

# THE BURMA CAMPAIGN SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

September 2003

Number 3

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### THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

During the British 2nd Division's Kohima Days in York, I was one of two special guests at the Officers' Dinner Club and at the Service of Commemoration in Kohima Memorial Park. I was honoured to lay the fourth wreath and was glad that my insistence on a joint memorial was understood by the army.

Due to strong demand from the Japanese community in Los Angeles, I lectured on my war experiences on 7th August, and took part in the Discussion Meeting the following night, a very enthusiastic and emotional event, during which it emerged that some of those present never knew that Japan fought against Britain. An interview was reported in Yomiuri Shimbun in Japan on August 15th.

On 17th August, BCS participated for the first time in a joint memorial Evensong at Canterbury Cathedral. John Bynoe, Satoru Yanagi and the Japanese Ambassador laid wreaths for the war dead of both nations. There were remarkable numbers of young people from Three Wheels, from Canterbury and from the Japanese Embassy, and Ambassador Orita wrote to me saying that he was very much impressed at witnessing the veterans' reconciliation at the principal Cathedral of the Anglican Church. He thanked me and many members of BCS for

our efforts.

The Ceremony at Three Wheels, held annually since 1995, again took place on 16th August. Unfortunately, Maurice Frances, Patric Emerson, and their wives, together with Tom Bruin, were prevented by illness from attending.

Members of the All Burma Veterans' Association of Japan will make a pilgrimage to Kohima and Imphal next March, starting in Calcutta and arriving in Kohima on the 9th and staying for the 10th. I have arranged with the Bishop of Kohima to have a joint Memorial Mass in the Catholic Cathedral, and also for a joint dinner.

I would like to gather 5 to 10 British, but not necessarily Kohima veterans, for the event. The cost of the package tour will be about £2,000, leaving London Heathrow on the 7th or 8th March, 2004. The special entry visa for Kohima and Imphal usually takes about four months to process, so please contact me on Tel: **0208 998 5216** or **Email:-[hirakubo@ma.kew.net](mailto:hirakubo@ma.kew.net)**.

Masao Hirakubo

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### FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF BCS 22nd May, 2003.

#### **Chairman's Report.**

The Chairman rehearsed the events leading up to this first AGM. He stressed the general agreement on the themes of reconciliation and remembrance of the war dead and the importance of the Discussion meetings, welcoming suggestions for suitable topics that encouraged even more debate.

He had come to realize the importance of the veterans talking to the younger generation of their experiences and, having visited a number of schools in Britain and Japan, was making a list of veterans who might join in this work.

In 2004, the 60th anniversary of the Imphal Kohima campaign, BCS will be involved in organizing joint memorials at Kohima, Coventry Cathedral and Three Wheels.

#### **Committee Members, Officers and Membership.**

The current Committee Members agreed to continue to stand and were re-elected. They are Masao Hirakubo (Chairman), Philip Malins (Deputy Chairman), Pauline Martin (Hon. Treasurer), Phillida Purvis (Hon. Secretary), John Bynoe, Akemi Solloway and John White. A new election of Officers will take place at the next Committee Meeting on 6th October, 2003. The

appointment of three Email Advisers in Japan, Ryugo Matsui, Tomoyo Nakao and Sadao Oba, was confirmed. There were 50 paid up members of the Society during 2002-3.

#### **Accounts and Budget.**

The Accounts, presented by the Hon.Treasurer and reviewed, as requested, by John White, were accepted and showed Bank Balances of £3,682.24 at 31st March,

2003. A Budget for the year 2003-2004 presented by the Hon.Secretary, with projected Expenditure at £1,360 against Income of £727, giving a projected Deficit of £633, was also accepted.

Following the Meeting, the Japanese Ambassador and Madame Orita and Mr. Umemoto joined Members for lunch.

Phillida Purvis

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### **59th ANNIVERSARY SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION, YORK.**

On Sunday, 20th July 2003, a Service of Commemoration to mark the 59th Anniversary of the Battle of Kohima in 1944 was held in the Cathedral and Metropolitan Church of St. Peter in York. It was conducted by the Rev. J.R.Dailly CF, Deputy Assistant Chaplain General, York and the Rt. Rev. Bishop Noel Jones, the former Bishop of Sodor and Man and former Chaplain to the Fleet, the Blessing being given by the Rev. Canon Glyn Webster, Acting Dean of York.

Music was played by the Band of 150 (Northumbrian)

Transport Regiment, The Royal Logistics Corps (Volunteers), Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel R.J. Fox TD, and by Piper J.C.Maclean, late Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders.

Wreaths were laid by Major General D.M.Naylor CB MBE DL, Major General N.R.Parker CBE, Captain K.E.Halnan, late Royal Signals, and Mr. Masao Hirakubo OBE, as Chairman of the Burma Campaign Society.

Masao Hirakubo

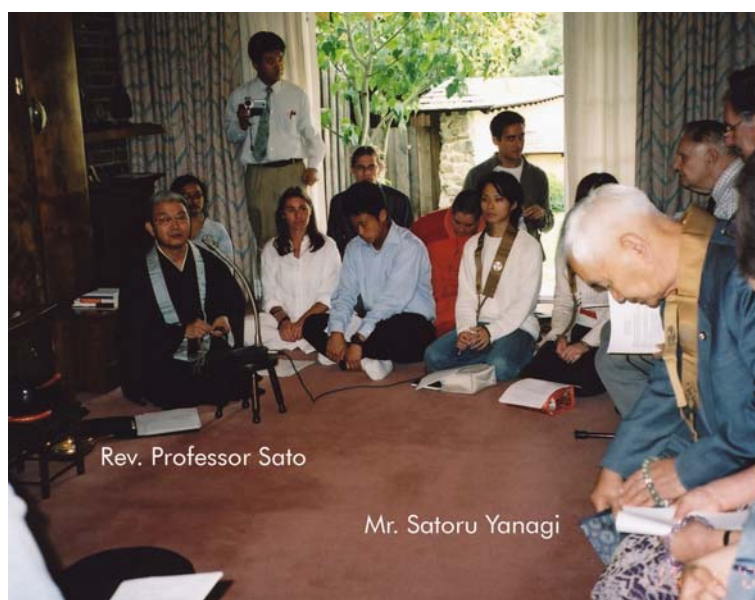
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### **RECONCILIATION CEREMONY AT THREE WHEELS SATURDAY 16th AUGUST**

Among those present at the Ceremony, conducted by the Rev. Professor Sato, were Masao Hirakubo, Satoru and Yuko Yanagi, Philip Daniel, Barbara Law, Philip Malins, Pauline Martin, Hiroko Sato and Akemi Solloway. During the chanting of Gathas, and two poems by Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism, incense was burned by the members present. Finally

there was a ceremonial shaking of hands.

Rev. Professor Sato gave a Dharma Talk 'On Peace', stressing the importance of inner peace and quoting Honen Shonin's warning against the desire for fame, wealth and domination.



Satoru Yanagi then gave a Talk in Japanese 'On the Way to Peace', translated by his grand-daughter Maki Hoshikawa, concluding with the hope that the memorial service would not simply be a way of consoling war veterans like himself, but might become part of a religious practice of praying for world peace and be taken up by young people.

Finally, Philip Daniel gave an Address 'The Walls do not Reach Up to Heaven' quoting Pope John Paul II's

moving words at Hiroshima and those of the British Commanding Officer to his men on the eve of battle in Iraq, that most Biblical of lands. He emphasized how hard, in the light of current events, is the road to true peace, and stressed the need for Christian and non-Christian alike to join in the mutual upholding of humanity's best impulses.

Akemi Solloway

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## RECONCILIATION SUNDAY AT COVENTRY CATHEDRAL.

As in previous years, Japanese and British Second World War veterans took part in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral in an Act of Reconciliation before the Reconciliation Statue, identical to that in the Peace Park at Hiroshima. Wreaths were laid by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Francis Graves OBE, and by Minister Plenipotentiary, Seiji Kojima, on behalf of the people of Japan. The Lord Mayor of Coventry, Councillor Sucha Singh Baines, laid a wreath on behalf of the City with a special tribute to the men of the Indian Army who lost their lives in the two world wars, in both of which the Lord Mayor's father served.

A wreath in memory of all Allied prisoners of war who died in Japanese captivity was laid by Claire Louis

Thompson, great grand-daughter of Gunner Emrys Williams, who was one of their number, and on behalf of BCS, Philip Malins laid a wreath in memory of all who died in the Second World War.

All the Japanese and British, including prisoners of war then shook hands in reconciliation and friendship. Chiho Nakamura, an attaché at the Embassy, representing the youth of Japan, shook hands symbolically with Professor Susan Bassnet, Pro Vice Chancellor of the University of Warwick, where she had been a post graduate student, and all present then attended Evensong.

Philip Malins

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## INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP AND RECONCILIATION SUNDAY.

On 15th August 1945, the conflicts which began in September 1939 finally ceased, bringing World War Two to an end. The International Friendship and Reconciliation Trust, in association with the Burma Campaign Society, which is fully in accord with the Trust's aims, feels that annually the 15th August, or the Sunday immediately following, should be a special day in our nation's calendar.

In spite of August being the holiday month, causing many expressions of regret for non-attendance, it is good, after offering our warmest thanks to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral for allowing us to be associated with Evensong, to record that among those who attended were the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Kent; the Japanese Ambassador and his wife, Madame Orita, with a dozen or so members of the Embassy; the Lord and Lady Mayoress of Canterbury; Lord Kingsdown, a Patron of the Trust; the Mayor and Mayoress of Maidstone (County

Town of Kent); Mr. J. Hawthornthwaite, Vice Chairman of the National Committee of the Royal British Legion, together with many prominent Canterbury figures and Japanese students from Canterbury House International Language School. Among the British and Japanese veterans, Bill Rose, a former Far East POW was "discovered" to be present!

BCS was strongly represented at the ceremony by Masao Hirakubo (Chairman); Phillida Purvis (Hon. Secretary), her husband Christopher, their son and daughters; Pauline Martin (Hon. Treasurer) and Akemi Solloway (Ctee Member); Rev. Professor Taira Sato and his wife Hiroko, and more than twenty others. Among them, special mention must be made of Satoru Yanagi, who again came with his wife Yuko, and who, in spite of advancing years, had made the long journey from Japan for the seventh successive time in order to attend. Also from Japan for the occasion, were Ryugo Matsui, a BCS



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|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Lord Kingsdown               | 5. The Mayor of Maidstone  | 9. Philip Daniel               | 12. Satoru Yanagi                 |
| 2. The Lord Mayor of Canterbury | 6. The Japanese Ambassador | 10. Tony Young                 | 13. Masao Hirakubo                |
| 3. Rev. Prof. Kemmyo Taira Sato | 7. Bill Rose, Far East POW | 11. The Deputy Lord Lieutenant | 14. The Precentor Rev. Kevin Goss |
| 4. The Dean of Canterbury       | 8. John Bynoe              |                                |                                   |

Email Adviser, and Maki Hoshikawa.

Welcoming the 300 strong congregation to the Choir, the Dean quoted lines on ‘forgiveness’ and ‘love’ by Laurens van der Post, who was himself a Far East POW and lifelong personal friend of many Japanese. He later gave an Address on a similar theme which included that of ‘reconciliation’. The First Lesson was read by a British veteran and the Second by the Dean.

The Japanese Ambassador and two veterans, Satoru Yanagi and John Bynoe, laid wreaths and Japanese children paper cranes. At the end of Evensong, the Dean escorted the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, the Japanese Ambassador and the Lord Mayor of Canterbury to the Compass Rose in the nave, where he invited a British veteran to read the Kohima Epitaph. This was followed by the shaking of hands in a symbolic Act of Reconciliation and by a concluding prayer.

John Bynoe

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## **THE INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP AND RECONCILIATION TRUST.**

As the name implies, the IFRT and the BCS are complementary bodies working in harmony, each with their own special focuses of interest, towards many broadly similar goals.

Like many other members of BCS, I have, until now, been largely in the dark about the IFRT, so I thought that it might be helpful to clarify a few points.

The Trust has as its patrons the Bishop of Coventry, Sir Adrian Cadbury, the Right Hon. Lord Kingsdown KC, Andrew Rowe, and the Right Hon. Lord Weatherill DL. Its officers are Philip Malins (Chairman), the Rev. Canon Andrew White (Deputy Chairman), John Bynoe (Hon. Secretary) and William Stirling (Hon. Treasurer).

It is largely as a result of John Bynoe’s long association with the Cathedral that the present fruitful relationship

with Canterbury, in which the IFRT has indeed taken the leading role, has come into being.

While much of the preliminary work for the Ceremony on the 15th August, with which the BCS was closely associated, was done by John Bynoe in association with his fellow officers, the standard protocol is that it is the Cathedral authorities who issue all invitations to its ceremonies, including in this case those to the Japanese Ambassador and his staff; hence the form taken by the documents and communications associated with the event.

The relationship between the BCS and the IFRT is encapsulated in the fact that Philip Malins is also Deputy Chairman of the BCS and John Bynoe is a member of its Committee.

John White  
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## BRITAIN'S GRAND STRATEGY FOR WAR AGAINST JAPAN.

### **Discussion Meeting on 12th March, 2003 at the East India Club.**

The Chairman, Mr. Rex Wait OBE, welcomed all those present and pointed out that the Club, to which news of the victory at Waterloo had been transmitted, was built in 1807 for the employees of the East India Company and had occupied the same premises ever since.

**Dr. Saki Dockrill**, Senior Lecturer at Kings College, University of London, said that following the Anglo Japanese Alliance of 1902, relations between the two countries had remained friendly and in 1921 the setting up of the British naval base in Singapore, advocated by Admiral Jellicoe, had been approved. However, in 1932 Japan attacked Manchuria and withdrew from the United Nations, but from 1934 onwards Britain regarded Germany as the main potential enemy and Churchill thought that an attack by Japan was unlikely.

After the attack on Pearl Harbour, the United States persuaded Britain, its Allies and Holland to form a coalition against Japan under its direction. Despite

regarding Singapore as the key to holding Eastern Asia, Britain gave it its lowest priority, leaving responsibility for the Pacific area to the United States.

However, Britain agreed to the importance of keeping China in the war on the Allied side and at the Casablanca Conference in 1943 a campaign in Burma was approved. The South East Asia Command was formed that same year, with Mountbatten as Supreme Commander, but was deprived of adequate men and resources because of the demands of the war in Europe.

At the Second Quebec Conference, Churchill suggested that the Royal Navy and the RAF should, in the Pacific, be placed under the command of the US, which nevertheless decided to direct its principal effort against the Japanese mainland and estimated that eighteen months would elapse between the capitulations of Germany and Japan.

Philip Malins

*The Talk is entered in full on the BCS Website,  
[www.burmacampaignsociety.org](http://www.burmacampaignsociety.org)*

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## THE TREATMENT OF JAPANESE SURRENDERED PERSONNEL AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

### **Discussion Meeting on 12th May, 2003 at the Nippon Club.**

**Sadao Oba**, an historian and former senior business man in London has been a tireless worker for reconciliation between former enemies. As a young paymaster he believed it was Japan's mission to liberate what was then the Dutch East Indies.

He arrived in Java in January 1944, serving there until the end of the war on 15th August 1945. As a Japanese Surrendered Person (JSP), he was employed for ten months procuring and supplying food and clothing for British and Indian Army personnel and civilians. Then, until May 1947, he worked as housekeeper of a British officer's mess and as a labourer. JSPs had obeyed British orders because they believed that Japan had accepted unconditional surrender.

He made copious notes of his treatment, which included humiliation by Allied personnel, and this Discussion Meeting was perhaps the first occasion on which a JSP has talked publicly in Britain of his experiences.

Lacking sufficient troops, the British ordered the Japanese Army to join in rescue missions in Indonesia. He worked, although he knew that POW officers were not required to do so, procuring food and charcoal even in dangerous areas because the Indonesians were sympathetic to the Japanese.

He had expected to be repatriated in the late summer of 1946, when all Japanese POWs had been returned from the USSR and Communist China, but on 17th July the British ordered 100,000 of the 700,000 JSPs under their control, including 13,400 in the Dutch East Indies, to spend another year on construction work. In November 1946 they were handed over to the Dutch Army, and he arrived home in May 1947. JSPs in Malaya and Singapore were detained even longer, despite the availability of adequate shipping.

He said that JSPs were fed 1,600 to 1,800 calories a day and were always hungry, working seven days a week until September 1946, when Sunday became a free day. They received no pay until June 1947, when the British paid one and a half pence an hour for skilled work and

half that for unskilled.

The British had maintained their control of JSPs by allowing them to keep their army establishment intact. Some 8,971 JSPs were killed or died in areas of British responsibility, of whom 1,243 were killed during labour or fighting alongside Allied troops, and 20,084 were wounded.

**Philip Malins** described, during the following discussion, how he had commanded Japanese infantry JSPs, together with Ghurkas and volunteer Dutch newly released POWs, in French Indo China to save the lives of French and local people, who were being killed by the Annamites, until sufficient British troops became available. As Head of the Civil Food Control organization from September to December 1945, ensuring food and other essential supplies, he used thousands of JSPs as labourers, lorry drivers, rivercraft operators, technicians and specialists,

together with air supply through Japanese aircraft. All this was done under their own officers who took orders from Allied officers. Then, from January to May 1946, he was in charge of all essential supplies, including food, petrol and oil, in Borneo and Sarawak, using several thousand JSPs on labour, dock, and warehouse duties. As before, he believed that they were fairly treated.

Mr. Oba closed the meeting with a plea for everyone to examine the facts impartially and with great care and to continue to work for reconciliation and friendship.

Philip Malins

*The Talk is entered in full on the BCS Website, [www.burmacampaignsociety.org](http://www.burmacampaignsociety.org)*

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## THE JAPANESE RED CROSS SOCIETY BEFORE AND DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

### Discussion Meeting on 21st July 2003 at SOAS.

**Mrs Kosuge**, Associate Professor of Politics and Public Administration, Yamanashi Gakuin University, said that the Red Cross organization came into being in 1864, as a result of the Geneva Convention, on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, and universality, to ameliorate suffering in war. Its development in Britain was hampered at first because Florence Nightingale opposed it, believing that it would relieve governments of their responsibilities.

Founded in 1886, the Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) was the first in Asia. It was seen as an unique means of entry to the specially privileged and often exclusive circle of Christian European countries. Under the leadership of the Imperial Family, it helped to unite people of all social levels in a national organization, and by 1930 had a membership of several millions.

In spite of being a non Christian nation, Japan, unlike Turkey and Persia, did not adopt its own new emblem of adherence to the International Organization. It accepted that the Red Cross emblem was not intended to be religious and accepted it with enthusiasm.

Interest in battlefield pain and death was strengthened by dramatic advances in mass communications from the fronts. Ordinary people wished to help in preventing

the useless and unreasonable death and suffering of family members and neighbours who were fighting for their country as conscripts or volunteers. In Japan, JRCS became a symbol of 'love and caring' supposedly bestowed on soldiers and sailors by their Emperor.

In 1938, an Imperial Order declared JRCS 'To deserve a privilege of freely working under the patronage of the Army and Navy', but by 1940 the government was becoming increasingly hostile to JRCS activities. In 1937, during the war with China, membership stood at 2,930,000, rising to 15,210,000 by the end of World War Two. In the period from 1937 to 1947, 35,785 individuals, including medical and nursing staff, were mobilized to serve in the JRCS.

The Bureau of Prisoners of War Aid Committee was established in January 1942, a month after the attack on Pearl Harbour. As the war proceeded the JRCS came to be completely under the supervision of the Army and Navy, and support from the Imperial Family increasingly linked it to the State Shinto religion. The Committee complained that it was never informed about anything, but continued to hope that the International Red Cross Committee would be able to work successfully in Japan and other occupied areas.

Senjinkun, the Japanese Battlefield Code, issued to the Army in 1941 and intended to serve as a manual of state directions, had said that benevolence to prisoners of war

was to be discouraged, but Red Cross workers still urged Red Cross nurses going to China to look after wounded Chinese soldiers.

**Masao Hirakubo** said, during the subsequent discussion, that he had seen JRCS nurses in Burma wearing the Red Cross insignia, and also Japanese ships bearing the emblem.

**Mrs. Kosuge** said that JRCS continues to operate as a national organization with wide support through local

branches and door to door collections.

**James Luto** displayed a complete World War Two medical orderly's kit with the Red Cross emblem on the satchel, and including instructional pamphlets for the bandaging and treatment of the wounded and the sick.

Philip Malins

*It is hoped to get permission to enter the Talk in full on the BCS Website.*

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## THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION OF SINGAPORE.

Sgt. W. Twigg (Wes to his friends) of HQ 7th (Sandhams) Battery, 4th British Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, was attached to the 5th Indian Division. This Division was the first to enter occupied Singapore (*Syonan-to* or *Light of the South*), coming ashore on 5th Sept. 1945. Wes Twigg, who with many others, helped to put Singapore back on its feet, worked mainly on the supervision of working parties, general administration and data gathering.

During this time he, like soldiers worldwide, acquired souvenirs, some of which he gave to me for my Collection of Far East Militaria. Among them is a 10 page document on the activities of the **Nampogun Boekikyusuibu, The Institute for Preventive Medicine, Japanese Southern Expeditionary Force.**

This fascinating document deals with an aspect of the Japanese occupation (1942-45) that is not common knowledge, and documents are rarely seen in the public domain! It tells of the work and administration of the Serological Institute set up in the College of Medicine Building taken over by the Japanese Army.

Page 1, is an introduction to the scope of the work of the Institute, comprising (a) Administration, (b) Research and Education for Tropical Medicine, (c) Biological Products, (d) Quarantine Duties, Hygienic Field Water Supply Duties and Clinical and Supply Duties.

Page 2, is a brief historical sketch of the Institute, which opened on 5th May, 1942. Its first Director was Major General M. Kitagawa, who died in an aeroplane accident on 22nd May, 1943. Surgeon Lt. Col. K. Hayakawa, the Assistant Director, held the reins until Surgeon Major General Y. Hayama arrived to take over from 3rd July, 1943 until the surrender.

Pages 3, 4 & 5 detail the sections within the Institute. There were some 15 laboratories covering fields of service and research in a wide range of tropical problems and diseases. Malariaology, Tropical Hygiene and Nutrition, Cholera, Water Supply, Organic Chemistry, Salmonella and Rickettsiosis, and Anaerobic Bacteria (Tetanus, Gas Gangrene) were among the main areas of research. The more specialist research work during the three years covered studies of Tropical 'Tsutsugamushi Disease', Salmonellosis in the Tropics and Tropical Tuberculosis.

The section afforded priority was that of Biological Products, since all vaccines for the expeditionary force were made there! These included those for Typhoid, Cholera, Dysentery, Pest, Rabies and Smallpox. At the end of August 1945, there were some 100 immune horses, 2000 guinea pigs and 1000 mice, which were presumably used as test vehicles.

James Luto



## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION.

Our Society is not large and is run, as you know, by volunteers. Our expenses therefore are minimal, and really amount to the cost of hiring premises for our Discussion Meetings, of printing and mailing this Newsletter to you twice a year, and sending you our other mailshots.

These costs must, however, be met from the very modest membership fees we ask of you. If you have not already done so, please do therefore kindly send your £10 annual subscription to me as Hon. Secretary, so that we can keep our efforts going! Thank you.

Phillida Purvis

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## BCS WEBSITE: [www.burmacampaignsociety.org](http://www.burmacampaignsociety.org)

A website is a fantastic way of communicating our intentions and engaging interest and support, provided it is properly registered with all the Search Engines. Just typing in 'Burma and Campaign' will soon bring explorers to the BCS Website and from it they can contact me, as Hon. Secretary.

the real issue of running a website is to keep it current and interesting. Our site is divided up as follows: About Us, Charter, Articles, Events, Publications (including information about the Burma Campaign Memorial Library at SOAS, and also Book Reviews) and Links.

I often get enquiries from researchers or collectors, and from those with links to the Campaign, even sometimes, from war veterans themselves (although not all are keen to try the internet experience!).

I should greatly welcome any material, sent to me by Fax or Email at the address listed at the foot of this page, which Members would like to see communicated to the world through the BCS Website.

Quite apart from maintaining the site, which is a technical challenge to which I myself am not best suited,

Phillida Purvis

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## COMING EVENTS

Plans are underway for the next discussion meeting, to be held on 14th of October 4 - 6 pm, at SOAS, on The British Commonwealth Force and the Occupation of Japan, after the dedication of the BCFG commemorative plaque at St. Ethelburga's Church.

Phillida Purvis

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### *Editor's Note.*

*For comments, criticisms and questions concerning the Newsletter, please contact John White, 25 Cadogan Place, London, SW1X 9SA, Tel/Fax 020 7235 4034. Material for inclusion in the March 2004 Issue should reach me at the above address by 29th February at the latest.*

Edited and Produced by John White & Lucien Chocron

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