



CHANGI CHAPEL
AND MUSEUM



CHANGI CHAPEL AND MUSEUM

Understanding the Lives of Internees

Student Guide for Primary Level

Recommended for ages 10 to 12

Welcome to the Changi Chapel and Museum. This museum presents the stories of the prisoners of war (POWs) and civilian internees, who were imprisoned in the Changi area during the Japanese Occupation (1942–1945).

Explore the museum and the internees' experiences through the stories of four characters.

Use this booklet to note down what you have learnt from the characters.

Character Profiles



Name: **Dave**
Age: **34 years old**
Nationality: **British**
Status: **Soldier**



Name: **Cecilia**
Age: **17 years old**
Nationality: **Australian**
Status: **Civilian**



Name: **Helga**
Age: **10 years old**
Nationality: **British**
Status: **Civilian**

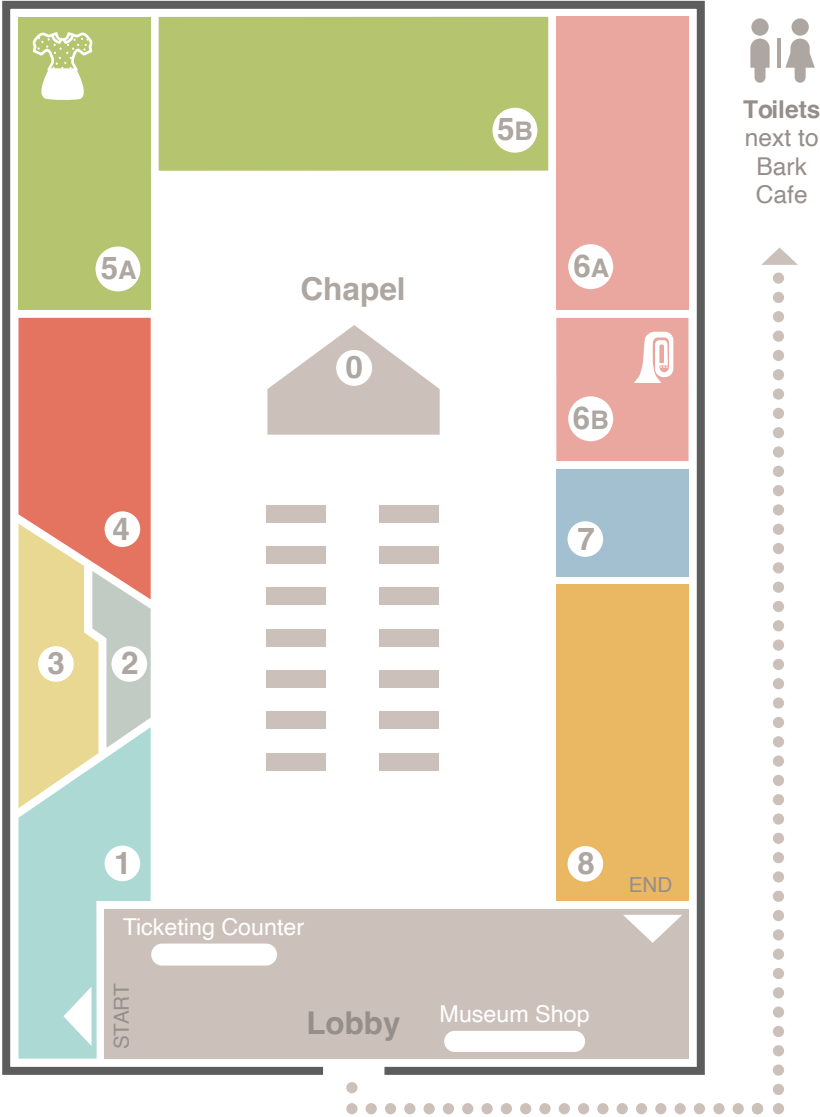


Name: **Stan**
Age: **25 years old**
Nationality: **British**
Status: **Soldier**

Did You Know?

People who were captured and locked up by the Japanese soldiers were all known as internees. Turn to page 12 to learn about the different groups of internees.

Getting Around



Zone 0: Changi Chapel

Zone 1: Changi

Zone 2: Fallen Fortress

Zone 3: The Interned

Zone 4: Life as a Prisoner of War (POW)

Zone 5A and 5B: Resilience in Adversity

Zone 6A and 6B: Creativity in Adversity

Zone 7: Liberation

Zone 8: Legacies

Tips for an Enjoyable Museum Visit

When you visit the museum, please remember:



Pay close attention to what you see and hear around you. Some of the answers you're looking for may just be near you!



Speak softly while discussing with your friends and move around carefully.



Photo-taking is allowed, without flash. Please do not take videos.



If you need a quick snack, please head outside as eating and drinking are not allowed in the museum to protect the artefacts.

Look out for these icons for the different activities in this booklet!



Fill in the blanks/boxes



Reflection



Discussion

Changi Before the Japanese Occupation

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Changi was fairly isolated, with only a few houses, a small village and a few public facilities. Residents remembered it as a quiet and peaceful place.

View in Changi, 1869
Collection of the National
Museum of Singapore
(2007-00839)





Changi's Transformation

After World War One (1914–1918), Britain saw that Japan was becoming a powerful country.

As Southeast Asia was rich in raw materials such as oil and rubber, Japan looked to conquer this region. Hence, Britain strengthened the defence in this region.

15-inch coastal defence gun placed in the east of Singapore, 1939–1941
Collection of the Imperial War Museums (K 757)

In Singapore, the British Royal Artillery built coastal guns in Changi to protect the naval base in Sembawang in the north. The most powerful ones were three massive 15-inch* guns, built to defend against any attacks coming from the sea.

*This 15-inch refers to the inner width of the gun barrel

What were these guns known as? Have a look in this zone to find your answer.



J H R B A T Y

They thought the Japanese were going to come by ships, so they built these guns facing the sea.



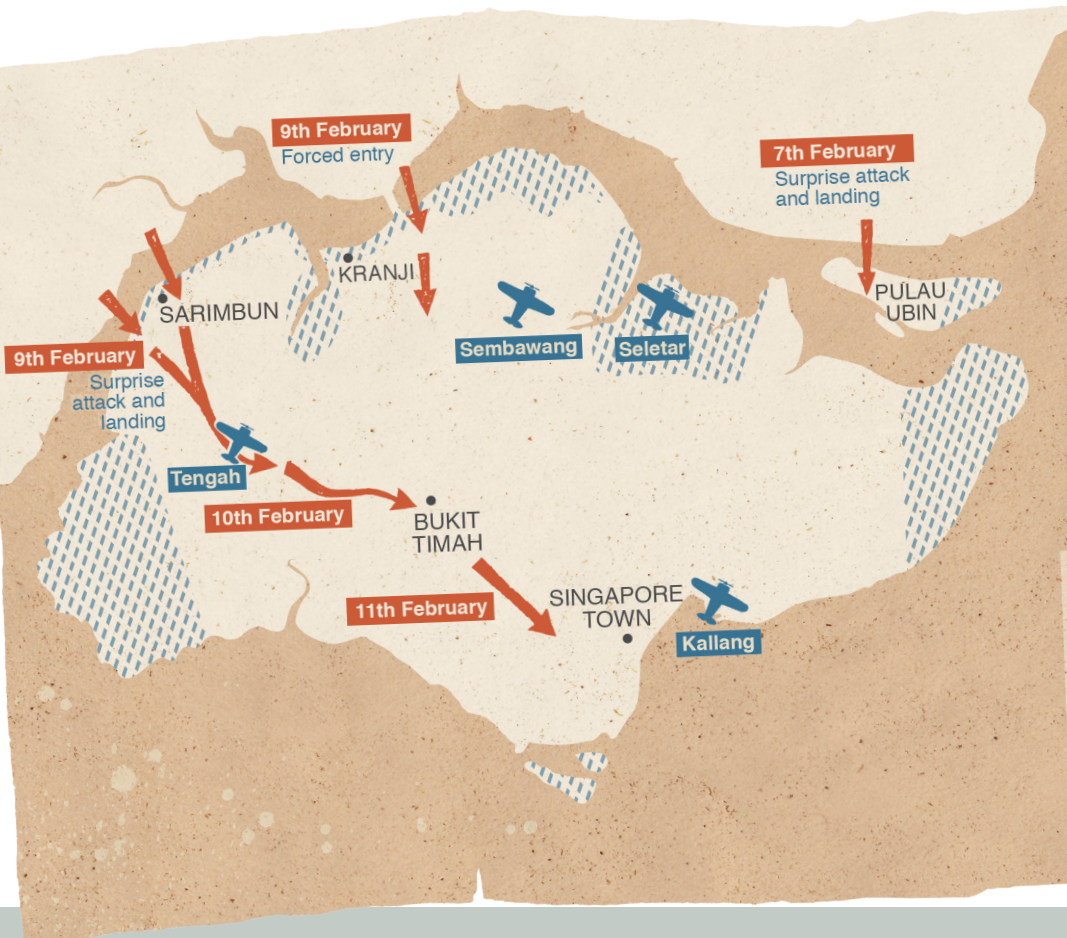
The beach at Changi Point, early to mid-20th century
Collection of the National Museum of Singapore
(XXXX-00339)

The Fall of Singapore

Even though the British built military defences, the Imperial Japanese Army managed to invade Singapore in 1942.

The red arrows in the map below represent the Imperial Japanese Army's movement into Singapore. We can see that the Japanese invaded Singapore from the north.

Do you know where the coastal guns in Changi are on this map? Circle or mark an 'X' on the map below where you think they were located.



The Imperial Japanese Army landed in Northern Malaya on 8 December 1941. How long did it take for Singapore to fall to the Japanese from that date?



*

days

* Hint: The answer is somewhere in the gallery! If you know when Total Defence Day is commemorated, you can also calculate backwards from 8 December of the previous year.

Compare the direction of the Japanese invasion with the first point of landing by the Japanese army. Why do you think the British were unable to defend against the invading Japanese army? 

Everyone thought that Singapore would never be invaded as the coastal defences could protect us, but we lost quickly because many of our soldiers did not have enough experience and we failed to see through the tactics used by the Japanese army.



Japanese Invasion



British Airbase



Forts



Answer: 69 days

Impact of the Fall of Singapore

Singapore fell to Japan on 15 February 1942. John Ritchie Johnston was a POW in Changi from 1942 to 1945. His notebook, which can be found in the gallery, records his thoughts about the Fall of Singapore. This is an excerpt from his notebook:

“Those seven memorable days, during which the [Japanese] stormed the fortress, were a veritable **nightmare** to the inhabitants, both the civilians and military. The **morale** of the civilian populations rapidly began to **deteriorate**... The [docks] were besieged by **frantic** men, women and children, and ship after ship left the quayside steadily at night.”



ARP (Air Raid Precautions) volunteers fighting fires at dock in Singapore, 1942
Collection of the Australian War Memorial (2006-000492-AWM)

Based on the bolded **words** and image in the previous page, what do you think the people in Singapore felt when Singapore fell to the Japanese in 1942, and why?



Angry

Anxious

Sad

Fearful

Hopeful

Excited

We've lost....



The March to Changi

“The march to Changi will forever be remembered by all who took part. We had little water and it was a dreadfully difficult march for those who had minor injuries or wounds...”

—Penrod Vance Dean, POW at Changi

Did You Know?

Some of the internees had to march from Johor (Malaya) to Changi.

After Singapore fell, many Australian, British and Indian soldiers who had helped to fight the Japanese, as well as civilians from these countries, were gradually captured. The soldiers became known as POWs, while the civilians were known as civilian internees. They were made to march to Changi.



British POWs marching on the road to Changi, 1942
David Ng Collection, courtesy of the National Archives of Singapore
(19980005712 - 0090)

Profiles of POWs and Civilian Internees

Who were the POWs and civilian internees? To find out more about the people held captive at Changi, match the characters to the reasons for why they were captured based on their profiles on page 1.



Dave



I was captured because my father is Australian.

Cecilia



I was captured because I am British.

Helga



I was captured because I am a soldier.

Stan



I was captured because I am a soldier.



There were two main groups of internees: the POWs and civilian internees. POWs were soldiers like Stan and I, who fought against the Japanese. Civilian internees, like Cecilia and Helga, were NOT soldiers. Some of them were family members of the soldiers.

Discuss with your friends, why do you think the Japanese also captured people who were not soldiers?



What the Internees Brought With Them

On the march to Changi, the POWs and civilian internees could only bring the things that they could carry. There were also many other rules.

In this zone, look out for the items that the POWs and civilian internees brought with them. If you were about to be interned in Changi, what would you take with you? Circle the items below or draw other items you would take.



We marched for several hours without much rest to get to Changi! How much do you think you would be able to carry with you on the same march?

Ask your friends to share and explain what they chose.



Living Conditions in Changi



Painting of POWs in Changi POW camp, c1945
Gift of Wang Weiming
Collection of the National Museum of Singapore

POWs were interned at Changi military camp and the civilian internees were mostly interned in Changi Prison.

Changi Prison was completed in 1936, and was built to house 600 inmates, each in a cell of their own. However, by 1944, the prison was 16 times over its capacity. Each cell often had at least four people in it.

Did You Know?

This replica cell at the Changi Chapel and Museum is the exact size of the one in the original Changi Prison!

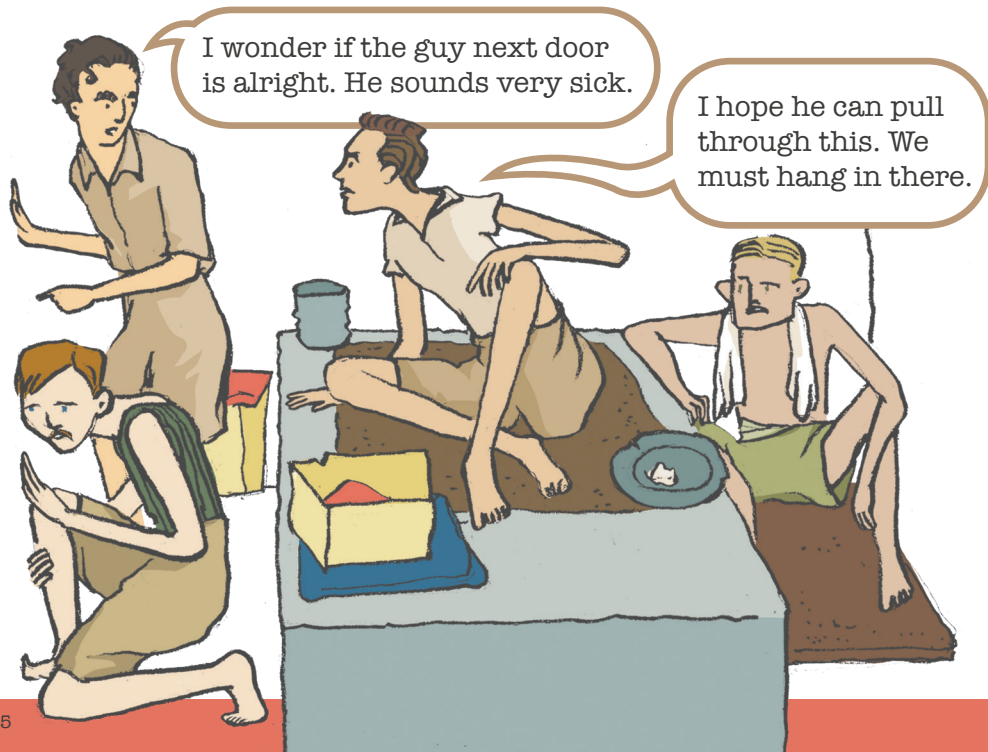
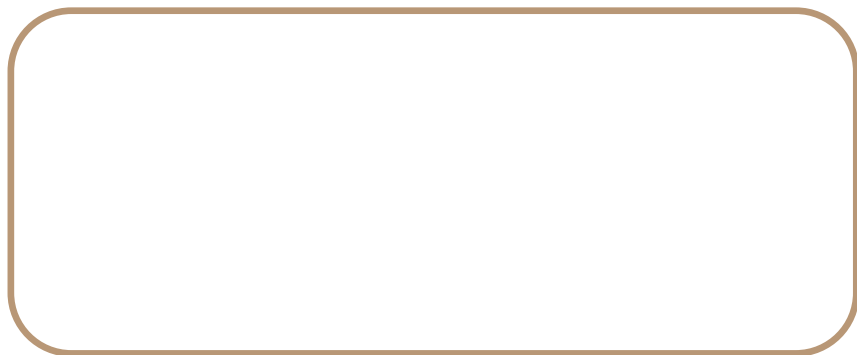


Whispers of Changi

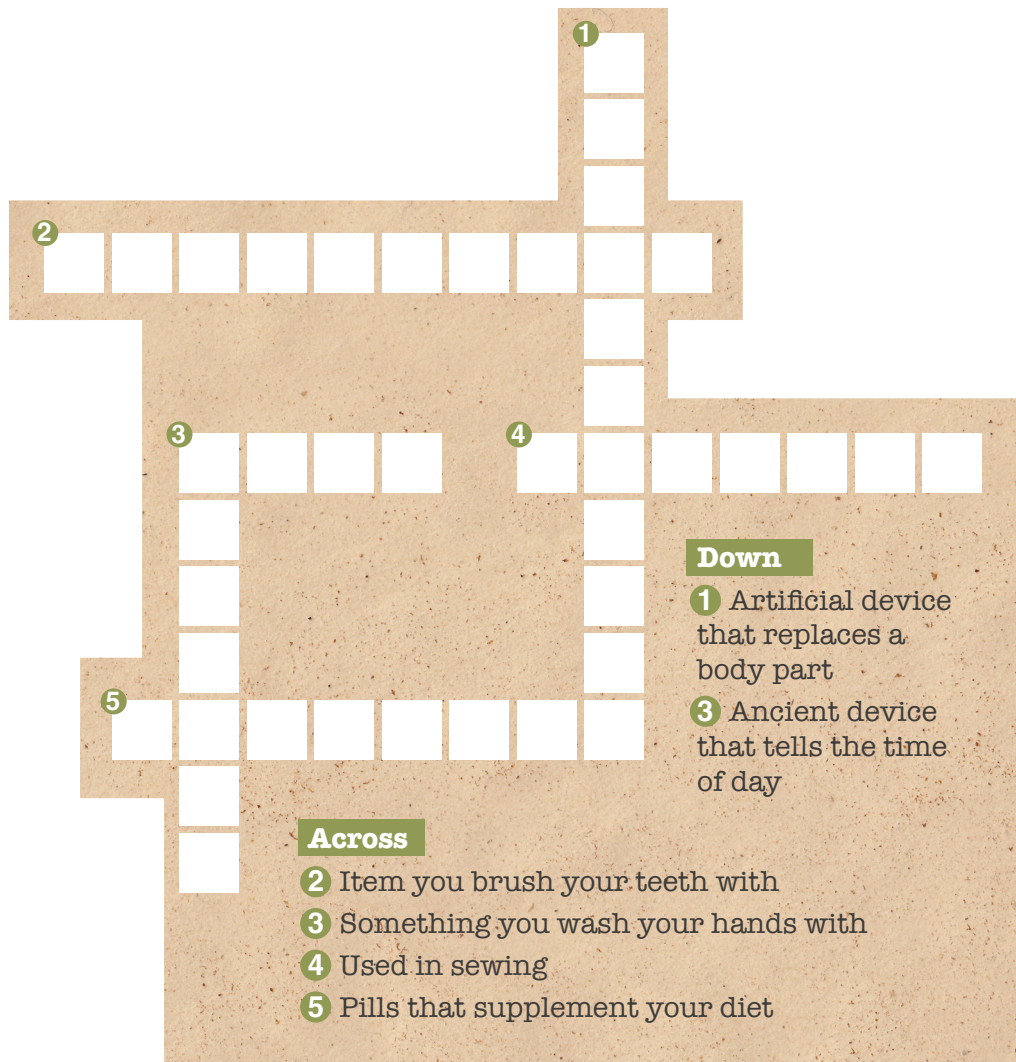
What was it like for the people living together in the cell?
Enter the jail cell to find out. Put your ear against the wall to
listen to the voices from the past.



How would you feel if you had to live in this cell with three
other people? Why?



The shortage of food and resources forced the POWs and civilian internees to be creative with whatever they had. Fill up the crossword puzzle and look out for some of the items made by the internees in the gallery!





This was one of the items made and used by the POWs.

Collection of the
National Museum
of Singapore
(2014-01474)

Find this item in Zone 5A of the gallery!
What is it called?

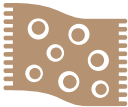
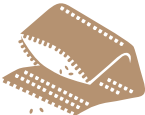
L - L A

What do you think this item was used for?

Create Your Own Tools!

Some common materials found in the prison camp:



				
Bamboo	Scraps of Cloth	Food Tins	Rice Sacks	Coconut Husks
				
Pieces of Wood	Army Boots	Rubber Sap	Bicycle Spokes	

Are you able to make something out of these materials? Use your imagination and sketch your idea in the box below:

Prisoners of War in Captivity

Almost immediately after the POWs were imprisoned in Changi, the Japanese began using them as forced labour in Singapore, and later, overseas. Most of those who went overseas were sent to the infamous Thai-Burma “Death Railway”.

What kind of work were POWs in Singapore forced to do? Look for your answers on the wall panel titled “**Work Parties in Singapore**”.



- ① Unloading at Keppel Harbour
- ② Building a at Bukit Batok

Optional Activity: Overseas Work Parties

Russell Braddon, a POW, saw how the men looked like after returning to Changi from the Thai-Burma “Death Railway”.



“... their ulcers, of which they had dozens... on each leg. All their **ribs showed clearly**... Arms hung down, **stick-like**... and the skin wrinkled where the **muscle had vanished**, like old men.”

—Russell Braddon, POW at Changi Prison

Based on the words in bold and what is written on the walls, how would you describe the working conditions of those who worked at the Thai-Burma Railway?

With no idea when they would be released, some of the internees found comfort in religion. There is a set of five murals located in Roberts Barracks, which served as a chapel. They were painted by an internee who used everything from crushed chalk to brushes made with human hair. A copy of the murals is on display in this museum.



Have a seat and look at the murals.

How do you feel looking at them?



How do you think the internees felt when they sat in a room like this?

Going to School in Changi Prison

Children were also imprisoned in Changi Prison. They lived with the women in areas separate from the men. The adults did their best to keep the children occupied and distracted from their poor living conditions.



We can't go to school while we're here, but the adults organised classes and reading sessions for us! I was also part of the Girl Guides group!

Try to imagine what the classes in Changi Prison were like. Would a classroom in a prison be the same as yours? Discuss with your friends, then draw or write your interpretation of a Changi classroom in the box on the next page.

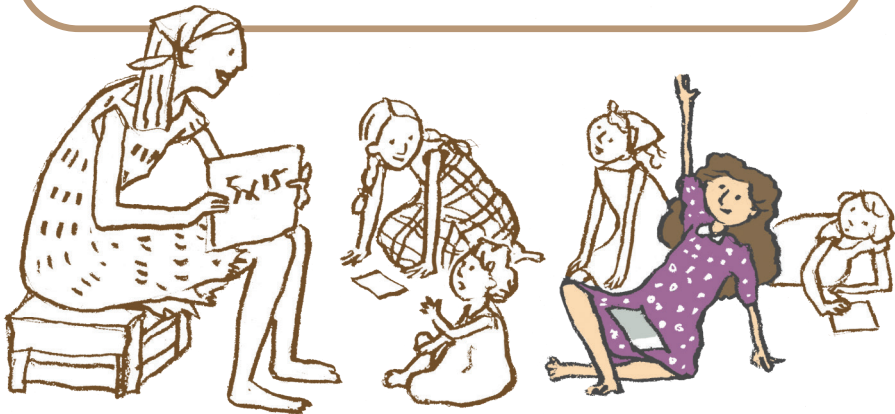


Think about the subjects taught or the stationery used by the children! Would we have desks to write on, or chairs to sit on? What about textbooks to read and notebooks to write in?



A Changi Classroom

If you were a student in Changi Prison, how would you feel about having classes there?



Women Prisoners and Their Crafts

Women sent to Changi Prison were just left alone. Although they were not put through hard labour, unlike the POWs, their living conditions were not much better.

Mary Angela Bateman, an art teacher, created a set of watercolour drawings while interned in the prison. This is one of them:



Changi Prison a.k.a. Child at Play,
c1942—1945
Collection of the National Museum
of Singapore (2014-01498)

Find the rest of Mary Angela Bateman's paintings on the screen in this zone!

What do you observe in these paintings? How would you describe the living conditions of the women and children?



The Changi Quilts

Many of the women turned to embroidery to pass the time and find comfort in a craft they knew well. Shortly after they were imprisoned in Changi Prison, they started sewing quilts to be sent to military hospitals. Check out the quilt on display in this zone!

The women were asked to put “something of themselves” in the quilts they sewed. It also became a way for the women to tell their husbands or fathers that they were still alive.



Embroidered 'Australian Changi quilt', 1942
Collection of the Australian War Memorial
(REL/14235)

This embroidered square depicts the grief of cellmates Iris Parfitt and Joan Macintosh-Whyte while in captivity.

It shows a small figure curled up in a dark Changi cell. The phrase “How long O Lord how long!” conveys the feeling of not knowing when they would be freed.



This embroidered square was sewn by Sheila Allan. It features a map of Australia and a kangaroo representing the country, showing how much Sheila missed her homeland while imprisoned.

If you were a prisoner in Changi Prison tasked to sew a quilt, what would you include? Draw your design in the box below:

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners and a thin brown border, intended for drawing a quilt design.

I helped to sew
the Girl Guides'
quilt as well!



Creative Pursuits and Changi University

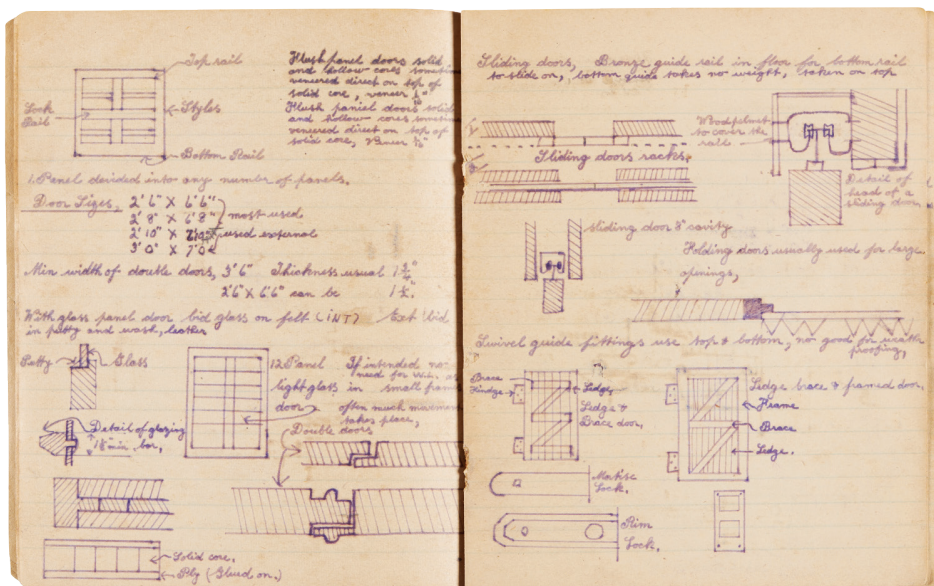
To lift everyone’s spirits, the internees organised all kinds of activities while in prison. One example was a series of educational classes for POWs, known as “Changi University”. At one point, there were 9,000 POWs enrolled in the various classes.

To find out some of the things they learnt in the classes, look out for these artefacts!

Manuscript Malay-English dictionary written in pencil in old exercise book, c1942–1945 Collection of the National Museum of Singapore (2017-00287)

VERBS Ex 21			MALAY PART II		ANIMALS Ex 22	
ENGLISH	MALAY	PRON	ENGLISH	MALAY	PRON	
LOSE	KALAH	KAH-LAH	BUFFALO	KERBAU	KER-BOW	
WIN	MENANG	MUN-UNG	TIGER	HARIMAU	REE-MOW	
HOPE	HARAP	HAH-RUP	ELEPHANT	GAJAH	GAH-JAH	
KICK	TENDANG	TUN-DUNG	CROCODILE	BUAYA	BOO-AH-YAH	
DANCE	MENARI	MUN-AREE	MONKEY	MONYET	MOAN-YET	
SING	NYANYI	NEEVN-YEE	DEER	RUSA	ROO-SAH	
DIG	GALI	GAH-LEE	SNAKE	ULAR	OO-LAR	
BURY	TANAM	TAH-NUM	CATERPILLAR-MAGGOT	ULAT	OO-LAT	
PRaise	PUJI	POO-JEE	WORM	CHACHING	CHAH-CHING	
KEEP-COMPOSE	KARANG	KAH-RUNG	CENTIPEDE	LIPAN	LEE-PUN	
COMPOSE-OPPOSE	LAWAN	LAH-WON	FROG	KATAK	KAH-TA	
FIGHT	BERKUALAH	BER-KULI	HAWK-EAGLE	LANG	LUNG	
KILL	BUNOH	BOO-NOH	PIGEON	MERPATI	MER-PAH-JEE	
SETTLE (UP)	SELESAI	SHUR-SIGH	GOOSE	ANGSA	VNG-SAH	
BREAK	PATAH	PAH-TAH	SWALLOW-PAPER KITE	LAYUNG-LAYANG	LA-YOUNG-LAYOUNG	
HIDE	SEMBUNYI	SUM-BOON-YEE	COCKATOO	KAKATUA	KAKA-TOO-AH	
LOVE	KASEH	KAH-SEN	BAT	KERAWAR	CLAH-WAAR	
KISS-SWELL	CHUM	CHEE-QME	SPARROW-FINCH	PITIT	PEE-PIT	
TRY	CHOBA	CHO-BAH	LOUSE-FLEA	KUTU	KOO-TOO	
WEIGH	TIMBANG	TIM-BUNG	SPIDER	LABAH-LABAH	LAH-BAN-LAH-BAN	
RETURN	BALEK	BAH-LAY	SHELL FISH, SHELL	SIPUT	SEE-FOTE	
SHAKE	GOYANG	Goy-Young	CRAB-A PLANE	KETAM	KUT-UM	
DECEIVE	TIPU	TEE-POO	FAWNI	UDANG	OO-DUNG	
BURN	BAKAR	BAK-KAR	HOUSE LIZARD	CHACHAK	CHICH-CHA	
CHOOSE	PILEH	PER-LEH	GRASS HOPPER, LOCUST	BEJALANG	BLAH-LUNG	
ADJECTIVES Ex 23						
BROAD	LEBAR	LAY-BAR	BITTER	PAHIT	PITE	
HARD	KERAS	KRAS	PUNGENT (OF TASTE)	PEDAS	PUD-DUSS	
FT, FLEXIBLE	LEMBUT	LUM-BOAT	SALT (" ")	MASIN	MAH-SIN	
STRONG	KUAT	KOO-UT	FRAGRANT	WANGI	WUNG-EE	
TAUGHT-HEAD	TERUS	TROOS	TASTELESS, To BID.	TAWAR	TAH-WAAR	
ROOKED	BENG-KOK	BENG-KO	RAW, (UNCOOKED)	MANTAH	MUN-TAH	
ROUND	BULAT	BOO-LUT	SATED (WITH FOOD)	KENYANG	KUN-YOUN	
IGHT-FITTING	KETAT	KUT-UT	SATISFIED	PUAS	POO-US	
OOSE	LONGGAR	LONG-GAR	THIRSTY, WORN AWAY	HAUS	HOUSE	
TOOTH-SLIPPER	LICHIN	LEE-CHIN	COARSE	KASAR	KAH-SAAH	
UGH	LIAT	LEE-UT	FINE	HALUS	HAN-LOO	
OULD	LAPOK	LAH-PO				
ICK-NOIDS.	PEKAT	PUK-CUT				
IN-OF "	CHAIR	CHYE-ER				





Former POW John Ritchie Johnston's exercise book, 1940s
Collection of the National Museum of Singapore (2018-00762-001)

Take a closer look at both artefacts. What are some of the subjects the POWs studied at Changi University?
Unscramble the letters to find out!



1 Y A A L M



2 E E E G G I I N N N R



Liberation

On 15 August 1945, Japan surrendered, bringing an end to World War Two. Following that, the POWs and civilian internees were set free by the Allied troops. The formal surrender took place later, on 12 September 1945, at the Municipal Building (now part of the National Gallery Singapore).

The release of Allied POWs
from Changi Prison, 1945
Collection of the Imperial War
Museums (CF 725)



How do you think the POWs and civilian internees felt when the Japanese surrendered?

??



Legacies

The internees at Changi displayed courage. Although the experience of imprisonment left a deep impression on everyone, many of them went on to lead full lives in Singapore or in their home countries.

All four characters in this booklet are loosely based on actual internees. Two of them have their names on the wall in the Legacies section, and a third character is featured in one of the galleries. Can you guess who they are?



After hearing their stories, name two positive values shown by the POWs when they were imprisoned in Changi:



1

2

Changi Chapel

This is an exact copy of an actual chapel built by the internees at Changi. This space provided a source of hope and comfort for them. This chapel was modelled after the Church.

Did You Know?

The original chapel has been moved to Australia as a memorial.

Looking Back...



How did the Japanese Occupation affect these internees?
Compare what life was like for them before the war, when they were imprisoned in Changi, and after they were freed.

How can you apply the values shown by the internees in your everyday life?

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