



30/2 ANGWIN STREET,  
EAST FREMANTLE W.A. 6158  
TEL/FAX 9339 8237  
EMAIL [ericjoybtrma@optusnet.com.au](mailto:ericjoybtrma@optusnet.com.au)  
web site <http://www.btrma.org.au>

## **BURMA THAILAND RAILWAY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION (Inc)**

**THIRTIETH NEWSLETTER  
MAY 2012**

### **2012 QUIET LION TOUR SUMMARY**

The final party was comprised of 70 travellers including 30 juniors. Ex-POWs Neil MacPherson (with son Alan MacPherson, daughter Jan Deany and grand-daughter Gypsy O'Dea) and Snow Fairclough (with sons Colin and Denis and daughter-in-law Susie) travelled. Neil's son Ean joined us for Anzac Day.

Vietnam veteran Graham Edwards (ex State and Federal MP) attended Home Phu Toey for the Anzac Eve reception, the Dawn Service and the Wreath Laying Service.

Committee members were Neil MacPherson, David Piesse and Eric Wilson. Joyce Wilson assisted.

The Esperance District Senior High School contingent included thirteen students Jade Gallon, Carrie Zaretzky, Meg Clarke, de-anna Edmondson, Jaydon Hill, Bree Wickstein, David Andrews, Shelley Defrenne, Hannah Shipley, Alicia Jackson, Chevy Jackson, Andrew Russell, and Lachlan Kipling, two teachers, Sarah Day & Brett Kipling and the school nurse Christine Brandenburg. Also from Esperance were Frank Kipling, David Andrews, Paul Russell and Lorna Russell and Andrew Hill.

FESA sponsored junior Campbell Simpson of the Wongan Hills Brigade. Sam McGregor from Geraldton also attended. The exPOW Association sponsored juniors Emma Bromham and Andrea Leonard from Mount Lawley Senior High School. The Karrinyup Rotary Club sponsored Carine Senior High School students Laura Mwiragua, Anika Landy and Sam Blitvitch. Wagin Lions sponsored Claire Piesse.

Carnamah District Senior High School was represented by juniors Micaela Dunham and Tuscany Hughes with teacher Stacey Wellington.

The Mandurah group consisted of cadets, Kelsie Potthoff, Christopher Purchase & Steven Palliser sponsored collectively by The Holding Trust, Peel Health Campus, Mandurah RSL and Neil MacPherson; Daniel Dawson sponsored by Wally Holding and adults Stephen Purchase and Russell and Roslyn Herbert.

Other younger people were Mosese and Netani Talemaitoga, Chelsea Wells and David Hamilton.

Jenni Cameron and Judy Forge from Brisbane, Maureen White from Burnie (Tasmania) and Ron Wilson from Melbourne travelled from the Eastern States.

Other adults were June Elliott, Mary Bock, Gill Bulliard, Kathleen Heath, Elaine Cary, Norma Gwilliam, Warwick Lang, Ian Skepper, Dennis Ritchie, Maureen Storry, Michael Vincent and David Waddell.

To perpetuate the memory of the privations and sacrifices of Allied Prisoners of War and the selfless dedication of the medical personnel during the construction of the Burma Thailand Railway by informing current and future generations through all forms of education and particularly with Quiet Lion Tours to the Burma Thai Railway; The River Kwai; The Three Pagoda Pass; Anzac Day

at Hellfire Pass and Kanchanaburi War Cemetery.

There were a number of travellers who had kin on the Burma Thailand Railway; David Piesse's father was Ron Piesse, David Hamilton's grand-father was Dick Hamilton and June Elliott's father was Bill Haskell, all of the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Machine Gun Battalion. Norma Gwilliam's husband/Elaine Cary's brother was Horace Gwilliam of the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Battalion. Andrew Hill and Michael Vincent also had kin on the railway.

The tour left Perth on 17th April and arrived at the Royal Benja Hotel in Bangkok late that night.



Day 2 saw a briefing and get-together after breakfast followed by a City Tour including the Royal Grand Palace and The Emerald Buddha Temple, lunch at the Fishermen's riverside restaurant on the Chayo Praya, an afternoon at the Toll Marble Hall (new venue), an arrival dinner and overnight accommodation at the Royal Benja Hotel.

On day 3 there was a visit to the Royal Summer Palace at Bang Pa In and the ancient Thai capital Ayutthaya. Time was spent at Ayutthaya Historical precinct where old ruins of a city sacked by the marauding Burmese in the fourteenth century and a huge golden Buddha were examined. Lunch was taken on a river cruise from Ayutthaya to Bangkok along the Chayo Praya River. There was time for shopping in the afternoon and evening.

Day 4 featured a visit to Nakom Pathom and the giant chedi. This area was the site of a giant 10,000 bed hospital established towards the end of the railway building project. Nong Pladuk, where the Burma Thailand Railway commenced from the Singapore-Bangkok Railway and Ban Pong where the Prisoners of War left the trains to travel north were visited. The site of the Tamuang camp, which featured a meeting with a Thai gentleman who resided on the site of the camp where PoWs were assembled for the Japan parties was visited. After lunch at the Baan Rao Restaurant in Kanchanaburi, the Cemetery and Thai Burma Railway Centre were visited. At the TBRC those travellers who had kin on the "Railway" were able to receive information folders on their kin from the TBRC staff.

There was then a visit to the Chunkai Cemetery and cutting before arriving at the Pung Waan Kanchanaburi Resort for a welcome party.

Day 5. The traditional Anzac Cup football match arranged by the Thailand Tigers was attended at 8.30am. The visitors this year were the Cambodian Eagles. All the players on both sides are ex-pat Australians and the visiting PoWs are given pride of place. The party then boarded the train to travel on the original railway to Wampo Viaduct where lunch was taken at the Tam Krasae River Resort on the Kwai Noi River near the viaduct. There was then a visit to the Tarsao hospital and camp sites (now the Pung Waan Kwai Noi Resort). The Elephant Park near Thadan Bridge was visited.

After arrival at Home Phu Toey resort there was a Light and sound show and welcome dinner as guests of the proprietor, Khun Kanit Wanachote OAM.

Day 6. Visited the scene of the Hintok Mountain Camp where Bill Haskell traditionally addressed the group. David and Eric addressed the group. The addresses covered the Mountain Camp, the Valley Camp, Cholera Gulch and the Road Camp. Later the Kinsayok Camp area and the Sai Yok Yai Waterfalls were visited followed by a houseboat trip and lunch on the River Kwan terminating at Hinton River POW Camp ensued. The tour then returned to Home Phi Toy via Konya River Camp and Hinton Road.

Day 7 saw the group walk the Heritage Trail from Hintok Cutting through to Hellfire Pass. There was an address at the end of Hintok Cutting and the site of the Three Tier Bridge by David Piesse and a period at the Hellfire Pass Museum. In the afternoon the group visited the Sai Yok Noi Falls and the site of the Tonchan South camp and later he Jack Chalker gallery and other displays at Weary Dunlop Park.

Day 8 there was a series of events at Home Phu Toey. There was then an Obelisk Ceremony in memory of all those personnel from Hintok Camp, particularly the medical personnel. A Buddhist ceremony followed in Weary Dunlop Park where a group of nine Monks conducted a service to rest the souls of all people who died in the area. This represented a novel, one-off, experience for our juniors.

A special Memorial Service was then held at the tomb in the nursery and scout area of Home Phu Toey in memory of the late Khun Oonjai Wanachote. The Esperance Group again gave an outstanding rendition of Amazing Grace under the direction of Gypsy O'Dea  
The group travelled to Takanun Camps, the Wat Takanun and the Khao Lam Dam (lunch overlooking dam wall). The Rin Tin, Onte, Brankassi and Hindato camps were passed. The juniors had their first drill instruction for the wreath laying ceremony.

Day 9 started early with the Dawn Service at Hellfire Pass. A gunfire breakfast followed before returning to Home Phu Toey for breakfast. The group then travelled to Kanchanaburi for the Wreath Laying Service. Neil MacPherson delivered the PoW address and Snow Fairclough delivered the ode. Our juniors again escorted the wreath layers and assembled before the VIP tent to acknowledge the POWs and dignitaries. There was a convivial barbecue arranged jointly by the Australian and New Zealand Ambassadors. Lunch was at the restaurant beside the Bridge over the River Kwai. Lat Ya Shinto Shrine (Peace Park) where lush gardens of the Shinto Peace Park Shrine in the vicinity of the Raja or Temple Camp which had been a stopping point for all POW groups travelling north from Ban Pong were enjoyed. There was free time at Home Phu Toey. That evening there was a farewell dinner normally hosted by Khun Kanit but unfortunately he was not well. The traditional concert was held during and after dinner. It was compered on this occasion by Stacey Wellington from Carnamah and Brett Kipling of Esperance. It was a memorable event featuring many improvised and funny items.



Dawn Service Helfire Pass

Day 10 saw the group return to Bangkok. En route they visited the Damnoen Saduak Floating Markets where they experienced a trip through the klongs in long tail boats before shopping in the vast markets. A tour highlight was the sumptuous lunch followed by an elephant show and a cultural village display was enjoyed. There was again an opportunity for shopping.

Day 11. This was a free day for members of the group to make arrangements for shopping or tours of the city. A party of juniors were escorted on a special shopping and city features tour. In the evening there was a final dinner before leaving for the airport for the late flight home. The involvement of the Thai agent and his staff and was acknowledged. All those who contributed during the tour were acknowledged. The guides and bus crews were collectively and individually thanked for their great work and juniors presented each with suitable gratuities provided by the tour on behalf of the travellers. Senior Guide Ake continues to improve his knowledge and leadership. Bus 2 Guide Kate proved a great help, particularly with the juniors and at the Pung Waan celebration.

The 2012 Quiet Lion Tour was very successful by comparison with any previous tours.

**Eric Wilson**  
Chairman/Tour Organiser

**David Piesse**  
Tour Leader.



Neil MacPherson delivering the Anzac Day address.



Esperance students with the POWs Snow Fairclough and Neil MacPherson



Neil MacPherson after the wreath laying ceremony

## VALE WILLIAM SLAPE

Members of the Burma Thailand Railway Memorial Association (Inc) are saddened and overawed at the news of the death of a very great friend Bill Slape.

Members will recall the recent article in the newsletter which referred to the presentation of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) Operations Medal by Deputy Commissioner Michael Phelan to Bill for his efforts in support of the AFP tsunami relief operation in Thailand in December 2004. Members who had travelled on Quiet Lion Tours were reminded that Bill Slape, manager of the Hellfire Pass Museum on the Burma Thailand Railway always been a great help to the organisers of the Quiet Lion Tours.

Bill, a Vietnam veteran and retired Warrant Officer was presented with the Australian Federal Police (AFP) Operations Medal by Deputy Commissioner Michael Phelan in a ceremony held at the Australian Embassy in Bangkok in recognition of his efforts in support of the AFP tsunami relief operation in Thailand in December 2004.

Bill had responded at short notice to a request for assistance as a linguist to facilitate AFP operations at Phuket. However, he did much more. Among the many tasks, Bill sought approval for international medical teams to use two temples as temporary mortuaries, sourced equipment, and supported AFP forensic staff. He worked in this environment for 16 days non-stop. The AFP Operations Medal had never been awarded to a civilian and was awarded to Bill at the direction of former AFP Commissioner, Mick Kelty. At the time, Bill had recently been treated for a heart condition but was recuperating at his Kanchanaburi residence.

Bill did his normal excellent performance in leading the team preparing Hellfire Pass and the Heritage Trail for the 2012 Anzac Day Dawn Service. We had the opportunity to catch up with him prior to and after Anzac Day.

Bill exercised regularly, particularly after his health scare but, tragically, he had a heart attack on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May whilst swimming laps and died.

There was a Christian memorial service at the Christ Church, 11 Convent Road, Bangkok, on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May. Following the service in Bangkok, Bill was returned to Kanchanaburi for services at the Wat Nua temple in Kanchanaburi on Wednesday (16<sup>th</sup>), Thursday (17<sup>th</sup>) & Friday (18<sup>th</sup>) nights commencing 7.30 p.m and concluding with a Cremation Service at 1.00 p.m. Saturday (19 May). Bill had endeared himself to the many Thai nationals who he worked with and he deeply respected their religion.

Bill has many friends and family in his home State of Queensland and many friends and acquaintances in Thailand and will be missed by all. We of the Burma Thailand Railway Memorial Association extend our condolences to all and express our deep sorrow at the passing of such an energetic and resourceful man who was also a great friend.

Eric Wilson Chairman  
Burma Thailand Memorial Railway Association (Inc)

### **BURMA THAILAND RAILWAY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION (Inc) WEBSITE.**

The website of the association is about to undergo some changes. The site we not look too different but we hope that the changes will enhance the communication of its message to the world at large.

The website has previously been hosted by NGIS and supported by it and Roland Lockhart free of charge. Whilst the firm NGIS has been generous in hosting our web site and Roland Lockhart has carried out the management, our profile has grown considerably. Our site had operated on a limited basis prior to the arrangement. Chris Devlin Neil, MacPherson's nephew and employee of NGIS, assisted in having NGIS host the website and maintain it.

The web site assists greatly in achieving the worthy objectives of the Association by allowing interested people to gain knowledge of the story of the Burma Thailand Railway, the terrible experiences of our service personnel and the valiant efforts of our medicos as Prisoners of War of the Japanese Imperial Army during World War Two.

The Association is a non-profit organization and the assistance of NGIS has been invaluable. Having generously assisted us for some years it was decided that we should acknowledge the good will of NGIS, relieve them of the cost and trouble involved and move the BTRMA management of the account to Roland Lockhart as an individual. Roland is happy to continue his role.

The web site at Webclick (PerthWeb Design Studio) has been migrated off the NGIS account and is now registered with the BTRMA via namescout,

The BTRMA is deeply indebted to NGIS and Roland Lockhart for assisting with the establishment and maintenance of our Web Site and we thank Mr Chris Devlin for facilitating the commencement of the arrangement with NGIS.

Eric Wilson  
Chairman  
Burma Thailand Railway Memorial Association (Inc)

# ITINERARY QUIET LION TOUR OF THAILAND 2013

- DAY 1 SATURDAY 20th APRIL 2013**  
6.10AM Arrive Perth International Airport (Perth Travelers)  
9.10AM Depart Perth International Airport. TG484  
5.00PM Arrive Suvarnabhumi Airport Bangkok.  
Overnight accommodation Royal Benja Hotel Bangkok. (1)
- DAY 2 SUNDAY 21ST APRIL 2013**  
9AM Briefing and get-together after breakfast.  
9.30 a.m. City Tour. Royal Grand Palace and The Emerald Buddha Temple.  
Lunch at Chayo Praya riverside restaurant. Afternoon ? River tour and Toll Marble Hall. Time for shopping.  
Arrival dinner.  
Overnight accommodation at Royal Benja Hotel. (2)
- DAY 3 MONDAY 22ND APRIL 2013**  
8AM Visit the Royal Summer Palaces at Bang Pa-in & the ancient capital Ayutthaya. Lunch cruising down the Chayo Phraya River. Some free time after cruise to shop. (Juniors under supervision).  
Overnight accommodation at Royal Benja Hotel. (3)
- DAY 4 TUESDAY 23RD APRIL 2013**  
7.30 AM To Nakom Pathom, Ban Pong, Nong Pladuk, Tamuang and Kanchanaburi. Lunch at Baan Rao Restaurant. Kanchanaburi Cemetery and Thai Burma Railway Centre. Chunkai Cemetery and cutting.  
7.30PM Welcome party at Pung Waan Kanchanaburi (1)
- DAY 5 WEDNESDAY 24TH APRIL 2013**  
8am. Check-out. 9am Football match. 11.30am Train to Wampo Viaduct with lunch by River near viaduct. Visit Tarsao hospital and camp sites (Pung Waan Kwai Noi Resort), **Thadan Bridge & Elephant Park. Tarsao & Sai Yok Noi Falls (Tonchan South Camp**  
19.00 hrs Light and sound show. Welcome Dinner as guests of Khun Kanit. Overnight accommodation at Home Phu Toey. (1)
- DAY 6 THURSDAY 25TH APRIL 2012**  
3.00AM Early wake-up for Dawn Service in Hellfire Pass. Breakfast at Home Phu Toey.  
8.00AM To Kanchanaburi for 10AM Anzac Day Ceremony at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery. Lunch at Tida Loa Riverside Restaurant. Visit Bridge over River Kwai. Lat Ya Shinto Shrine (Peace Park). **Thadan Bridge & Elephant Park. Tarsau & Sai Yok Noi Falls (Tonchan South Camp). See Day 5.**  
Overnight accommodation at Home Phu Toey (2)
- DAY 7 FRIDAY 26TH APRIL 2013**  
8AM Walk the Burma Railway Heritage Trail from Hintok Road through Hintok Cutting to Hellfire Pass Museum. Lunch at Home Phu Toey. Visit Jack Chalker gallery and other displays at Weary Dunlop Park.  
Overnight accommodation at Home Phu Toey. (3)
- DAY 8 SATURDAY 27TH APRIL 2013**  
8AM Obelisk ceremony, Oonjai Memorial and Buddhist ceremony at Home Phu Toey. Takanun Camps and Khao Lam Dam (lunch overlooking dam wall). Pass Brankassi and Hindato camps. Concert rehearsals. Dinner and overnight accommodation at Home Phu Toey.  
Overnight accommodation at Home Phu Toey. (4)
- DAY 9 SUNDAY 28TH APRIL 2013**  
8AM Visit scene of Hintok Road POW Camp, Kinsayok Camp area, Sai Yok Yai Waterfalls, Houseboat trip and lunch on River Kwai terminating at Hintok River POW Camp. Return to Home Phu Toey via Konyu River Camp and Hintok Road.  
Farewell dinner and concert as guests of Khun Kanit Wanachote.  
Overnight accommodation at Home Phu Toey (5)
- DAY 10 MONDAY 29TH APRIL 2013**  
8.30am Leave for Kanchanaburi.  
Thailand Burma Railway Centre.  
Lunch on raft and two rivers.  
Overnight accommodation at Pung Waan Kanchanaburi. (2)
- DAY 11 TUESDAY 30TH APRIL 2013**  
8.30am Leave for Bangkok.  
Visit Floating Markets and Craft Workshop. Lunch and cultural show at Rose Gardens. Time for shopping.  
Overnight accommodation at Royal Benja Hotel. (4)  
7.30.PM Final dinner.
- DAY 12 WEDNESDAY 1st MAY 2013**  
5AM Leave hotel  
7.45AM Depart Bangkok for Perth per TG 481  
Arrive Perth International Airport APPROX 4PM..



SUBJECT TO CHANGE WHERE NECESSARY.



## BURMA THAILAND RAILWAY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION (Inc)

31 Geranium Place  
CANNING VALE WA 6155  
Tel: (08) 9256 1436  
Email: [kimkrishna@iprimus.com.au](mailto:kimkrishna@iprimus.com.au)  
Website: <http://www.btrma.org.au>

Subscriptions for the 2012/2013 financial year are now due. If you have not already paid them, please forward them to the Association with this notice.

Mr  Mrs  Ms  Miss

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Tel No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Subscriptions: \$ 5.00

Donation: \$

Total: \$

Please make cheques payable to Burma Thailand Railway Memorial Association (Inc).