Archive Reference: GB 0532 Cwl ALLC

Papers of William H. Allchin:

Interim Catalogue

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Contents

[Introduction 1](#_Toc404599620)

[Collection description 1](#_Toc404599621)

[Reference code 1](#_Toc404599622)

[Title 1](#_Toc404599623)

[Dates 1](#_Toc404599624)

[Level of description 1](#_Toc404599625)

[Extent 1](#_Toc404599626)

[Name of creator 1](#_Toc404599627)

[Biographical history 1](#_Toc404599628)

[Immediate source of acquisition 2](#_Toc404599629)

[Scope and content 2](#_Toc404599630)

[Appraisal 2](#_Toc404599631)

[System of arrangement 3](#_Toc404599632)

[Access conditions 3](#_Toc404599633)

[Copyright/conditions governing reproduction 3](#_Toc404599634)

[Language of material 3](#_Toc404599635)

[Finding aids 3](#_Toc404599636)

[Related collections 3](#_Toc404599637)

[Archivist’s note 3](#_Toc404599638)

[Rules or conventions 4](#_Toc404599639)

[Date(s) of description 4](#_Toc404599640)

[Indexing 4](#_Toc404599641)

[List of Files in the Archive 4](#_Toc404599642)

[Writing and teaching 4](#_Toc404599643)

[Materials concerning Nagase Takashi 5](#_Toc404599644)

[Far Eastern POWs 6](#_Toc404599645)

[Other peace activities and miscellany 10](#_Toc404599646)

# Introduction

This archive comprises the papers of a remarkable individual, William Allchin, a prisoner of war in the Far East during the Second World War who later sought reconciliation with his Japanese captors. He was also a psychiatrist, poet and peace campaigner.

This catalogue is “interim”: it is published as part of our “First Sort” programme which aims to put basic information about new archives into the public domain as quickly as possible. We will refine and enrich it in response to user demand.

Alison Cullingford, Special Collections Librarian.

# Collection description

## Reference code

GB 0532 ALLC.

## Title

Papers of William H. Allchin.

## Dates

Circa 1942 to 2001.

## Level of description

Collection.

## Extent

0.52 linear metres, 0.050024 cubic metres.

## Name of creator

Dr William H. Allchin, psychiatrist, poet and campaigner for peace and reconciliation, 1921-2001.

## Biographical history

William Henry "Bill" Allchin was born in Harrow, Middlesex, on 27 March 1921. During the Second World War, as a Lieutenant in 18 Battalion Reconnaissance (Recce) Corps, he was captured at the fall of Singapore and spent three and a half years as a prisoner-of-war, first at Changi from February 1942-May 1943. He was then one of the POWs who worked on the Thailand-Burma "death railway", until he was sent back to Changi in December 1943, where he remained until liberation in December 1945. At Changi, he learned Japanese to try to communicate with his captors.

After war service he trained as a doctor, eventually specialising in psychiatry with particular concern for children and young people. He moved to Hampshire in 1961 to work at Leigh House, near Eastleigh, the Wessex Regional Health Authority adolescent unit. From 1976 he practised as an independent psychiatrist. He was also an adult education tutor with the Workers' Education Association. Dr Allchin was a member of the Labour Party and stood four times in general elections as a Parliamentary Candidate for the Winchester/Andover constituency.

Dr Allchin returned to Thailand in January 1976 with a group of POWs: he concluded that as a survivor of the camps he was "under an obligation to work for peace and reconciliation". He supported a plan by a Japanese interpreter from the camps, Mr Nagase Takashi, for a reconciliation at the River Kwai. When this proved impossible for most British ex-POWs, Dr Allchin helped organise a meeting at Westminster Abbey to bear witness. He continued to correspond with Nagase Takashi and to work for reconciliation with the Japanese.

He was involved with various campaigning groups, including the Ex Servicemen's Anti-War Group and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. He was Chair of the Winchester Peace Council and worked with homeless people with the Winchester Housing Action Group. He became a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers). Dr Allchin published many journal articles concerning his psychiatric work and also was a poet, many of his poems relating to his reconciliation experiences.

Dr Allchin retired to Bangor with his partner of many years, Tom. He died there on New Year’s Day 2001, aged 79. A bursary for Peace Studies students at the University of Bradford was set up in his memory

## Immediate source of acquisition

Donated to Special Collections by Dr Allchin's Estate in 2009.

## Scope and content

The archive mainly consists of material relating to Dr Allchin's efforts for peace and reconciliation with his captors. It includes typescripts and manuscripts of books, articles and poems by Dr Allchin and other individuals; correspondence with Mr Nagase Takashi, other POWs, and many organisations; press releases and other publicity material; and press cuttings, many from Hampshire or the Far East.

## Appraisal

Duplicates and irrelevant material have been weeded as seen; further appraisal will be carried out as the Archive is catalogued in more detail.

## System of arrangement

The original files and system of arrangement used by Dr Allchin have been retained where these are evident.

## Access conditions

Available to researchers, by appointment. Access to archive material is subject to preservation requirements and must also conform to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act and any other appropriate legislation. This Archive contains correspondence and other items containing personal data so access is restricted under the Data Protection Act pending further cataloguing. This will be carried out in response to user demand so individuals are encouraged to inform Special Collections of their interest in this material.

## Copyright/conditions governing reproduction

Copies may be supplied or produced at the discretion of Special Collections staff, subject to copyright law and the condition of the originals. The donor’s rights in this collection have been assigned to Special Collections, but note that many third-party copyrights are represented in the Archive.

Applications for permission to make published use of any material should be directed to the Special Collections Librarian in the first instance. Special Collections staff will assist where possible with identifying copyright owners, but responsibility for ensuring copyright clearance rests with the user of the material.

## Language of material

English, some Japanese.

## Finding aids

A basic boxlist has been produced to make the Archive accessible as quickly as possible. This will be further refined in response to user demand.

## Related collections

Published works by or belonging to Dr Allchin are catalogued separately as the Allchin Collection.

## Archivist’s note

Described by Alison Cullingford.

Biographical history based on Dr Allchin's obituary in the Hampshire Chronicle, 12 January 2001, biographical blurbs in his printed works, and his Liberation Questionnaire, digitised and placed online by COFEPOW[[1]](#footnote-1).

## Rules or conventions

ISAD(G) 2nd ed.

## Date(s) of description

November 2014.

## Indexing

### Persons

Allchin, William H. "Bill"

Takashi, Nagase

### Subjects

World War, 1939-1945 — Prisoners and prisons, Japanese.

Prisoners of war — Great Britain — Biography.

Burma-Siam Railroad — History.

# List of Files in the Archive

## Writing and teaching

### 01 Civil strife and the relevance of the Quaker peace testimony

Date: 1982

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: "Master copy", includes views on riots, policing, fascism. Plus 3 poems.

### 02 Poems

Date: 1982-1986

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Typescripts of poems

### 03 and 04 Violence of the Heart

Date: 1991

Extent: 2 files

Scope and content: Synopsis and draft chapters of book by WHA, including his POW experiences, Kwai reunion, visits to Japan, Nagase, and drawing on ideas of nonviolence. First draft and other drafts and notes. Letter from Darton, Longman & Todd turning down book.

### 05 Articles by William H Allchin

Date: 1974-1988

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Mainly typescripts

### 06 Courses taught by WHA

Date: 1981-1995

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Outlines and publicity for lectures and courses taught by WHA on psychology (including Jung) for the WEA. Talk on nonviolence for the Thomas Merton Society.

## Materials concerning Nagase Takashi

### 07 Nagase Takashi material

Date: 1990-1994

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Correspondence with Takashi, reviews of Takashi's books by WHA, press cuttings.

Note: WHA distributed book by Takashi: Crosses and Tigers

### 08 Mr Nagase's Temple Project

Date: 1986

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Takashi's proposal for a temple on the River Kwai. Correspondence, typescript article about the Temple by WHA, press cuttings including Thai newspapers.

### 09 Nagase's MS for Dick Lee

Date: 1988

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Copied manuscript in English of Takashi's The Truth and Lies, 1987, plus press cuttings and notes

## Far Eastern POWs

### 10 River Kwai Reunion correspondence

Date: 1976

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Mainly circulars about the Reunion from WHA, correspondence with veterans, NT, Moto Uwano of the Embassy of Japan. Some press cuttings and writings by WHA.

**Access: Restricted under DPA pending further cataloguing**

### 11 1976 Reunion

Date: 1976

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Travel documents, articles, correspondence relating to FEPOW return to Thailand

**Restricted under DPA pending further cataloguing**

### 12 Allchin on TV

Date: 1976

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: The Light of Experience, 4 November 1976, camera script and scripts of interviews with WHA. WHA article Eastleigh Bridge page 16, September 1972.

### 13 River Kwai Reunion

Date: 1976-1977

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Correspondence, press releases, press cuttings, Reunion prospectus. Long article on journey to Thailand - appears to be by Ron Wait who was influence on WHA. Correspondence with War Veterans' Association, individual veterans, newspapers and peace groups. 1 letter from 1986 from Dudley S. Cave.

**Restricted under DPA pending further cataloguing**

### 14 Japanese material

Date: 1976-1993

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Including articles by Bill Duncan, correspondence, and Japanese Labour Camp Survivors Association of Great Britain circulars etc.

**Restricted under DPA pending further cataloguing**

### 15 Japanese material

Date: 1977-1979

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Ephemera including namecards from Japan visit March/April 1977, correspondence

### 16 Additional POW material

Date: 1980s

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Press cuttings about POWs and notes by WHA on POW experience possibly for an interview

### 17 Further FE POW material

Date: 1942-1996

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Including press cuttings, agreement by POW not to escape, articles and reviews by WHA. Material concerning Woodbrooke seminar on long-term imprisonment, 1984

### 18 Miscellaneous re POWs

Date: 1945-2000

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Including berthing card for HMT Sobieski, Japanese Labour Camp Survivors Association publications including “Fulcrum", material re 1976 trip - itinerary, list of passengers, assorted press cuttings etc.

**Restricted under DPA pending further cataloguing**

### 19 Japan visit; Mr Ahn's visit 1988, THK TV visit 1988

Date: 1968-1988

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Including correspondence with NT and veterans concerning the Reunion. 1968 photograph and publicity for Hiroshima bomb survivor Mr Mashashi Nii in Winchester chaired by WHA. Photographs, press cuttings etc.

**Restricted under DPA pending further cataloguing**

### 20 POWs, Hiroshima

Date: 1975-1982

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Correspondence and other material. Links between Hampshire and Hiroshima, including presentation of report by Mayor of Hiroshima City to mayors of Southampton and Winchester via WHA, Hampshire CND material. Correspondence with Akihiro Takahashi concerning Hiroshima links, with Bill Duncan (also a POW, includes long article by him on reconciliation with captors), press cuttings. Visit of Japanese medical students to Southampton University 1977.

**Restricted under DPA pending further cataloguing**

### 21 Press cuttings and correspondence

Date: 1988-1995

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Press cuttings on Railway, Hampshire Chronicle press cutting on meeting with Mr Ahn, correspondence

**Restricted under DPA pending further cataloguing**

### 22 Far East stuff

Date: 1990s

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Including press cuttings, photographs, correspondence with NT, article by NT on the International Treaties regarding POWs and Japan, issues of FEPOW Fulcrum

**Restricted under DPA pending further cataloguing**

### 23 Peace-related miscellaneous

Date: 1990s

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Typescript article, letters to Peace News, sermon he preached in Winchester Cathedral in 1995, press cuttings including Thai, debate at Winchester Theatre Royal, Agape booklet (working for reconciliation POWs and Japanese; WHA's obituary from the Hampshire Chronicle

**Restricted under DPA pending further cataloguing**

### 24 Far East

Date: 1993-1995

Extent: 1 file

**Restricted under DPA pending further cataloguing**

### 25 Far East

Date: 1998-1999

Extent: 1 file

**Restricted under DPA pending further cataloguing**

### 26 Japan material

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Japanese ephemera of visit to Tokyo and telegram to WHA from NT

### 27 Japan material

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Japanese brochures and postcard from Hull

## Other peace activities and miscellany

### 28 Ex Servicemen's Anti-War Group

Date: 1949-1952

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Circulars, flyers, press

Note: WHA was Treasurer of the Group

### 29 Photographs

Extent: 2 photographs

Scope and content: Dr Allchin with pile of books. Mr Ahn in his garden 8 August 1996 inscribed to “My dearest friend”. Copyright unknown

### 30 Poetry

Date: 1978

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Correspondence with Jared Ipson of Salt Lake City, The Poet as Politician, Polyani colloqium

**Restricted under DPA pending further cataloguing**

### 31 Hiroshima Day

Date: 1989

Extent: 3 photographs

Scope and content: Peace Council Silent Vigil at war memorial. Credit: Hampshire Chronicle.

### 32 Hiroshima Day

Date: 1997

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Photographs and ephemera, including WHA with Nagase at the Yasakuni Shrine, Tokyo, March 1977

### 33 Hiroshima tapestry

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: Tapestry depicting the Peace Park with the Atom-bomb Dome, at Hiroshima

### 34 Notes on Japan

Extent: 1 file

Scope and content: File of notes on Japanese religion, society, plus poems and notes

### 35 Quotations and references

Extent: 1 box

Scope and content: Index cards containing quotations and references of interest to WHA

1. <http://www.cofepow.org.uk/lq.images/Alexander%20-%20Anderson/Allchin_William_Henry.JPG> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)