

# THE BURMA CAMPAIGN SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER

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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

There were only two significant activities in the year between February 2010 and February 2011. In November I visited Lieutenant General Sato's tomb in Yamagata Prefecture. Together with Philip Malins, Maurice and Jean Franes, David Charles and Hideki Hayasaka, I also attended the Memorial Service and Prayers for Peace at Three Wheels on Sunday, 22nd August. There, we were joined for the first time by Mr. Futagami, Mr. Takashi Hayashi and, from a younger generation, Masaomi Futagami and Toshie Kaneko, who are also new members of BCS. We were, however, unable to send anyone to the Annual Service for International Friendship and Reconciliation in Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday, 15th August, for which Phillida Purvis was the key organizer.

My personal circumstances meant that from February 2010 I had to be with my family, and since then the organization of BCS fell into disarray and no Annual General Meeting was organized. The poor communication and lack of understanding amongst ourselves as to how to run the Society was certainly an eye-opener. An AGM was eventually held on 2nd October, but many issues were left unresolved.

1. All Committee Members, except for John White, are either working or looking for a job. Communication with one another is therefore very difficult, and even when using e-mails responses are often delayed.
2. New Japanese members' interests are more focused on the current political issues arising in the Pacific region and in neighbouring countries, such as the Korean peninsular and mainland China, as a result of World War II, rather than on Burma itself. Except for the Chairman, none of the Japanese members were connected with the War in Burma.
3. Lack of Recruitment and declining membership, since the advancing age of veterans inevitably meant that they could no longer attend meetings.
4. Failure to follow up on annual fees; to promote BCS, and to resolve the situation promptly.
5. Failure to update or improve the Website for several years.
6. No activity plan, since members were too busy to get together regularly.
7. David Charles urged the closure of BCS last August and John White resigned from BCS in October.
8. The Constitution is no longer suited to the current Society and requires amendment.
9. Lack of commitment, with no one willing to take the initiative and accept responsibility for running BCS.
10. Lack of financial support.
  - Recruitment, Website costs, Attendance at war-related events and meetings are all paid for by individual members.
  - Although postage, envelopes, printing ink and paper and Nippon Club venue fees are covered, there are insufficient funds to develop our activities further.

The issue as to whether BCS should continue or close down was raised at the AGM and there was a heated discussion. The majority voted to continue as we are, but it was also agreed that all members should be asked for their opinions.

### **Auspicious News.**

Philip Malins, a long-time advocate of reconciliation between Britain and Japan, former Deputy Chairman of BCS, and a previous member of the Burma Campaign Fellowship Group, was honoured by Japan with the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays. He received the medal at the Japanese Ambassador's residence in London in November, and all of us offer him many congratulations on receiving this special award.

## **Sad News.**

**Maurice Franses** passed away on 17th November, aged 89. He was a former Treasurer of BCFG, a long-time, loyal supporter of BCS, and the late Masao Hirakubo's closest friend. Masao used to visit Franses' home every month for afternoon tea, together with Jean Maurice, and they had many discussions regarding the Burma Campaign and the historical backgrounds of both nations. They were very close and formed a strong friendship over many years. Despite his poor health, Franses and Jean attended the Annual Memorial Service at Three Wheels last August. He will be greatly missed.



**Maurice Franses**

**Len Harrop** also passed away in February this year. His son contacted my home while I was away and I was told that his father was 94. I am sorry that I never had the opportunity to meet him and I would like to thank him for his loyal and friendly support of BCS.

## **Japan-UK 150th Anniversary Celebration. DVD.**

Recently NHK Japanese Broadcasting Corporation, sent us a DVD which was the edited version of eight hours of tape. As a result we now have a 12 minutes promotional DVD. We had asked Mr Shimizu and Mr Uno, two amateur cameramen, to film the entire event, which was held at St. Ethelburga's Reconciliation Centre on 17th October 2009. The two of them then spent many hours transferring the long films onto a single DVD, and we then asked NHK to create a short DVD with subtitles.

I would like to extend our very special thanks to Mr Takashi Hayashi, Managing Director of Telesearch Ltd, who kindly lent us a professional video camera for this event. I would also like to thank Mr Okada, the then Managing Director of NHK Europe, who has since returned to Japan. He helped to have NHK in Japan extract a short DVD from the original long version. I used this new DVD for a Lecture at Tohoku University of Community Services and Science and, after it was shown to the public, we observed a one minute silence to pray for the war dead.

## **Kohima War Museum.**

Before I went to Shonai-Machi, Yamagata Prefecture, the home town of Lieut. General Sato, I contacted Mr Bob Cook, Curator of Kohima War Museum in York, and he kindly sent me a cross of poppies to dedicate at General Sato's tomb. He also sent me two messages, together with a booklet in English of Japanese war experiences, which I passed on when I dedicated the cross and a wreath, also of poppies, from BCS.

My report of my visit will be on Kohima War Museum's Website (<http://www.kohimamuseum.com>) and in their Newsletter in the near future, so please watch those spaces.

**Akiko Macdonald**

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## **HON. SECRETARY'S MESSAGE TO ALL MEMBERS.**

The time has flown by so fast. It has already been four months since the last AGM, and first of all, I would like to apologize yet again for the delay in sending out the Minutes.

The time since the AGM has been marked by the very sad news of the death of two well-known members, and we would like to offer, on behalf of all BCS members, our heartfelt sympathy to their families and their friends,

I myself have renewed my sense of duty to carry on their legacy to the next generation by committing ourselves to do whatever we can to continue our activities in order to deepen, as well as widen, mutual understanding between our two nations. To achieve this we should all put our heads together to think about the best way forward. To this end, your ideas, suggestions and comments would be very much welcomed.

One other thing that I have to apologize for is that we did not have a chance to call a three-monthly Committee Meeting. We did, however have a spontaneous gathering in December at which Akiko, Mr Shimizu, Mr Masaomi Futagami, Mr Hyashi, Miss Toshio Kaneko, together with a potential future member and myself were present.

The good news is that since the AGM we are now at last on our way to sorting out the Website, thanks to Masaomi and to Ms Yuko Matsumoto who have so far helped us free of charge. In the future, you may therefore be able to put your

ideas and comments to the membership through the notice board. We shall let all members know when that time comes.

Finally, I should like to thank you all for your endless patience and generous understanding and look forward to seeing you all at this year's AGM in April or May.

**Hideko Hayasaka**

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## **PHILIP MALINS MBE MC RECEIVES THE ORDER OF THE RISING SUN WITH GOLD AND SILVER RAYS.**

In his Speech bestowing the Award conferred on Philip Malins, now aged 91, by the Government of Japan, Ambassador Shin Ebihara spoke of his many initiatives in the cause of reconciliation, saying "I sincerely admire Mr Malins' efforts to create opportunities for British and Japanese people to come together..... turning the precious concept (of reconciliation) into solid reality." He added that "Heavy responsibilities are now on the shoulders of my generation and successive younger generations to build upon Mr Malins' achievement and to consolidate everlasting peace and friendship between our two nations." The Ambassador referred particularly to the Annual Reconciliation Services at Coventry and Canterbury Cathedrals and the founding of the Anglo-Japanese Garden at the National Memorial Arboretum,



**Philip Malins**

In his Acceptance Speech, Philip Malins said that he was "filled with gratitude and emotion in accepting this entirely unexpected honour in the presence of so many who have made outstanding contributions to reconciliation."

Among the many distinguished guests and war veterans was Gordon Graham MC and Bar, who fought in the Battle of Kohima and was responsible for creating the Burma Campaign Libraries in the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London and at the Yasukuni Museum in Tokyo. It is clear that one of the most important contributions that the "successive generations" to which the Ambassador referred can make is not to be content with the existing Collections, holding almost one thousand books in English and Japanese in each of those two libraries, but to continue to expand them year by year and decade by decade to create a living archive of ever-growing importance.

In rehearsing his many activities over the years, Philip Malins spoke of the remarkable speech which Ambassador Sadayuki Hayashi delivered from the pulpit of Coventry Cathedral in 1999. In it he said that "The experience of those people who suffered during the war against Japan will remain forever etched in their minds. We Japanese feel deeply remorseful about what happened and sincerely apologize for it. We also recognize that the dreadful events of that time must never be repeated. Indeed, none of us can be blind to the cruel effects of war when we recall the tragic loss of life inflicted on people of all nations involved in that conflict."

It was in that spirit that Philip Malins concluded his Acceptance Speech, saying that "I have great hopes that the war in which we served will be the last world war and that will be the reward for all the sacrifice. *Victory without reconciliation is never complete. Reconciliation is the final victory for both sides.*"

**John White**



**Philip Malins at the Ceremony in the Japanese Embassy**

## MY LINK WITH LIEUTENANT GENERAL KOTOKU SATO (1896-1961).

I became very interested in him because my father, Taiji Urayama, was a Lieutenant Veterinary Surgeon in the 31st Regiment, Mountain Artillery, in the 31st Division, under the command of General Sato. Masao Hirakubo, my predecessor as Chairman of BCS, was, as a Lieutenant, the Supply Officer in that same Unit, and I strongly believe that both he and my father owed their lives to the battlefield decisions taken by General Sato.

I therefore became motivated to look, not just at the exploits of General Sato, who took the crucial decision to withdraw the men of the 31st Division of the 15th Army from the Battle of Kohima, the front line of the Imphal Operation, but also at the character and personality of a man who was once stigmatized as dishonourable and insane.

During the battle, Lieut. General Sato disobeyed his Commanding General's order to advance and pulled his troops back to the nearest food and ammunition depot to save his men from starvation, deadly diseases and death from their wounds. Not long after this, the British-Indian army regained the entire Naga area, thus ending the Imphal Operation.



Lieutenant General K. Sato

In this context, it is well to remember that, of the 86,000 Japanese soldiers who took part in the Imphal campaign, 30,000 died in action or of starvation and illness, and 20,000 were injured or succumbed to malnutrition and disease. The road to Kohima and Imphal, on which lay the remains of so many corpses in military uniform, who have never been taken back to their home, was called 'White Bone Road'.

### Shonai-Machi.

Yamagata Prefecture in the North-West of Japan's main island has a population of roughly 1,250,000 and an area of 9323 sq. km and the Shonai region is in the North-West of the Prefecture and has a population of about 40,000 and is mainly agricultural. It produces a well-known brand of rice called 'Koshi-hikari'.

I knew that General Sato came from Shonai City and I was interested in visiting his grave and memorial, and also hoped to meet his relatives to learn more about him. So I contacted the local government in August and Mr Kenichi Okuyama, Deputy Mayor of Shonai, invited me to lecture at the University and in the City Hall when he learned that my husband and I were planning to go to Japan in November.

General Sato's decision during the Battle of Kohima to withdraw his men branded him as a disgraced officer in the eyes of his superior, General Mutaguchi, who had a military doctor examine him and declare him insane, purely because he had refused to sacrifice his men in a battle he knew it was impossible to win. General Mutaguchi then demoted him and transferred him to the Philippines as a punishment for disobeying his orders. He was not court-martialled because General Mutaguchi did not want his own incompetence in planning and executing the campaign to be scrutinised in a courtroom. General Sato therefore never had a chance to clear his name by showing how his men were sent into battle with insufficient ammunition, food, medicine, and so on.

The Mayor and people of Shonai-Machi were very happy to welcome someone who knew and understood the true character of General Sato; that he was an honourable man who only withdrew the 31st Division from Kohima because he had the lives and welfare of his men at heart.

On my arrival, I was greeted by the Deputy Mayor and Mr Masahiko Hasegawa, a regional TV reporter, although I had not been told that they would both be waiting for me at the station. Next I met Mr Sachio Sato, the Chairman of an Association set up to honour the memory of General Sato. Then we were both taken to the cemetery to pay respects at



Generals Sato's grave and memorial, where I laid the wreaths of poppies and translated the messages from the Curator of the Kohima Museum in York. I was overwhelmed to find that there were many heads of local Associations and several newspaper and TV reporters waiting to ask me questions about my visit.



**Akiko Macdonald visiting General Sato's grave**

the International Symposium and I read out the poem 'For the Fallen' by Lawrence Binyon, which was followed by a short silence. The audience, and particularly the young people, expressed their feeling of respect and their thanks for the opportunity to think again about the war.

*Editor's note: Mr H Onodera is Honorary Secretary of General K Sato's Honorific Association; Mr J Hino the Curator of the Shonai-Machi Regional Museum. Mr S Abe is Head Coordinator of Jokeji Temple and Mr Kenichi Okuyama is Deputy Mayor of Shonai-Machi.*

Then, in the evening, I was invited to a party attended by Mr Jun Hino, a local historian and the Curator of Shonai-Machi Regional Museum; by General Sato's nephew, Mr

I really wanted to visit General Sato's grave to thank him for saving my father's life. It is clear that but for his decision, I would not be here. I also felt very strongly that I should be a bridge between Japan and the UK in order to bring about a much better understanding between our two nations.

In the afternoon, at the invitation of Professor Machiko Ito of Tohoku University of Community Services and Science, I gave a Lecture to about 150 students and members of the general public about how to bring about reconciliation and develop mutual understanding through citizens' activities. As part of it, I explained what has been achieved, firstly by BCFG and then by BCS. Afterwards I showed the DVD of



**H Onodera, J Hino, S Abe, Akiko Macdonald  
Kenichi Okuyama**

Shigehiko Sato, a banker; by the Mayor, Mr Maki Harada, and by Mr Toru Togashi, Chairman of the Shonai-Machi Town Assembly.

At the meeting I explained to the twenty or so guests how, at all levels of society, we should be more grounded in the culture, history and people of other nations so as to avoid misunderstandings that could lead to chaos and war. Especially, Japanese people should try to express their feelings and views to the outside world more often, and in a louder voice, because far too often they hesitate to give their opinions clearly.



**Akiko Macdonald giving a lecture at Tohoku University**

Just before this meeting, I met Mr Koichiro Wajima, formerly Private, 2nd Class, who is now 88 and served in the Imphal campaign. He told me and the assembled reporters how he and his Platoon encountered a group of British soldiers in the jungle during the night. The British started to fire at them, at which point they counter-attacked, using their out-dated weapons, aiming to knock out the enemy heavy machine gun. The following morning they discovered British soldiers lying dead, as well as several of their own men.

At this point, Mr Wajima burst into tears and said "I now remember clearly". After a pause, he went on amid tears, "I regret that I could not bring them back home to their families". I held his arm to comfort him and said to him that I was told

by British ex-soldiers that, whichever side wins, it does not matter because war just brings misery to everyone involved.



**Akiko Macdonald, Koichiro Wajima and Shigehito Sato**

He then repeatedly said **“Whichever side wins, war is no good, war is no good, never engage in war”**.

**Akiko Macdonald**

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## **ANNUAL SERVICE OF FRIENDSHIP AND RECONCILIATION**

This year, the annual Service of Reconciliation which the International Friendship and Reconciliation Trust, supported by the Burma Campaign Society, help to organise at Canterbury Cathedral, marked the 65th anniversary of the Second World War. The attendance of several Far East Prisoners of War, who most understand the meaning of reconciliation and the journey towards it, was therefore particularly special for all who were at the Service. Canterbury resident, 98 year old Bill Rose, who had spent four years as a POW in Japan, read the Kohima epitaph, assisted to the lectern by a serving officer, Colonel Peter Gilbert. Another FEPOW and BCS member, 89 year old George Housego, who laid a wreath, with Prince Charles, at the cenotaph at the VE day commemoration in May, read from Lawrence Binyon’s poem ‘They shall not grow old as we who are left grow old’. His fellow FEPOWs, Ernie Boswell and Jack Cole-Fowler were also there to support him.

The Service, as usual, was attended by His Excellency Mr Shin Ebihara, the Japanese Ambassador, Minister Plenipotentiary Keiichi Hayashi and other colleagues from the Japanese Embassy. The Reverend Kemmyo Taira Sato, and Mrs Sato, and many other members of the Japanese community also joined the Service. These included Philip Malins and other BCS members and staff, and students, from local Chaucer College, Canterbury, a branch of Shumei University in Japan. Dr Alan Russell, Chairman of the Dresden Trust, gave the Old Testament reading and the Vice-Dean of Canterbury Cathedral, Canon Edward Condry, officiated. The Lord Mayor of Canterbury, Councillor Pat Todd and the Lady Mayoress, the Sheriff of Canterbury, Councillor Sally Pickersgill, as well as representatives of the Royal British Legion, including their standard bearer, John Marsh, provided an added sense of ceremony on this important anniversary.

Since the holding of a ‘joint memorial’, dedicated to reconciliation, is one of the founding objectives of the Burma Campaign Society and the International Friendship and Reconciliation Trust, we are grateful to Canterbury Cathedral for having made the commitment to make reconciliation the theme of this annual Evensong service, on the 15th August or the nearest Sunday to it.

Please, if you can, continue to support both Canterbury and the associated Service that the Reverend Taira Sato unfailingly holds at the Three Wheels Buddhist Temple in West London. This year the latter was held on the following Sunday, 22nd August. For any information about the Canterbury Service please contact Chris Chalk through BCS. He now liaises with the Cathedral, taking over the baton from his grandfather, John Bynoe, a founding committee member of BCS.

**John White**



**Dr Alan Russell, The Mayor of Canterbury, Canon Edward Condry, Minister Hayashi  
Philip Malins, Bil Rose, Ambassador Ebihara, Ernie Boswell, George Housego,  
Colonel Peter Gilbert**

*Editor's note: Dr. Alan Russell is Chairman of the Dresden Trust. Sadly, Bill Rose died in January. Ambassador Ebihara has now retired and Minister Hayashi is now Ambassador.*

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**MEMORIAL SERVICE AND PRAYERS  
FOR WORLD PEACE  
AT THREE WHEELS.  
Sunday, 22nd August, 2010.**

In his Opening Address, Mr Shingo Yamagami, Political Minister of the Japanese Embassy, drew attention to the fact that, in spite of the suffering and pain endured by both countries, there had been 152 years of bilateral relations between them. The impact of World War II had been enduring and the efforts of those seeking peace and reconciliation had therefore been of great value. It was up to the next generation to maintain the momentum.

After the chanting of a number of Sutras, representatives of the Japanese Embassy, the Burma Campaign Society, and Three Wheels, offered incense in remembrance of the sacrifice of those who had given their lives in war.

Reverend Sato said how deeply moved he had been during the chanting. It was as if Masao Hirakubo and all the soldiers who had died were there beside him. There then followed a short Address by Venerable Bhikkhu Vajiro, whose grandfather and uncle had been POWs during the war. He had seen that his uncle, as a Buddhist, had never felt any resentment at what had happened to him



**Masao Hirakubo**

The Reverend Sato then gave his keynote Address, stressing that all that was left during these Memorial Services was “to express our sincere gratitude to the departed for what they had done for us”. Philip Malins, followed by his successor as Chairman of BCS Akiko Macdonald then spoke a few words and the Hon. Secretary of the London Shogyoji Trust remarked that although those who were present were few in number, a small body could have a great effect on the future. Throughout the world the impact of a few with quality can be profound.

**John White**



## The Memorial Service at Three Wheels



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### AN OFFER OF HELP FROM A NEW MEMBER

My name is Masaomi Futagami, a twenty-six year old Japanese studying in London.

Having been educated in Abingdon School in Oxford for the years between being fourteen and eighteen, I was in the RAF Section of the Combined Cadet Force School for two and a half years. I have also, as a member of a string orchestra, played the Requiem on every 11th of November in the School Assembly. Paying respect to the British soldiers involved in wars was therefore part of my teenage life for many years,

Being introduced to BCS by Akiko Macdonald, I thought that I could make use of this unique opportunity to contribute to a Society concerned with Anglo-Japanese relationships in the course of tragic war incidents.

If there is anything I could do to help, I would be happy to do it.

I'm interested in making internet telephone communication linking old soldiers from both sides as soon as possible, if there is a need for it.



**Masaomi Futagami**

**Masaomi Futagami**

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### COMING EVENTS.

- **Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 11.00 am:** Annual 2nd Division Kohima Memorial Service, York Minster.
- **April/May:** The date of the next AGM will be announced as soon as possible
- **Friday, November 25<sup>th</sup>:** Seminar on “War Memory, War History & Reconciliation” at the University of Leeds dealing with the Experiences of Japan, China, Korea and the UK. Details will follow due course .

Contact Phillida Purvis at 020-7221-6985 or email: [phillida@linksjapan.org](mailto:phillida@linksjapan.org)

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