

MONTE SAN MARTINO TRUST

June 2021

Strong in face of adversity

WELL – “that was the year that wasn’t,” you might say!

As we emerge into what will, hopefully, soon begin to look like a return to “near normal”, let me first express the hope that all our generous supporters and ex-PoW family members and friends have come through this troubling year more or less unscathed. To those who have suffered sickness or loss, whether in this country or elsewhere (and particularly in Italy), I can only extend my deepest sympathy and regret.

The work of the Trust has continued during this time, though inevitably constrained by virus restrictions. We were, of course, unable to host any bursary students from Italy in 2020; or to join our friends in the Escape Lines Memorial Society on the Tenna Trail in the Marche; or to gather for our annual MSMT lunch.

But this year we hope to welcome at least a few of the 40-plus students awarded bursaries and have set 10 November as the date for our lunch – please put it in your diary now! Inevitably, there must remain some uncertainty about whether these activities will go ahead as planned (not least on account of the seriousness of the pandemic in Italy and elsewhere) but we have our fingers crossed.

In the meantime, work on putting our archive of escape accounts online has continued and is nearly complete; we have signed off on an exciting partnership with the Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri, based in Milan, to establish a website in Italy about Allied PoWs and the camps; and we kicked off a series of occasional MSMT Zoominars on aspects of the PoW story with the online launch of the English translation of a book about Fontanellato (*Bugle Call to Freedom*) and another in May to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the publication of Eric Newby’s famous book *Love and War in the Apennines*. We had 170 attendees at the latter event which raised £1,000, for which we are very grateful.

We have also taken time to review some of the Trust’s legal and policy documentation and have three excellent new trustees. One of them, Christopher Woodhead, has agreed to take over the responsibilities of Treasurer from Justin de Meo – to whom many grateful thanks.

Inside this newsletter you will find much else to interest you, and I hope you will agree that my volunteer trustee friends and colleagues, and our administrator John Simkins, have done a pretty good job of “keeping the show on the road”. It would, however, be remiss of me if I didn’t finish by noting that, in common with many other charities, the Trust has had a thin year for fundraising, and 2021 looks no better – so, dare I ask you to think of the Trust if you are considering updating your Will, or if there is any loose change burdening your pocket or handbag!?

Nick Young, Chairman



Eric Newby’s book *Love and War in the Apennines* never ceases to fascinate. Professor Robert Tregay, who has forensically researched the route that Newby took after escaping from PG49 Fontanellato, explains on p. 3 how this came about. Another Newby researcher is Paola Bondani, who conducts walks in the footsteps of fugitives from Fontanellato. This photo was taken at Zumara, where Newby stayed, by a participant on one of Paola’s walks



New hands on the purse-strings: Christopher Woodhead, above, has taken over as Treasurer from Justin de Meo, below. The Trust is extremely grateful to Justin for his excellent stewardship



TREASURER'S REPORT

By Christopher Woodhead

WHAT a strange time we have had. And, not surprisingly, this is reflected in the Trust's accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020. The students, our main spend, were unable to come because of Covid-19, so our income over expenditure looks very healthy.

However, we have offered bursaries this year to both the 2020 cohort and new applicants for the year 2021 in the hope that they would be able to come, and have budgeted for that eventuality. But, as is explained in a report on p. 6, the uncertainty over travel from Italy has made it difficult for students to commit to taking up the offer.

Without any students, our expenditure for the year 2020 was a modest £20,764 compared with £110,308 in 2019. With income of £118,585 (£164,076) we had a healthy, if one-off, surplus of £97,821. We have increased the budget to £105,000 to cater for the extra students in 2021 (£75,182 in 2019) and anything left from 2020 will be used to fund those of the double cohort who are able to come.

Donations despite Covid have kept up well, including the laudable £1,500 from the event organised by Graham Jones, of Sudbury Golf Club. There is, of course, a large blank against the annual lunch, which had to be cancelled. As you will read on p. 12, however, a date has been set for this year's annual lunch, when it will be a joy to gather once again.

We have several projects to which we are contributing in 2021 over and above our core activities. These include budgeting support for the memorial in York (see p. 4), the research work at Istituto Parri (p. 6) and a potential project involving the Allied Screening Commission files in Washington, D.C.

The Trust's finances remain in good standing with net assets now at £2,873,941 (£2,467,554). And whilst we still have a little way to go, it remains the Trust's long-term ambition to increase the income from our assets to a level that covers the annual expenses.

Our portfolio with Rathbones has done well with a total return of +6.9% outperforming both the MSCI PIMFA +2.0% and the ARC Charity Steady Growth Index +3.8% for 2020. The investment objective continues to be a balance between capital growth and income generation but there is hope as we emerge from Covid that the bounce will increase both the value and income from the funds.

I only hope that during the next few years I can emulate the good work that Justin de Meo has done over the past seven years. His has been a steady and efficient hand on the tiller.

Justin de Meo writes: It has been both a privilege and rewarding to serve as Treasurer for a remarkable charity. One of the highlights for me has been meeting and writing to the people who generously support the charity with donations. Another has been the close ties to the Italian Embassy, which recognises the importance of the Trust's charitable work.

Also noteworthy have been the financial appeal run by Vanni Treves, which raised £1 million, and the legacy left by Keith Killby, the Trust's founder. The result has been to provide the charity with a strong financial base.

It has been a pleasure discovering the strong ties with Italy and getting to know people whose fathers were PoWs in Italy. The warmth, humility and generosity extended by the *contadini* were significant.

My successor, Christopher Woodhead, will provide continuity and expertise and I am sure he will enjoy the role as much as I did.

I am delighted to be able to remain as a trustee.

In the footsteps of Eric Newby

Sonia Ashmore and Jonathan Newby tell how they heard of a remarkable initiative by **Robert Tregay** to research the route that their father, the author of *Love and War in the Apennines*, took after escaping from a PoW camp

IN September 2017, a phone rang from a Land Rover somewhere between the village in Slovenia where our mother Wanda Skof was born, and Fontanellato, Italy.

It was at Fontanellato that she had met our father Eric Newby, one of the 600 prisoners in PG49, the PoW camp in the village, and it was she who had helped him escape into the mountains.

The call was one of those “You won’t know me” openings that began a continuing correspondence and friendship with Robert Tregay. He has re-trodden the area between Fontanellato and the Apennines where Eric was hidden in the autumn and winter of 1943. As usual we, as “children”, only had part of the story. After all, we had been there and it had all been written down, or had it?

The MSMT held a Zoominar on 12 May to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Love and War in the Apennines* and to showcase Robert Tregay’s research. There were 170 attendees and the Trust received £1,000 in donations. A recording of the event can be accessed through www.msmtrust.org.uk or at <https://youtu.be/RbOxwos27WE>

With forensic persistence, Robert has reconstructed the story our father wrote in *Love and War in the Apennines*; he has walked the paths, found the people who “remember” and discovered the boundaries between fact and imaginative writing. Above all, he came to understand the heroism of the Italian *contadini* who helped Eric and so many others.

It was thrilling to receive each new episode of his research. If the past is another country, for us at least part of it lies specifically in the province of Parma, which has resonance for so many MSMT members and their families. Now we know it, and Eric’s story, better. Robert has generously donated a copy of his research to the Trust.

Robert Tregay takes up the story

IN 2016, I read *Love and War in the Apennines*. It gripped me like no other adventure, neither true nor imagined.

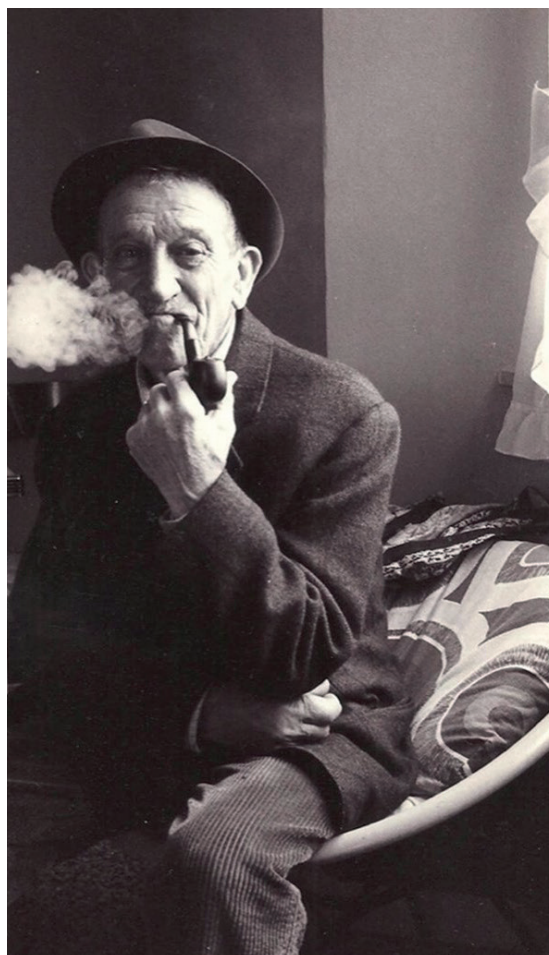
Pictures played in my mind: where was the Pian del Sotto, the Castello del Prato, the Col del Santo and what were they like? And who were Zanoni, Scamperdale, the Doctor?

I was lucky to meet Maria Švagelj, the woman who translated part of Wanda’s book *Peace and War, Growing up in Fascist Italy* (1991). I stayed with her in the hill-town of Štanjel in Slovenia where Wanda grew up. “Oh, no,” she said of *Love and War in the Apennines*, “it’s just a story.” However, I was unable to shake off the belief that large parts of the book were true. But which parts? And what was pure invention and what lay in the middle ground between?

In the intervening years I unravelled the story; it felt like completing a huge jigsaw puzzle.

I identified every place in the book and almost every character; where and when they lived, their stories and what they looked like. I worked out a timeline. And I spoke with two people who, as children, met Eric and took him food to keep him alive. One of the key characters in Eric’s novel was Zanoni. With Sonia Ashmore’s help, I was able to identify him as Guglielmo Ugolotti (**photographed by Eric in the 1970s, right**). Ugolotti risked his life to save Eric’s. I was lucky to track down two of his grand-daughters and then, on one of the most memorable days of my life, I discovered where he had lived.

In the novel Eric stays there after walking up the valley in a terrible storm before going on to find work on the Pian del Sotto with Luigi and Agata.



As he set off he stood at the back of Zanoni's small stone house:

"Standing under the apple trees in the orchard next morning with Signor Zanoni it was difficult to believe that the last two days of wind, rain, thunder and lightning had ever been. The sun was a huge orb of melted butter shining out of a cloudless sky... Out beyond the end of our valley to the south-east a series of long outlying ridges ran up towards the main ridge of the Apennines. And beyond the furthest of these ridges there was the outline of a fantastic mountain that was like the profile of a whale rising from the sea, its head a huge vertical cliff. 'Bismantova,' said Signor Zanoni." (Chapter 9, with some editing.)

Below is the orchard 75 years later, with Bismantova on the far horizon. The trees still exist. In the book's epilogue we are told that Zanoni's old house fell down after the war. I know exactly where it stood.

In September last year MSMT published *Bugle Call to Freedom*, a translation into English of *L'Orizzonte del Campo* by the historian Marco Minardi, the story of the escape from PG49 by 600 Allied servicemen, including Eric Newby. It is available through bookshops or Amazon. Proceeds go to the Trust.



Photograph: Graeme Tregay, 2018

News from ELMS

by Rog Stanton

THE year 2020 proved to be challenging for the WW2 Escape Lines Memorial Society.

All our trail and memorial events throughout Europe, including the Tenna Valley Freedom Trail in the Marche, had to be cancelled. Arrangements were in place, but lockdowns and travel restrictions, due to the pandemic, put paid to our plans.

However, we ensured that low-key, wreath-laying ceremonies took place at memorials at Eden Camp Museum, near Malton, the Special Forces Grove at the National Memorial Arboretum and at the SOE Memorial at Westminster Abbey.

Hopefully, 2021 may eventually prove to be less challenging. Instead of our usual four-day reunion at Eden Camp Museum at the end of April, we plan to hold a mini-reunion there in June – a small commemoration at our memorial with a bugler, piper, our Padre and a group of not more than 30 members.

Sadly, some of our helpers and veterans passed away during the lockdowns and so were deprived of the “farewells” that they deserved. It is intended to hold another short service later in the year to allow others to pay their respects.

The Italian Memorial rock, to commemorate the people of Italy who assisted Allied escapers and evaders, was donated by Coldstones Quarry high in the Yorkshire Dales and delivered to Eden Camp by Hymas Haulage of Ripon. They donated the use of one of their large trucks and the fuel to cover the 130-mile round trip, and a volunteer driver gave up his Saturday (and his pay) to assist. My wife Jackie and I discussed with the museum the proposed location of the rock (between the guard tower and the ELMS Memorial).

The rock is English limestone and the dedication plaque will be Italian marble, representing the strong bond between the escapers and their Italian helpers. Progress on the project, a collaboration with MSMT, was expected to be swift once the museum reopened, with a stonemason and a builder on call. We are planning for the unveiling of the memorial to take place later in the year.

Sadly, we lost another of our Italian helpers in April: Giovanni Luciani, from Penna San Giovanni in the Marche, was a young boy when his family assisted escapers, including Sgt. Donald George Robinson RA, who escaped from PG59 at Servigliano and was the father of ELMS member Georgina Stewart.

Recognition for Servigliano

FOR Trust supporters, two of Italy's 80-plus PoW camps hold a special place. One is at Fontanellato, near Parma, an officer camp from which there was a disciplined mass breakout after the Armistice in September 1943. The other is PG59, Servigliano, in the south of the Marche, which held Austrian captives in the First World War and Other Ranks prisoners of the Allies in the next conflict. One of these was Keith Killby, MSMT's founder, who escaped with others through a hole in the wall.

After the Armistice, PG59 became a transit camp for Jews and then, post-war, a refugee camp for Italians displaced from Istria and Dalmatia. The buildings were mostly demolished in the 1960s and, by the 1980s, the site of the camp had become a park.

It is now the focus of countrywide attention. Earlier this year Francesco Verducci, Senator for the Marche, supported by Senator for Life Liliana Segre, persuaded the Italian Parliament to grant "National Monument" status to the park. The nearest English equivalent would be the granting of "National Heritage" status.

The initiative has built on many years of hard work by Italians in the Marche to preserve the sad memories of PG59. In 2001, Filippo Ieranò and others set up the Casa della Memoria organisation, with a brief that was both educational and archival. Testimonies were recorded from those who had been involved in sheltering the escaped PoWs and historical documents were collected. School parties started to come to learn about this period in their country's history from historians as well as from those who lived through it.

The former train station, from which the prisoners entered the camp, was identified as a possible museum site. It was renovated in 2013 and opened to the public with a lecture room. This is a starting point for guided tours of the camp. In addition, in January 2020, the museum received a large government grant to renovate the former camp infirmary, which will provide a library and a reading room for students, researchers and the wider public.

Senator Verducci said: "The former prison camp of Servigliano is a symbol... part of a memory map that links countless cities throughout Europe. A map that must be traced and preserved, to hand over the memory of what has been. Memory needs places to live. A society that loses its memory remains blind, without identity and without a future." He added that the initiative was linked to the cultural and political battle to strengthen the study of history in schools.

The recognition of the importance of PG59 Servigliano will go a long way to boost the profile of the camp, and of the stories of the PoWs and their Italian assisters. It is thought that about 2,000 prisoners escaped, either through the hole in the wall at the rear of the camp or through the front gate, which was opened on the night of 14 September.

The Trust, which has a continuing relationship with the Casa della Memoria, congratulates all those involved in the restoration project. We were very pleased to take part in an online symposium on 25 April, the anniversary of Italy's liberation in 1945, that discussed the mosaic of civil and military resistance to fascism and the part played by PG59 and the surrounding area. Chaired by Paolo Giunta La Spada, of the Casa della Memoria, the participants included Ieranò, Verducci, Vincenza Filippi, prefect of Fermo province, Marco Rotoni, mayor of Servigliano, and Costantino di Sante, of Ascoli Piceno historical institute.

The Trust was represented by Nermina Delic, who had been invited – together with Mirco Carrattieri, of Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri – to describe the two organisations' exciting new joint project. This is to build an online portal entitled "Italy and the Allies 1943–1947" that will bring under one roof the research into the topic's different themes, beginning with the prisoners of war. Please see p. 6 for a full account of this.

Anne Copley and Nermina Delic



Announcing the grant of funds to renovate the camp's infirmary, with projections of the renovated building and proposed library

THE Trust's focus on research as part of its long-term strategy has been marked by the signing of an agreement with Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri to create a thematic website entitled "Italy and the Allies 1939–1947". Currently, information on the many different aspects of this topic is scattered and it is intended to make the online portal the principal repository of existing and new research. The first section of the project will be about Allied prisoners of war in Italy.

PoW research in Italy

The Parri institute, based in Milan, co-ordinates a network of 65 organisations known as Istituti Storici della Resistenza e dell'Età Contemporanea. These promote research into Second World War and contemporary history. Both Parri and MSMT see the new website, the first section of which is being co-funded on a budget of 50,000 euros, as a major initiative in extending knowledge of the Allies' wartime presence in Italy and its consequences for the country. The portal will supplement the Trust's own digital archive, which contains memoirs of ex-PoWs donated to MSMT (archives.msmtrust.org.uk).

Under the agreement, Parri will build the new website and create the section on prisoners of war. Presenting the project at a webinar marking the anniversary of Italy's liberation on 25 April, Mirco Carrattieri, director of the Parri institute, said: "We intend to set out the considerable research done in universities and at the institute over the past 20 years. The first section is about the prisoners of war – their presence in camps, where they came from, what happened to them after 8 September, their relations with local Italians, their return to their own countries and, where it occurred, their participation in the Resistance."

The text will be in both Italian and English. Parri aims to complete the first section by the end of 2021 although the agreement allows for an extension until the end of March 2022. MSMT is to pay Parri its 25,000 euros share in instalments.

MSMT is represented on the project board by Nermina Delic, a trustee, John Simkins, the Trust's administrator, and Rossella Ruggeri, who lives in Italy and was instrumental in arranging the five-year collaboration agreement between Parri and MSMT that came into force in 2019. In addition to Dott. Carrattieri, the Parri board members are Paolo Pezzino, the institute's chairman, and Marco Minardi, of the Parma historical institute and the author of *L'Orizzonte del Campo*, the story of the mass escape from Fontanellato camp. This was published by MSMT last year in English as *Bugle Call to Freedom*.

Parri envisages that the portal will eventually include sections on Allied raids in support of the Resistance, Allied bombing missions and the Allied Military Government. However, no decision has been taken by MSMT on whether to support this further work.

John Simkins

OUR STUDENTS

THE Covid-19 pandemic has struck heavily at the Trust's principal activity, the awarding of one-month language study bursaries to young Italians, *write John Simkins and Letitia Blake*. It was impossible to welcome them in 2020 but there were high hopes that

those awarded bursaries would be able to come in 2021 – and about 30 indicated they would like to do so. New applications were also received and we prepared to welcome a total of 43 students, a considerably larger number than in any previous year.

The second wave of coronavirus and the lockdown over winter came as a big blow. Right through the spring it proved impossible to be certain if students would be able to fly from Italy in the summer, which is the period most choose, and what social and international travel restrictions might apply then.

In mid-May we asked our students if they still wanted to come in 2021 or if they preferred to postpone their bursary until 2022. Many opted to do the latter but, at the time of writing, we are delighted that a dozen plan to come in July or August.

There remains a big proviso: it will only be possible if, by then, the UK government has placed Italy on its "Green" list for international travel, meaning that it would not be necessary to self-isolate on arrival and take tests, all at the student's own expense.

We also offered students the possibility of an online learning course but there has been little appetite for this. Part of the attraction of the bursary is that it enables young Italians who may not have travelled much the chance to get acquainted with England and its culture.

Regrettably, this year students will not be met upon arrival by our valiant band of volunteers. The prospect of continued social restrictions made it unrealistic to plan for this. We are reviewing the Meeter programme for future years.

The turmoil has not made it easy for our new Student Co-Ordinator, David Kettle, to settle into the role. Please read an introduction to David, as well as a tribute to Edward Gretton, the outgoing Co-ordinator, on p. 7.

A new Student Co-ordinator



**Left: Edward Gretton, with a self-portrait by Susan Wilson who preceded him as organiser
Right: David Kettle, who has stepped into the role**

At the beginning of this year Edward Gretton decided to relinquish the role of Student Co-ordinator which he had undertaken brilliantly for 10 years. The Trust is enormously grateful to him and his wife Susan Wilson, an artist, who had been the Co-ordinator for the previous five years, for the care they took of our bursary students.

We have been extremely fortunate to recruit David Kettle as our new Co-ordinator at a particularly demanding time, given the uncertainty that has hung over the 2021 student programme. Even before an Italian student sets foot on our shores this year, David has been fully involved in assessing the prospects for the bursary programme in light of the pandemic.

David has had a successful career as a singer and in the theatre. He was a leading vocalist in many musicals in London's West End and abroad and worked as assistant director on arena opera productions in Verona, Sydney, Munich, Cairo and Toronto. He also produces and directs his own touring shows in the UK. Much of his work has been in Italy and he is well acquainted with the country's way of life.

The Co-ordinator liaises with a successful bursary applicant about travel and with the language school about accommodation. He, or she, provides the student's initial contact with the Trust and must have good communication skills, a caring personality and a calm head to deal with the unexpected.

Edward took everything in his stride, easily fielding requests such as "may I have a piano?" and "no boys at the homestay, please". He was quick to advise a student arriving in London on the eve of the Olympics that expecting to find a hotel room without booking was not a good idea.

It is rare that a homestay proves unsuitable but there was such an occasion in 2014. Edward recalls: "We rang the student, a young man from the Marche, and said 'come and stay, we will sort it. But we are having the house re-wired, it's very dusty, and you will be in a tiny loft bedroom, on a futon with no light, just a torch.'

"He came and was very happy. We took him to dinner with neighbours who have very posh voices and are argumentative. He just loved it all. Afterwards we asked him why he was enjoying the loft, torch, mayhem, and he beamed at us: 'I'm a Scout!'"

It's never too late

Miranda Quigley thanks a family for their wartime bravery and compassion

LIKE many young men who returned from the war, David Garcia, my grandfather, said very little about his experience. The most my mother Linda knew was that he escaped from captivity in Italy and was sheltered by a local family.

Then last year, by chance, she discovered a letter addressed to David, which had been sent to him in 1944. It was from the Red Cross apologising for their failure to deliver a message he had prepared for an Umberto Capannolo, of L'Aquila.

We deduced that David had been attempting to thank Sig. Capannolo for saving his life. My mother and I decided that we would try to deliver David's message. We searched the L'Aquila telephone directory and found a handful of entries with that name. With the help of an Italian neighbour we wrote to each of them. One week later, we got a call from Giulia, the grand-daughter of Umberto Capannolo, who, it turned out, was indeed the farmer whose family had given David refuge.

We discovered that David had been one of two soldiers the family sheltered. The men lived and worked on their farm through the winter of 1943–44. When the Fascists were close, they were hidden in mountain caves nearby. There they were brought food by Giulia's uncle, then aged seven. David would give the boy pieces of chocolate. At one point David was ill with a high fever so the family treated him in the farmhouse, worried that he might not survive, but he pulled through.

Eventually the PoWs left the Capannolos and David somehow made it back to London. We do not know how, nor what became of his companion, who Giulia told us was named Patrick and might have been South African.

Giulia and her relations were so excited that we had contacted them. The story of their wartime guests had been passed down the generations. To finally learn that David had survived filled them all with joy. For my mother Linda there is a tinge of regret that it has taken so long to fulfil what David set out to do. Yet she takes comfort from knowing that, although her father endured unimaginable hardship and anxiety, he was shown compassion by this courageous family. Our sights are now set on visiting L'Aquila and thanking the Capannolos personally in 2022.



Umberto Capannolo and his wife



Linda and Miranda Quigley

THE Trust has awarded a grant to support the translation into Italian of important records relating to escaped prisoners in the Marche. Copies of the completed publications will be lodged in the library of the Casa della Memoria at the former PG59 Servigliano camp and will be used as teaching aids in schools. The work is being organised by Giuseppe Millozzi, the son of Antonio Millozzi, the Trust's representative in Italy.

One of the projects is the translation of *Time Off in the Marche*, part of the memoirs of Paul Bullard, who escaped from PG53 Sforzacosta. An article by his son, Alan, is on p. 9. The memoir is being translated by Alessandro Luchetti, who graduated in languages at Macerata University and teaches at the Liceo Scientifico at Fermo. There are also plans to translate a second Bullard memoir, *Doing Time in the Marche*, and a diary by Frederick Lax, who escaped from Fontanellato camp with three other officers and was sheltered in Garulla by the Guglielmi and Sacchetti families.

In addition to the translations, also in preparation is a collection of stories in Italian. These testify to the courage of women in the margins of the fighting, sheltering ex-prisoners of war in their houses or on their farms, for example. It is entitled *Donne della resilienza*.

A way of life shaped in rural Italy

Alan Bullard describes how the outlook of his father Paul was influenced by his friendship with the *contadini* of the Marche who sheltered him

FROM 1989 to 1992 my father Paul Bullard wrote two illustrated memoirs about his experiences of the Second World War in Italy, nearly 50 years earlier. The memoirs can be read at www.paulbullard.co.uk and one of these, "Time off in the Marche", is being translated into Italian. As background, I will say a little about how these experiences shaped Paul's post-war life.

Before he was called up in 1940, Paul was an art student in London, engaged to be married, enjoying concerts, ballet and theatre. Joining the army, mixing with people of many different backgrounds, and then suffering the privations of capture in North Africa and imprisonment in Italy, must have changed his life. Many of us cannot imagine what it will have felt like to lose one's freedom and to see colleagues and friends dying in battle or from illness. Paul, like many others, hardly ever discussed some of the things that he encountered. Writing the memoirs was a cathartic experience and brought into the open many aspects of wartime life that had remained hidden. But the second part of his story – his escape from PG53 at Sforzacosta, near Macerata, and the welcome he received from the *contadini* of the Marche, is something that shaped his life very clearly and was certainly not hidden from view.

I vividly remember travelling on a painted ox-cart

Throughout Paul's post-war life there was much talk of the Italians who befriended him, much studying of "proper" Italian (rather than the dialect that Paul had picked up from scratch on the Italian farms) and, from the late 1950s until the 1990s, regular visits to see the families, alongside galleries and sight-seeing. For Paul, these families were the people who welcomed the stranger, who saved his life by sheltering him at severe risk to themselves. And Paul's own life, as an artist and art-teacher, encouraging all who wished to learn and welcoming many and varied people to his home, was partly a consequence of his experiences in rural Italy.

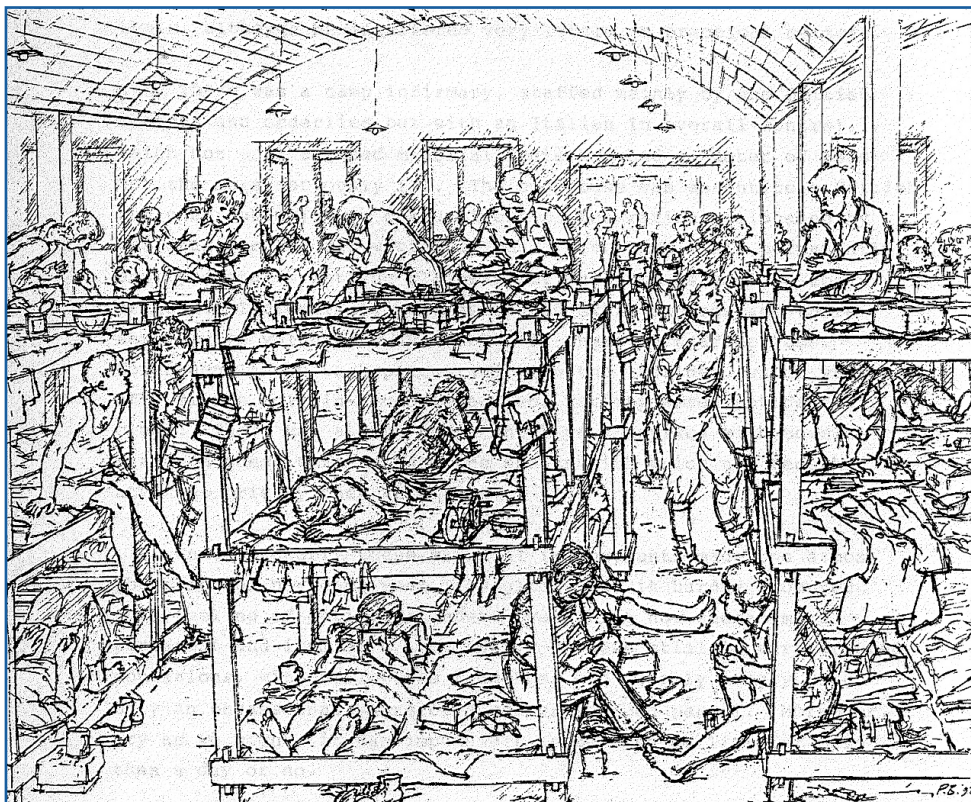
On our first visit there as a family, in 1957, the way of life, in a farm-building with animals on the ground floor and people upstairs, was hardly changed from when Paul had been there 15 years earlier – I vividly remember travelling on a painted ox-cart, for instance. But by the time of his last visit to the children and grandchildren of those who sheltered him, the farms had been abandoned and employment was now to be found in the towns nearby, running restaurants or small businesses making handbags and tourist mementoes. Why live on a picturesque farm at the end of a cart-track, working all hours

encouraging crops to grow on hilly and stony ground, when you could live in a smart new house in town?

Since Paul's death the link has continued – via Facebook, emails and also in person, as Paul's children and grandchildren have kept in contact.

In the final year of his life, 1995–96, Paul spent much time making a video film that sadly was destroyed (possibly by accident) before his death. Its focus was on friendship between nations, viewed via the friendship between the Italian families and our own, and shaped by the socialist views that he had acquired as a student and honed while a prisoner of war. Truly he never forgot his Italian friends – nor did they forget him.

I'll finish with the dedication in one of the memoirs: "For my grandchildren, in the hope that their generation does not repeat the stupidities of their grandparents."



As well as his painting of PG53 Sforzacosta, which is in the Imperial War Museum, Paul Bullard made this sketch of the cramped interior

An extraordinary man of his time

Hilary Horrocks, a contributor to a new book about PoW and partisan Stuart Hood, summarises his varied achievements



Stuart Hood in the early 1990s on a return visit to the barn in Valibona, Tuscany, where his partisan group was ambushed by Fascists
Photo courtesy of Anne Hood

“HIS life encompassed most of [the twentieth] century. Two terrible wars devastating Europe, a Bolshevik revolution in Russia, its corruption into Stalinism, a devastating world slump, the rise of the Nazis and unimaginable acts of atrocity, a post-war attempt to rethink socialist possibilities. A man whose socialist principles were inevitably fixed in the thirties slump, trying to make his way through the minefield of choices and the bitter disappointments familiar to every-one on the left. But if he was just a man of his time... what a time! And what a man!”

The life of Stuart Hood (1915–2011) is beautifully encapsulated in this quote from Tony Garnett’s contribution to a new book of essays* on this extraordinary man – partisan, broadcaster, translator, novelist, academic and radical intellectual. Hood is not as well known as he should be in Britain, and perhaps even less so in Scotland, his birthplace. Perhaps this is partly because his life and career defied categorisation: he was the opposite of the specialist yet made a lasting mark on almost everything he did.

Freed from a PoW camp at Fontanellato, near Parma, after the Italian armistice with the Allies in September 1943, Hood headed south through German-occupied northern Italy towards the comparative safety of the Apennine mountains and Tuscany beyond, where he knew the Resistance was active.

Fighting in the first pitched battle between local Fascists and partisans in the hills above Prato, Hood narrowly escaped with his life. He later commanded a partisan band, part of a disciplined and effective formation, around Siena. In his autobiography about this period, *Pebbles from My Skull* (latest edition Faber, 2013), and subsequent writings, his experience informed his interrogation of the “authorised version” of the Resistance in a way that still resonates in this contested historiography.

Along with many who had had what was called “a good war”, Hood joined the BBC, moving up the ranks to become in 1961 director of television, and recruiting radical directors, producers and writers. They included Garnett, who writes: “We smelled the changing atmosphere and got to work.” Under Hood, programmes that broke the mould, such as *That Was the Week That Was*, *Z Cars* and *The Wednesday Play*, began. Without them much of today’s television would be inconceivable.

Following his years at the BBC and subsequently, briefly, at ITV, Hood became a pioneering authority on media studies. He dissected the ownership, finance and control of the media, warning of the threats to public-service as opposed to commercial broadcasting, even greater now than when he was writing in the 1980s and 1990s. In the 1970s he lectured inspirationally on Film and TV at the Royal College of Art.

Hood published eight novels that engaged with political issues, perhaps outstandingly in *A Storm from Paradise* (Carcenet, 1985). He had a parallel career throughout his life as a translator from Italian, German, French and Russian, producing definitive versions of work by Pasolini, Dario Fo, Brecht and Erich Fried, among many others. His degree in English literature at Edinburgh University in the 1930s had required him to read Italian sources of English classics in the original; a decade later, the skill was saving his life as he fought with the Italian Resistance.

* *Stuart Hood, Twentieth-Century Partisan*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020. Edited by David Hutchison and David Johnson, with additional chapters by Terry Brotherstone, Hilary Horrocks, Nick Havely, Philip Cooke, Tony Garnett, Haim Bresheeth, Robert Lumley, Stephen Watts and Alan Riach.

War hero, artist... and more besides

John Verney's books *Going to the Wars* and *A Dinner of Herbs* are among the most vivid accounts by a PoW in Italy. Here **Guy. J. Singer**, author of a new biography of Verney entitled *Coffee with the Dustmen*, focuses on his adventures among the *contadini*

SIR John Verney, 1913–1993, Second Baronet, Military Cross, Légion d'honneur, artist, author, ardent building conservator, local councillor, father of seven and husband to Jan for over fifty years. How can one sum up such a life in a few words? Fortunately, I can take one small part of his life and concentrate on that.

During much of the early part of the Second World War, John (pictured, in 1944) fought with the North Somerset Yeomanry in Syria and Palestine, where he was noticed by people such as David Stirling, of the SAS. John was co-opted into one of the early incarnations of the SBS. His only active operation, Hawthorn, was a disastrous raid on Sardinian airfields, which led to his capture (alongside the entire force). After a brief time in PoW camps in Italy, John was put on a train bound for Germany. In a daring escape, he, along with Edward Imbert-Terry and Martin Gibbs, climbed out of a roof hatch and disappeared into the darkness.

Their adventures over the next two-and-a-half months read like the best war fiction. As part of my research, I came across John's notes in the MSMT archives and devoured his words. In twenty-seven pages of closely typewritten script, John describes the intricacies of his time in the hills above Sulmona in the Abruzzi region.

John's writing is peppered with references to the generosity and friendship of the local *contadini*, for whom he retained deep and lifelong affection. It is hard to imagine the deprivation and fear those times brought. The farmers of the hills were starving. Germans stole their food and the harvests had not been good. That did not prevent the families, particularly Antonio Crugnale, Sinibaldo Amatangelo (known as Sam) and their wives, from showing great generosity. The farmers carried food far up the hillside while the British hid from the enemy. Every mouthful donated to the British was one bite closer to their own starvation. And if the Germans had caught the farmers helping the escapees, they would have executed them. Happily, John's friends survived the threat from the occupiers. In a typical example of the farmers' care, one day, when the weather was particularly miserable, Sam, Antonio and his wife arrived at the cave high up the hillside carrying a heavy shoemaker's last and nails to repair the men's boots. The rain had soaked Sam to the skin, Antonio had a bare chest under his thin shirt, while his wife's teeth chattered from the cold. But none of them seemed to mind.

Eventually, the three escaped prisoners made their way over the mountain and back to British lines. Although John and Edward managed to cross, Martin was recaptured at the final sentry point. He was finally liberated from a PoW camp in Germany.

John never forgot the debt he owed to the farmers and returned to the valley in 1963. Their friendship lasted over decades. I will leave it to John to sum up his thoughts: "We amused ourselves deciding the kind of clock or watch we would give in accordance with the degree of service given to us. For instance, Dionino, who had at first qualified for at least a gold Half Hunter, had now fallen down the scale to an Ingersoll. Sam and Antonio, of course, must have the most elaborate and, if possible, accurate Grandfather's Clocks that could be transported from Bond Street to Italy."



For readers in Britain, signed copies of *Coffee with the Dustmen* are available directly from Guy Singer for £15 on <http://bit.ly/GSCWTD>. Overseas readers can obtain the book from Amazon online.

ANNUAL LUNCH

THE Trust is delighted to announce that it is planned to hold this year's annual lunch on Wednesday 10 November at our usual venue, the Royal Overseas League, London. Please keep the date!

The delight is felt especially keenly, given that the Covid-19 pandemic prevented us from gathering together last year. We cannot be absolutely certain whether, or in what way, this year's event might be affected. But the situation should be clearer

by September when the invitations will be sent out to supporters by email. We do hope as many as possible will be able to make the journey.

Interest in our ancestors' wartime experiences is growing, rather than diminishing, and we have witnessed a steady stream of new supporters. Much has happened in a positive way at the Trust since the lunch in 2019 and we look forward to updating you.

WORK on the digital archive continues to progress and we are gratified to note that archives.msmtrust.org.uk is clearly not a static site: we continue to receive new documents, all of which are interesting and informative.

Except for the stories with outstanding copyright issues and those that need to be re-scanned because of illegibility, the manuscripts have all been uploaded to the online archive. In May, 161 accounts were available.

The primary objective of the archive team was to upload the personal accounts that had been supplied as paper documents to our founder, Keith Killby, by ex-servicemen who had been PoWs in Italy. Since great strides have been made with converting those stories into a legible, digital version for the website, future efforts will also be directed towards the inclusion of the names and stories of Italian helpers as well as the PoW camps in Italy. We are very keen to give as much prominence as possible to the assistance provided by the Italians, although the number of these accounts will necessarily be far smaller than that of the Allied servicemen. We will dedicate a new area of the site to these Italian stories.

Research into all aspects of the PoW story will also be greatly strengthened by the creation of a "companion" online portal entitled "Italy and the Allies 1943–1947", the fruit of a collaboration between the Trust and a network of historical institutes in Italy (see p. 6).

Discussions with Cambridge University about the transfer of the physical archive have unfortunately been delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

When we first planned the website, we thought that it would be mainly of interest to descendants of escapers and other Trust supporters. However, we received requests from authors who wish to use some of the content in books they were writing for publication. Given new legislation around data protection, we sought legal advice. The archive team is grateful to Nick Young, Trust chairman, for his sterling efforts in obtaining expert advice on specific copyright issues regarding usage of the archive's content. Supporters will receive information about this by email.

Christine English



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ONLINE ARCHIVE

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Antonio Millozzi MBE (representative in Italy)
David Kettle (UK student organiser)

The Trust was founded in 1989 by Cavaliere Ufficiale Keith Killby OBE (1916–2018)

www.msmtrust.org.uk; archives.msmtrust.org.uk
info@msmtrust.org.uk