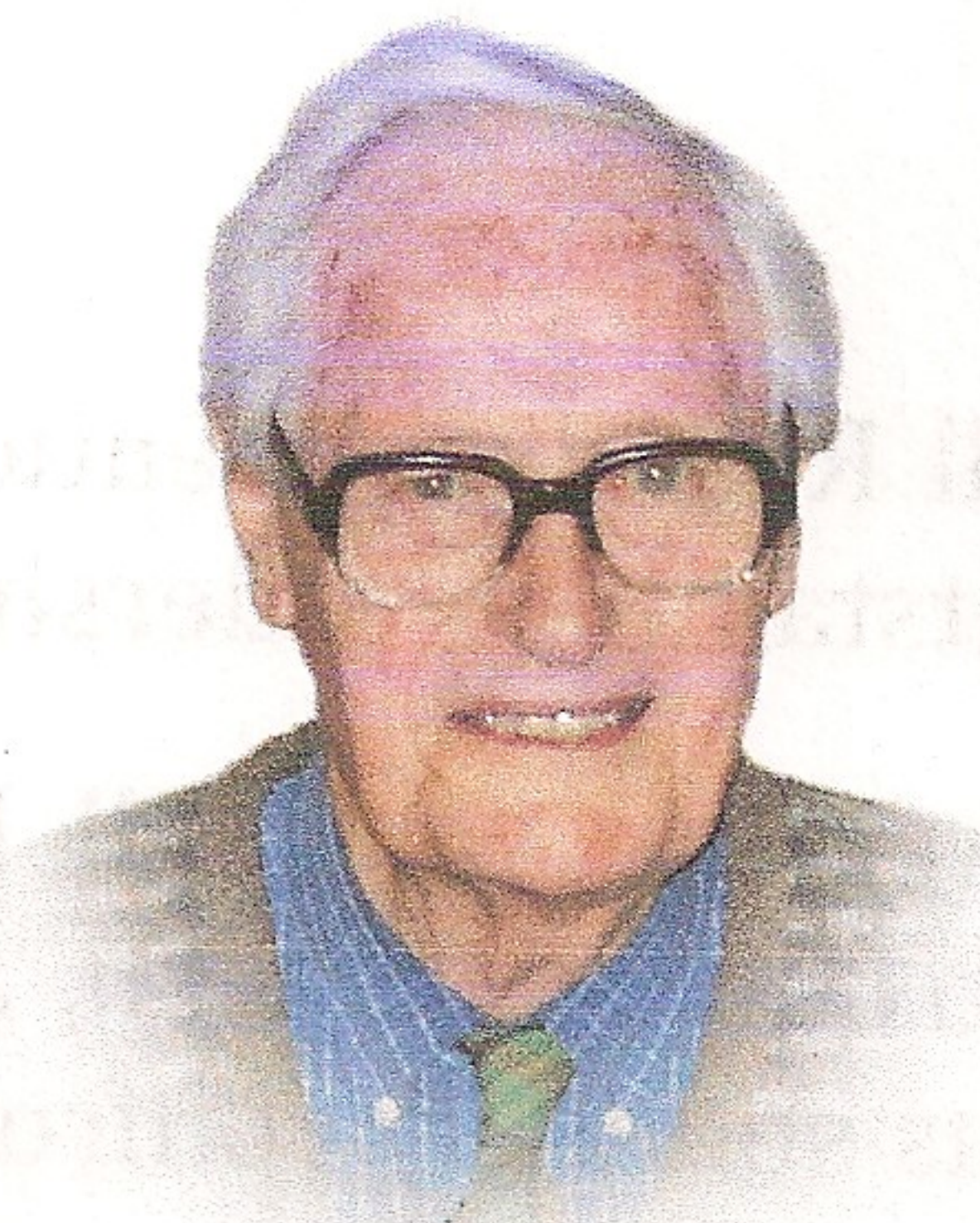


William Cyril Rose 1912-2010

A different kind of war hero.



Bill Rose was born within the sound of Bow Bells, London, and was raised in Bermondsey SE1. He left school at fourteen to become a wine blender, a job that his mother deemed as totally unsuitable despite the fact that he was following in his father's footsteps. A cousin encouraged him to join a builders merchant company at which he worked for the whole of his career apart from the war years. His work ethic and motivation were high and Bill sought further education by putting himself through night school. The main love of his life was his wife, Joyce Heather Khan. She caught his eye at the tender age of 14 whilst he was a chorister at St Lawrence Jewry in the City of London.

Bill and Joyce married in 1938 and built a house in Robin Hood Lane, Walderslade. Bill volunteered to join the R.A.F. at the outset of World War II. Due to the high casualty rate at RAF Wattisham, the bomber station where he was stationed, and his leadership potential being recognised very early on, he was quickly promoted to Sergeant. He was shipped East to help defend Singapore, but only arrived in time for his ship to be bombed in the harbour and to see Singapore covered in smoke. He was subsequently captured by the Japanese in Java and shipped back to Singapore.

On the 27th October 1942, one hundred and eighty P.O.W.s were packed into the hold of a rusty old transport ship *SS Tokyo Maru*. Twenty-five men died on this notorious thirty-one day voyage to Japan. Once there, Bill endured two forced labour camps. At Mitsushima in the central highlands, he worked on the construction of a dam (still there), and at Kanose he toiled in front of the carbide furnaces.

During this time Bill wrote, in microscopic handwriting, a secret and extraordinary daily diary of his P.O.W. experiences and observations – these diaries are now held by the British Imperial War Museum. The activity was particularly dangerous as discovery by a Japanese guard could have led to summary execution. On these 4" x 2" diaries lie the raw facts of inhumanity and intolerance, courage and bravery – on both sides of the guard/prisoner divide. The diaries also witness shards of humour; attempts at building a piano in impossible conditions; accounts of physical brawls (with fellow prisoners and, on one occasion, with a Japanese guard); his determination to survive deprivation, illness, and hunger; the importance of his Christian faith; and above all, the challenge to ensure his return alive to his wife and the son whom he had never met.

Bill Rose was mentioned in dispatches and awarded The Oak Leaf for his outstanding leadership while a P.O.W. for three-and-a-half years.

After the war, Bill buried his memories. When his second son Graham introduced Takako, a lovely Japanese lady who later became his wife, Bill was suddenly confronted with the past. After much thought he brought out his diaries to re-read, hitherto hidden from his family. His response to the past was to dedicate much of the last 15 years of his life to building reconciliation and understanding between the British and the Japanese peoples. Working with the Japanese Embassy, AGAPE, Japanese high school students (their school is built on the site of the Mitsushima Prison Camp), his sons Malcolm and Graham, Chaucer College, and various supporting individuals, Bill has, through reciprocal international visits, worked hard to change the hearts and minds of fellow FEPOWs and others toward the Japanese people – this was his personal and heartfelt contribution to world peace along with helping to establish the annual Service of Reconciliation at Canterbury Cathedral.

A commitment to peace did not mean that Bill was passive in the face of violence. He made headline news, as readers of the Kentish Gazette may remember, in 2003. The then 91-year-old boldly took on a burglar in his bedroom who was trying to rob and attack him with a 10 inch screwdriver.

Bill was an active member of the community of Bridge, Kent for 45 years. It is Bill's warm and wise contribution to village life that will be missed as indeed will be his familiar figure in the church together with that of his wife until her death in 2002.

His last visit out was on the 19th of December last year. During this service at St Peter's church, Bridge. Bill was presented by the Vicar, the Reverend Simon Rowlands, on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury, a signed photograph thanking Bill for his eighty five years as a choir member; a commitment and a joy that originated from his St. Lawrence Jewry days.

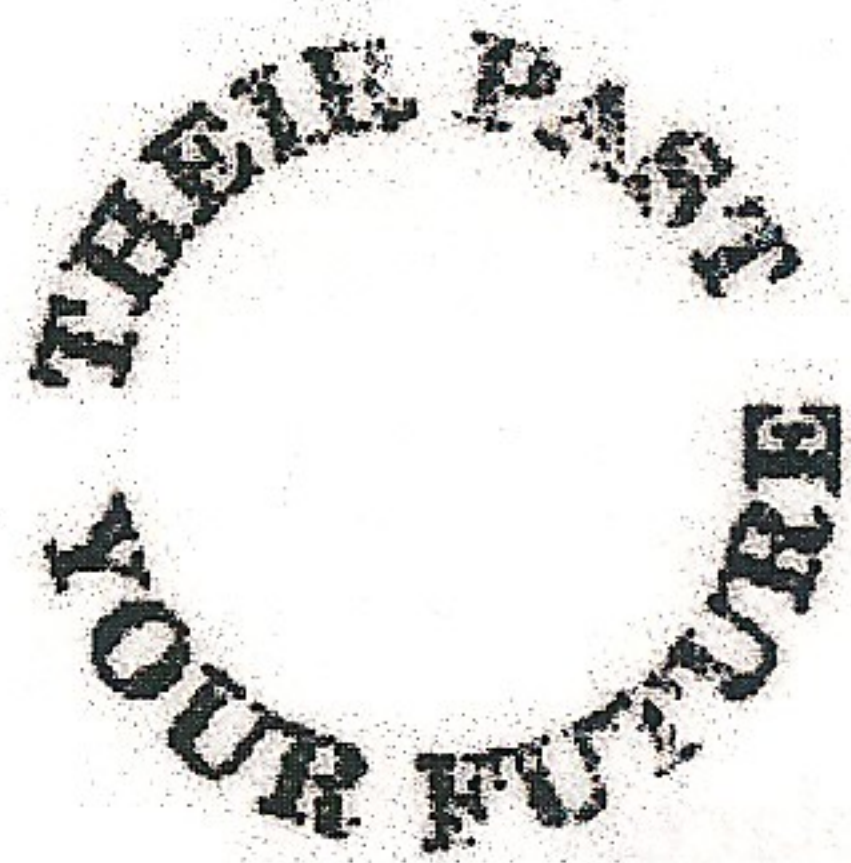
Bill died peacefully at home on 27th December 2010 aged 98.

He is survived by his three sons, Malcolm, Graham, and Jonathan.

Bill was the beloved husband of Joyce and proved to be a wonderful father, father-in-law, grandfather & great grandfather who is sorely missed by his family & friends. He will be remembered as a peacemaker of infinite wisdom, patience & kindness.

29th January 2011

http://archive.theirpast-yourfuture.org.uk/upload/pdf/9_William_Rose_3_Mar_06.pdf

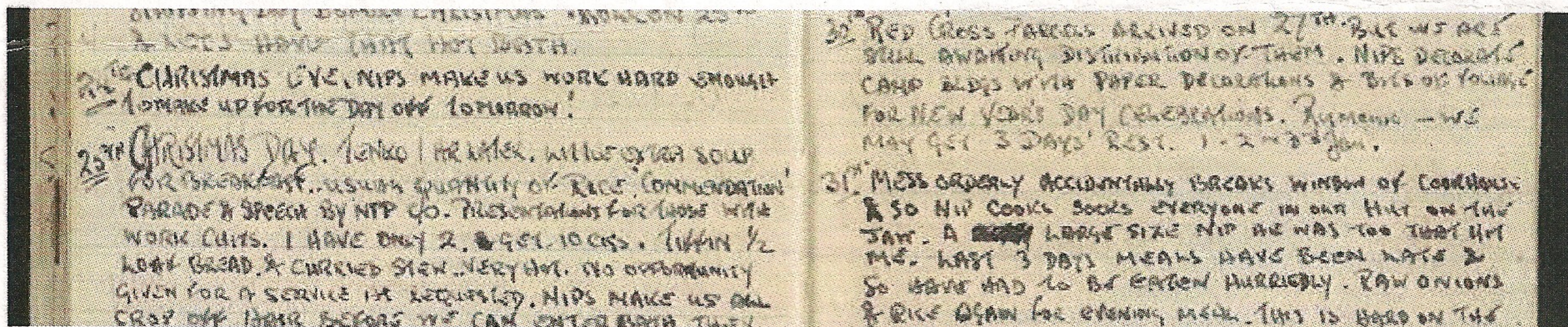


Bill Rose and the Their Past Your Future Project at the Imperial War Museum

Their Past Your Future (TPYF) was the learning strand of the Veterans Reunited programme, launched at the beginning of 2004 by the Big Lottery Fund. Veterans Reunited aimed to bring generations of people in the UK together to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. It had three strands; Heroes Return, which funded veterans, their spouses, carers, widows or widowers to visit the sites of their wartime service, Home Front Recall, a programme of events to honour the memories and experiences of the wartime generation and Their Past Your Future. The purpose of TPYF was to enable young people to understand the meaning and continuing relevance of the Second World War. It was to do this through engaging them with veterans, historic sites, formal and informal commemorative events, museums and primary historical sources.



Samantha Heywood, then Director of the Their Past Your Future project at the Imperial War Museum spoke to Bill for the first time early in 2004. In that conversation he told her about his time as a prisoner of the Japanese during the Second World War. He had heard about the Their Past Your Future project from one of her colleagues in the Museum. He told her about the wartime diary he had written whilst a POW and the flag he had made from a bed sheet to celebrate the end of the War. Both were already in the collection of the IWM. Would this be the sort of thing that would be useful for an education project like this one, he asked?



This conversation began an association with Bill that lasted for the whole of the TPYF project, from 2004-2010. Bill became one of the Personal Stories featured in the Touring Exhibition and online. He also features in a number of online learning resources. He visited schools and the Museum and



talked to groups of young people who were about to travel to Japan and Thailand. He told them of his experiences, patiently allowed them to ask him many questions, was filmed speaking to them and helped us bring to life the very powerful, surprising and life changing legacy that war has. Bill has had a deep and lasting impact on all of those young people, teachers, the TPYF team and the wider community who met him and heard his story as part of the TPYF project.

Bill's lasting legacy as part of the TPYF project can be found online in the following places:

- One in Five, online exhibition

<http://archive.theirpast-yourfuture.org.uk/upload/package/52/Flash%20Site/index.html>

- Learning Resources

http://www.tpyf.com/upload/pdf/William_Rose_-_TA.pdf

http://www.tpyf.com/upload/pdf/Why_is_Mr_Rose_extraordinary_-_TA.pdf

http://www.tpyf.com/upload/pdf/SWW_People_of_Britain_-_SE.pdf

http://www.tpyf.com/upload/pdf/Medals_and_Memorials_-_TA.pdf

- Film of Bill speaking to young people from Godalming College, Surrey

<http://www.radiowaves.co.uk/story/15994/title/MrRoseSecondWorldWarVeteran>



Supported by
The National Lottery[®]
through the Big Lottery Fund



ROSE

William Cyril

*Died peacefully at home on December 27, 2010
aged 98.*

*Beloved husband of Joyce (deceased), wonderful
father, father-in-law, grandfather and great-
grandfather who is sorely missed by his family
and friends. He is remembered as a peacemaker
of infinite wisdom, patience and kindness.*

Memorial service will be held at St. Peter's Church,
Bridge, on Saturday January 29, 2011 at 2pm. No
flowers. Donations, if desired, to St. Peter's Resto-
ration Fund via C.W. Lyons & Son Ltd., 70 Military
Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1ND. Tel. Canterbury
01227 463508