

70th Anniversary Commemoration of the Sinking of the *Lisbon Maru*

In Spring 2011, Issue #30, I submitted an article on The Sinking of the *Lisbon Maru*, a tragedy in which some 800 British prisoners of war lost their lives off the coast of China in 1942, but nearly 400 others were rescued by the courageous actions of the local fishermen.

The 70th Anniversary of this event fell on 2 October this year. The Chinese authorities in Zhoushan (where the Incident took place) had originally indicated that they would be sending two of the fishermen who had helped in the rescue to the UK to commemorate the 70th Anniversary. They later changed their minds but held an act of remembrance in Zhoushan.

This was a moving ceremony attended by local officials, local students and scholars as well as students from the Zhejiang Ocean University. The event helped to keep alive the memory of this tragedy in the minds of the younger generation. The students rightly praised the courage of the fishermen who had carried out the rescue of their own volition and under fire from the Japanese, and also mourned the more than 800 British prisoners who had perished in the local seas.

Interestingly, those attending the ceremony wore hand made poppies, modelled on those used here for Remembrance Day. This is highly unusual, since for most Chinese, any association of poppies with the British normally evokes only bitter recollections of the Opium Wars. A further example, perhaps, of the burying of old hatchets and the opening of new sympathies and understandings between the peoples of our two great nations.

There was good coverage of the event in the local Chinese press and I am attaching both the original Chinese text and a translation, as well as a link to video coverage of the Act of Remembrance. Like many press stories anywhere in the world, there are a number of inaccuracies of detail, but the important facts are right, and it is hoped that this coverage will help spread the word further and keep the memory of this tragedy alive.

The "Walk for War Heroes" fundraising campaign which I ran on behalf of the Lisbon Maru Association of Hong Kong raised a total of £2,155.64p in the UK; this was converted into HK\$26,239.80 and sent to the Association in Hong Kong. The campaign also raised funds in Hong Kong which were paid directly to the Association.

I am most grateful to all who contributed to the fundraising campaign. The UK bank account will remain open for the time being and if anyone wishes to contribute further (or encourage their friends to do so), details of how to do so can be found on the websites:

www.wix.com/bfinch/walkforwarheroes

and

<http://walkforwarheroes.yolasite.com>

Video coverage of the event can be seen at:

http://www.56.com/u68/v_NzQxNDU4NjU.html

ZHEJIANG DAILY 浙江日報 寻找“里斯本丸”号

记者 张品方 王益敏 区委报道组 刘诗剑

10月2日，舟山市普陀区莲花岛，天高云淡，海风习习。

伴随着庄重的音乐声，一束火红、罂粟花状的塑料花环，静静摆放在人群中。几十名当地高校的学生及民间文化者，围着它，默哀、致敬。

花环是几天前特地从英国空运而来的，由英国密德萨斯军团协会主席费恩祺少校赠送。在英国，这样的花环只用来祭奠在战争中阵亡的烈士。

而在二战期间，英国的密德萨斯军团，留驻香港，和中国人民一同参加抗击日军的反法西斯战争。

同一天，同样的祭奠在中国香港、英国伦敦也举行了。70年前的这一天，舟山东极海域的一起事件，是牵连两国三地祭奠活动的“桥梁”。

这就是第二次世界大战期间著名的“里斯本丸”沉船事件。70年，在历史长河中只是短暂一瞬，但对个体而言却意味着一生。

最近，我们踏上了寻找“里斯本丸号”之路，记录当年目击者的诉说，同时探究事件背后的精神财富。

寻根 战争垒砌异国情

“被救上来的英国人，大部分被安置在岛上庙内和渔民家里。”陈永华说，当时的小岛，被日本军封锁着，与外地隔绝，岛民生活极其困苦。就在这样的状况下，面对衣衫不整，极度疲惫的战俘，渔民仍像对待客人一样，把平时舍不得吃的粮食、鱼干制品拿出来给战俘充饥，还取出各自的衣服，给战俘取暖。

“好几个人发烧，用手势比划说，想吃甜的东西。我们就拿出所有白糖，放在番薯汤里。”陈永华说，当时，白糖是裹在衣服里、压在箱底下的，珍贵程度不言而喻。

1942年10月4日清晨，岛上渔民正商议如何把英国战俘安全送回国时，5艘日本军舰从沈家门方向驶来，迅速包围了青浜、庙子湖岛。

为了不连累善良的渔民，英国官兵主动集合，排好队。当天下午2时，381名英国官兵被日军押上日舰。但日军没想到，还有3名战俘躲过了大搜捕，他们分别是英国军尉官法伦斯、英国商人伊文斯和英国外交官詹姆斯顿。

今年83岁的梁亦卷老人对此事功不可没。我们找到梁亦卷老人。回忆往事，老人脸上充满了自豪。“那时，我才13岁，很贪玩。有一次，发现青浜岛东北面的南田湾，有个小

湾洞。”老人说，他和另外两个小伙伴，带着这3名战俘，躲进小湾洞，最终逃脱了日军的大搜捕。

天然海蚀洞穴小湾洞竟成了最后“功臣”。一个初秋的早上，我们跟着当年目睹这场大救援的另一位老人——88岁的林阿根，走进了小湾洞。从青浜岛居民聚集区，绕着沿海的山路走上20多分钟，能看到一片礁石，跨过这片礁石，又有一处荒草丛生的地方，而小湾洞正在礁石和荒草之间。

小湾洞口小腹大，深约两米，进洞后分左右两条路，左边直通海面，右边沿坡向上，洞内可容纳三四十个人。林阿根老人说，涨潮时，海水淹没洞口，里面却还有很大空间，外面根本看不出来。直到今天，岛上仍有不少居民找不到这个洞穴的入口，也从没去过那里。

3名战俘就在小湾洞住了整整5天。1942年10月9日，6位青浜渔民驾着小船，连夜将他们偷渡到了宁波象山渔港。几天后，当地官兵几经周转，将3人送到了重庆。詹姆斯顿等3名战俘居留重庆期间，以亲身经历在广播电台上揭露了日军暴行，引发国内外强烈公愤。最后，他们由英政府驻华使馆接回国。

历史 东极海上大救援

在浙江省档案馆的特藏室内，保存着一组形成于60多年前、编号为L030—236的历史档案。

打开这一卷宗档案的封面，映入眼帘的，是一封全部用英文撰写的电传信件。此信是1948年4月12日英国驻华大使写给当时中国外交部的。主要内容如下：

二战期间，一艘日本的船只“里斯本丸”号曾运载着近2000名英国战俘，从香港前往日本。1942年10月2日，这艘船行驶到舟山外洋，遭鱼雷攻击而沉没。当时，由于中国舟山青浜岛渔民的奋勇救助，有200余名英国战俘没有葬身大海。尽管当地渔民生活非常艰苦，但他们想尽办法为这些英国战俘提供食宿、照料等，使他们生存了下来。

我们的寻找，从70年前的目击者开始。登上青浜岛，一座名副其实的小岛。房屋大多依山而建，有些干脆就用石块垒成。人们的生活简单而祥和，男人们出海捕鱼；女人们围坐在一起织网，处理一些海产品；老人们则三五成群、面朝大海地聊着天。

其中，一个身穿深蓝色T恤，满头白发的老人，就是记者的采访对象。85岁的陈永华老人，当年曾和伙伴驾船救起5名英国官兵。坐在老人身边，听着他的叙述，思绪被带到70年前。

“那天是东极岛难得的好天气，海面风平浪静。”此时才15岁的陈永华和几个伙伴在海边干活。“天蒙蒙亮，我听到一声巨响，眼前一艘从没见过的大船，冒起黑烟。”因为正值战争年代，陈永华没在意，直到一昼夜后。“我看到大船尾部明显下沉，船头翘起，最后竖着沉入大海，掀起巨浪。”陈永华说，大船沉没的地方，大约在青浜岛北面约10公里处。

多年后，陈永华才知道，那艘大船就是“里斯本丸”号，是一艘日本客货轮，长120米、宽18米、排水量7152吨。二战期间，往来于日本与中国，运载战俘。

时光再次回到 1941 年的圣诞夜。日军攻占了香港，逾万名包括英国、加拿大、澳洲及印度等国的盟军成了战俘。1942 秋，日军将战俘分批送回日本当苦役。同年 9 月 25 日，日军将 1816 名主要为英国籍的战俘驱赶上“里斯本丸”号，全部人员被迫挤在狭小的货舱内，船上并载 778 名日军看守战俘，两日后启航。

1942 年 10 月 1 日，“里斯本丸”号驶抵舟山海域。由于没有标示是运载战俘的船只，遭到美国太平洋舰队潜艇部队第 81 分队的“鲈鱼号”（USS Grouper）发射鱼雷击中。

“这么大的船沉了，我们一开始很开心。因为从大船上漂来了很多印着小碎花的布匹。”陈永华说，之前，他从没见过这么漂亮的布匹。

起初，很多人都开着船去捞布匹。但随后的一幕，让陈永华触目惊心。“海上到处漂着黄头发的外国人，沉船附近停着两艘军舰，站在上面的日本兵，用机枪、步枪射击落水的人。黄头发的人好不容易爬上军舰，又被日军踢了下去。”

蓝眼睛、黄头发的人，曾给陈永华的祖辈们留下过惨痛的回忆。“当年的鸦片战争，舟山被英国人侵占，长达五年半之久。”陈永华说，“但我们渔民历来有个传统，发现有人落海，就要拼命相救。”在他的理解中，这是舟山人千百年来传承下来的一种精神。

“快，上船！”陈永华和其他渔民不再打捞花布，纷纷开始救人。那天，岛上只要有船的渔民，都出去救人了。很快，旁边庙子湖等附近小岛的渔民也加入救援。198 名渔民先后出动小渔船 46 艘 65 次，共从海上救起 384 名战俘。

当时渔船小，一次只能装十多个人，渔民们只有拼命划船，救了一批，再回头去救……但仍有很多战俘因长时间漂浮，体力不支，等不到渔船再次出现，就永远沉入海底。最后，有 843 名战俘葬身大海。

不只是为了纪念

王益敏

在青浜岛人的心里，陈永华老人是当前“里斯本丸”号沉船事件最具发言权的见证者。

9 月 10 日，记者在青浜岛采访陈永华老人。中午，陈永华的女儿在家中为老人准备了一顿丰盛的午餐。

餐后，趁老人离开期间，陈永华女儿告诉记者，这很可能是老人在青浜岛吃的最后一顿饭。

十几年前，陈永华老人身体出现病症，为了方便就医，老人和老伴离开了青浜岛，一起搬到舟山本岛居住。不过，每年夏天，老人都会抽出一段时间，到青浜岛的女儿家中居住。

今年 5 月，老人被查出患了癌症，而且已是晚期。医生悄悄告诉他的家人，他最多只能撑两三个月。在家人看来，老人能撑到今天，已算一个奇迹。

那天，老人见舟山天气已逐渐转凉，提出想回自家居住，午饭后即将动身。席间，老人说，今年不来了，明年夏天再来。一桌子人举杯，“您想什么时候来，就什么时候来。”女儿说。

陈永华老人捕鱼一辈子，出海无数次，而每当说起 70 年前出海救人的一幕，老人的叙述，仿佛就发生在昨天。

随着时光流逝，见证过这段历史的人，已越来越少。对于我们来说，如今，寻找“里斯本丸”号的意义，不仅在于让更多的人倾听、了解、感悟那段历史，更在于寻找背后的历史价值、民族精神。

从英国空运过来的“罂粟”花环，如今已静静躺在浙江海洋学院的陈列室内，供学生参观。然而，为了这段不能忘却的纪念，我们应该再做些什么？不为别的，只为惨痛的历史不再重演。

传承 海洋文化新亮点



岁月如梭，当年救助英国战俘的大部分渔民都陆续去世。目睹并参与了当年营救的渔民，至今仍健在的已不足 5 人。

不过，值得庆幸的是，如今，只要你到东极，坐下来和当地人聊天，大家都能说上几句关于“里斯本丸”号的故事。

“从小受父辈影响，多少知道一些。”梁亦卷的女儿梁银娣是东极镇政府的工作人员，近几年来，她持续跟踪关注“里斯本丸”沉船事件，但她也有担心的事，“等父辈们走了，只能靠我们传述当时的故事，但我们的下一代，或许就会遗忘掉这段历史。”

2005 年 4 月 4 日，“里斯本丸”沉船事件历史研究会在舟山市定海区成立，梁银娣成为了研究会会员。“研究会的主要任务，一方面是继续挖掘、整理、研究、考证‘里斯本丸’号沉船事件的史实资料，弘扬舟山渔民不顾个人安危、冒死救助英国被俘人员的人道主义和国际主义精神；另一方面，还制定研究规划和活动计划，为今后的文艺创作提供素材。”

2005 年 8 月 18 日，在舟山各界人士的支持下，曾被舟山东极渔民营救的“里斯本丸”号遇难幸存者，英国老兵查尔斯佐敦，在时隔半个多世纪后，带着妻儿及另两位英军遇难者亲属从英国千里迢迢来到了舟山东极，寻访当年的救命恩人，与仍然健在的英雄陈永华、沈阿桂等 7 位老渔民热烈拥抱。

2009 年 9 月，在东极镇政府的支持、研究会人员的努力下，东极庙子湖岛上建成并开放了“里斯本丸”纪念馆。舟山市普陀区政协委员胡牧多次提出，要为这个重大的历史事件建一座碑，从而在追忆宝贵精神的同时，增添一种物化的象征。

“这次沉船事件，是中外古今死亡人数较多的一场海难，作为二战的一种文化遗产，它的现状更应得到国际社会的重视。”胡牧说。



2005年8月18日，在去舟山东极镇的船上，“里斯本丸”号幸存者查尔斯·R·佐敦把老渔民郭阿德和王保荣紧紧搂住。视野网 供图



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“里斯本丸”沉船70周年祭举行

□记者 文军 通讯员 陈文文

“七十年二战记忆，八百名英军亡灵。”今年10月2日，是“里斯本丸”沉船70周年，由市社科联、浙江海洋学院“全国大学生海洋意识教育基地”共同组织的“里斯本丸”遇难70周年纪念活动在普陀区莲花岛上举行，以纪念二战中长眠舟山海域的盟军士兵亡灵。

二战军官寄来“罂粟花环”

1942年10月2日，一艘日军货轮从香港起航驶往日本，船上满载侵华战争物资和1800多名在参加香港保卫战时被日军俘掳的英国官兵。在东北青浜岛以东三海里处，货轮被美军太平洋舰队潜艇击沉。

从早上9时直至黄昏，东极渔民共救起了384名英国战俘，部分生还者再次被日军捕获，有800多名随着沉船长眠在了冰冷的海底。“罂粟花是国际性的纪念阵亡将士的标志。”活动发起者之一、舟山海洋航海文化专家胡牧告诉记者，香港里斯本丸协会和英国密德萨斯军团协会主席费恩祺，快递来了极具象征意义的“罂粟花环”。

据介绍，英国陆军密德萨斯军团是一支参加过二战的部队，费恩祺先生曾是这支部队的军官。记者在活动现场看到，花环的正面用中英双语写着“香港里斯本丸协会、里斯本丸遇难70周年纪念”等字样，背面则有“费恩祺少校”的签名等。

舟山日报

舟山市保长假交通旅游畅通平安

舟山跨海大桥昨晚近程高峰

“里斯本丸”沉船70周年祭举行

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舟山风光·晒场(嵊山)

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- 黄金周长假临近尾声游客接待量明……

弘扬义举促进舟山对外交流

纪念活动中，悼念者首先献上了“罂粟花环”，并默哀3分钟。在用中英双语朗读祭文后，浙海院学生把祭文折成的纸船、花环及康乃馨花束一起放入了莲花洋。“念祭文时鼻子发酸，有一种说不清楚的感觉。”浙海院学生王璐文说，透过历史，他似乎看到了盟军士兵挣扎在水面上且遭遇日军机枪扫射的画面。“通过悼念他们，让我们感受到了今天的和平有多么的珍贵，衷心希望我们的国家能更加繁荣、富强。”“纪念活动，弘扬了舟山人民英勇救人的义举，也促进了舟山的对外交流。”离退休干部毛德传说，舟山群岛新区成立后，对外开放和交流肯定会进入一个新的阶段，里斯本丸事件将会是一个重要的切入点。

里斯本丸事件是海洋文化亮点

“里斯本丸事件，是二战留给舟山的宝贵历史文化遗产。”胡枚说，他与上海海事大学时平教授交流时，时平教授就指出：里斯本丸事件反映了舟山人民为二战所作出的贡献，体现了舟山人民的朴素善良，折射出舟山海洋文化中的国际意义，它应该成为舟山海洋文化的一个亮点。

此次纪念活动发起者之一、普陀区海洋文化研究会副秘书长孙和军说，在舟山海域一次牺牲843名英军将士，在太平洋战争乃至整个二战史上都是一个大事件。843名将士的血肉之躯，也渲染了二战东方战场上的悲壮。“深入探讨和研究里斯本丸沉船事件所凝聚的国际意义，对进一步认识舟山海洋文化所蕴涵的海洋文明具有重要的现实意义。”

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舟山晚报

2012年10月07日 | 星期日 | 今日9版

纸船花环祭长眠海底的二战英军

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舟山、香港、英国三地举行纪念“里斯本丸”沉船70周年活动

纸船花环祭长眠海底的二战英军

口记者 王晓东 文/摄

丰碑如在兮，方舟犹航。曙光在前兮，正义在望。八百英灵兮，鉴我衷肠。花环纸船兮，载波载浪……定海一中学生孙念充充满感情地朗读完“里斯本丸”沉船70周年祭文，

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舟山晚报

口记者 王晓东 文/摄

丰碑如在今，方舟犹航。曙光在前兮，正义在望。八百英灵兮，鉴我衷肠。纸船花环兮，载波载浪……定海一中学生孙念翥充满感情地朗读完“里斯本丸”沉船70周年祭文，现场一片肃穆。浙江海洋学院学生把写有祭文的纸张折成纸船连同花环一起放入莲花洋，漂向长眠在舟山海底的二战遇难英军官兵。

10月2日上午，市社科联、浙江海洋学院、我市一些学者联合民间热心人士在普陀莲花岛上，举行纪念“里斯本丸”沉船70周年活动。

我们仍然铭记他们

“70年岁月悠悠，但这种大爱的精神，在时光的长河中不会消失……”香港著名历史研究者托尼先生为纪念活动撰写悼文，传到舟山，他在悼文中说，“70年过去了，‘里斯本丸’沉船事件的幸存者所剩无几，但我们仍然记得他们及他们的战友和营救者。”

1942年10月2日，日本货轮“里斯本丸”载着侵华战争物资和1800多位参加香港保卫战被日军俘虏的英军官兵，从香港起航驶往日本，在东北青浜岛以东3海里处，被美军太平洋舰队潜艇发射的鱼雷击中沉没。海难发生后，舟山人民勇救384位遇险的英军战俘，部分生还者再次被日军捕获，另外还有820位英军官兵随着沉没的船体至今长眠在舟山群岛海域冰冷的海底。

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岛)呈现冰冷的海底。

两国三地举行纪念活动

我市曾在2005年有过一次较大规模的纪念活动。当年被东极渔民救起、80多岁的佐登先生携妻特地到舟山谢恩。两年前，佐登先生离世，但在今年10月2日，包括佐登先生的家人在内的当年英军盟军官兵的后代，在英国等地举行“里斯本丸”沉船纪念活动，悼念70年前在二战中随沉船长眠在舟山海底的亲人。“这次两国三地同时纪念70年前为二战牺牲长眠在海底的英军，传承流淌在血液里的海洋精神。今天，我们更要凸显这种精神。”该活动发起人之一、普陀政协委员胡牧表示。

二战军官英国费恩祺少校得知舟山要举行“里斯本丸”沉船纪念活动，特地用绢花做了一个花环，空运到香港的“里斯本丸”纪念馆，被专门派特快运送到舟山。

彰显舟山人民助人美德

上海海事大学时平教授特地为这个纪念活动写来一封信，称，“里斯本丸”事件是二战中的历史事件，这个事件与舟山发生了联系，它的价值反映了舟山人民为二战作出的贡献，这个贡献体现了舟山人民朴素善良的救死扶伤的人道主义精神。这个精神恰恰是舟山海洋文化中人性彰显的一面，即善于助人的美德，而且这个事件折射出舟山人民乐于助人的精神，它说明舟山海洋文化中国际主义的一面，它应该成为舟山海洋文化的一个亮点。

而胡牧表示，如果能把“里斯本丸”沉船事件的英军尸骨找出来，那将会是一件轰动世界的大事，舟山也将会成为世界的一个热点。

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里斯本丸号 70 周年祭 02/10/2012



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ZHEJIANG DAILY

(Translated by Brian Finch MCIL)

Looking for the “*Lisbon Maru*”

Reporters Zhang Pinfang, Wang Yimin, District Party Committee Reporting Group, Liu Chijian

On 2 October in Lianhua Island, Puta District, Zhoushan City, the sky was high, the clouds pale, there was a gentle sea breeze.

A plastic wreath of flaming red poppies was quietly placed amongst the crowd, accompanied by the sound of solemn music. Ninety local high school students and folk artists surrounded it, stood in silent tribute and paid their respects.

The wreath was specially flown in from the UK several days before, as a present¹ [sic] from Major Brian Finch, Chairman² [sic] of the Middlesex Regiment Association. In the UK, this type of wreath is used only in remembrance ceremonies for those killed in war.

And during World War II, the Middlesex Regiment was stationed in Hong Kong and took part with Chinese people in the anti-Fascist war of resistance against Japan.

On the same day, commemorations were also held in Hong Kong China and in London, England. It was an incident in the seas of Dongji, Zhoushan, on this day 70 years ago, which led to the “bridge” involving two nations and three regions in these remembrances.

That was the famous incident of the sinking of the *Lisbon Maru* during the Second World War. In the long span of history, 70 years is but the twinkling of an eye; but to the individual it has lifelong significance.

Recently we set out on the road of looking for the *Lisbon Maru*, recording the accounts of eyewitnesses at the time, and at the same time researching into the spritual wealth behind the incident.

Looking for One’s Roots: War Piles up an Exotic Atmosphere³ (sic)

“Most of the Englishmen saved were placed in the Island temple and in the fishermen’s homes” said Chen Yonghua. Life for the islanders on this small island, sealed at the time by the Japanese army, cut off from the outside, was very hard. It was under these conditions, faced with prisoners of war who were barely dressed and extremely exhausted, that they took the dried fish

¹ The wreath was presented by the Lisbon Maru Association of Hong Kong (trans)

² I am not Chairman of the Middlex Regiment Association, just a member (trans)

³ The precise meaning of this heading is not very clear ltrans)

products that they would be reluctant to give up in normal times and gave them to the prisoners of war to appease their hunger, and took out their personal clothes and gave them to the prisoners of war to keep warm.

“Many of the men were feverish, and gestured to indicate that they wanted to eat something sweet. So we put all our white sugar in the sweet potato soup” said Chen Yonghua. At the time, white sugar was wrapped in clothing and kept in the bottom of a chest; its value goes without saying.

In the early morning of 4 October 1942, just as the island fishermen were discussing how to send the British prisoners of war safely back to their country, five Japanese warships sailed from the direction of Shenjiamen and rapidly surrounded Qingbang and Miaozihu Islands.

So as not to get the good kind-hearted fishermen into trouble, the British officers and soldiers took the initiative to form up in ranks. At 2:00 pm that afternoon, 381 British officers and soldiers were escorted onto Japanese ships by Japanese soldiers. But the Japanese did not realise there were still three prisoners of war who had hidden from arrest; they were British Warrant Officer Fallace, British businessman Evans and British diplomat [sic] Johnstone⁴

Today, 83 year old veteran Liang Yijuan’s contribution to this affair cannot be left unrecognised. We found veteran Liang Yijuan. Recalling the past events, the old man’s face was full of pride. “At that time I was only 13 years old and too fond of playing. Once, I discovered that there was a small cave in Southfield Bay on the north side of Qingbang Island”, the old man said. He and two other partners took these three prisoners of war and hid them in the cave and finally succeeded in eluding the Japanese search.

Sea erosion had formed the cave naturally, and unexpectedly it had become the final “hero”. One morning at the beginning of autumn, we followed another old man who had witnessed this great rescue that year – 88 year old Lin Agen – into the cave. From the Qingbang Island residents’ assembly area, we walked for 20 minutes along the mountain path winding along the sea, and could see a rock, and straddling this rock was a place overgrown with weeds, and the cave was between the rock and the weeds.

The cave had a small entrance and a large interior; about two metres deep; after entering the cave it divided into two paths, left and right; left went straight out to sea, the right sloped upwards; the cave could hold thirty or forty people. Veteran Lin Agen said that at high tide the sea covered the entrance, but there was still plenty of room inside, but it absolutely could not be seen from outside. Up to now, many of the island residents had not found this cave and had never been there.

The three prisoners of war had lived in the cave for a full five days. On 9 October 1942 six Qingbang fishermen sailed their boats and through the night

⁴ Johnstone was a Warrant Officer with the Hong Kong Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (trans)

slipped through the blockade and took them to Xianshan fishing port in Ningbo. After a few days, local troops handed them over several times and sent the three men to Chongqing. Johnstone and the other prisoners stayed in Chongqing for a while, using their personal experiences to expose the Japanese atrocity on the radio station, triggering public opprobrium at home and abroad. Finally, they were sent back to the UK by the British Embassy in China.

Historical Great Rescue on the Dongji Sea

In the Special Storage Office of the Zhejiang Archives, there is a set of historical documents, serial number L030-236, put together more than 60 years ago.

Opening the front cover of this dossier, a telex written entirely in English greets the eye. The letter was written on 12 April 1948 by the British Ambassador in China to the then Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main points were:

During World War II, a Japanese ship, the *Lisbon Maru* transported nearly 2,000 British prisoners of war from Hong Kong towards Japan. On 2 October 1942, whilst the ship was sailing in the seas off Zhoushan, it was attacked by torpedoes and sank. At the time, more than 200 British prisoners of war were saved from drowning by the courageous efforts of the fishermen of Qingbang Island, Zhoushan, to rescue them. Despite the fishermen's livelihoods being very poor, they did everything they could to provide those British prisoners of war with food, shelter and care, enabling them to survive.

Our search for eyewitnesses from 70 years ago began. We reached Qingbang Island, a small island worthy of its name⁵. Most of the buildings were built on the mountain side, some were made simply by piling up rocks. The people's lives were simple but they were kind: the men went out to sea fishing, the women sat around together making nets and processing sea products; the elderly gathered in small groups passing the time of day.

Amongst them, a white-haired old man wearing a deep blue T-shirt was the person the reporters had come to meet. 85 year-old Chen Yonghua took his boat out that year with his partner and rescued five British soldiers. Sitting beside the old man, listening to his account, our thoughts were taken back to 70 years ago.

"That day was unusually good weather for Dongji, the sea was calm and tranquil." Chen Yonghua, who was only 15 at the time, and several partners were working by the sea. "The sky was misty and bright; I heard a tremendous noise and in front of my eyes was a large ship I had never seen before giving off black smoke." Because this was wartime, Chen Yonghua did not taken any notice till the nex day. "I saw the rear of the ship clearly sinking, with the bow sticking up and finally becoming vertical and sinking into the sea,

⁵ Qingbang literally means "green creek" (trans)

setting off a huge wave.” Chen Yonghua said that the place where the ship sank was about 10 kilometres to the north of Qingbang Island.

It was only many years later that Chen Yonghua knew that the ship was the *Lisbon Maru*, a Japanese cargo ship, 120 metres long, 18 metres wide, displacing 7,152 tons, which during World War II plied between China and Japan carrying prisoners of war.

The time returned again to Christmas night in 1941. Japanese troops had captured Hong Kong, and more than 10,000 Allied troops from Britain, Canada, Australia (sic)⁶ and India had become prisoners of war. In Autumn 1942, the Japanese army sent prisoners of war in batches back to Japan for hard labour. On 25 September that year, the Japanese army drove 1,816 (sic)⁷ mainly British prisoners of war onto the *Lisbon Maru*; they were all forcibly squeezed into small and narrow holds. The ship also carried 778 Japanese soldiers to guard the prisoners of war, and two days later they set sail.

On 1 October 1942, the *Lisbon Maru* reached Zhoushan waters. Because it did not indicate that it was a ship carrying prisoners of war, it was hit by torpedoes from the submarine *USS Grouper* of the 81st Squadron of the US Pacific Fleet.

“At first we were happy at the sinking of such a large ship, because a lot of cloth printed with fine and dense flowers would float off a large ship.” Chen Yonghua said he had never seen such beautiful cloth.

At first, many people started their boats to go and net some cloth. But following that, Chen Yonghua was startled. “Everywhere the sea was covered in fair-haired foreigners; near the sunken ship were two Japanese warships, with Japanese troops standing on them using machine guns and rifles firing at the people who had fallen in the water. It was hard for the fair-haired foreigners to climb onto the warships, as they were kicked off by the Japanese soldiers.”

Blue-eyed, fair-haired people had given Chen Yonghua’s ancestors distressing memories. “During the years of the Opium War, Zhoushan was invaded and occupied by the British for as long as five years”, Chen Yonghua said. “But we fisherman have always had a tradition: if we discover someone has fallen into the sea, we risk our lives to save them.” To his understanding, this is a spirit handed down by word of mouth for hundreds and thousands of years by Zhoushan people.

“Quick! Get in the boats!” Chen Yonghua and the other fishermen no longer looked for cloth, but one after another started to save people. That day, so long as there were fishermen with boats, they all went out to save people. Very quickly, fishermen from Miaozihu and other small islands nearby joined

⁶ No Australian units were stationed in Hong Kong in 1941 (trans)

⁷ The number was actually 1,834 (trans)

in the rescue. 198 fishermen took 48 boats out on 65 journeys and altogether saved 384 prisoners of war from the sea.

At the time, the fishing boats were small, and on each trip could only take around a dozen people; the fishermen had to risk their lives and paddle the boats, rescue a few, then turn round and rescue some more.... But there were still many prisoners of war who, because they had been floating for a long time, and their strength was exhausted, were unable to wait for the fishing boats to appear for the second time, and sank forever to the bottom of the sea. In the end, 843 (sic)⁸ prisoners of war drowned in the sea.

Not Only for Commemoration

Wang Yimin

In the minds of the people of Qingbang Island, veteran Chen Yonghua is the most authoritative eye witness at the time of the incident of the sinking of the *Lisbon Maru*.

On 10 September, the reporter visited veteran Chen Yonghua on Qingbang Island. At midday, his daughter was in the house preparing a sumptuous feast for the old man's lunch.

After lunch, taking the opportunity of old man having left, Chen Yonghua's daughter told the reporter that it was very possible that this would be the last meal the old man would eat on Qingbang Island.

A dozen or more years ago, Chen Yonghua became ill. For the convenience of medical treatment, Chen Yonghua and his wife left Qingbang Island and moved to live on Zhoushan Island. However, every summer he spent some time in his daughter's house on Qingbang Island.

In May this year, the old man was diagnosed with cancer and it was at an advanced stage. The doctor quietly told his family that he could only last another two or three months. In his family's view it was already a miracle that the old man had lasted until now.

That day, the old man saw that the Zhoushan weather was gradually getting cold and had proposed moving back to his own home, and would make the move after lunch. During the feast, the old man said I won't come back this year, but I'll come again next summer. "Whenever you want to come, you just come" said his daughter.

Veteran Chen Yonghua had been fishing all his life; he had been out to sea countless times, yet every time he spoke about rescuing people 70 years ago, from his account it seemed as if it had happened yesterday.

⁸ Actually 828 (trans)

With the passage of time, there are fewer and fewer people who witnessed this piece of history. As for us, nowadays, seeking the significance of the *Lisbon Maru* is not only to enable more people to listen carefully, understand, and come to know about this piece of history; it is even more to seek the background to the historical value and the national spirit.

The poppy wreath that was flown in from the UK is now quietly resting in the exhibition hall of the Zhejiang Ocean University for students to visit. But what else should we do for this unforgettable commemoration? Apart from anything else, we must not repeat this bitter history.

Handed Down: A New Oceanic Culture Bright Spot



Years later, most of the fishermen who saved British prisoners of war at the time have successively passed away. No more than five of the fishermen who witnessed and took part in the rescue that year are still alive.

However, it is worth rejoicing that nowadays, if you come to Dongji, sit down and chat with the locals, everyone can tell a few tales about the *Lisbon Maru*.

“I know a little, because I was influenced by my father’s generation from a small age.” Liang Yijuan’s daughter Liang Yindi works for the Dongji Town Government. In recent years, she has maintained a close interest in the incident of the sinking of the *Lisbon Maru*, but she has a concern: “When my father’s generation have gone, we shall have to rely on us passing on the stories of that time; but the next generation might wipe out the memories of this piece of history.”

On 4 April 2005, the Incident of the Sinking of the *Lisbon Maru* Historical Research Society was established in Dinghai District of Zhoushan City and Liang Yindi became a member of the Research Society. “The main task of the Research Society was on the one hand to continue to unearth, sort out, research and do textual research on historical facts and material on the incident of the sinking of the *Lisbon Maru*, and carry forward the spirit of humanity and internationalism shown by the Zhoushan fishermen who, heedless of their personal safety, risked their own lives to save British prisoners of war; and on the other hand, to draw up a research plan and an action plan so as to provide material for future literature and art.

On 18 August 2005, with the support of people from all walks of life in Zhoushan, British veteran soldier Charles Jordon, a survivor of the *Lisbon Maru* disaster who had been rescued by the fishermen of Dongji, Zhoushan, after a separation of more than half a century brought his wife and two other survivors' relatives from Britain to Dongji, Zhoushan, to look for the benefactors who had saved his life that year, and was warmly embraced by the heroes who were still alive, Chen Yonghua, Shen Agui and the rest of the seven elderly fishermen.

In September 2009, with the support of the Dongji Town Government, and the hard work of members of the Research Society, the *Lisbon Maru* Commemorative Museum was established and opened on Miaozihu Island, Dongji. Hu Mu, a member of the Puta District Political Consultative Committee in Zhoushan, proposed many times that a memorial should be built to commemorate this great historic event, thereby adding a material symbol at the same time as recalling the precious spirit.

“This incident of the sinking was a maritime disaster with a relatively large number of casualties globally and historically, and was a cultural legacy of World War II; it should be of interest to the international community” said Hu Mu.



18 August 2005. *Lisbon Maru* survivor Charles R Jordan aboard a boat on the way to Dongji, Zhoushan, tightly embracing elderly fishermen Guo Ade and Wang Baorong.
Picture: Field of Vision Network

**Memorial Ceremony held for the 70th Anniversary of the
Sinking of the *Lisbon Maru***

Reporter: Wen Jun Correspondent: Chen Wenwen

“Remember the souls of 800 British soldiers 70 years ago in World War II.”² October this year was the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the *Lisbon Maru*. An act of remembrance, organised jointly by the Municipal Social Science Federation and the Zhejiang Ocean University, was held on Lianhua Island, Puta District, on the 70th Anniversary of the *Lisbon Maru* disaster, to remember the souls of the allied soldiers at eternal rest in the waters of Zhoushan.

Poppy Wreath Posted by World War II Officer (sic)

On 2 October 1942, a Japanese military cargo vessel sailed from Hong Kong towards Japan; the ship was laden with goods and materials from the war of the invasion of China, and more than 1,800 British troops who had been captured by the Japanese whilst engaged in the defence of Hong Kong. Three nautical miles to the east of Qingbang Island, the cargo vessel was sunk by a submarine of the US Pacific Fleet.

From 9:00 am until dusk, Zhoushan fishermen rescued altogether 384 British prisoners of war. Some of the survivors were recaptured by the Japanese army, and following the sinking of the ship more than 800 are at eternal rest on the ice cold sea bed. “Poppies are international symbols displayed for the remembrance of deceased officers and soldiers.” One of the initiators of the commemoration, Zhoushan maritime navigation specialist Hu Mu, told reporters that the Lisbon Maru Association of Hong Kong and Brian Finch, Chairman (sic) of the Middlesex Regiment Association, had sent the highly symbolic poppy wreath by express delivery.

It was explained that the Middlesex Regiment of the British Army was a unit that fought in World War II; Mr Finch was an officer in this Regiment. The reporters saw at the ceremony that on the face of the poppy wreath was written in Chinese and English: “Lisbon Maru Association of Hong Kong, to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the *Lisbon Maru* disaster” and on the back was Major Finch’s name.

Carry Forward the Promotion of Zhoushan’s Foreign Exchanges

During the act of remembrance, the mourners first presented a poppy wreath and observed a three minute silence. After reading out the address clearly in both Chinese and English, the Zhejiang Ocean University students took the address, folded into a paper ship, a poppy wreath⁹ and carnations, tied them

⁹ This was a wreath handmade locally (trans)

together and put them in the Lotus Ocean¹⁰. “When reading the address there was a lump in my throat; a feeling I could not describe”. Zhejiang Ocean University student Wang Junwen said revealing the history was like seeing a picture of the allied troops struggling in the water whilst being shot at by Japanese machine guns. “Mourning them enables us to feel how precious is today’s peace and we wholeheartedly wish that our nation can be even stronger and more prosperous.” “The remembrance activities carry forward the magnanimous actions of the courageous Zhoushan people in rescuing people and promote Zhoushan’s foreign exchanges.” Retired cadre Mao Dezhuan said that after the new district of the Zhoushan archipelago was established, opening up to the outside world and overseas exchanges would definitely enter a new phase, and the *Lisbon Maru* Incident would become an important gateway.

The *Lisbon Maru* Incident is a Bright Spot in Oceanic Cultural

“The Lisbon Maru Incident is a valuable historic cultural legacy given to Zhoushan by World War II.” Hu Mu said that when he was on an exchange with Professor Shi Ping from the Shanghai Maritime University, Professor Shi Ping had pointed out that the *Lisbon Maru* Incident reflected the contribution made by the people of Zhoushan to World War II, embodying the Zhoushan people’s simple kind-heartedness, and reflecting internationalism in Zhoushan’s oceanic culture; it should become a bright spot in Zhoushan’s oceanic culture.

One of the initiators of the act of remembrance, Puta District Oceanic Cultural Research Institute Deputy Secretary General Sun Hejun, said the sacrifice of 843 (sic) British soldiers in one incident in Zhoushan waters in the Pacific Campaign, was a major incident in the history of the whole of World War II. The bodies of 843 (sic) soldiers show up the tragedy of the Far East Campaign in World War II. “Thoroughly enquiring into and researching the internationalism distilled from the incident of the sinking of the *Lisbon Maru* has an important practical significance in furthering the understanding of the oceanic civilisation contained in Zhoushan’s oceanic culture.”

¹⁰ A local stretch of water so named because it is near Lotus Island (trans)

Zhoushan Evening Paper

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Zhoushan, Hong Kong and Britain Hold Commemorations in Remembrance of the 70th Anniversary of the Sinking of the *Lisbon Maru*

Paper Boat and Wreath Offered to World War II Soldiers at Eternal Rest on the Sea Bed



Remember the souls of 800 British soldiers
70 years ago in World War II¹¹

Reporter Wang Xiaodong

If there was a monument, two ships, still sailing. Daybreak is in front, justice can be seen. 800 British souls, reflect the words from my heart. Wreath, paper boat; waves all around.... Dinghaiyi Middle School student Sun Niannu, full of emotion, read clearly the address for the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the *Lisbon Maru*; the scene was solemn. Students from the Zhejiang Oceanic Institute folded the address into a paper ship, and put it, together with a wreath, into the Lotus Ocean, floating towards the British soldiers, victims of World War II, now at eternal rest on the Zhoushan sea bed.

On the morning of 2 October, the Municipal Social Science Federation, the Zhejiang Ocean University and scholars from the City¹² joined with local enthusiasts on Lianhua Island, Puta District, and held an act of remembrance on the 70th Anniversary of the sinking of the *Lisbon Maru*.

We Will Remember Them

“70 long years, but the spirit of this kind of great love cannot fade with time....” The famous Hong Kong historical researcher Mr Tony Banham wrote the memorial address for the act of remembrance; he passed it on to Zhoushan; in the address he said: “70 years have passed; there are very few survivors of the incident of the sinking of the *Lisbon Maru* left; but we still remember them, as well as their comrades and their rescuers.”

¹¹ This is the main message on the banner. The other writing is too small to read (trans)

¹² ie Zhoushan City (trans)

On 2 October 1942, the Japanese cargo ship the *Lisbon Maru*, carrying goods and material from the war of invasion of China, and more than 1,800 British troops who had taken part in the defence of Hong Kong and been captured by the Japanese army, was sailing from Hong Kong to Japan and was sunk by a torpedo fired from a submarine of the US Pacific Fleet, three nautical miles to the east of Qingbang Island, Dongji. After the disaster, the people of Zhoushan courageously rescued 384 of the British prisoners of war who were in peril; some of the survivors were captured again by the Japanese, and following the sinking of the ship a further 820 British troops up to today have been at eternal rest on the ice cold sea bed in the waters of the Zhoushan archipelago.

Two Nations and Three Places Hold Acts of Remembrance

Zhoushan City had held a relatively large scale act of remembrance in 2005. That year, 80 year-old Charles Jordan, who had been rescued by the Donji fishermen, made a special visit to Zhoushan with his wife to thank his rescuers. Two years ago Mr Jordan passed away, but on 2 October this year in the UK, the next generation of the British allied soldiers of the time, including Mr Jordan's family, held acts of remembrance of the sinking of the *Lisbon Maru*, to mourn their relatives at eternal rest on the Zhoushan sea bed, following the sinking 70 years ago. "These acts of remembrance held at the same time in two nations and three places to remember the British soldiers who were sacrificed 70 years ago in World War II at eternal rest on the sea bed, passes on the oceanic spirit through the blood line. Today we must show this kind of spirit even more" said Puta Political Consultative Committee Member Hu Mu, one of the initiators of the act of remembrance.

World War II Officer (sic), Englishman Major Brian Finch, on learning that Zhoushan was to hold an act of remembrance of the sinking of the *Lisbon Maru* made (sic) a special wreath of silk flowers and had it flown out to the *Lisbon Maru* Association of Hong Kong, and the wreath was sent by express post to Zhoushan.

Clear Virtue of Zhoushan People Helping Others

Professor Shi Ping of Shanghai Maritime University wrote a a letter specially for this act of remembrance, which said: The *Lisbon Maru* Incident was an incident in World War II, and this incident had significance for Zhoushan; its value reflects the contribution made by Zhoushan people to World War II, and this contribution embodies the Zhoushan people's spirit of simple, kind-hearted humanitarianism in healing the wounded and saving the dying. This spirit is precisely one clear aspect of the human nature in Zhoushan's oceanic culture, namely the virtue of being good at helping others; and furthermore, this incident reflects Zhoushan people's spirit of willingness to help others; it illustrates an aspect of humanitarianism in Zhoushan's oceanic culture and should become a bright spot in Zhoushan's oceanic culture.

And Hu Mu said, if we could find the bones of the British soldiers from the incident of the sinking of the *Lisbon Maru*, that would be a world-shaking event, and Zhoushan would become a world hotspot.

Memorial Ceremony for the *Lisbon Maru* 70th Anniversary 02/10/2012



