and asked if anyone of our group was from Liverpool. He spoke perfect English. I said "yes" and he was very pleased to see me. He wanted to know whereabouts and it seems that he had lived in Allerton for many years. He had to send a parcel to a place in Liverpool and wanted the district number.

- 12.45pm** Back at docks and still bad ferry service so had quite a wait.
2.00pm Arrived back at boat and enjoyed a rather late dinner.
3.30pm Up anchor and out of harbour. Just outside harbour saw whale spouting and then it vanished. Columbo on west of island so followed coast south, until we turned east on the last lap of our journey.
7.00pm Passed Kandy and turned east still following coast.
9.00pm Few lights still visible as Ceylon faded in the darkness and I faded into bed.

Wednesday, August 7th

Not much doing today. No land at all but only three days to journeys end.

- 11.00am** Saw shark following ship as waste bin tipped over stern. Indian Ocean just a dirty green like most other water on the trip.
12.00pm By noon we had covered 352 miles since noon yesterday.
7.00pm Had quiz between R.A.F team and an Army team. Judges all army officers so we lost by 1 point.
10.00pm Up on deck after quiz for some fresh air. Very hot breeze however – unusual for time of day.

Thursday, August 8th

- 9.00am** Tannoy message ordered all R.A.F. personnel to meet on the messing deck at 2.30pm to be given postings. Rain came down in torrents all morning. First heavy rain all trip. Could be omen for this afternoon.
12.00pm By noon we had covered 418 miles since noon yesterday. Even the ship seems to sense there is not long to go now.
2.30pm All ranks congregated on the mess deck. A great air of expectancy hangs over the place. Senior R.A.F officer comes in with our postings. I am one of the last to be called. – R.A.F. Butterworth – no idea where it is – after a few enquiries discovered it was on the west coast of Malaya near Penang. Reputed to be the best camp in F.E.A.F. Rest of day seemed to fly as we discussed our postings.
10.30pm Light appeared on starboard bow which could only be Sumatra coast. Far too many to be an island.
11.00pm Turned in – lights still visible.

Friday, August 9th

- 8.00am** Heading south-east along coast of Sumatra.
10.00am In Strait of Malacca. Sea like a mill-pond. Jellyfish and flying fish in great numbers around the ship. Jellyfish like dustbin lids. (About this time probably only about 70 miles from Butterworth on coast if we had known.)
11.00am Coastline of Sumatra faded away and just sea again.
12.00pm By noon we had covered 413 miles since noon yesterday.
3.30pm Malayan Coastline came into sight. Just palm trees as far as we could see from our distance from shore
4.30pm Passed Berhala Island which guards narrow waters between Malaya and Sumatra. Just coastline for rest of evening.



- 6.30pm** Issued with Paludrine – anti-malarial tablets. Now on last lap of journey. Very enjoyable but now look forward to our permanent camp.
- 9.00pm** Turned in to get a good nights sleep.

Saturday, August 10th

- 6.00am** Still sailing along Malayan coastline. Packed odds and ends away and stacked stuff neatly ready to leave ship. Practically everyone on deck with nothing to do – all eager to see Singapore.
- 8.00am** Opposite causeway between mainland and Singapore. Few hours to go yet.
- 9.00am** First view of Singapore as we pass range of hills. Modern looking city with small skyscraper buildings.
- 10.00am** Turned in towards harbour passing dozens of small islands with many coloured flowers and shrubs on them. Marvellous natural harbour – protected on three sides by range of hills and from the seaward side by the small islands. Numerous houses on sides of hills overlooking the harbour – must be wonderful view. The colours all around the clean looking buildings and the bright sun all combine to give a good first impression. Mile upon mile of quayside with ships of all sizes and nations tied up alongside.
- 11.00am** Tied up alongside quay. Many people waving on the dock. Gangway run out and two redcaps take up post.
- 3.00pm** Exchanged money for Malayan currency as we left ship. Since noon yesterday we have covered 367 miles. Therefore Singapore is 8100 miles from Southampton:

6970 - - Gibraltar
5970 - - Malta
5050 - - Port Said
4950 - - Suez
3650 - - Aden
1550 - - Columbo

END OF SEA VOYAGE

Saturday, August 10th (continued)

Journey from Singapore to R.A.F. Butterworth

- 3.00pm** Set foot on the island of Singapore. Directed by M.P.'s down passageway between two sheds and came out in a big yard containing about 30 R.A.F. wagons.
- 3.30pm** Organised into a rough parade by a W.O. and directed into various groups by him as our names were called out.
- 4.30pm** Now standing by the different wagons like prize cattle for the market, all this time moving two kitbags, a holdall and small pack with us.
- 4.45pm** Ordered to board wagons and one by one they left for Tengah, Changi, Seletar and Port Swettenham – various units on the island. Those for Malaya like myself were also going to Changi for a meal.
- 5.00pm** Swing through gates on a never to be forgotten ride through Singapore. Theoretically the traffic system is the same as ours. Our driver was weaving in and out of cyclists on whichever side of the road was convenient. The roads were very good and very wide and mostly lined with palm trees. Britannia Club pointed out to us along the front. Hovels and mansions side by side on the roads. New houses built but huts left where they were. Amazed by numbers of women engaged in manual labour but was soon to see how extensive this was. What odds equality for women in U.K.? Passed Changi P.O.W. camp which looked very forbidding.

- 5.20pm** Arrived at Changi camp. Unloaded outside mess and went straight in for a meal which was quite good.
- 5.40pm** Whipped out of mess and struggled down to armoury to draw rifles. Returned to our wagons outside mess.
- 6.00pm** Given various instructions about our behaviour aboard the train and changed into slacks for the night journey.
- 6.30pm** Picked out for advance party to station for luggage escort.
- 6.50pm** Arrived at station, unloaded wagon of kitbags and suitcases etc and kept eye on them until main party arrived. Perspiring profusely after that job.
- 7.00pm** Main party arrived. Hung around for two hrs just talking and smoking. Train not due out until 9.10p.m. Typical R.A.F. – rush you around for an hour and leave you with nothing to do for two hours.
- 8.45pm** Struggled onto train carrying 2 kit bags, holdall, small pack, rifle and ammunition belt. Shown to our sleeping berths by a 2nd Lieutenant of Movements Staff.
- 9.10pm** Train left dead on time at which I was most surprised.
- 9.30pm** Crossed Causeway into Johore Bahru and entered Federation of Malaya.
- 9.45pm** W.O. i/c Troops came round arranging guard duty for the night. Got 11–12, not worth sleeping so just lay on bunk.
- 11.00pm** Went on guard – endless fireflies flitting past and when we stopped for signals etc crickets and frogs very evident. No terrorists however so finished peacefully.
- 12.00am** Turned in and soon dropped off.

Sunday, August 11th

6.00am Woken up for second guard duty after very solid six hours sleep. Quite light now although not up. Train travelling through jungle on high bank about level of tree tops – very high embankment. Many hills in distance and quite a sight as the sun came up over the hills and shone across the tree tops. Passing rubber plantations and coconut plantations by the score. Train travelling quite fast and I counted 20 carriages as we went round a curve in the track.

8.15am Pulled into Kuala Lumpur railway station. Marvellous construction – more like a castle than a station. It puts to shame any we have in England. Left train and had a look for our connection.



8.45am Left on final stage of our journey. Just endless jungle, only blastings spoil the peace. Turned out to be tin mining.

11.00am Passed through area of banana plantations. 10 cents on train by the way. 450 miles covered by noon.

2.00pm Stopped at Ipoh. Numerous armoured cars in railway sheds. They precede engine to detonate any mines on the track.

5.00pm Arrived in Prai. Another 150 miles so 600 miles from Singapore. Had to wait around until wagon arrived from camp.

5.45pm Wagon arrived and commenced drive to “permanent posting”. Road seemed to be alternately through rice fields, jungle and sleepy little villages. The place seems to be miles from anywhere the way we were travelling. Came out onto what seemed to be a wider road.

6.40pm Crossed wide lane at right angles to road which was obviously the “strip”.

6.45pm Turned into a gateway to a long low building which was evidently transit. Being Sunday night we have to wait until tomorrow.

7.00pm Taken up to main camp for a meal and brought straight back. Didn’t think much of it first looks but was nearly dark anyway.

8.00pm Discovered swimming pool so had an hour in there.

9.00pm Tired out so early to bed, so ending this diary of the journey to Butterworth.

John Manny also visited an operational tin mine during his Far East tour and shares this experience with us.

VISIT TO KAMUNTING TIN MINE

15TH JANUARY 1958

We left Main Guardroom for Taiping at 9.00 a.m. After passing through Bukit Tengah, Nibong Tebal we arrived at 11.00 a.m. From Taiping we passed on to Kamunting via British Military Hospital and ex P.O.W. camp for 3 miles arriving at the Tin Mine at 11.15 a.m. The mine itself is a dredger or man made lake. It digs up surface with its buckets – passes it through in shales depositing dirt at stern so progressing all the time. Controlled by cables linking dredger to shore. Periodically cable posts have to be moved as the land is eaten away.



When surface dirt is removed the alluvial soil beneath it is then dredged. This soil is passed through screens which leaved large rocks and lumpy soil for dumping. Deposit then passed through secondary jigs with a water flow which removes sand leaving tin and soil. On to the primary jigs which removes most of heavy soil. The remainder – mainly tin is collected in buckets (about twice the size of ordinary household bucket). The turnout is about 70 buckets a day. Sampans take buckets to shore and ‘portable’ 25” guage railway takes them back to sorting areas.

All tipped into hopper for distribution to five screens for final separation. Two series of screens purify the tin completely. Then a 40,000 volt machine separates magnetic or non-magnetic tin. The end-product is packed into bags and sent to Penang for smelting.



The daily produce of tin is about \$1000 [or £120] WHEN PRODUCTIVE.

When we had finished our tour we still had some time left so went on to the Waterfall Gardens where we ate our packed lunch – Black area of Perak. Tried to walk up Maxwell Hill but turned back.

Later we visited Taiping War Cemetery. Wonderful tribute to the Commonwealth men who died for Malaya. Beautiful flowers and lawns. Hundreds of unknown soldiers.

Also visited Taiping Buddhist Association. Came back through Taiping passing armoured patrol on way up Maxwell Hill. Arrived back at camp at 5 p.m.

Photographs: John Muter

The Genius of F. Howard Stirling

During a lull in the celebrations at dinner in the 2010 Reunion Bill Bohannon and the editor talked about Howard Stirling, an ATC officer renowned for his rather wild escapades whilst at Butterworth. On return from the reunion an e-mail from Brian Lloyd (RAF Changi Association) included a copy of a letter printed in the Shackleton Association newsletter referring to an ATC officer met at both Wymswold and Butterworth. The last paragraph of the letter referred to the building of a small aircraft using an engine retrieved from an Auster that had crashed on the jungle. The officer concerned could only be one person – Howard Stirling! With permission from the writer of the letter, Tony Freeborn, and editor, Neville Feist, of the Shackleton Association to reproduce the letter and with Bill’s written input, and further input from Bob Margolis, we had a story (*Howard Stirling featured in an earlier issue of the RAFBPA newsletter.*)

The story starts with Tony Freeborn's letter:

'An episode from the distant past has recently crossed my mind, though it has no connection with the Shackleton, it does illustrate that there was life before Coastal, in a rather different Air Force. In 1949 I was a second pilot on a Hastings squadron based at Topcliffe. One weekend we were tasked to provide one aircraft to lift an Auxiliary Squadron's ground crew and equipment from Wymswold to Chivenor for their annual camp. We positioned at Wymswold on Friday afternoon in preparation for the flights on the following day.

In conversation with the Air Traffic Control (ATC) officer, I was bemoaning my fate at being a second pilot when he suggested that I might like to fly his glider, which he kept in a small hangar. I jumped at the chance. Out came the glider and we pushed it to the end of the runway. The Air Traffic jeep was connected with a long tow rope and in I got. Off went the jeep and up and up soared the glider, until I released the tow rope. I had enough height for a circuit of the airfield and rejoiced at being in sole control with the wind on my face acting as my sole airspeed indicator. I completed the circuit and in reply to a question as to how the glider handled, I replied that it was fine. "Oh good!" said the owner. He informed me that he had built the glider himself but had not flown it. Someone else had flown it on its first – and – only flight and reported it had tail flutter!

Later that evening in the bar of the officer's mess the door opened, in came the Air Traffic officer carrying a soda-acid fire extinguisher which he proceeded to squirt over the assembled Auxiliary Officers and their ladies! The general verdict of the assembled Auxiliaries, "Oh! It's him, he's a nut case."

Fast forward a year to August 1950. I was a first pilot on Yorks based at Bassingbourne, engaged on the UK-Singapore route. On one return flight we had done battle with an inter tropical front over the Bay of Bengal, and lost! With the de-icer boots ripped off the wings and wrapped around the tail plane and a Merlin engine in the hold broken loose and floating up and down, and the starboard wing having flexed so much that the tie-rod to one of the fuel tanks had snapped, we were in a perilous position. Unable to make Ceylon we might just make it back to Butterworth in Malaya. Fortunately, with fuel tanks indicating zero we scraped into Butterworth, and,



very much relieved, we reported to the Air Traffic Control Tower – a bamboo and attap building by the taxiway. Imagine my surprise when we were greeted by the same Air Traffic Control Officer that I had encountered at Wymswold! Whilst we recounted our experience in the storm, our signaller asked if he could use the toilet. "Of course – it's that attap shack a few yards behind the ATC building" Off trotted the signaller, a gleam came into the ATC officer's eyes. He started a stop watch, the warrant officer handed him a 1½" Vervey cartridge pistol loaded with a smoke puff. The countdown started, 20 seconds – trousers down – 30 seconds----- . At a crucial point the officer fired the pistol, the warrant officer shouted "bandits" and the smoke puff exploded just above the open roof of the thunder box. Out stumbled the signaller considerably hindered by his trousers around his ankles but making good speed towards the dugout! Much merriment in the control tower! This was, apparently, a regular procedure for treating visitors. In an aside, the warrant officer whispered to us "He's a nut case!"

That evening we learned that the Air Traffic Officer was organising an expedition into the jungle to retrieve the engine from a crashed Auster. He was building a small aircraft (*hydroplane!*) and hoped to fit the engine in it. I often wonder if he succeeded (*he didn't*) and if so, who he conned into test flying the contraption. If he should read this story, please do not give him my address!

The previous article by Fred Hoskins featured in an early copy of the Association newsletter made a significant reference to an Air Traffic Controller named F. Howard Stirling. The date given was 1952. The article reads 'A few of us rode BSA Bantam 125cc motorcycles and an air traffic controller named F. Howard Stirling would occasionally take a friendly shot at these with a Very pistol as they crossed the runway going to or from the squadron. Once he hit a rear wheel.....It was Howard who crammed a Sten magazine into his pistol holster to give him a "quick on the draw" capability. When, during the

AOC's inspection, he demonstrated this to the great man on the balcony of the ATC tower the pistol left the holster at great speed when the flap was flipped open, just as intended, but unfortunately Howard failed to catch it and as he had not fitted a lanyard, the pistol flew down to the ground outside. (Then) there was the boat, or hydroplane, he built out of two Sunderland wing tip floats with a structure of 3 inch rocket motor tubes supporting a salvaged engine and propeller from an Auster. It was not a success!

All the above was used to persuade Bill Bohannon to write about Howard Stirling from his own time at Butterworth during 1950-52. In his e-mail Bill writes 'Please find enclosed my notes on the escapades and antics of the renowned Howard Stirling. It is a pity that there are not more members in the association from that era, I am sure there would be other pranks he got up to that I was not aware of (he was a right nut case!).

Memoirs of Butterworth 1950-1952: Howard Stirling by Bill Bohannon.

My first knowledge of the existence of Howard Stirling was through general chat in Station Workshops where I was assigned on my arrival at Butterworth. It was about this Air Traffic Control Flying Officer and to do with a sea craft concoction he had designed, and had made, in the workshops just prior to my arrival.



It consisted of two floats he had scrounged from a seaplane and an engine he had obtained from a crashed Auster aircraft somewhere. This engine was mounted on one side of a wooden platform approximately seven feet square and attached to two floats, resembling something like a hydroplane (*left*). For this he was dubbed as '*The Mad Scientist*'. All the time I was at Butterworth, it was anchored about two to three hundred yards out from the shore in the Malacca Straits between living quarters (basha huts) and Penang Island. We spent many an enjoyable hour or so swimming out and diving off the platform. I only ever saw this contraption in actual operation once...the noise from the engine was deafening! I did hear that he was banned from using it by 'Senior Management' but cannot verify this.

It would be interesting to know what happened to this so-called work of art when the new living quarters were opened...was it scrapped or returned to the workshops? Further to this he was also renowned for other escapades, one being that when he was on duty in the control tower and the 'Met' weather man* sent his balloon up he would endeavour to shoot it down with either his pistol or a Verey light gun. I myself saw this actually happen when I was in the control tower one day dropping off some equipment!

In addition to this he had other duties to perform. He had been made Officer i/c a jungle rescue team that had recently been set up which necessitated training and mock rescue exercises. On two occasions I had the unfortunate honour of being his driver, both being night operation exercises, and on both these outings he put the wind up the locals with his indiscriminate use of firecrackers and thunder flashes as we drove through kampongs and settlements. Where he got as many of these from is anybody's guess but he certainly had the locals flying about and diving for cover in all directions while letting them off. I often wonder if he ever got reported and if so, what the outcome was? I bet everyone was relieved when his tour of duty was over!

*Further to Howard Stirling story, Bob Margolis (who was taught to shoot by HS) recalls: '*I remember my father (civilian meteorological officer at Butterworth) cursing his use of the radiosonde balloons for target practice. (I was encouraged to use the bulkhead light on the gable end of one of the hangars!)* Also Bob mentioned that F. Howard Stirling appeared to have died quite young, saving Tony Freeborn the worry of a possible visit!

Late News: the Association welcomes another new member, **Ernest Pepperdine** (Ernie), civilian officer with the Meteorological Office, RAF Butterworth, October 1956 to October 1959.

Following the transcript of Rosemary Fell's story of the MVAF featured in the last issue of 'Eastward' is the following piece on family history as appertaining to our chairman, Tony Parrini, and adds yet another piece to the historical jigsaw that is Malaya/Malaysia.

The things my mother didn't tell me by Tony Parrini

The advent of the internet and the various genealogy sites has opened up many opportunities to research one's family history. The potential for discovering previously forgotten facts about one's ancestry are enormous. However, I'm sure there comes a point in many lives when one realises that matters of detail are lost forever; certainly I regret the fact that my mother has taken to her grave much of the detail that I'm now researching – "If only I had talked to my Mum!"

In 1905, RALPH COLIN GOULD born in 1877, left behind his father's legal business in Sheffield after obtaining his legal qualifications. He travelled to Malaya to become the Legal Advisor to the Straits Settlements in Penang and Malacca. What an adventure for a young man of 27 in those days, as he packed his belongings and headed out on his 7000 mile voyage to a future in the Tropics.



EDITH EMILY JOHNSTON arrived in Malaya soon after and married Ralph on 3rd August 1906 and settled down in Malacca. Her family was from Newcastle-upon-Tyne and included one brother and three sisters, amongst them Evelyn Mary Seymour Johnston who was later to become the Matron of the Bristol Royal Infirmary and Mary Nancy Isobel Johnston who was later to marry George Denholm, and whose son George Herald Denholm was to be awarded a DFC during the Second World War.



The family homes in Malacca appear to have been a town house not far from the Straits Settlements Offices in a building that by 1970 was the Family Planning Clinic. They also had a weekend villa on the coast near a Government Rest House.

On 28th August 1908 the marriage was blessed with the birth of JOHN BROOKFIELD GOULD and on the 26th April



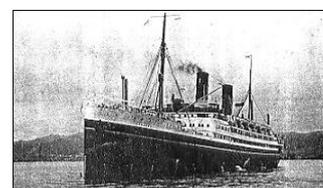
1911, my mother MARGARET EVELYN GOULD was born. Passenger lists show that Mrs E E Gould and her 2 Children came back to the UK in 1912 and returned to Malaya a while later.

The next 10 years appear to have been uneventful until sadly, on 3rd March 1923 the head of the household died leaving Mrs Gould with her 2 children to determine a future for themselves – an expatriot British family living in the colonies, gaining the respect of everyone. My mother's Manual of Private Devotion called "Before the Throne" records that she was confirmed at Christ Church Malacca on 7th June 1923, aged 12 by Reverend Norman Bower the Colonial Chaplain. Mrs Gould taught the pianoforte to local children.

However, for whatever reason, at the age of 12, my mother (Margaret Evelyn) was sent back to Europe for her schooling at Sheffield High School and then attended Thildonck Convent in Belgium for her finishing school. It would appear that her Aunt Dora (Johnston) and Uncle Jack (CARRICK) became her guardians; holiday photographs show her teenage holidays at various seaside locations including Filey and Sutton-on-Sea at play with her cousins Jimmy and Mary. Mother never returned to Malaya. Jimmy later qualified as a GP. After the death of his wife many years later, my mother and Jimmy resumed a very close friendship in their later years.

I've yet to find out about John Brookfield ("Jack") Gould's education. It appears he stayed with his mother in Malacca to work on the Plantations.

As the Japanese Occupation and the possibility of war in the Far East increased, Mrs Gould was evacuated on SS Aorangi arriving in Fremantle, Australia on 23rd January 1942. (In discovering this particular piece of information from the MVA website, I find that Rosemary Fell slept underneath the grand piano in the ship's saloon – and perhaps my grandmother "tinkled the ivories" of that same piano to maintain morale!)



At some stage my grandmother arrived back in England to live with her sister Evelyn Mary Seymour Johnston in Wiltshire. Her death is recorded at Marlborough on 11th December 1945. Whether or not she reunited with my mother during the war years isn't recorded – my mother by this time had fully qualified at Sheffield and nursed during the war at Queen Mary's Hospital and worked at Carshalton in Surrey.



Meanwhile John Brookfield Gould was conscripted to the Johore Volunteer Engineers (Sapper 681). Unfortunately his active service didn't last long, for in February 1942 he was captured by the Japanese in Singapore and spent time as a POW in Changi, then Siam (Thailand) and finally in the Ube POW Camp in Japan.

There are two pieces of information that lead to the final mystery that I would love to resolve.

John Brookfield Gould wasn't married when he enlisted. When he was captured he recorded his mother at her evacuation address in Australia as his Next of Kin. When released in December 1945, his Release Report shows a home address in Wiltshire where his mother and aunt were living. Possibly as a result of the captivity in the hands of the Japanese, John Brookfield Gould died in Malacca on 15th August 1948. His gravestone has the inscription "Beloved Husband of Margery" – quite how she came on the scene or when or where they married remains a mystery.

I met Margery at my mother's home in London in around 1957 and hadn't realised until recently her significance to the family story. My mother's old address book indicates that Margery lived in Newcastle-on-Tyne – I have been unable to trace her.

So why did I never sit down with my Mother to find out more about her intriguing background? What is even more annoying is the fact that my own service in the Royal Air Force sent me to Malaysia from November 1968 to October 1971 and still I received no information about my mother's childhood in Malacca. When out in Butterworth and Penang, our Parish Priest was Father Louis Ashness whose brother was the Catholic Priest in Malacca. On a trip down country in 1971, we visited Malacca and local people recounted their knowledge of "Lawyer Gould" and the "Piano Teacher".

This story is far from complete. I wonder whether there is anyone who can fill in some of the gaps - If so, I'd love to hear from them.



John Brookfield Gould (Left) and Margery Gould (Right) at Mersing - 1947

It has always been the intention that the newsletter should not be just a 'newsletter' but should be both interesting and informative through using personal stories, and history accounts, to build a picture of the country as we knew it, no matter when we served, at either Butterworth or Penang. Stories such as Tony's and Rosemary's (Christmas 2010) lead to the following account of the volunteer forces of Malaya as it appeared in the 1937 edition of the Straits Times. The next few pages are a direct copy from the original text and may suffer in quality during printing.



Five Thousand Volunteers in the Defence Forces of the Colony and Malay States Infantry Battalions And Gunners in the Federation

By Captain T. M. Winsley, Reserve of Officers, S. S. V. F.

HOW many Volunteers in Malaya appreciate the fact that their corps and units are not without an historical background and that they belong to volunteer regiments of standing?

In a history of the Singapore Volunteer Corps to be published early next year we shall see that Malaya can boast one of the first volunteer corps to be formed in the Colonies of the British Empire. Eighty-three years ago the Settlement of Singapore received the approbation of the Indian Government, under whose administration it then was, for its foresight and example in forming a Volunteer Rifle Corps.

That corps was the first in the domains of the East India Company, and later Colonel Sir W. Orfeur Cavenagh, when Governor of the Straits Settlements, brought this fact to the notice of the public by stating that the Singapore Volunteer Rifle Corps had the right to the motto "Primus in Indis." This was immediately adopted and only changed some years later for that of the present-day "Primus in Oriente." when it was further appreciated that this original volunteer unit of Malaya was entitled to a motto covering a much wider area than India alone.

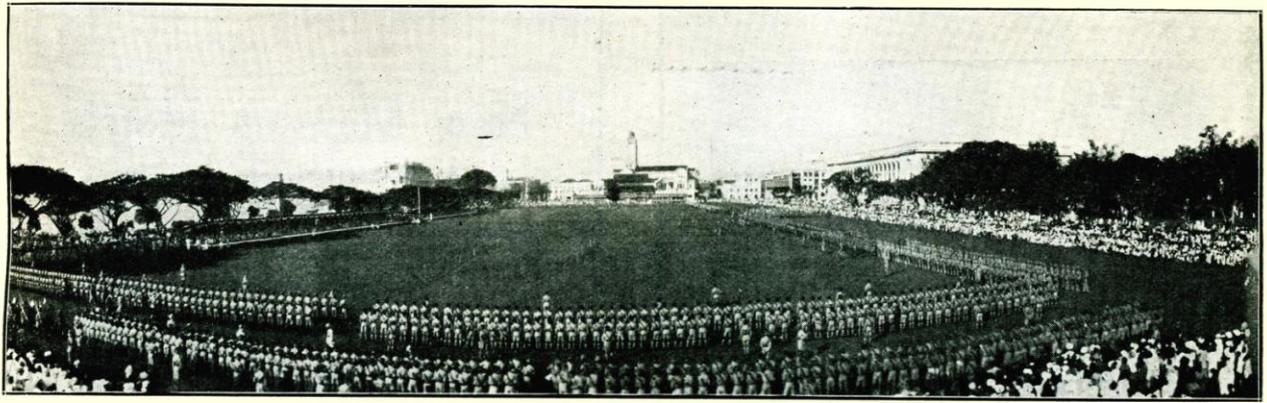
Volunteering in Malaya was, in fact, started five years before the great volunteer movement in the United Kingdom, which did not commence until 1859, and this in itself is an honour worth remembering.

THE volunteer forces of Malaya, though apparently split into five parts on a territorial basis, have, we must not forget, a common administration from Malaya's military headquarters in Singapore at Fort Canning, through the medium of the Staff Officer, Local Forces, and his Assistant.

The movement is consequently combined into an all-Malayan one, and the volunteers' "esprit de corps," considering the many transfers of personnel that take place every year, should also be Malayan. Thus it matters not whether we serve in Singapore, Penang, Malacca, the Federated Malay States or the Unfederated States: we are Malayan Volunteers with the same country to defend.

IT is easy to appreciate the attitude of civilians in this country when volunteering first started here. They were in an outpost of the Empire, and before any civilian armed force was formed a man's constant anxiety was the protection of his family, estate, and the country in which they were and from which he derived a living to keep them.

His appreciation of the rule of the "survival of the fittest," in the case of a possible enemy near or far—a rule which had been handed down to him from the dim and distant ages, and recognised by both men and animals—made him only too keen to claim the



(Nakajima.)

The King's Birthday Parade in Singapore has become a splendid spectacle since the influx of the Services into the new Fortress.

honour of defending what was his and his rights, by joining an organised force composed of other volunteers who did not wish to become professional soldiers, but nevertheless realised the necessity of learning how to defend their property when they could never afford to pay for others to defend it adequately.

IT was therefore considered an honour to be a Volunteer, and in those first days of volunteering in Malaya a member of the community proffered himself for election to the honour of membership of the various corps of volunteers—the honour of offering voluntarily his intelligence, foresight and capability of not only being trained to defend himself but the women, the children, the aged and infirm and his country.

It is only when this honour is lacking and voluntary service fails, that governments are forced to conscript, and the British nation is one of the few left that still trust to honour rather than conscription.

The volunteers of the nineteenth century had few of the amenities offered to present-day volunteers. Much longer hours were devoted to training, due to slower transport by ricksha and gharry, so that the civilian today has much less excuse for being untrained than in the days when funds were inadequate and governments failed to fully appreciate the numerous advantages of a highly trained civilian army.



Volunteer anti-aircraft gunners.

THERE were very few Europeans in Singapore during the early days, and the original Volunteer Corps in this city was therefore a mixed one of all nationalities. Penang and Malacca were only able to commence activities in 1899 and 1902 respectively, the latter being the Malacca Company of the Singapore Volunteer Corps from its inception early in 1902 up to 1906.

As a result of the federation of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang in 1895, the Malay States Volunteer Rifles was formed in 1902, this force being raised from the Europeans in those States.

The Chinese and Eurasian Companies of the Singapore Volunteer Corps were formed at about the same time and were followed eight years later, in 1910, by the Malay Company, S.V.C.

On the outbreak of war in 1914, Malaya, for a country of its size and population, was very shortly able to muster one of the best local defence forces of that time, so that when the 5th Light Infantry mutinied in Singapore in February, 1915—the British regiment having been withdrawn for service at the front—the Volunteers were the mainstay of Malayan infantry defence and did some very fine work in helping to quell the mutiny within four days of its outbreak.

It was noticeable, as is always the case when there are wars and rumours of wars, that civilians came forward in large numbers in Singapore during that crisis, and although many had never done volunteer service in their lives and did not even know how to handle a rifle, they demanded to be armed and made use of. The mutiny had brought to their very doors a war which had previously been very far away

SHORTLY after the Singapore mutiny there was an abortive rising in Kelantan, and volunteers from Singapore and Penang were sent to the assistance of that State.

Kelantan had at the time two companies of "Special Constables" which had been enrolled in August 1914, No. 1 Company consisting of about 30 Europeans and No. 2 Company of about 25 Asiatics. Actually they were the Kelantan Volunteer Rifles, as by an enactment in August, 1917, they took that title with retrospective effect from 8th August, 1914.

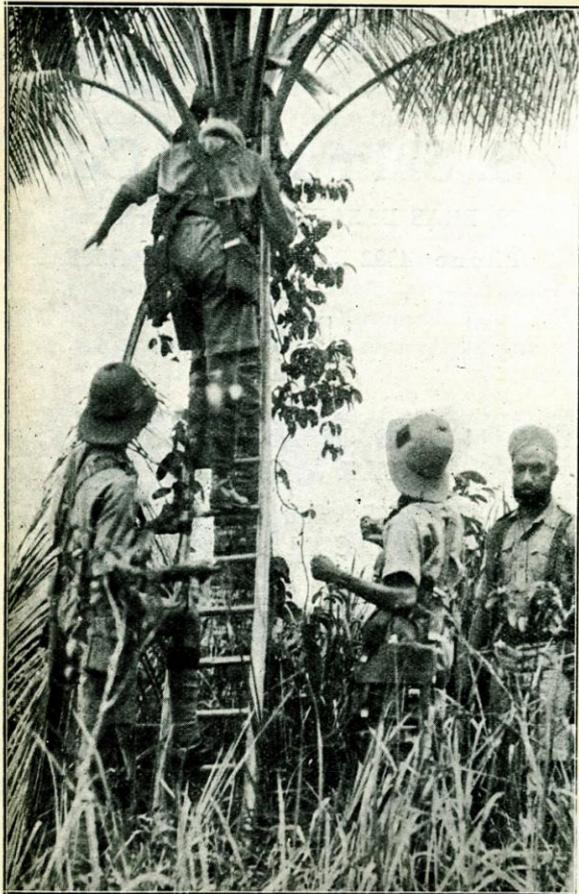
Other volunteer units which came into existence during the War were:—

- The Johore Volunteer Rifles, October, 1914.
- The Malacca Volunteer Rifles, 12th August, 1915.
- The Province Wellesley Volunteer Rifles, 3rd November, 1915.
- The Malayan Volunteer Infantry, Perak, March, 1915.
- The Malayan Volunteer Infantry, Selangor, 1915—1916.
- The Malayan Volunteer Infantry, Pahang, April, 1916.
- The Malayan Volunteer Infantry, Negri Sembilan, September, 1916.
- Kedah—The Kedah Volunteers, 5th August, 1914.
- The Sungei Patani Volunteers, 1915.
- The Labuan Defence Detachment.

Most of these units still exist under their original titles. The Johore Volunteer Rifles, however, became in 1921 the Johore Volunteer Engineers; also the old Malay States Volunteer Rifles were disbanded in that year and on the same day the Malay States Volunteer Regiment was formed as a Federal unit with headquarters in Kuala Lumpur.

There was a re-organisation of local forces in the Colony in 1921 and all the volunteer corps of the Straits Settlements were combined into one main force, the Straits Settlements Volunteer Force.

IN 1931 the volunteers of the Federated Malay States were also brigaded, and the Malayan Volunteer Infantry, who up to that time had been State troops,



Signallers of the Singapore Volunteer Corps.



Scottish Volunteers in beach defence exercises.

combined with the Malay States Volunteer Regiment to form the Federated Malay States Volunteer Force, but even then the former were State—as opposed to Federal—troops. Last year the final re-organisation took place and the whole of the volunteers in the Federated Malay States, known as the F.M.S.V.F., are now Federal.

At the end of the War the volunteer units in Kedah were disbanded but the movement was revived in 1933 with the formation of the Kedah Volunteer Force, which started with one European and two Malay platoons and has now been expanded to a complete battalion of three companies and a H.Q. wing.

In Kelantan the Volunteer Rifles have continued ever since their inception in August, 1914, a stout little unit of no great strength but with the right spirit. It was reconstituted in 1935 and is now known as the Kelantan Volunteer Force.

FROM a military point of view the volunteers of Malaya are really one force with two main brigades, one being maintained by the Colony and the other by the F.M.S., and three smaller ones maintained by the Unfederated States of Johore, Kedah and Kelantan.

Since 1921 the F.M.S.V.F. has added a light battery of 3.7-in. mountain howitzers to its units, sections of which are stationed in Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh. The S.S.V.F. has been augmented by a complete Scottish company in the Singapore Volunteer Corps and by a Scottish platoon in the Penang and Province Wellesley Volunteer Corps.

All corps have been adequately provided with Vickers machine-guns and Lewis guns and have formed machine-gun companies or platoons suitable to the units concerned.

The S.V.C. boasts of an armoured car section, while the Singapore Royal Artillery (Volunteer), in addition to their battery of four 3.7-in. mountain howitzers, have increased their establishment and

undertaken a battery of anti-aircraft guns. The anti-aircraft gun in fact has now become their main weapon. The Singapore Royal Engineers (Volunteer) consists of a field company, a fortress company with defence electric light, and a fortress signal company.

ALL the corps in the volunteer forces have rifle units, intelligence and scout sections with motor bicycles, and field ambulance units. For those members of the community who are musical, the Band is recommended.

This unit is so sadly lacking in numbers in Singapore at the moment as to be non-existent—a fact which was only too noticeable in the Coronation celebrations on the padang, when the S.V.C. had to march off the ground and round the town in silence and without the encouragement of martial music. Enlistments in this unit would, therefore, be most welcome and its members can be assured that they are “doing their bit.”

The Penang and Malacca Volunteer Corps, in this matter of the Band, are lucky in having a working arrangement with their Municipalities whereby most of the members of the town bands are also volunteers and serve in their respective volunteer bands.

In Singapore there are also the Straits Settlements Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, formed in 1934, with H.M.S. Laburnum as a training ship and coastal patrol boats fitted with 3-pr. guns, and the recently formed Straits Settlements Volunteer Air Force. Both of these units are ready to accept as volunteers those members of the civilian community who like the sea or are air-minded.

AT the end of last training season the S.S.V.F., having only 2431 members and an establishment of 2901, required nearly 500 more volunteers, and these are required mainly from the Europeans of Singapore and Malacca, the Penang corps having to their credit a practically complete establishment.

The F.M.S.V.F. also require about 500 more members, their establishment being 2424 as against an actual strength of 1995. The Asiatic units in the F.M.S. are almost without exception up to establishment, and it is therefore the European units that require more support. There is also a shortage of officers in the F.M.S.

It will be clear that more European volunteers are required in both the Colony and the F.M.S. and a stiffening of those Europeans who have had previous training in Volunteer. Territorial or Cadet units would be most useful and welcome. Since it stands to reason that such men, even though not desirous of accepting promotion, would, by the very example they set and their previous knowledge, be a most useful asset to the training of those who are doing their first periods of service.

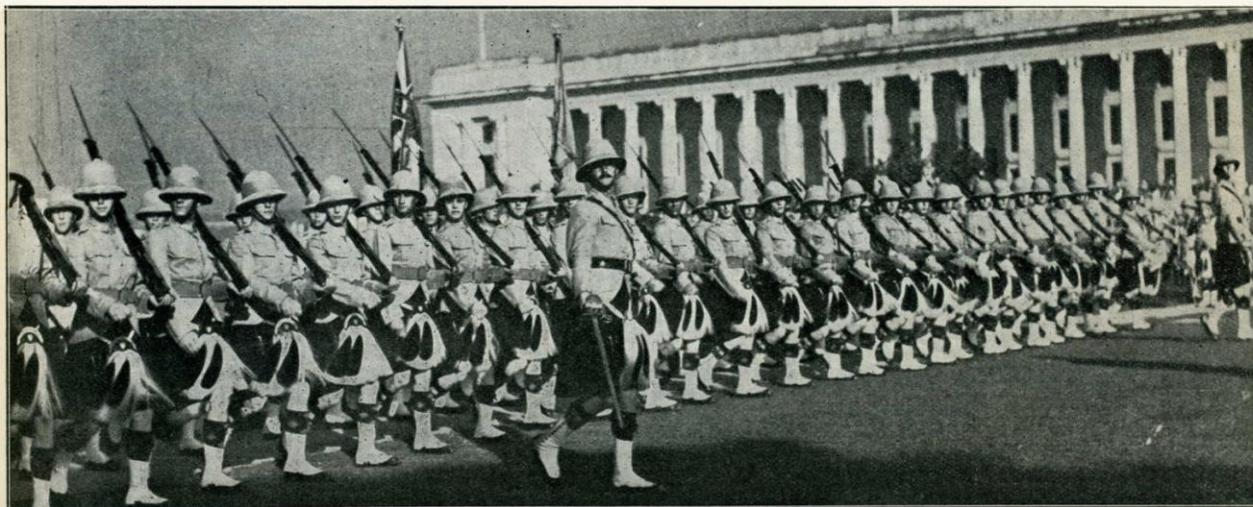


Malayan Volunteers in a typically Malayan setting.

WITH the foregoing in mind, and a further appreciation of the fact that volunteering offers hours in the open air combined with exercise, distraction from business worries and opportunities for acquaintances with all communities, it would appear easy for the average man of 40 and under to apply the will to the way and eventually have the satisfaction of feeling that a duty has been done.

Regular troops may be maintained in peace-time as an emergency precaution, but when it comes to defending our homes, families and the countries which are our very source of livelihood, the inadequate size of the Regular Army can easily be comprehended by the number of civilian troops that had to be trained and put into the field during the Great War.

Our nation cannot think of maintaining a regular army of the size that is required for modern warfare,



The first kilted regiment that Singapore has ever seen: the 2nd. Battalion the Gordon Highlanders at the Coronation Parade.

and any effort to do so would only result in intolerable taxation and finally in bankruptcy.

Consequently the regular forces are merely the nucleus of the nation's army, maintained for purposes of keeping the country's armaments up-to-date and testing them; for maintaining law and order; for punitive expeditions; for the training of men whose profession is the army, and whose job it is to appreciate the possibilities of future wars and to avoid them with adequate preparations for defence, which includes the training of a civilian army of volunteers—including those who never come forward for training until war has broken out or is imminent.

IN the Great War all available regular troops were thrown into France at a moment's notice, and it was possible to reinforce that pitifully small force almost immediately by volunteers, i.e. the Territori-



Armoured cars are manned by Volunteers in Singapore.

als, men who through a high sense of duty to their families and country had allowed themselves to be trained in the art of defence in their spare time by the Regular Army in times of peace. Together these two forces held the front while civilians came forward during the years that followed, some quickly, some slowly, some under pressure.

If we had only had every civilian trained, that ghastly war would have been of very much shorter duration, for during the time that we were training our civilians we gave the enemy time to do the same thing. Further, a nation the size of ours, if it has a highly trained civilian army of volunteers may avoid war altogether, since such very strength would make an enemy hesitate to attack at all; but our real motto must be that which Lord Baden-Powell gave to the youth of our Empire: "Be Prepared."



Volunteer engineers preparing for an "enemy" landing.

Rosemary Fell, in her COFEPOW article, *The Malayan Volunteer Forces*, mentions the immense help given to the thousands of British Forces upon the capitulation of Malaya and Singapore to the Japanese in 1941/42. The 'Volunteers' were acclimatized to the tropical conditions, unlike many of the troops who were newly arrived to the Far East. They were knowledgeable about tropical diseases and dealing with them and were in a position to barter with local traders for food and medicine for the POW's. That the 'Volunteers' were comprised of civilians of different nationalities and from all walks of life is emphasized through the above article, by Tony Parrini's family history research, and was also a significant happening in helping determine the post-war career of David Marshall, Singapore's first elected Chief Minister in the mid-fifties. A member of the Singapore Volunteers Corps (SVC) 'B' Company he was captured in February 1942 and interned in Changi Prison. He was later sent to a forced labour camp at Hokkaido in Japan. He was moved to 26 different POW camps during his internment where he acted as spokesman for his fellow prisoners. After the war he formed the Singapore War Prisoners' Association fighting for compensation for former POW's.

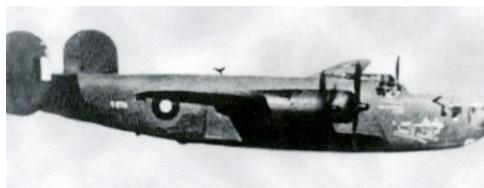
The man who reintroduced head hunting into Borneo – part 3

Tom Harrison DSO

After wartime service during 1945 behind Japanese lines in Borneo, as leader of a 'Z' Special unit, Tom Harrison took on the role of interior administering officer for the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit in post-war Borneo, later as curator of the Sarawak Museum and also played a key role in assisting British Forces during the Brunei revolt and initial stages of Confrontation with Indonesia.

Explorer, soldier, curator: anthropologist, conservationist, aviator. At the surrender of the Fujino Tai in late 1945, Major Tom Harrison was able to turn his attention to his new

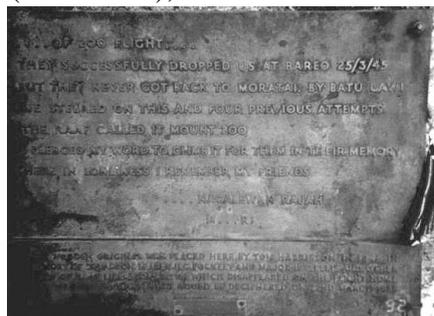
assignment with the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit. In his new role as ‘officer administering the interior’ his first assignment was the supervision of building a school at Pa Mein. During this period Sarawak was under Australian military administration with the third Rajah, Charles Vyner Brooke retiring, ceding Sarawak to Britain and it becoming a British Crown Colony. Throughout this ‘upheaval’ Tom Harrison continued with his duties with BBKAU and also



made plans to commemorate the arrival, by parachute, of his ‘Z’ Force team into Borneo the previous year, and also to remember the crew of the 200 Flight RAAF



Liberator, A72-191, that brought them to Borneo but did not return to base. Apparently the Liberator tangled with a camouflaged and heavily armed AA gun boat after the drop and was shot down. To the memory of the crew he erected a wooden board on the lower peak of Mount 200 (Batu Lawi), so named as it was the turning point for the



drop zone run-ins for 200 Flight aircraft and hence the name ‘Mount 200’.

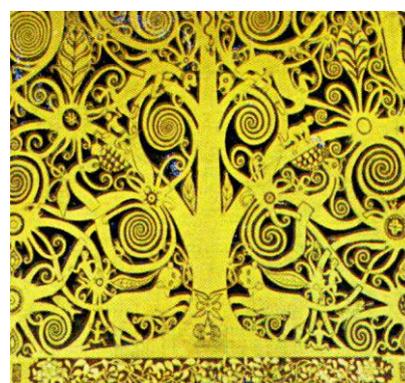
Recently discovered, the original plaque is unreadable in places, but the original transcript reads: FOR MY FRIENDS S/LDR GRAHAM POCKLEIGH [Pockley] DFC MAJ. BEN ELLIS, BRITISH ARMY AND THEIR CREW OF 200 FLIGHT RAAF. THEY SUCCESSFULLY DROPPED US AT BAREO 25/3/45 BUT THEY NEVER GOT BACK TO MOROTAI. BY BATU LAWI WE STEERED ON THIS AND FOUR PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS. THEIR MAP CALLED IT MT 200. I PLEDGED MY WORD TO CLIMB

FOR THE FIRST TIME. HERE IN LONELINESS I REMEMBER THESE FRIENDS. TH 20/4/46

Upon his return from taking leave in Britain in 1947 (he was awarded the DSO in 1947 for his wartime service) he was appointed as Government Ethnologist and Museum Curator to the Sarawak Museum in Kuching. As the museum curator he revived the Sarawak Museum Journal, prior to the Japanese occupation a prestigious publication. In addition to the museum journal he also contributed to other science based journals including the Bulletin of the Raffles Museum (Singapore) and Malayan Nature Journal. He also developed the museum ‘into an



institution of worthy standing’ but also as a museum for the people. His role as curator also included that of conservation officer for the green sea turtle leading to research into declining numbers of the animal. For his outstanding work in this study he gained international recognition.



Remembering the charismatic ‘Tree of Life’ artwork (above) seen previously at the Kenyan Long Nawang longhouse, he commissioned a Kenyan artist to reproduce the painting in the museum, accessible for all to see and enjoy.

His work as Government Ethnologist led to him clashing with a number of academic figures that were recognised experts in this field. Of several who clashed with him, one, a social anthropologist of repute, really fell out with him, making many complaints to senior government representatives about his behavior. Following this the complainant visited the museum and declared the place a ‘palace of pornography’ taking photographs of the

‘offending’ *orang ulu* traditional carvings. Later, after being accompanied by a police escort to the airport upon his voluntary departure from Kuching, and arriving in Singapore he ‘blew it’, eventually to be assessed by a psychiatrist in Karachi and then collected and escorted back to his Australian university by his department head. At a later date, after Tom Harrison had left Sarawak for good, the anthropologist returned to continue his supervision of scholars doing fieldwork.

Despite all this the highlight of Tom Harrison’s role as a government employee led to the giant Niah caves and discovery of famous *Niah Skull*. During the protracted arguments over the skulls authenticity, his behavior was moving more towards engineered rows with his drunken and disorderly behavior becoming more common. Occasionally, his drunken driving around Kuching was enlivened by the hairy arm of an orangutan reaching out of the passenger’s window, an advertisement perhaps for the sanctuary he helped set up for raising and breeding the ‘man of the forest’ for eventual release into the wild. This sanctuary is still in existence today`.

In spite of his reputation for rudeness and drunkenness, Tom Harrison was awarded the OBE for his accomplishments on portraying Sarawak to the world. He also had the people of the interior still at heart when he visited his wartime friends at Bario after an absence of several years. He found changes: dogs were now kept outside the longhouse, the pigs were fenced in and an anti-malarial programme was in operation to reduce the number of mosquitoes, also there were fewer cockroaches about due to use of insecticide that in turn led to a proliferation of bed bugs. Unfortunately there had also been an increase in the rat population as the longhouse cats died through eating poisoned cockroaches (and chit chats as they accumulated the insecticide in their bodies through eating affected insects), so with the help of volunteers collecting cats of all ages, Tom Harrison was able to persuade the ever helpful RAF to drop the cats, secured in ‘special containers’, by parachute to the Bario population.



Red Feather Day

On December 8th 1962 the Brunei revolt started. On December 9th John Fisher, Resident Officer of the 4th Division of the Sarawak Colonial Administration and prewar officer of the Brooke Rajah government, sent a red feather by runner up the Barum River: a traditional call to arms! The response from the tribal peoples was enthusiastic to say the least! Hundreds of Kenyahs, Kayans and Ibans moved rapidly downriver where expatriates from the PWD, Police, Education etc took charge of the volunteer forces. In the meantime Tom Harrison was involved in helping British Forces reconnoiter the interior, courtesy of RAF helicopters and Single and Twin Pioneers. On landing at an inland site he tasked the volunteers of the ‘Harrison’s Force’, as it came to be known, to prevent the escape of rebels. He also helped plan the recapture of the fort at Bekenu where an attack by his irregulars and the First Battalion Green Jackets was successful...*heads were not taken by any of the tribal irregulars, probably to the disappointment of some of the WW II guerilla veterans!*



In order to further secure the loyalty of the sub-coastal people, Tom Harrison recommended that the British Forces provide radios, batteries, ammunition and leadership. From this it was decided to place the tribal irregulars under Tom Harrison’s command leading to the forming of the Border Scouts (*left*), who in turn provided useful intelligence to the British forces. For the next six months he was also an adviser to the British Army where his long wartime walks in wartime central Borneo (for which he was awarded the Royal Geographical Society’s Founder

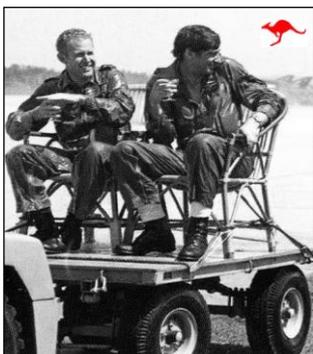
Medal in 1962) proved to be invaluable to military intelligence.

In January 1963 Tom Harrison was requested to produce a pamphlet on the *Background to a Revolt: Brunei and the Surrounding Territory*, a guide for the British Forces on how to avoid offending the 'locals'. Another literary success! Early in 1964 he no longer had a role to play in the Britain's Secret War, known as *Konfrontasi* or Confrontation, and went back to his civilian role in the Sarawak Government.

A woman scorned. Tom Harrison retired from Sarawak Government service in 1966, on his 55th birthday. He stayed on in Sarawak working on a report on the Niah excavations and being involved in the setting up of the new Brunei Museum. It was at this point his offensive behaviour towards others, especially 'expats' in Government Service, began to stack up against him as rumours were spread that he was giving away Sarawak's heritage to Brunei. Not only that but disagreements with two female experts on ceramics and one on archaeology was to lead to trouble for him, especially his clashes with the trained British archaeologist who instigated a campaign against him during his absence when visiting the UK. It has since been proved that the accusations levelled by the archaeologist against Tom Harrison were grossly untrue, but his enemies within the Sarawak Government made sure he was blacklisted from entering Sarawak on his return by refusing him entry at Kuching airport. And so ended his days in Sarawak, for ever!

On January 16th 1976, the hired minibus he was travelling in as a passenger with his wife was returning in the dark from a visit to a reserve in Thailand when it struck a loaded timber lorry parked, without lights, in the middle of the road. Both died instantaneously, as also did two Thai passengers.

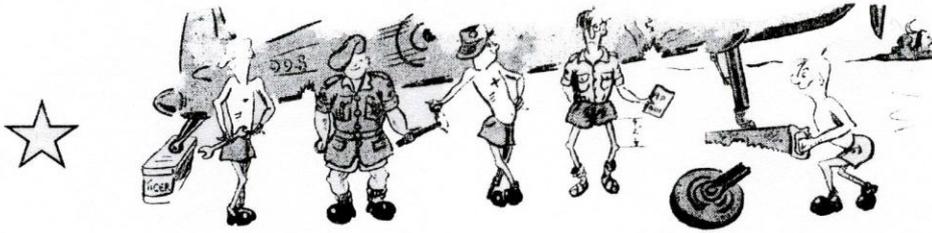
So ended the life of a man who played a major role in the lead-up to Confrontation. Major-General Walter Walker, Director of Operations in the Borneo territories, described Tom Harrison's contribution: *'I liked Harrison's zest and imagination. We would spend the day up-country, flying between longhouses collecting intelligence, and be back in Brunei for the evening conference. During this first week both of us flew together the full length of the Indonesian frontier, nearly one thousand miles. Between stops the two of us looked down on to the jungle covered hills and mountains while Harrison pointed out the routes across the frontier which he had already marked on my map'*. Wherever they landed, the people of the uplands immediately recognised him *'as soon as he landed and stepped out they all came rushing up to him. It was as if Jesus Christ had arrived'*. Not a bad accolade to finish on!



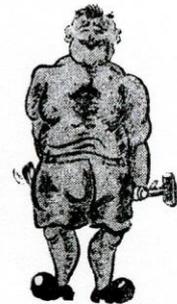
Royal Australian Air Force logistics planners at Butterworth thought they had the answer when they came up with a new fuel saving scheme for transporting staff around the base.....Unfortunately for the Aussies the RAF beat them to it when the WRAF in Singapore adopted pedal power as a means of fuel savings many years ago! Well done the WRAF.



Something Technical



YOUR aircraft has lavished on it all the care, if not always the affection accorded the newly-born. Every day, rain or sun (and it's usually rain), the technical chaps give it the once-over. Every couple of weeks they have the cowlings off, change the plugs and generally rummage about (at least, that's what they appear to be doing; actually they are following a strict schedule). Then, every three months, the aircraft gets taken apart into quite small pieces and put together again—a long job and a thorough one. Other inspections are carried out and replacements fitted exactly as laid down in the little book — for example, the oil and the wheels are changed every hundred flying hours and the engines are changed about every thousand.



These chaps — the fitters and mechanics — know their job, although when you see them they may not always be dressed for dinner. Hidden beneath the grease and suntan is a specialist in some aspect of aircraft engineering — radar, perhaps, or electrics. You'll find them all trade-proud, too, working till the job's finished, the clock notwithstanding. No one would pretend they are all angels (hear the Corporal Tech. when he drops a spanner) but they are doing a very good job, often under trying conditions and, unlike the aircrew, they get very little kudos out of it.



To return to your aircraft. After the technical experts are satisfied, it is handed over to the flying crew who then carry out an air test to see that all the knobs behave in flight. Finally, just before you emplane, the Captain carries out a careful external inspection (you may have seen him walking around like a Brass-hat looking for dust) by way of a last-minute check. Internal tests, running-up the engines and a hundred-and-one safety checks are then carried out either at dispersal (that's where you got in) or at the end of the runway before getting airborne.



No wonder you are feeling safe.

