eggs are now $8 (£1) each I may not feel inclined to keep up with the rising prices. I also have some reserve supplies of milk and butter, sufficient to see me through the next two months, and when these are exhausted I shall begin to go off a bit too no doubt, but I am not going to consider that situation until it arrives.

Things have come to a pretty pass now. We have just been informed that patrols will be on duty in the vegetable gardens during the hours of night to prevent theft of vegetables. This gives some idea of the hunger which some internees must suffer when they will sneak out in the night and pinch sweet potatoes or tapioca to alleviate their sufferings.

Sunday, 25th March, 1945.

Last night we were told officially that our camp commandant and secretary had been taken outside the camp to some place not stated, and shown packing cases of Red Cross supplies intended for this camp. These comprised foodstuffs, clothing, footwear and medical supplies, and are expected in camp on the 27th. If we are bombed in the interim no doubt these supplies will suffer! I will write more about this when I see the goods. If Red Cross supplies can be brought in perhaps letters too will come. I do believe I pray more for letters than I do for the other stuff. I am so lonesome for Helen, it's such a long, long time since I have had news from her. I wish I could just tell her that my waking thoughts and my last thoughts before I drift off to sleep, are of her.

Some 600 women and 200 men are coming in to swell our numbers today. I understand the first batch has arrived and consists of local women and children. It has been pouring with rain all night and is still raining hard so the poor devils will be doubly depressed, torn out of comfortable homes to be herded into leaking, draughty huts. However, it can only mean one thing: that the war is coming nearer, and my own view is that they are being brought in here for better protection in the event of street fighting.

Tuesday, 3rd April, 1945.

Another Easter has passed and I am still a prisoner. The doctor now talks of letting me go back to my hut in 'about a month's time', partly because I am better and partly because with the influx of several hundred new internees, space is urgently needed in the hospital for new cases, including T.B. Space has already been made for two cases amongst the new arrivals, two Eurasians.

Papayas in here are a very valuable part of diet, particularly hospital diet; so much so that any theft of the fruit at night (or any other time) is a serious offence followed by heavy punishment - provided of course the thief is caught. A small bloke was visiting me today and happened to mention that he very nearly fell off a roof which he was attaping (thatching) the other day. I said that he must be careful when he is up a papaya tree pinching fruit that he doesn't fall down and break his neck. O'Reilly in the next bed added "It'll be allright if you fall down and break your neck, but don't fall down and break your leg. If you break your neck you can get away; if you break your leg you won't be able to!" One fellow was caught with two papayas which he couldn't reasonably explain away and got three weeks solitary confinement.

Had Freddy Bloom over for two hours yesterday - as a special concession for Easter. She tells me that their numbers have been swelled to more than double by the arrival of something like 500 Eurasian women. It's merry hell over in the women's camp just now. Three of our huts were ordered to

be evacuated today and the evictees accommodated elsewhere in other huts. My old hut - 115 - has had to take in 15 men and the head space allotted to each man before this new addition was 2'8" only! I can just imagine what it is going to be like now. I am, however, still hoping to rejoin Stringfellow there when I am finally discharged from hospital, in spite of the overcrowding. I shall have to suffer greater discomfort anyway so I might as well suffer it happily amongst friends.

Rumour has it that there are some letters in but it is still only rumour, and rumour in here is very much a lying jade. Fact has it that we are to get at least one Red Cross parcel each, possibly also a part of one more, but we still have not seen them. They are all in camp but cannot be released until the General (Saito) sanctions.

We had a spectacular raid the other night. I slept through it all. A huge flame of what was probably gasolene shot up into the air and illuminated the whole world, including the bombing planes. Great joy the following morning.

Wednesday, 11th April, 1945.

We have suffered another rice cut of 6%. If this sort of thing goes on much longer some of us will pass out from starvation. We are all now suffering from malnutrition to a greater or lesser degree according to one's ability to supplement one's diet by buying eggs and other foodstuffs on the black market, but as prices are beginning to rocket even those best able to afford it may find the cost of living prohibitive. Admitted we can now get $10 for our £, but even that is ludicrous when the price of an egg is $8.50 and going up almost daily. When eggs are available I sometimes treat myself to two of an evening but it pains me to think that I have spent £2 on my evening meal! However I should be foolish if I allowed considerations of economy to obstruct my efforts to maintain my health until we are relieved.

We have had a bit of a storm in a teacup over the Red Cross parcels which arrived the other day. Originally we were told that each old internee would receive at least one whole parcel and possibly a further half parcel or even a little more, and that new arrivals in camp would get one fifth of a parcel each, and possibly more proportionately as we received more. We were all very happy. A few days ago our camp commandant was informed by Lieut. Suzuki, the Japanese camp commandant, that the parcels would be issued in small lots over a period of six months, which would have worked out at something like a fourth of a parcel per old internee per month, as this was the manner in which the Japanese Foreign Office wished them to be distributed. A heated argument took place there and then and Davidson, our official interpreter, told me afterwards that he and Collinge just missed getting their faces slapped during the interview. It was touch and go, apparently. Collinge asked to see the General (Saito) on his next visit to the camp which was due in a day or so's time, but he was informed by Suzuki that this could not be permitted and that anything Collinge wished conveyed to the General must be submitted through him.

Next day Collinge was sent for and told that an interview between him and the General had been arranged for Sunday last and at this interview the question of the parcels was again broached. The outcome of this meeting now is that we old internees are to receive one parcel each and new internees a fifth of a parcel each, so that the position now is very nearly what it was at the beginning. What racket was to be covered by the six-monthly scheme no one knows but we are all full of suspicion. The excuse given for its proposal was that the food situation was so grave that the contents of the parcels should be used by the camp to supplement our

rations over that period. The food situation is apparently very serious, but the issue of, say, 40 parcels a day would not alleviate it to any appreciable extent and we all feel that we should like to get our hands on to at least one parcel before they begin to disappear in some mysterious manner. Nobody trusts anybody, not even our own camp authorities; cooks are looked upon with great suspicion as many kitchen rackets have been brought to light since hunger descended upon us in such a chronic form. Kitchen staffs are constantly being changed. This is the reason why we each draw our individual sugar ration every tenth day - we found there were leakages when it went straight to the kitchen.

So now we are all keyed up with anxiety which won't be relieved until the parcels are in our hands. There have in the past been so many misunderstandings between the Japs and ourselves that we all feel that there may yet be a slip between the cup and the lip, so to speak. After all, what can one expect when our minds and thoughts work in entirely different ways; how can the workings of the mind be the same, or reliable translations be even possible, when the two languages are so entirely different?

I am pretty well these days and if nothing unforeseen happens am to be returned to my hut at the end of this month. I am very pleased.

Sunday, 15th April, 1945.

There is a disquieting rumour going the round that Roosevelt is dead. A Japanese medical orderly is reported to have told Dr. Winchester that he died the other day of cerebral haemorrhage. I hope it isn't true but I'm afraid that it probably is, as bad news of this nature which comes to us from Japanese sources is generally authentic. There is no object in the story as propaganda.

There is a relatives' meeting going on at the moment (11 a.m.) in the Orchard at which the General is present. I am informed that photographs are to be taken of family groups, and of 50 parcels being handed to 50 married men BUT the 50 parcels have subsequently to be returned to store after the temporary recipients have been photographed in possession!! The Japs have no sense of humour - or have they a sadistic one only?

No word of a general delivery of these Red Cross parcels yet, and many of us are beginning to doubt if we shall ever see them. Peace may come first! We are all half starved and the very thought of a parcel makes the mouth water.

Helen's letters have been such a support and I am constantly longing for more. Maybe the General's visit today will bring a pleasant surprise in this respect; these visits sometimes do. I see no reason why letters should not have reached Singapore in the same ship as the parcels, and I'd forego my parcel if only I could get some up to date news of Helen.

Wednesday, 18th April, 1945.

The General's visit was profitless. He walked around the relatives meeting and that was about all. Some prints of photographs which were taken at a previous meeting were distributed to internees directly concerned, one coming to Freddy Bloom who was sitting talking to John Dobie at the time, both quite unconscious of the fact that they were being snapped. I saw this photo last Monday when Freddy came over to visit me and it was quite good. The impression it would convey to anyone not well versed in local conditions would be

favourable; the surroundings were pleasant and Freddy and John were dressed up in their best bibs and tuckers, in other words they had on their best going-away suits. The threatened handing-out of parcels to which I have referred did not take place after all, so there are no photographs of such a farce.

The total camp population today is 4,510 of which number 862 are women. When we came in here a year ago we were about 3,600 all told and then we considered that we were pressed for space. On top of this we have been deprived of the use of three of our largest huts, which were taken from us about two weeks ago to accommodate Japanese troops who have since moved in.

I gather from information which seems to be finding its way into camp that conditions outside are pretty bad. The whole thing is black market so far as I can judge. Personal belongings are sold at fantastic prices and all sorts of corrupt practices are indulged in by Japs and their local employees. Pay is very often handed out so much cash and so many cigarettes which, if necessary, the recipient can sell on the market at high prices. This state of affairs is not likely to improve. However, I suppose one's stomach will adjust itself to reduced rations and the pangs of hunger will ease in time. There is talk of further cuts in our food.

I saw Mrs. (Justice) Aitken last Monday. She had come over with the women who were visiting their sick relatives (Freddy Bloom comes in this way to see me) and I had an opportunity of exchanging a few words with her before they were all shooed back to their own quarters by their Japanese escort. Her husband, the Judge, has septic sores on his legs, a very common complaint these days. The main hospital ward is half full of men with the filthiest wounds, all festering and septic, and these are only the worst cases as accommodation in hospital is so limited. Patients are discharged long before they are cured, to make room for worse cases, and those discharged in this way generally find their way back in due course, sometimes in a worse condition than before, and so the vicious circle goes on. Nothing seems to heal in here.

I mentioned in this diary that I had met at a relatives meeting a young woman who came from Taymuilt, a Mrs. Trevor-Hughes. Her husband died two days ago. He was one of our diabetics and had in the past gone through the hell of watching the insulin supply run low and seeing it replenished only at the last moment.

Saturday, 21st April, 1945.

A new patient was admitted to this ward yesterday so I am definitely going out at the end of the month to make room for him. At the moment he is parked temporarily in the middle of the floor - the only passage way through the ward for the orderlies - so we are very crowded. His name is Wardhaugh and he worked in Thos. Cooks in Singapore before the capitulation. Poor chap looked very scared when he came in first, was biting his nails and pulling skin off his blistered hands while gazing vacantly into space, so I went over and had a chat with him and tried to ease his mind. I told him not to worry and narrated my own history.

Wednesday, 25th April, 1945.

We got our parcels last Sunday. The General again visited the relatives meeting and the plans which were arranged for the previous week were carried out; chosen internees were handed parcels and were photographed examining

the contents, then the parcels were handed back. But this didn't matter as the general hand out was taking place the same afternoon.

General Saito delivered a little speech to the internees present at the relatives meeting, to the effect that the Japanese had been so good as to send the parcels to Singapore in a Red Cross ship but that the Americans had torpedoed this ship on its return journey. He did not, however, say what the ship was carrying back to Japan, nor did he explain the long delay in delivering the parcels. Most of them are dated 1942.

I got a British parcel in pretty good condition, inasmuch as that none of the tins were blown although very much battered and dented. Many have found tins blown and consequently useless and no bad tins can be replaced. The American and Canadian packing is vastly superior to the British packing and people who got either of the first two types consider themselves lucky.

I am now the happy possessor of a tin each of meat, rice pudding, margarine, sugar, cheese, syrup and one or two other odds and ends - all enough for two or three days good tuck in. Stringfellow and I are going ping-ping on our two parcels as I return to the hut on Friday.

The delivery of the parcels has caused quite a wave of good cheer in camp. Trading in tins is very lively and prices are soaring. They say that a 1 lb tin of powdered milk is fetching up to $600. I do know for a fact that 20 Chesterfields cost $100. I have just acquired ½lb of Canadian coffee for $20 and ½lb of Canadian sugar for $15, both cheap at the price.

Tuesday, 1st May, 1945.

One year ago today we moved into this (Sime Road) camp. It doesn't seem so long ago so time must be passing reasonably quickly.

I was discharged from hospital last Friday and it was like being given a new lease of life. I am taking things very easily and so hope that I shall be able to keep well until we get out of here. I am back in my old home and find nothing changed. Stringfellow and I are sharing our parcels and have so far broached some paste stuff and an apple pudding both of which were excellent. I had an old tin of cream which we opened to go with the apple pudding. There's nothing wrong with my appetite!

Word has just come round that about 7,500 letters have arrived in camp, from everywhere more or less, but they won't be delivered until the camp censors have dealt with them, and that may be days, weeks, or even months with the Japanese. The letters are dated between July and October 1944. I am excited in the hopes of hearing something from Helen.

I attended the relatives meeting in the Orchard last Sunday for the first time in nearly five months. It was a pleasant reunion - Freddy Bloom, Katherine de Moubray, John Dobie and myself - and the two women brought coffee in a thermos and tinned salmon sandwiches to celebrate the occasion and we were a very happy party. I was ravenous. These two women are always doing something of the kind and we selfish men just let them, although we feel we shouldn't allow them to. Why is it that most women are so unselfish and so self-sacrificing? These two have been kindness itself to me during internment and I have to thank Freddy for a lot during

the early days when she sent over milk, butter and other things which we men were unable to get on our side. In this way I was able to a great extent to stave off ill health so I feel I owe her a lot.

Monday, 7th May, 1945.

Earl and Cherry, two of the Singapore Gestapo prisoners who were returned to camp some few months ago, have again been taken back to town. Poor devils; I know that they have been shivering in their shoes with this threat hanging over them ever since they came back to us.

The attitude of the Japanese appears to be improving towards us so far as one can judge; at least they indicate a more amenable disposition towards us although actually they don't do much. Of course, there are things they used to do to us which they don't do now. They practically never strike an internee; they don't persecute the authorities as they used to do in Changi (as will have been noted from perusal of the earlier parts of this diary); they will discuss matters with our commandant which they would not entertain some months ago. I read into this that they now realise that they are losing the war and losing it very rapidly. Rumour has it that Germany has completely collapsed which if true means that the end cannot be far off in the East. Japan's position is so hopeless that I feel myself that reason will prevail and that the voice of the industrialists and moderates will soon be heard. Japan is so vulnerable to bombing that a little of that should effectively destroy all her main cities, which I see from an old copy of Pears Annual house over 13 million of the population. This feeling pervades the camp and a spirit of optimism prevails. People are at last beginning to allow themselves to dream of freedom and discuss plans of what they will do when they get home again.

Work still has to go on and grandiose schemes of cultivation are commenced in spite of the signs of change, and as a result of this men continue to lose weight. The food question is still acute. Pimples, cuts and scratches go septic and some become gangrenous. There are several men in hospital in quite a serious condition due to gangrene. Such complaints as impetigo, shingles, scabies, oedema, and more obscure skin troubles are common. Half the camp seem to be walking about in bandages - arms, calves, thighs, toes, in the case of some, while others are painted green, red, brown, yellow and multicoloured. We are suffering from all the disabilities of the slums.

All this might be explained by the general condition of food shortage throughout Malaya if it were not for the fact that certain commodities which would be most helpful, but which the Japanese say they are unable to obtain for us, come into the camp 'black market' through the Jews in large quantities and are sold to internees at fantastic prices. There is no other way that one can augment one's diet so the nefarious trade flourishes. In this way such things as eggs, red palm oil (a very valuable commodity as it is our main source of fats), gula malacca, coffee and cheroots, all come in and we are mulcted to the tune of respectively $12 each, $8 a half pint, $32 a katty, and anything from $50 to $70 a katty, and from $1 to $3 each for one cheroot. The Jews cash cheques for as low a rate as they possibly can, having started at the parity of $8.50 to the £ and come down now to, I believe, about $15 to the £., the rapid drop in the value of the Japanese military dollar being due to the rumours of good news.

The Jews are hand in glove with the Japanese interpreters and guards and trade with them quite openly. To our

way of thinking it is a roaring scandal but to these orientals it's fair game. And the Jews we have to deal with! They are the scrubbiest, dirtiest, crookedest bunch of gutter rats one could come across. There is one man of the name of Mordecai who is the king of the black market, an Indian, who struts around the place as if he owned the camp (and, after all, he probably does by now financially as he has us all in his pocket), and he seems to be able to produce almost anything in camp while nothing can come in through the official channels. One read of the fortunes which the Japanese Military were making out of graft in Manchukko. It appears to be general with all ranks in all places. One rather hopes that many of the cheques which have been issued to the Jews will be repudiated after the war. "How odd of God to choose the Jews".

Someone said to me the other day that we were all getting older and supported his inane statement by informing me that my hair is now much greyer than it was a year or so ago. I hadn't noticed any great change but change I suppose there must be, both in this and probably in other things.

My friend Archdeacon Graham White has undergone a very serious abdominal operation and is very much on the danger list. I can't visit him as he is too ill.

Artie Aston is bedridden with septic wounds in his legs. I have seen quite a lot of him lately; I used to wander over from the hospital after I was allowed to walk a little, as his hut is only about 100 yards away from the ward.

Wednesday, 9th May, 1945.

I have just returned from the Archdeacon's funeral service. The poor old man died last night. Those who saw him a lot after his wife died say that he seemed to have lost interest in life. I am also told that the day after this big operation he had just undergone he was found wandering on the verandah of the ward during the night. I think that he had made up his mind to join his wife and was determined that he would not recover from the operation.

This is one of the minor tragedies of the war. I believe he had set his mind on retiring just before the war out here started but stayed on to let the new bishop get settled in. The padre who gave the address at the service this morning told us that Graham White had met his wife in the last war when he was an Army chaplain and she a nurse; he said they had met in one war and departed this life together in another. They have no children.

I have lost three good friends in here - James Leutchford, Sam Middlebrook and now the Archdeacon. I hope I shan't lose any more. It has depressed me considerably to attend the funeral service of each of these good fellows in turn. In the case of the first two the circumstances of their death were so horrible that they left a lasting impression. The Archdeacon's death is a tragedy but nothing like such a gruesome one as the other two.. Sam's was nothing more nor less than murder.

Today Lieut. Suzuki, the Japanese camp commandant, turned up just before the service began, marched up the aisle of the small open-sided church (where we were all assembled) to the coffin, clicked his heels together and, removing his hat, bowed for about thirty seconds, turned about and marched out again. The Japanese orderly officer of the day attended the service - one Kamasui, commonly known as 'Puss in Boots', the man who excelled himself in Changi Camp by beating and kicking not only the male internees, but also the female ones.

Bought a 1 lb tin of Klim yesterday for $100 Straits currency and $250 Japanese currency (or banana money as it is described in here). At the present rate of exchange this is equivalent to about £15. The circumstances of the purchase were amusing: one man arrived and offered to sell me a similar tin for £60 which I had much pleasure in turning down! He then asked me to make an offer and I said I might consider something around £20, but he wasn't interested and went away. A few minutes later up turned the second man who offered his tin for $900 banana money but as I hadn't $900 banana money in my possession I made a counter offer of $100 Straits and $200 banana. We settled the deal after a lot of haggling. The £60 offer was ridiculous but the £15 purchase was a bargain.

Germany, they say, is now out of the war. If this is true, are the Japanese going to go on? I personally do not think so and am expecting great news any day. If I am right and the great news comes some of us, myself not excepted, will be sick with joy and excitement. The whole camp is buoyed up with hope these days. At the worst I feel that we should be relieved before the end of the year, and that, after all we have already gone through, will not be so bad.

The green slime, the 'soup' which we get at midday every day, is now being served so I must away and join the queue to draw my pint.

Saturday, 12th May, 1945.

Today we have been allowed to hand in yet another message for broadcast to Australia and mine reads as follows:

> "Interned staff well myself included absolutely no cause for anxiety hoping for reunion in near future everlasting love please cable foregoing wife through bank"

I have addressed it to my friend Atkinson of the Union Bank, Perth, and I pray that it will reach him and go on to Helen.

Monday, 14th May, 1945.

It is interesting to record that the basic cereal rations issued to us by the Japanese are 9 oz. for a full worker (4 hour day); 7.9 oz. for a part time worker (1½ hour day) and 6.3 oz. for a non-worker, with certain supplementary allowances for extra hard work (to which I have referred in an earlier part of this diary). On top of this we have our garden vegetables, but as the cereal must be looked upon as the bread part of our food, anyone can appreciate how badly off we are. The midday soup, which is all we get then, is made up almost entirely of potato leaves, some spinach, some byam and a few, a very few, potatoes. Internees work hard in the gardens and elsewhere, all the time in the blazing tropical sun, so that it is now becoming quite a regular occurrence for a man to be brought back on a stretcher, having had a complete black out. Ralston came back this way two days ago and my friend Fleming similarly a week or two ago. The Japanese are driving these poor devils like slaves. I think so that they may be able to make a good showing of cultivation when our relief troops march in. They have opened up 38 acres so far outside of the camp proper and are always working on new ground. It's a case of drive, drive, drive all the time.

I have had no letters yet in the last consignment received but as only about 1,400 have been delivered to date I may be lucky with the balance in hand. It is very tantalising to know that there are letters lying in the office and

not be able to touch them until Mr. Tominaga chooses to censor them and release them. As they are practically all 25 word post-cards the whole job could be worked off in a couple of days at the very most, but that would be pandering to the miserable internees I suppose. This life, vis-a-vis the Japanese, has in its mildest form been one long succession of pin pricks.

The medical supplies recently arrived in camp included some Vitamin B tablets so we are all now having a course of Vitamin B. We line up about every fourth day and receive our dose, just like a bunch of Tamil coolies being doctored with quinine. I don't feel any different!

At the relatives meeting yesterday I heard of one woman who left her husband in Sumatra just before the war broke out in Malaya and had had no news, either direct or indirect, of him since, when suddenly she got a letter in this last lot telling her that he was interned in Sumatra. Her joy was unbounded; she had been so miserable and depressed up to then, having almost given up hope. Both Mrs. de Moubray and Freddy Bloom have recently staged 'black outs' so that these are pretty general too in the women's camp. Since the influx of the last batch of women internees the proportion of Eurasians to Europeans has gone up considerably, and the Sunday meetings nowadays are a milling mass of the scrubbiest looking citizens one could ever wish to meet, mostly Jews.

Tuesday, 15th May, 1945.

We have had a little mild excitement in camp. Two youngsters were missing from camp yesterday morning and we all thought that at long last escapes had commenced. The Japanese immediately called for a roll-call that same evening at 5.30 and that was all that transpired there and then. This morning I hear that the lads have turned up in camp again; they apparently got back in the middle of the night and were reported immediately to the Japanese who came and took them away to their guard room. I understand that they are two of the new internees, both Eurasian, aged about 19, and that as they were not getting enough to eat in camp they decided to go into town and get a decent meal. That was all, so that the excitement of yesterday has completely died down. What will happen to the two unfortunates I dread to imagine, but maybe now that the general situation seems to have changed so much to the detriment of the Japanese, they will take moderate and reasonable action in the matter.

Friday, 18th May, 1945.

A long letter has been submitted to the Japanese authorities by our camp commandant, setting forth the trials and tribulations under which we are at present labouring. I believe that it is couched in very plain terms and states clearly that we are overworked and are suffering from malnutrition to a dangerous degree.

One of its plaints is that although the Japanese repeatedly state that the foodstuff which we so urgently need is not available in Singapore, this is finding its way into camp through unofficial channels. Collinge does not actually say that it is being sold in the camp black market as that is not the point which he particularly wishes to make. The trouble is that the stuff is being brought in by the Japanese themselves, sold by them to the Jews, and by the Jews to us. Eggs, palm-oil and gula-malacca are traded in in this way and these are valuable commodities which the Japanese say are unobtainable.

The letter also gives loss of weight statistics, pointing out that there has been a sharp drop since the beginning of this year - about the time when we went on to starvation rations - and that the condition of many of the older men is such that there is no hope of their recovery to normal health even with considerable improvement in conditions. Should we have to fight an epidemic of any sort the death rate would be high as our natural resistance is at such a low ebb. The rice issue today is 1.240 kilos for 4,500 internees against 1,800 kilos for 3,500 internees a few months ago.

Collinge asks that the hours of work be curtailed as the physical condition of some of the 'over 40s' is very much undermined. To work for 4 hours in this climate, the minimum time in order to qualify for 9 ozs. of dry cereal per diem, is too much, but men who are quite unsuited for such long hours in the tropical sun, and who are rapidly losing weight in consequence, must carry on or they will not get enough to eat. They do not get enough to eat even then and cannot face the further cut which would come if they worked shorter hours. I don't suppose the letter will have any effect, but we shall see.

One can see from this what a marvellous background this is for a black market and how favourable it is for any Jew - or even Gentile for that matter - to lend money or cash 'good' cheques. Today, for example, the best rate I could get for a bank draft (a cheque drawn on the Hongkong Bank and signed by two members of the staff on behalf of the bank) was $15 Japanese Military notes to the £1 Sterling. When one considers the prices one has to pay on the black market one is left in no doubt as to the extent that we are being fleeced by the Japanese and our friends the Jews. Can one really blame Hitler for persecuting the latter?

It is all very depressing and conditions are not likely to improve until we are relieved. The optimism of a few days ago is gradually dissipating as the war goes on. People who used to think that the Japanese would cave in soon after Germany are now beginning to change their views, and the general opinion is that they will fight to the last as they have always maintained they would. If this is so then everything would seem to depend on just how long Japan can hold off the Allied external pressure. And perhaps Malaya will be bypassed and the main offensive launched directly against the Japanese mainland.

Monday, 21st May, 1945.

We are very much a self-contained unit these days. In fact we have been so for well over a year, probably something like two years. We rely on ourselves for everything except the rice, salt, sugar, palm oil (very little) and salt fish (also very little) which the Japanese issue to us.

We have our own tailor shop, tinsmiths, cobblers, carpenters, police, internal post office, library, hospital, opticians, medical services, dispensary, dentists, disciplinary board, central administration with our own interpreter, and so on, some of which services are run under the greatest of difficulty.

For example, the cobblers: they have no material for repair work and can only do the simpler stitching jobs unless material can be provided by the internee himself. The tailors - they insist on one bringing cloth for repair work but will make new garments out of old shirts etc, provided one is prepared to wait for weeks for one's turn to be served. The opticians have a few lenses which can sometimes be made to serve, but where they have excelled themselves is in

making new spectacle frames out of old tooth brush handles! Men wander about with glasses' frames of all colours; green, blue, white, red, brown etc. The library have to keep on re-binding the limited number of books at our disposal, most of which are in continuous circulation (and, incidentally, are wonderful carriers of bugs). Tinsmiths will not look at any private work such as the repair of mug or tin container, unless one can also provide solder. Surgical operations are done 'on the premises' so to speak by our own internee surgeons, and the hospital is staffed entirely by internees.

Drs. Hanna, Cellan-Jones and Ellis, all members of the Hanna firm, are the camp dentists who are able to carry out the simpler work - fillings, extractions and the like. My teeth, thank goodness, have not suffered much in here and, apart from the odd filling, have had nothing disastrous happen to them to date (touching wood!). These three good fellows provide us with powdered wood ash as a dentrifice. And Ellis has even managed to improvise a small plate of four teeth for Mike Turner to keep him going until we get out - a very worthy effort indeed.

If I personally have any clothing repair work to be done I give it to Freddy Bloom on our Sunday meetings and get efficient and expeditious service from that very good friend.

One thing which is causing a certain amount of speculative thought these days is the fact that none of our planes have been over here since the first week in April, and when I say none I mean that not even a reconnaissance plane has shown up. The last raid we had was the night one at the end of March when a petrol dump or something very like it was seen to flare up several hundred feet into the sky. Naturally one wonders why this should be. Almost daily at one time we had one or two planes over and on frequent occasions we were well and truly raided. The popular opinion is that peace negotiations are going on and that the Allies have decided to leave this place alone until they are concluded. My own opinion is that, since the capitulation of Germany, we have decided to strike good and hard at the mainland of Japan, and in this way bring the war out here to an end without any supplementary and unnecessary campaign. Why throw away more lives than necessary in attacking Malaya, for example, when Malaya must fall with the final surrender of Japan, apart from the fact that a frontal attack on Malaya or, say, Hong Kong, would be extremely destructive in friendly life and property. If I am right then it now remains to be seen just how long Japan is going to take to make up her mind that further resistance is sheer madness; ultimate defeat is inevitable and certainly no good purpose can be served by prolonging the war, in fact a stubborn resistance will only intensify bad feeling against Japan and make it harder for her to get any concessions whatsoever. I have no doubt that her popular press is breathing fumes of defiance and voicing determination to fight on to the last man! Germany did that up to a few days of her surrender, and so did France. We ourselves swore that we should fight in the fields, in the villages and in the streets, if the German invader came over, but I am inclined to think that if Germany had succeeded in landing forces in any large numbers we might have very soon changed our tune. We had no Army left in England at that time, certainly no Army sufficiently well equipped to face a strong invading force of panzer divisions. No; that sort of rhetoric is very heroic-sounding but means very little - sometimes the very opposite of what is expresses.

Monday, 28th May, 1945.

With reference to the preceding paragraph, one or two reconnaissance planes are reported to have been over in the

last two or three days. That may be true. I don't know. I haven't seen them myself. They also say that the sentry box at our entrance gate is being bunded, which looks a bit like preparation for trouble.

The camp finance committee have borrowed $100,000 from the Jews at $160 banana to $100 Straits which is a ridiculous rate. I myself can get $200 banana to the $100 Straits. When I first heard of the camp borrowing I was a bit incensed as I had just a few days previously had a hard struggle to get two to one, and I thought the camp transaction would set the rate back against me if I should want any more money, but no, this very morning I have raised £800 for myself and staff. About a week ago I borrowed £550 for the staff. The only way I can get large amounts at a good rate is to draw a sterling draft on behalf of the bank, one other officer adding his signature to mine.

Not so long ago I gave one of the Jews a pretty straight talking to and I suggested that he broadcast my views to the local Jewish community (they all live in hut 106, commonly known as Aldgate). I told him that they had complete control over the black market and were in a position to demand from us poor Gentiles what prices they chose for the articles which they, through the Japanese, were able to lay their hands on, while they were the only people who seemed able to obtain money from outside. Their black market operations bring all the money they lend back to them, and this, or anyway the large part of it which is profit, they lend back to internees to enable them to purchase on the Jewish black market. It's a sort of vicious circle. In spite of the fact that prices of all commodities have soared sky high, there is no corresponding benefit in the rate of exchange at which cheques are cashed to obtain the Japanese Military notes which circulate nowadays, the Jews will make practically no concession in this. The rate of exchange between good sterling or Straits Dollar cheques and local "banana" money (as the Military Dollar is described) has moved very little. As far back as a year ago it was officially read out on all floors that the purchasing value of the Military Dollar vis-a-vis commodities had fallen as low as two Straits cents, but in spite of this the best exchange one can get for a good cheque cashed by one of the Jewish fraternity is only two Military Dollars for one Straits Dollar (which has a value of 2/4d); in other words the Jews when lending money value the "banana" dollar at 50 cents Straits but when selling foodstuffs they consider only the current depreciated value of only about one cent Straits!

I said to Saul Ezekiel, the particular Jew to whom I was talking, "What do you think the average internee thinks of you Jews?....I hear what they are all saying and I warn you here and now that you are all sowing the seeds of a hatred which will take a long time to live down. You dangle food in front of the eyes of a half starved community with one hand, demanding fantastic prices, while with the other you cash good cheques at very little better than par. You control both markets and you choose to bleed us white." Ezekial heard me out without comment but looked a bit crestfallen by the time I had finished, and I really felt that I had got under his tough Hebrew hide. I hope that he will broadcast all that I had to say to him to his racial brethren.

What I fear is that now we have destroyed Nazi-ism the these people will become more poisonous than ever. God damn them!

The two youths who broke camp the other day are still in custody in the Japanese headquarters house. This is all we know about them. For the first three days no food was allowed to be sent in to them from any of our kitchens but at the end of that time this ban was relaxed and food went in.

Tuesday, 29th May, 1945.

The two youths were released last night. This was officially announced on the floor and we were informed that General Saito had issued a warning that any further incidents of this nature would be followed by a severe punishment. How times have changed! The leopard seems to have actually changed its spots.

Thursday, 31st May, 1945.

Ten pigs, two goats and a calf were slaughtered two days ago and we had the great pleasure of eating our share of them yesterday. The Jews got the goats and the gentiles the others. We had a succulent pork loaf.

Yesterday and today the air raid sirens sounded - for the first time for many weeks. However, nothing much transpired except that a few anti-aircraft shots were heard this morning, so I presume at least one raider was over. We are in the limelight again perhaps. Will raids develop I wonder? We are all somewhat down at the complete neglect which we have suffered recently and are hoping for fireworks soon.

Life is darned dull when one is precluded from doing any physical work. I am bored to distraction. The news of Germany's collapse has made us all very restive and it is desperately hard to settle down, even to reading novels. We expect our own release to follow immediately and if it is long delayed we shall all be a bundle of nerves by the time it eventually does come. And I have had no letters from my darling Helen in this last batch; they have all been delivered and I am just out of luck. I admit that this has got under my skin and that I have succumbed to some feeling of depression as a consequence. There is only one thing which can beat me and that is bad news of my wife. I can't take that. I wish I could curb my imagination.

Tuesday, 5th May, 1945.

During a conversation the other evening with one or two bank men when we were having our usual chin-wag prior to turning in to bed about 10 p.m., the question of working in Singapore for some time after we are relieved cropped up and I had occasion to do a bit of pretty straight talking. One man seemed to think that none of us would be able to do a hand's turn immediately after we got out. I don't like that sort of attitude so I asked him what he suggested we should do if we got out and found no-one of the bank staff to relieve us and it should be desirable that the bank reopen. Also, did he think that he would be justified in leaving any new arrivals who might turn up to carry on without giving them a week or two's assistance? Another made some remarks to the effect that none of us were fit to do anything but leave immediately for home. I told them that if it was necessary for any, or all, of them to stay on for a month or two after our relief, then they would just have to do it, health or no health. The first man's retort to this was "Well, I'm damned if they are going to get me to stay on", so I replied "In that case you will have to hand in your resignation and depart from the bank without any gratuity or possible pension". There was a genera silence after this which showed that the remark had sunk in.

Some of the lads here think that they have had a hell of a time and that the world must stand still while their grievances are being adjusted. They make me tired. They have escaped all the horrors of war and the risk of losing their lives by bomb or shell, and yet they howl. They are not so sick, some of them, that they cannot go out and do voluntary hard work for the camp in order to get more food, but the

mere suggestion that they carry on for a month or two after our release in order to help the bank out of its difficulties horrifies some of them. They have all been spoiled by the bank. They are probably drawing pay of some sort while here, their families are doubtless being cared for, and I shouldn't be surprised to find that Provident Fund is being credited in full; their jobs are assured when they get out, apart from the generous manner in which the bank has treated them in the past, and still many of them feel that the bank will be unfair if it expects them to do a little work out here before they depart for home.

As a contrast to the foregoing, I have just this morning been having a chat with a man Morris, a Singapore contractor, who must be 60 years of age, and he was saying that he would have no option but to resume work immediately after release. I said "But won't you take some leave before you start?" and he replied "How can I? I was on my own, the Army owe me $67,000 and I've got to stay and put in proof of my claim". I said "But your health - what about that? Do you feel that you will be fit enough to carry on at once after all you've gone through these last three years and more?" "Of course" he said, "I feel as fit now as I've ever felt". That seemed to me to show the spirit of the older men, of the men who have no powerful and wealthy employers to fall back on. What else can they do? They must live, and to do that they must work, not like some of the youth of the present day who are "so run down in health" that they cannot be expected to do even a few hours office work a day for a month or two before going on leave. And there are many men here in the same boat as Morris.

Thursday, 7th June, 1945.

The Japanese reply to Collinge's letter of the other day on the subject of food and work was read out to us last night. The General regrets that nothing can be done to alleviate the situation; our condition is no worse than that of the citizens of the rest of Malaya who are also feeling the pinch. No more rice is coming into Malaya due to disrupted communications and the sinking of ships, and we must therefore do the best we can for ourselves. In other words, if we wish to eat more we must work hard to grow more root vegetables. I am told the General actually said that the Japanese could not give us what they hadn't got.

Seventy heavy workers have been detailed to tunnel under a hill in the hospital district for the protection of supplies in the event of bombing or shelling. This sounds as if the war was nearing.

If actual fighting ever takes place on this island we should at long last have something to break the monotony. What it will mean to us no one can say, but it will have very disastrous consequences we we will certainly suffer casualties. That, however, is all specualtion and we mustn't dwell on unpleasant prospects - we have enough to contend with at the moment with our semi-starvation rations and slave driving. Only for God's sake speed things up as we are all getting a bit jittery; tempers are fraying and a lot of bickering is going on most of the time. It takes very little now to start up a violent argument which all and sundry claim the right to participate in.

Tuesday, 12th June, 1945.

The balance of the Red Cross parcels were released to the camp on Sunday. We actually got one between two internees on that day and there are 600 odd more yet to be

distributed. Stringfellow and I share a British parcel between us, the contents of which will go to augment our miserable diet - and tickle our palates incidentally - for the next day or two. Poor miserable creatures that we are! Half a dozen tins, more or less, thrown to us and we are as happy as pigs in "merde" for a short time. The ordinary Japanese rations and what vegetables we obtain from our own gardens make for poor eating. Sometimes we sit together of an evening and talk of the good things we propose to eat when we get out, but it only makes one's mouth water and aggravates one's hunger. Every night nowadays we go to bed hungry.

Prices are soaring even higher. Eggs are talked of at $25 each and gula-malacca $120 a katty. The last eggs I bought were some few hen's eggs at $14 each and that was about two weeks ago. I have spent a lot on Klim and have a supply which should last me three months, allowing myself half a pint of milk a day. I feel that if I take less it will be of no benefit, in fact I wonder if the half pint I take is of any use considering my medical history.

Managed to get 3 to 1 for a bank cheque for $5000 today.

Monday, 18th June, 1945.

My crown tooth came out a few days ago and I got it put in again yesterday morning and it has given me merry hell since. Tonight I'm glad to say the pain has eased up a lot and is quite bearable, so I am hoping that I may not have to have it out again. I had a lot of trouble with it last time it came out during the last war. Toothache is a damnable thing to add to our present trials and tribulations - I got little sleep with it last night and lay under the eaves of the hut verandah tossing about from side to side - the moon shining directly on me.

Katherine de Moubray celebrated her 47th birthday at our meeting last Sunday - the party was Katherine, Freddy Bloom, Dr. Tweedie, John Dobie and myself. It was fun. I gave Katherine three handkerchiefs (new), part of a lot I had brought in here with me, which will no doubt be of some use to her. The women brought over a cake made of tapioca root which had an icing of a kind on the top. When Tweedie saw it he said "How splendid! What sort of sauce is that on the top? and the indignant reply was "That's not sauce. That's icing". These Sunday meetings do me a lot of good as it's the only real taste of civilization we get in here. Normally we men all run around in the most disgusting rags and the constant sight of skinny, naked bodies has become somewhat revolting. Everything is so damned dull - just dull, dull and dull, all the time with nothing but relief to look forward to and that doesn't seem to get any nearer.

Wednesday, 20th June, 1945.

Bailey, the man with the wooden leg who created such interest amongst the Japanese sentries when I was transporting old men to the internment camp in February, 1942, died two days ago. Poor fellow had taken a bad fall and within 24 hours he died. I think he damaged his spleen.

I don't think I have ever referred to our self supporting efforts in the way of medicines. From some local herb the chemists interned have produced a mild laxative which is called "galingen" (the name of the herb I think); from charcoal they make up a stomach mixture; from clay they manufacture something also for the stomach, I don't know for what particular purpose; from rice they distill alcohol; from wood ash they produce tooth powder; and when we were in

Changi Prison and allowed access to the sea, salt was dried out of sea water. There are probably other things that I haven't heard of. Over and above this, banana leaf is employed as a substitute for bandage. It's bad to be reduced to such expedients, but needs must where the devil drives.

Three and a half years of a life of poverty, dirt and discomfort is quite a fair trial for any man and we all feel that it is getting beyond a joke. When I say dirt I do not mean dirty bodies, but the dirt of such things as bedding, furniture and housing. Blankets just cannot be washed nowadays or they will fall to pieces and they cannot be replaced, and the consequence is that they become hard and somewhat greasy from sweat. Chairs with canvas seats or backs cannot be cleaned often for the same reason, and they look dirty. Wooden huts with attap roofs can never be made to look clean as they are always dusty however much they are swept. So all in all we have to put up with a good lot of unavoidable dirt.

Many internees do not wash their clothing for the same reason. Too much washing in this poor quality local soap just eats garments up and these, too, cannot be replaced except from stocks in private possession at prohibitive prices. Nothing in the way of clothing ever comes in from Japanese sources.

Monday, 2nd July, 1945.

Another storm in a teacup: three men are in custody with the Japanese for being involved in some traffic of foodstuffs with a Sikh sentry. Goods were being handed over the wire fence by the latter to the three internees against an exchange of clothing which was being handed over to the Sikh. The sentry was duly caught and confessed and now a man Seymour, another man Martine, and a Eurasian are locked up in the Green House (the Japanese camp office building) and receiving some pretty rough treatment. Martine is an employee of the Borneo Company and a son in law of Freddy McQuisten, one time M.P. for Argyllshire and an old friend of my mother.

A certain amount of amusement was caused in our hut last night when our floor representative read out an official camp notice to the effect that the small fish in the camp drains were to be considered camp property and that no one was permitted "to fish, guddle, net, or take in any other way, any of these fish". I have never seen one but am told that they range up to about 4".

Friday, 6th July, 1945.

We are to have a roll-call medical inspection by the Japanese today and we are naturally all wondering why. The grouping of ages has led to a theory that the medical inspection part of it may be a prelude to a separation of the sheep from the goats, in other words that the able bodied who at first sight may appear capable of giving trouble in the event of an attack on Singapore are to be parted from the maimed and the halt, and removed to some place where it will not be possible for them to mutiny. I imagine that a superficial examination will pass me as able-bodied. If our speculations are true then it is good news.

The three men in custody are still in the Green House. And on top of this another man has disappeared - yesterday he was reported missing and up to date he has not returned. He is a member of the same hut as the two youths who took a jaunt into Singapore not so very long ago, but I fear that if he comes back he will be pretty sorry for himself after the Japanese have finished with him.

Grouse Davies is a very sick man, and looks it. He is suffering from oedema and his feet are very swollen. I gave him a talking to yesterday and recommended that he buy up all he can lay his hands on in the black market. I think he, like so many others, hates to spend money; as I pointed out to him, he must mortgage his future savings against keeping his health now. The trouble with so many of them is that they would not spend in the earlier days - say when the food began to fall off so badly just over a year ago - and are now suffering from malnutrition to such an extent that when they do get sick they have nothing to fall back upon in the way of physical reserves. J.C. Sutherland is another man who is always ailing but the difference with him is that he is not really as sick as he thinks he is. He and his brother are another two who won't spend money. Jock has a bad foot like so many others in here, but he is making very heavy weather of it. I got so sick of the sight of his drawn face lined with self pity that I went along to see our area doctor, and I told him that he had better give Jock a serious talking to. I pointed out that he was suffering more from self pity than anything else, in which the doctor agreed, and that his poor moral effort must be retarding the recovery of the foot. In this he also agreed. The outcome was that the doctor had a few words with Jock and I now hear him (Jock) talking of buying milk and butter on the black market. If he does this to anything like the extent he should, it will break his poor brother's heart!

Saturday, 7th July, 1945.

The medical inspection of yesterday was a farce. We all filed past a table where sat Tominaga and a Japanese doctor, and the latter ran his eyes up and down each internee as he filed past. The whole thing finished in a little over three hours so that when you think that some 3,500 men were looked over you will appreciate that my description of it is no mis-statement. I do not think it has anything to do with a change of camp, but we shall see in time.

Monday, 9th July, 1945.

The three men who have been in Japanese custody in the Green House for the last few days have been released today. What state they are in I have not heard.

Yet one more man has done a bunk, making two now at large, and punishment has been meted out to all the other members of their two huts in the form of a cut to half rations until further notice. I should think this would have the opposite effect, in that hunger is more likely to drive others to bolt in order to get more to eat outside than they are getting in camp. They may think too that their chances of remaining at large until relief comes are good. If any more go then I fear we shall all participate in the repercussions as the Japanese must be getting quite concerned about it all. To get out of this camp presents no difficulties whatsoever. There is a feeble strand of barbed wire around the perimeter which, at night, is only occasionally patrolled by a sleepy Sikh sentry. All one has to do is to wait until the sentry has gone his rounds and then just step over the wire to freedom. The three men who have today been released from Japanese custody were involved in trading with the Sikh sentries over this barbed wire fence.

We have been warned that the Japanese are working on a plan to mix the 'new' internees with the 'old'. This may mean drawing lots to see who has to leave this hut to make room for the 'new' internees who are to come in, and I am praying that my name will not be drawn out of the hat as I am relatively comfortable where I am.

One pound tins of Klim now change hands at $700 each and the other day I bought two tins of bully beef (12 ozs.) at $330 each. Stringfellow and I now go ping-ping on all purchases except milk. A one pound tin of Canadian butter cost me $450 a few days ago. We'll all be ruined if we stay here much longer. Eggs at $25 each and sugar $7.50 an oz!

Not of a sign of a British plane for weeks, and little indication of any impending attack on Singapore. But maybe this is the calm before the storm. I hope so. Any kind of excitement instead of this killing monotony would be a relief.

Wednesday, 11th July, 1945.

Colonel Cecil Rae died last night and I have just this morning returned from his funeral service in our little Anglican church. Lieut. Suzuki turned up and bowed before the coffin and then away. After the service was completed we all waited for the funeral lorry to arrive, and after half an hour someone turned up and informed the padre that there was no lorry available at the moment as they were all out on duty, so we dispersed. What a fiasco everything is in here.

On my way to the church I looked in on Artie Aston, now out of hospital and lying up in his hut, and found him a bit of a wreck. He has beri-beri and has to a great extent lost the power of his legs. His reflexes are quite dead, he tells me. I believe this is an indication of an advanced stage of the complaint.

Saturday, 14th July, 1945.

Eleven of the old internees of this hut have switched over with eleven of the newcomers from the North area. The newcomers are all Eurasians: one little fellow who has come to our section is as black as coal and has been down with malaria ever since his arrival. He is not a bad little chap and we are all very kind to him so I think he will appreciate the change.

The women got no midday meal yesterday. One of them had been stealing tapioca from the garden in their area and could not be traced so they were all punished for the crime.

We are told that 50 cases of Canadian Red Cross parcels are coming into camp and will be issued to us in due course. The total number of actual parcels is 800 I believe, so this will work out at one parcel to six men.

Friday, 20th July, 1945.

I used to think camping out would be a fine way of spending a holiday. After three and a half years in here I am quite decided that the tough he-man stuff is no longer my meat. Today, for example, it has rained steadily for several hours. Under conditions of normal existence rain outside when one is comfortably settled indoors, in front of a nice fire with a good book or perhaps the radio playing some good music, is real comfort, and one could really enjoy it; but here, where the shelter from the wet is negligible and one hasn't sufficient warm clothing, it is the acme of discomfort. Then again, at nights when it rains I, who sleep under the verandah, have got to get out of bed and let down my tarpaulin, fix a waterproof sheet at the end of my bed, then crawl back under the mosquito net and blanket, often with my sleeping garments dampened in the process, so that all in all it's darned unpleasant. On summing up, therefore, I am decided that camping out in the future is no go.

The inside of the hut is a picture of misery. It is just 4 p.m. and as no one has gone out to work the hut is full. Most people are under blankets (in many cases just parts of blankets), some have sweaters on, others their towels thrown over their shoulders, one man has some old sacking covering him in an effort to keep warm, the little Tamil Eurasian who has joined our section in recent times is sound asleep on a couple of old rice sacks with a minute piece of red blanket over him, and so on. It's a depressing picture. The hut is dark inside and the rain beats on the attap roof, making a melancholy sound. I'm fed up. I tried to lie outside under the verandah but was very soon forced in by the driving rain and the cold; stuck it out for quite a time with a waterproof sheet over me but that wasn't good enough so I packed up and went inside to the comparative shelter of the hut. I hope the rain lets up before night. And to top everything I did not get my afternoon cup of tea at 3 oclock from the dispensary as the power is off.

We have been told that 5,900 letters are in camp awaiting censoring. The notice read that the mail was from G.B., Australia and South Africa, no mention of the U.S.A. or Canada, but I am not by any means without hope. They say the latest date is February, 1945, so that won't be so bad if one can get news as late as that.

I never abandon hope. It's all one has to sustain one. Maybe relief will come soon, maybe not, but I continue to hope for it. Things must be moving outside but we hear little of it. I have so much to live for that I pray and fight to get out of here in reasonable health. So many people, I am sure, have gone down the hill - some of them have even died - through sheer despondency; the outlook for many of the older men with no savings must be so bleak and hopeless. I pin my faith on my wife. Many in here have lost their wives either in camp or at home, some at sea when the final panic flight was made in February 1942. It is all very tragic.

Chatting with George Travers last night I told him it was bad luck his married life had been so frustrated. He agreed; thought it a darned shame that after only a month or two of marriage he should be separated for three and a half years. I pull his leg and tell him that Lucy has probably got off with an Admiral and he gets all excited. He says "Here I am, a married man of four years standing and only spent about three months of it with my wife!", then we both burst out laughing at the irony of the situation. George has a good sense of humour and we have lots of amusing chats together. We were together in the Hongkong mess in the wild days of 1919/1922 and can conjure up amusing and ridiculous reminiscences.

Wednesday, 25th July, 1945.

A most amazing announcement was read out to us last night by our hut representative. The Japanese have asked for a statement of all those in possession of pocket and wrist watches and whether the owners are prepared to hand them over to the Japanese for payment in gula-malacca, butter, cheese, salt and/or coffee. It is understood that the exchange is to be made by the Military Authorities. Could anything be more fantastic? And here we have men dying from deficiency diseases for lack of such things as butter and cheese which are supposed to be unobtainable! Of course we have no guarantee that payment for any watches surrendered will be made in butter or cheese and not gula-malacca or coffee; in fact we have no assurance that payment of any kind will be forthcoming at all.

Money is very tight just now and prices of many articles have dropped a little. I think the Jewish fraternity

have got wind of the fact that the bankers in here will not issue a bank cheque for less than 3 to 1 and are holding off to try and make us weaken, but as they are the ones who will be found with the 'banana' money on their hands in the event of a sudden cessation of hostilities I feel that they must be the ones to weaken; either they must come to us for the best known form of security, or they must lend in piddling amounts to all and sundry which is just what they are scared to do. Tipler of the Chartered Bank came to me the other day and asked if we shouldn't come down to 2½ to 1 as several of his men were in need of money and he could get that rate, and I said "yes" if he liked but that I thought it was a pity to surrender as once we had done that the Jews could keep pressing the rate down if they wanted to. He agreed and wont do anything in the meantime.

Fourteen Jap fighters have just passed overhead, the most we have seen in the sky for a very long time.

Saturday, 28th July, 1945.

Have just read a very interesting booklet written by a Japanese journalist who worked in Singapore just prior to the outbreak of this war, and who was interned in India with his fellow nationals. It is called "Singapore Assignment" and is, I think, a local publication in English. So far as I can judge the treatment meted out to the Japanese who were arrested here in the early stages was very similar to the treatment we received when we were first rounded up and interned. This man complains about things which we were complaining about in the early months of internment; in fact, if his statements are true, their lot was, if anything, somewhat worse than ours at the beginning. In discussing this book with a fellow internee this morning who had also read it, the latter started off straight away with the remark that it was all probably grossly exaggerated, and when I asked him why, his reply was that as it had been written by a journalist it was quite obviously a tall story to attract public attention. I pointed out that the allegations made in the early stages we knew to be true as there were men in here who corroborated them - the statement, for example, that they had all been packed like cattle into steel trucks (standing room only) which had previously been exposed to the sun all day, and left there for some hours until many of them had fainted, was true; and when in Changi Prison before their transfer to India they were lodged three to a cell with supplementary people dossing down in the corridors, we also know to be true. Moreover, he states that they were locked indoors after 7 p.m. daily (whether in cells or in the block he does not say), a restriction never applied by the Japs to us.

My contention is that we British hold ourselves up as an example of perfection and will believe nothing which tends to upset these views, but nothing can be too bad where others are concerned. Admittedly the Japanese have resorted to inhuman treatment of certain individuals and we must put that down to their ideas of punishment which fall very short of ours in respect to humanity and justice, but we should not disbelieve all stories we hear which are detrimental to ourselves. We should endeavour to maintain an unbiased mind. I well remember a brute of a captain in the Royal Fusiliers in which I was a private in the last war, a man who had been some sort of prison official in private life, who was later transferred from the R.F. to a prisoner-of-war camp, much to our relief and, no doubt, much to the consternation of the German P.O.Ws.

Went over to see Artie Aston this morning in his hut. The poor fellow has fallen away a lot since I saw him last. He can hardly walk at all now and he says that he is beginning to lose the power of his arms. He is confined to bed. The