

# MONTHLY INFORMATION

St. Faith's Church, Havant with St. Nicholas Chapel, Langstone

## AUGUST 2020

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## What's On?



**Sunday 9.30am PARISH COMMUNION**

**Thursday 10.30am Communion (Book of Common Prayer)**

Services will be streamed via our Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/stfaithschurchhavant/>

See also <http://stfaith.com/livestreamed-services/>

**Sunday 6pm Said Evensong via Zoom. The link is:**

[https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73577393658?  
pwd=cW90TW9OREVSNVVMK3pqeW5OMitTQT09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73577393658?pwd=cW90TW9OREVSNVVMK3pqeW5OMitTQT09)

Meeting ID: 735 7739 3658

Password: 018860

**Monday - Tea and Chat at 3pm with Sandra**

The Zoom link is:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87388723961?  
pwd=K0JjamtYS0xJUGNQbUE1YXFRKzlkQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87388723961?pwd=K0JjamtYS0xJUGNQbUE1YXFRKzlkQT09)

Meeting ID: 873 8872 3961

Password: 388033

*For the latest information refer to our weekly news (Corona Chronicle) at <https://stfaith.com/566-2/>*

# www.stfaith.com

**VJ-Day 75.** *One of our parishioners, Govan Easton, was a Japanese prisoner-of-war. He was a regular at the 8am Communion service at St. Faith's until he became house bound when Michael Fluck took him communion. He moved to Dorset to be near his daughters and died in November 2019. He was a geography graduate and a secondary headmaster and lived in Southleigh Road. In 2003 he wrote three articles for "Faith Matters", the parish magazine, on "Anniversaries" and wrote articles for his daughters on VJ-Day and his subsequent return in October 1945. All are reproduced below.*

### **The Anniversary I - 15 February 1942**

Anniversaries usually involve happy, pleasant recollections of some past event; an event important and meaningful to each of us individually. The anniversary I am about to describe is different, unhappy, but memorable, as it led to one of the great character-forming periods of my life.

Sixteen hundred hours on Sunday 15th February 1942 found my colleagues and I in the depths of despair. Yes, it is sixty one years ago but I remember it as if it were yesterday. I was serving with the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers as a unit of the ill-fated 18th Division, having arrived in Singapore some ten days previously. We had just been informed on that Sunday afternoon of the surrender of the forces defending the Island, (that was us) and feared what would transpire. Is fear worse than reality? We were about to find out! The next hours we spent waiting and wondering. I tried praying, but somehow I couldn't concentrate. In spite of extreme fatigue, after some four days of non-stop fighting, I spent a restless night. At dawn orders were given to parade along Bukit Timah Road where we lined up in single file. I suppose it was around eight that Monday morning when Japanese soldiers began to approach, members of the Imperial Guard but still much smaller than most of us.

The language was strange and unintelligible to all of us, but the signs were clear and so were the messages emanating from the blows struck when one failed to respond. Standing at six feet and two inches I was able to look down on the man who approached, size was no protection however, not against an enemy holding a rifle with fixed bayonet. He grabbed my left wrist and removed one of my treasured possessions, a Rolex Oyster watch, then tapping my shirt pocket he indicated that he wished to see what was there. A cigarette case. Yes, I enjoyed smoking at that time. The cigarette case too became a trophy of war. Satisfied he moved on to the next target. We realised we had become guests of the Japanese Emperor, Hirohito.

The rest is history. Many thousands would live or die in abject slavery over the next three and a half years. I was one of the fortunate ones. I survived the work on the docks at Keppel Harbour, loading and unloading cargoes day and night. I endured with some three hundred the nightmare rail journey in trucks from Singapore to Nong Pladuck in Thailand, a journey taking 24 days. I suffered and endured the toil, the beatings, the diseases that accompanied the slavery of work on the Burma railway. My faith in human nature was

tested, but endured, because of the many acts of kindness and caring I witnessed as men shared water, food, tobacco and above all ideas and thoughts of a future. I survived the voyage to Saigon when the convoy was reduced from four ships to one. The American bombing raids on Nha Trang, an oil terminal, left me shaken but alive.

Each month there is at least one day that is a significant anniversary of some momentous event in life. My sojourn took me to some twenty two different camps, in three different countries, followed eventually by release in Saigon. There are many more stories to be told. Throughout the years, since that time, the Far East Prisoner of War Association has been invaluable as an organisation to support, guide and help all FEPOW with comradeship and care, as well as financial help when required. Each monthly meeting begins with our prayer.

#### The FEPOW Prayer.

As we that are left grow old with the years,  
Remembering the heartache the pain and the tears,  
Hoping and praying that never again,  
Man will sink to such sorrow and shame.  
The price that was paid we will always remember,  
Every Day, every Month, not just in November.  
We can forgive, but, we cannot forget!

#### **The Anniversary II - 15 March 1943**

Excitement reigned throughout the camp in Thailand. Four men from our Regiment had decided to escape and had gone from the camp. Two were fellow Sergeants and with them were two fusiliers. To cover their escape we had to ensure that the numbers at "Tenko" (roll call) added up. For three days we successfully baffled the Japanese and then the discovery. All Hell was let loose! The telephone wires were humming as messages went to the Kempai Tai (Secret Police). The following day they arrived in camp and even the Japanese and the Korean guards trembled. First they questioned the Japanese and then the Korean Guards, apparently to no avail. The camp was searched, every item within reach thrown to the ground, the huts were emptied and our meagre belongings had to be arrayed on the ground to be examined. My belongings, after a year in captivity, had been drastically reduced. I now owned a mess tin, spoon and fork, a water bottle, a mug, one blanket, a ground sheet and gas cape, a haversack, a rather ragged towel and the clothes I was wearing, namely a torn shirt, shorts, socks, boots and my topi. I had hidden my atlas in a section of bamboo out in the jungle away from the camp.

Now came our turn, the Kempai Tai came to each of us in turn and as we stood to attention they searched our possessions and asked questions. The fact that we could not understand led to beatings, threats, which we found fairly meaningless, and a display of anger. We knew nothing!

On 15th March 1943 three of the escapees were dragged back into camp, on leads like dogs. They had clearly suffered and were in a dreadful state, partly from hunger and also in part from the adverse jungle conditions, but mainly from the severe beatings they had endured. They were not defeated by the jungle but rather betrayed by natives who had been threatened by the Japanese. Next day they were taken to Banpong for trial and having been sentenced to death, they were shot, some prisoners being forced to witness this. I was relieved that it was not me. These were brave men who deserved better.

Some days later we left the jungle camp and after three days walking, along jungle tracks close to the river, we reached Chungkai. A train awaited us here and we were transported, in open trucks, to Nong Pladuk. What a revelation. Wooden huts built on stilts with wood floors and thatched roofs. Luxury after the jungle. What lay in store? A bamboo fence surrounded the camp. Near the cookhouse was a Hospital hut and a Chapel used for services by the camp Chaplain. Officers had their own accommodation many even had their camp beds whilst other ranks slept on the floor with a groundsheet and blanket as bedding.

The camp boasted an interpreter, American Japanese, and a Christian. Formerly a cab-driver in San Francisco who had travelled to Japan to see his parents and was conscripted into the forces and being bi-lingual he was made an interpreter. Even at this date in 1943 he said the Japanese could never win the war. On periodic visits to Bangkok he would undertake commissions to purchase medicinal drugs from the Chinese including sulpha drugs, which were invaluable for treating bacterial infections, and quinine to treat malaria. His actions helped to save the suffering of many.

### **The Anniversary III - 23 April 1943 (St George's Day)**

*Saint George of old the dragon slew, so runs the ancient story  
And left to all men good and true, the guerdon of his glory.*

It was 23rd April 1943 but we were not slaying dragons even though we were enveloped in smoke and burning embers, these being the result of sitting in open trucks behind a wood-burning locomotive. We were on our way up-country into the jungle again, to a camp called Wampo on the bank of the river Kwai. We had been here many months earlier building embankments and a wooden trestle viaduct around the cliff face above the river. This camp, already disease-ridden because of earlier occupation, was to be our home. Our task was to lay the rail track, that is to lay wooden sleepers and on them rails, which had to be fixed with six inch spikes. Another series of skills to be learned, and we learned quickly when there were Japanese engineers wielding bamboo canes, ready to use them to correct any hesitation or mistake.

Traditionally the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers celebrated St George's Day with Church Services and Ceremonial Parades. We would not be celebrating this year.

Little news filtered through of the progress of the war, but hearing of the Japanese invasion of India being repulsed we realised that a radio existed in one of the camps. To keep its existence secret no news was released for at least ten days. We began to understand, however, why the Japanese had a sudden desire for "speedo". Great pressure was applied for all work to be speeded up, even to the extent of working on rest days. The normal work cycle was nine days work and one day of rest, Sundays being treated as a normal day, if there was such a thing. The Japanese were ever more anxious to complete this railway regardless of any suffering or deaths that may happen.

Each day we witnessed columns of English, Australian and Dutch prisoners carrying all their worldly possessions, being force marched up towards the Burmese border at the Three Pagodas Pass. Many of these would never make the return journey but would perish somewhere in the jungle. The period of the next few months was to be a hideous example of man's inhumanity to man.

*Barbara, Govan's daughter, has taken these extracts from the memoirs her father wrote in 1997. It had taken 50 years for him to be willing to share his experiences .*

## **22 August 1945**

On 22nd August at about a quarter to ten, the Guard summoned the Gunso, The Nip in charge said simply, "*Senso awari*", the war is over. We couldn't quite grasp the significance of this and asked him to repeat, which he did. Then he said, "*Asta shigoto nei, taksin yasumi asta asta*", which means "*Tomorrow there is no work, lots of rest tomorrow and tomorrow.*"

Everyone looked anxious when we returned to the barrack room and when we told them there was a long silence, we were stunned by the news. No one showed great elation we were all concerned as to how the Nips would react as the threat to eliminate all P.O.W.s had been made on many occasions.

Next day we held our own service of remembrance and thanksgiving. We sang the National Anthem for the first time in years!

## **25 August 1945**

The morning of 25th August 1945 was bright and sunny when the Nip Gunso came into our billet, this was unusual, he usually demanded we went to see him.

He bowed, a first, and then with signs and words, some of which I could understand, he explained that we were to go back to Saigon by train and that we should all collect our belongings. Later that morning escorted by Nips, now trying to be friendly, we walked to the station, pleased, but still apprehensive. It had been said that none of us would be allowed to survive and the train could be taking us anywhere. There it was at the station with steam up and ready to go, this time with some locals also aboard the trucks.

It began to travel southwards towards Saigon, and we were thankful for that. The journey took two days as there were many delays en route.

*The remainder of Govan's journey home, was from Saigon by aircraft to Bangkok, then to Rangoon, a troopship to Liverpool via the Suez Canal and finally trains home to Berwick upon Tweed, arriving on 19<sup>th</sup> October 1945.*

*His war was finally over.*

*On his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday he said to his daughters that if anyone had told him he would still be alive he wouldn't have believed it!*

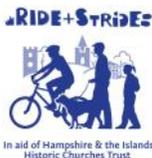
*He died aged 98 in November 2019. A life well lived.*



*A photograph of Govan Easton taken in 2013 at The National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire at a celebration for VJ day*

**Faith Matters.** If you enjoyed reading the above articles from the parish magazine on "Anniversaries" from Govan Easton, you can read many more very interesting articles that parishioners wrote for the magazine between 2002 and 2011 on our website site at <http://stfaith.com/magazine>. It may also bring back memories of the church outings, town fairs, flower festivals, and the many other activities that took place during this period. You can also do the monthly crosswords and the word searches. For a quick summary go to <http://stfaith.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Magazines-2002-2011-Summary.pdf>

**The Ride and Stride** event organised by the Hampshire and the Islands Historic Churches Trust is planned, as usual to be on the second Saturday in September. This year it is, the 12<sup>th</sup> September. Held in the open air, it encourages everyone to take some healthy exercise as well as raising funds through sponsorship. The Trust supports churches within our area by giving grants for renovation in and the rebuilding of churches. St Faith's has received money towards the restoration the patronal banner by the Royal School of Needlework. As a church community St Faith's has always supported the Trust and it is hoped that this year there will be a successful and enjoyable day for riders, (on pedal bikes or motor bikes), for walkers or for those who 'ride' on public transport. The aim for them is to visit as many local churches as possible. There are plenty in our vicinity and beyond! Help is needed too at St Faith's to meet and greet participants from other churches who are taking part in the day. Please call *Hilary Deadman* for details and with your (most welcome) offer of support (see contact list for *Hilary's* details), For information about the Trust see their website at [www.hihct.org.uk](http://www.hihct.org.uk) and our website at <http://stfaith.com/whats-new/>



**The Clewer Initiative** Is a three year project of the Church of England dioceses and other wider church networks to develop strategies to detect modern slavery in our community and to provide the victims with support and care. Modern slavery may not be immediately noticeable and can involve both adults and children. Nail bars and carwash facilities, some horticulture areas and domestic service may be some of the places where trafficked people are forced to work. Victims of trafficking may show signs that they are afraid of someone, have little freedom, are working for little or no pay, show signs of physical abuse (bruises etc). They may also be moved about frequently from one venue to another. Children may also be trafficked and one of their signs may be through difficult behaviour. It may be hard to be sure whether a person is being trafficked but some of the details may be found from noting that they have been brought from another country (but people can be trafficked within the UK), they may also be closely monitored by 'their employer'. The Modern Slavery Help Line is available 24 hours a day on 0800 0121 700 for help and advice and the very informative Clewer Initiative website is [theclerinitiative.org](http://theclerinitiative.org).

**Torch** is a Christian organisation which supports those with sight loss by giving support to individuals or to a church organisation. Sight friendly Bible notes and other publications are available in a variety of formats to suit individual needs. Advice and training is available on making a church sight loss friendly and there are resources to find ways of delivering a sight loss friendly service. To find out more about this scheme see [sightlossfriendlychurch.org.uk](http://sightlossfriendlychurch.org.uk). For information about Torch text [info@torchtrust.org](mailto:info@torchtrust.org) or telephone 01858 438 260.

## CONTACT DETAILS

Rector <i>(rest day: Monday)</i>	Canon Tom Kennar	tomkennar@gmail.com 07881 025592
Readers	Mrs Sandra Haggan Dr Michael Fluck	07452 982287 023 9247 7391
Church Wardens	Mr Colin Hedley Mr Clive Barnett	023 9249 8229 01243 389257
Lay Pastor	Mrs Sandra Haggan	07452 982287
Head Server	Mr Bruce Strugnell	023 9248 4435
Administrator	Mrs Pauline West	023 9249 2129
PCC Secretary	Mrs Pauline West	023 9249 2129
PCC Treasurer	Mrs Shelley Saunders	023 9247 3922
Musical Director	Mr Graham Kidd	music@stfaith.com
Captain Bellringers	Mr Bill Skilleter	023 9225 3802
Safeguarding Officer	Mrs Pauline West	023 9249 2129
Data Protection Officer	Mrs Pauline West	023 9249 2129
Health & Safety Officer	Mrs Pauline West	023 9249 2129
Stewardship	Mr Alan Hakim	023 9247 1681
Electoral Roll	Mr Hugh Owen	023 9247 1204
Bible Reading Fellowship	Mrs Hilary Deadman	023 9247 1241
Pastoral Team Leader	Mrs Julia Hancock	023 9248 3808
Children's Society	Mrs Sandra Haggan	023 9245 5161
Men's Group	Mr Nick Saunders	023 9247 3922
Mission Development	Mr Colin Hedley	023 9249 8229
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Website	Mr Colin Carter	webmaster@stfaith.com



**Parish Office:** 2 North Street, Havant PO9 1PR Telephone: 023 9249 2129

Opening Hours: **Closed until further notice**

**Contact the Administrator (Pauline West) for:**

All enquiries inc. Baptisms and Marriages—Email: [office@stfaith.com](mailto:office@stfaith.com)

**Contact the General Manager (Will Coulston) for:**

Bookings for the Pallant Hall & The Pallant Centre

Telephone: 07483 848809—Email: [stfaithsgeneralmanager@gmail.com](mailto:stfaithsgeneralmanager@gmail.com)

