

S P R I N G 2 0 1 7

the
Chindit Column

The boldest measures are the safest



The Chairman's Message

Welcome to the third edition of the Chindit Column. In recent times a few of our Chindits have sadly faded away, but the Society continues to grow and now boasts a membership of 278. The Society has an extremely close relationship with the new 77th Brigade. Nine Chindits and their families attended their barracks for the Royal visit by HRH the Prince of Wales and later for The Chindwin Dinner. I would like to take this opportunity to wish their Commanding officer, Brigadier Alistair Aitken the very best in his new endeavour, and to thank him for all the support he has shown us.

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111 Brigade's RAF Wireless Mule in 1944. Continued on page 10.

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Some words of wisdom before Operation Longcloth.

Our Aims and Objectives for the Society

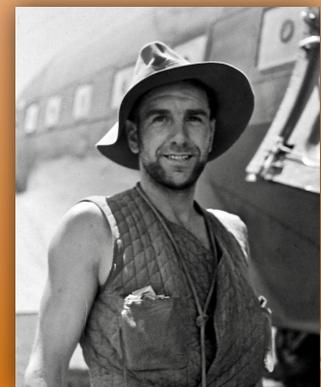
To protect and maintain the legacy and good name of the Chindits and their great deeds during the Burma Campaign.

To carry that name forward into the public domain, through presentations and education.

To gather together and keep safe Chindit writings, memoirs and other treasures for the benefit of future generations.

To assist families and other interested parties in seeking out the history of their Chindit relative or loved one.

Wherever possible, to ensure the continued well being of all our Chindit veterans.



The Tallest of all Chindits



Pte. 6089393 David Thomas Smith was born on the 4th February 1918 in Hackney, a London Borough situated just northeast of the Thames. David enlisted into the British Army underage, managing with the assistance of his grandmother to gain a posting into the Scots Guards in 1935.

The photograph to the left was taken in 1938 when David was just eighteen years old and had been transferred to the Queen's Regiment. As you can see, some extreme measures were needed to calculate his height, which was recorded at 6 feet, eleven inches.

David and his wife, Muriel Joyce (herself a Gunner in the Royal Artillery during the blitz) were parted in early 1942, when the 2nd Battalion of the Queen's Regiment were posted overseas. The Queen's became part of Bernard Fergusson's 16th British Infantry Brigade on Operation Thursday, with David a member of 22 Column under the

command of Major Terence Close. Fergusson's men were the only Chindit Brigade to march into Burma in 1944, encountering some atrocious weather conditions and arduous terrain along the way. Sadly, Pte. David Smith was killed in action sometime between the 1st and 9th of April 1944, whilst his column were operating just southeast of Indaw. An eyewitness account given by Sgt. Tom Proudfoot, also a member of 22 Column, suggested that Lt. John Fox, Pte. Smith and two other men were lost to the unit as it was attempting to withdraw from an area heavily populated by the Japanese. Further anecdotal evidence, given to the family many years later, reported that Pte. Smith had been severely wounded during this action and that it had taken three ampoules of morphine to accommodate his passing.

David Smith is remembered upon Face 4 of the Rangoon Memorial, which is located in the grounds of Taukkyan War Cemetery. His only daughter, Barbara Smith, began to search for information about her father in the late 1980's. With true grit and dogged determination, she eventually gained some insight into his wartime service and perhaps more importantly the nature of his sad demise in Burma. When recounting her father's story, Barbara reminded me of the short poem found amongst the pages of the book, *Jungle, Jungle, Little Chindit*. (Article by Steve Fogden).

*My C.O. told me I never should
Walk off by myself in the wood.
Because, he told me, if you do,
How shall we know if the Japs get you?
I guess he was right, as you'll find my bones
Down Indaw way on a heap of stones.*

Chindit Veterans visit to 77th Brigade HQ at Denison Barracks

On the 30th January this year, a number of our Chindit veterans and their families were invited to the 77th Brigade Head Quarters, for a special lunch in the presence of HRH Prince Charles and Viscount Slim.

On a rather damp and misty day, the various Chindits made their way to the Denison Barracks, a small Army encampment near the town of Thatcham in Berkshire and were greeted by the officers and NCO's at the door of the Sergeant's Mess building. All who attended enjoyed a wonderfully relaxed and informal afternoon, attentively hosted by all ranks from the Brigade.

There was an excellent display of decommissioned weaponry, made up of items used by the Chindits during the two Wingate expeditions. These included: a short magazine Lee Enfield rifle, a Bren gun, a Thompson submachine gun, a Vickers medium machine gun and an American M1 Semi-automatic rifle. Perhaps the only weapons missing from the display were the trusted 3-inch mortar and the rather unreliable Sten gun.

There was also a small audio-visual display set up showing photographs and video clips of the Brigade's visit to Mawlu in March 2014. The soldiers chosen to deliver this display did so with great enthusiasm and had clearly been positively affected by their time in Burma.

Later in the afternoon, HRH Prince Charles arrived, sporting, I was pleased to see, his Chindit Old Comrades tie. As always, the Prince spoke to our veterans with both interest and understanding and equally, the Chindits responded with typically informative and witty replies.

The Prince, who had come in the first instance to investigate the work of the newly raised 'Cyber' Chindit Brigade, then addressed the room, thanking his hosts for their warm welcome and absorbing presentation of their duties. Commanding Officer, Brigadier Alastair Aitken then responded on behalf of 77th Brigade.

I think I can safely say that a good time was had by all and I'm sure our Chindits in particular would like to do it all again soon. (Article by Steve Fogden).



77th Brigade a British Army formation, created in January 2015.

Did You Know?



Over the course of both Chindit expeditions, some 300 men were taken prisoner by the Japanese. The vast majority of these (250) were captured during Operation Longcloth, with another 50 or so Chindits falling into enemy hands the following year on Operation Thursday.

Most of the men captured in 1944 were from the 1st Battalion of the King's Regiment, lost aboard misplaced gliders that never made it to Broadway. Not surprisingly, the survival rate for the men taken prisoner in 1943 was far worse than their comrades a year later, with 60% perishing inside Rangoon Jail over the two years before the Japanese fled Burma in late April 1945.

Major Neville Hogan MBE

Born in Burma to an Irish father and a Burmese mother, Neville Hogan fought in both Burma campaigns. A keen boy scout, Neville enlisted in the Territorial Army on the 15th August 1939 at the tender age of 16.

When war broke out in Europe, no one thought that it would ever come to Burma. Everything changed when the Japanese captured Singapore and Burma became their next target. The retreat from Burma in 1942 was a grueling affair, with much of the route badly affected by the monsoon rains, in some cases the journey took many weeks to complete.

Once he arrived back in India, Neville was sent to Jhansi for infantry training. It was shortly after, that he received a commission and was promoted from the ranks to officer status. By the time of the second campaign, Neville was an officer in the Burma Rifles, which went on to form the backbone of the Chindits.

Lt. Hogan worked as a Reconnaissance Platoon commander in 46 Column on the second Chindit expedition in 1944. Everyday he went ahead with his men, looking for the best locations for supply drops, the next night's bivouac or organising assistance from local villages in the area.

46 Column was made up mostly from the men of the 2nd Battalion, the King's Own Royal Regiment and formed part of 111th Brigade.

Neville's fondest memories from this time were the camaraderie and friendships he forged with his comrades, knowing that they were all in it together.



Operation Thursday was an exhausting experience, with the men often going without sleep and adequate food for long periods. They were bitten by mosquitos and suffered from leeches getting inside their clothing. On many occasions, Lt. Hogan was involved in close combat with the Japanese, up until his unit exited Burma in June 1944.

After the war, Neville met and married his wonderful wife, Glory in April 1949. However, the political tensions of a newly independent Burma, as well as strong anti-British sentiment, led to a decision to leave the country in 1950. Neville moved to England, eventually settling in Hemel Hempstead with Glory and his family. Major Neville Hogan was awarded the MBE in 2004 for his services to the Chindit Old Comrades Association. Sadly, he passed away in April 2012.

Article taken from the *Best of British Magazine*.



Listen to a Chindit Memoir

The Chindit audio memoir for **Lt. Dominic Fitzgerald Neill** can now be listened to on-line. Please follow the link below to the website of the Imperial War Museum. Nick Neill was the Animal Transport officer for 8 Column on Operation Longcloth.

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80013020>

To view detailed topographical maps of Burma, that were collated just after the war please follow this link:

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/ams/burma/>

Captain Michael McGillicuddy



Denis Michael Edmund McGillicuddy was born in the London Borough of Kensington on the 5th September 1917. His family was originally from County Kerry in the Republic of Ireland. Michael was educated at Eton and in 1936 enlisted into the British Army, joining the Royal Scots Greys and serving for a time in Palestine.

Although recommended for a commission, Michael left the Army in January 1939, only to re-enlist into the Intelligence Corps at the outbreak of WW2. As an Acting Sergeant, he was awarded the Military Medal for his efforts during the British withdrawal from Dunkirk. From the London Gazette dated 20th December 1940:

During withdrawal from the Escaut River, this NCO with the assistance of another NCO reconnoitered in advance the oil refineries at Willems, he then waited until the whole of the 3rd Infantry Brigade rear-guard had passed, so as to avoid the risk of interfering with their movement in any way; then with complete disregard for his own safety, successfully set fire to large stocks of the oil.

He was commissioned into the 4/7th Dragoon Guards (his father's old Regiment) in late 1940, but this posting did not sit well with this adventurous young officer. After a short-lived flirtation with the RAF, in the summer of 1942 Michael was sent overseas and joined the 3/4th Gurkha Rifles as Acting Captain.

Within the year, the battalion had become part of 111th Indian Infantry Brigade and their Chindit training began. Michael's talent for horse management led to his promotion as Animal Transport Officer for No. 30 Column on Operation Thursday and his expertise was immediately tested in Burma during the night crossing of the Irrawaddy River on the 12th March 1944. The mules, fearing the fast flowing currents of the mile-wide river, refused to enter the water; Michael and his mule drivers quickly thinking on their feet, constructed a succession of bamboo rafts and ferried the animals across.

Loved and admired for his fearless nature, Michael was a popular soldier amongst both his men and his fellow officers. He was awarded the Military Cross for his actions during a column supply drop in early April 1944, near a place called Pinlebu.

This Officer on the night of 7/8th April 1944 was carrying out a reconnaissance with a one-section party. They were attacked in an open piece of country and for nearly two hours held off a very much superior force enabling the remainder of the column to get into a position from which they were able to beat off the subsequent and heavier attacks. At the conclusion of this action, he withdrew the section without loss.

Later during the same night, he took out a patrol whose actions eventually caused the enemy to withdraw from a feature, which was overlooking part of the area held by the column. This Officer's conduct under fire and complete disregard for his own personal safety has been an example to all ranks.

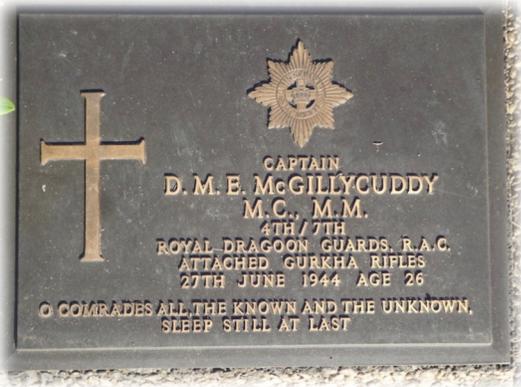


The award of an immediate MC was recommended by Michael's commanding officer from No. 30 Column, Major K.M. Dibben and was signed off by Major-General W. Lentaigne, who had taken up overall command of the Chindits after the unexpected death of Orde Wingate in late March.

After the collapse of the Blackpool stronghold on 24th May, 30 Column had been ordered by Brigadier Jack Masters to scout ahead and prepare the way for the rest of the ailing Chindit Brigade as it withdrew to the north. The monsoon had well and truly begun and the conditions through which the men travelled were atrocious. There was however still work to be done and fresh orders from General Stilwell, sent 111 Brigade further north to a place called Point 2171.

Having been almost continuously at the forefront of his column, Michael McGillicuddy was tragically killed on the 27th June 1944, close to the village of Ndaogahtawng. He had been chosen by Jack Masters to lead a reconnaissance party whose objective was to liaise with a Chinese Regiment reportedly somewhere in the area. In his book, *The Road Past Mandalay*, Masters recalls: *The Chinese were not there. Mike McGillicuddy, tireless and indomitable, was shot dead whilst leading two companies through some lantana scrub trying to find them. This is what happens when you send your best man.*

As with so many of the Chindit casualties from 1944, Captain McGillicuddy was originally buried at Sahmaw War Cemetery, located next to the railway line southwest of Mogaung. In July 1954, his body was exhumed and relocated at Taukkyan War Cemetery on the northern outskirts of Rangoon. (Story continued on page 6).



Last November, our Chindit Society Secretary, Mandy Walsh paid a special visit to Taukkyan War Cemetery. As part of this pilgrimage, she attended the grave of Captain McGillicuddy. Mandy recalled:

It was quite by chance that I spotted the name Captain DME McGillicuddy on a list of Chindit recipients of the Military Cross. Knowing the surname to be unusual, I mentioned it to my work colleague with the same name. To our delight a family connection was confirmed, and we then discovered that his remains were interred at the Taukkyan War Cemetery in Yangon, which I was shortly planning to visit. It was Monday 14th November 2016, the day after Remembrance Sunday and a national holiday in Burma celebrating the new moon in the eighth month of the Buddhist calendar. The roads leading towards Yangon were consequently crowded and noisy, but as we arrived at the cemetery late in the day the sound of cars, bikes and trucks settled to a background hum. The sun was low in the sky and cast long shadows across the beautifully tended grounds that form the final resting place for some 34,000 souls.

I had a list of graves to search for, including that of Captain McGillicuddy, but it was a simple task with each grave given a reference on the cemetery map. There are over 6,000 graves laid out in ordered rows, each memorial plaque separated from the next by a flowering plant. They are mostly named, but for many the epitaph simply stated *known unto God*. The striking Rangoon Memorial bears almost 27,000 names inscribed on 56 soaring pillars, designed with a rotunda at the centre. That evening, this was filled with many red and white wreathes from the previous day's ceremony; a poignant recognition that it may be more than 70 years, but they are not forgotten. It was so peaceful there and a deeply moving visit.

Many thanks must go to Mandy Walsh and to the family of Michael McGillicuddy, for their invaluable contributions to this story.

RECENTLY FALLEN COMRADES

Vic Whittingham, RAF att. 6th Nigerian Regt. 8th December 2016.

Frank Norris, King's Regt. 15th December 2016.

Harry Hughes, 2nd Queen's Regt. 31st December 2016.

Peter Oldham, 54th Field Company RE. 17th January 2017.

Herbert Carroll, Lancashire Fusiliers. 14th February 2017.

Maggie the Mule

Many years ago, long before a lady of the same name resided at No. 10, we in 111 Brigade owned a magnificent mule called Maggie, and she achieved fame both prior to and during the 1944 Chindit operation. She was an Argentinian, 15.2 hands high, of excellent conformation and general physique, with an almost jet black coat which shone beautifully after grooming. She would have been superb in any terrain, having the true perfection required of a Mountain Artillery mule for the frontier hills.

It was my good fortune to be the Brigade Animal Transport Officer and thus had the duty to allocate numbers and types of mules to meet the specialised requirements of each unit of the Brigade. At an early stage we learned that our RAF section would have heavy radio sets, plus charging equipment, which would weigh over 80lbs on each side, and was the basic loading limit for a mule on the march. Only Mountain Artillery mules could cope with heavier loads and Maggie was soon appointed to head-up this section of splendid animals, well capable of all tasks envisaged.

In addition to her other attributes, Maggie was a born leader and set a standard of excellence which was all her own. She had lovely eyes, a most engaging temperament and was a delight to us all. On every exercise, and later on in Burma, Maggie and her exploits were always to the fore. Visiting Generals and other VIP's were always formally introduced to her (the honour, of course, being on their side), and all too often I was on parade to show her off.

Such was her fame that, "*Get Frank to bring Maggie to the mess at 1600 hrs. to meet General So-and-so,*" became a frequent order. She was a legend in her own lifetime and thoroughly deserved to be.



We were flown into action by Dakota and glider and our mules, donkeys and ponies travelled well. Crash landings caused some casualties, but Maggie took it all in her stride. The Brigade had the misfortune to be landed on the wrong side of the Irrawaddy. This meant we had to start off with a river crossing, 600 yards wide, with a 9 knot current; a daunting task at any time and we were deep in the heart of Japanese-held jungle. Of course Maggie came into her own here and set an example to all we lesser creatures.

With minimal prompting she swam across from bank to bank, leading all the other mules and remaining in full view, to encourage the less intrepid beasts and men to follow her example. How well she deserved the medal that sadly, we were unable to give her.

In our K rations were bars of highly vitamized chocolate, which was supposed to keep us fit. I did not like it; neither did most of my Gurkha mule-drivers, who used an unpleasant Gurkhali word to describe it. But Maggie loved it, so it was always her reward from the Major-Sahib. A mule eating chocolate in the jungle, with probably none to be had back home in England. Good for old Maggie!

During the campaign, a young officer from the King's Own suffered a heavy blow to the side of the head from a free-falling package during a supply drop. He was severely concussed and unconscious for several days whilst in the care of Doc Whyte. Maggie came to the rescue by dragging the casualty on a litter made from a groundsheet on 16-foot lengths of bamboo, with the front portion tied to each side of her saddle.

Maggie towed him oh so carefully, I swear she understood the importance and delicacy of what she was doing and I'm sure Doc Whyte would agree. Two days seemed an eternity until we reached a light-plane airstrip, from which the patient was evacuated to a base hospital. I never did hear the end result, but Maggie, Doc and I did our bit.

Later, I lost contact with her because I went blind for thirty-one days and they evacuated me by flying-boat from Indawgyi Lake back to India. Sadly, therefore, I was not present when the end came for Maggie.

Story continued on page 10.



On December 29th 1942, Brigadier Wingate handed the officers of the original 77th Brigade the following words of wisdom and advice to take with them into Burma. This document was found amongst the war papers of Lieutenant John Murray Kerr, formerly of the Welsh Regiment and an officer with 5 Column on Operation Longcloth in 1943.



Secret

77th Indian Infantry Brigade

Maxims for all Officers

The Chindwin is your Jordan, once crossed there is no re-crossing. The exit from Burma is via Rangoon. Success in operations depends on the perfecting of an exact and well-conducted drill for every procedure.

Our reply to noise is silence.

When in doubt, do not fire.

Never await the enemy's blow, evade it.

Fight when surprise has been gained. When surprise is lost at the outset, break off the action and come again.

Security is gained by intelligence, good dispersal procedure and counter attack. Thus all depends on good guerrilla procedure plus careful drill. Read and then re-read 'Security in bivouac.'

Always maintain a margin of strength for a time of need. It is the reserve of energy that saves from disaster that gives the weight required for victory.

Times of darkness, of rain, mist and storm, these are our times of achievement.

Never retrace your steps.

The movement of the column must be unpredictable, even for it's own members.

Never bivouac within three miles of a motor road or waterway. Three miles of good forest will give the same protection as ten miles of open country.

Use every weapon and every man to capacity. It is their combined and simultaneous employment that gives strength. Work together and rest together.

Speed should be the result, not of fear and confusion, but of superior knowledge, planning and drill.

Intelligence is useless unless it is passed on. Use your W/T (radio) to capacity; it is your greatest weapon.

See that your men think the same of the situation as you do. For this, constant talks and explanations will be necessary.

If possible, never keep serious casualties with the Column.

Spend your cash.

Family Contributions and Research

The Chindit Society warmly welcomes the contribution of new Chindit artefacts and encourages families to share what they have with a wider audience. We would be interested to receive copies of any items, such as diaries, letters, memoirs and photographs. These would then go towards supplementing our Chindit archive and hopefully expand our knowledge of the campaign and the men who served within it.

Do you have a Chindit soldier in the family? Would you like to find out more about his contribution in 1943 or 1944? One of the aims of The Chindit Society is to assist families in accessing information about the two Wingate expeditions and relating this information to their own Chindit and his experiences.

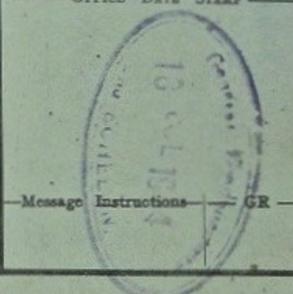
If you are not sure, but have heard family stories about a possible Chindit connection, the first thing to do is attempt to access his Service Records from the MOD Offices in Glasgow. For more information about applying for Army Service Records, please use the following link: <http://www.veterans-uk.info>

Please contact the Society for more advice on Chindit research. For all enquiries please email: info@thechinditsociety.org.net

Death of a Warrior

The image below was found in the War diary (1944) for 16th British Infantry Brigade Head Quarters. It is the top-secret communiqué sent by 3rd Indian Division Command at 2000 hrs. on the 27th March 1944, informing all Chindit Brigades, Rear HQ's and 1st Air Commando, of the sudden and unexpected death of their leader.

The message reads: *Regret to inform you Wingate missing believed killed in air crash 24 March? BGS takes command temporarily. Lentaigne to take over later. All ranks will agree most fitting memorial in early achievement of his purpose.*

ARMY FORM C2136 (Small) (Pads of 100)		MESSAGE FORM		Register No. 15
Call	Srl. No.	Priority	Transmission Instructions	
ABOVE THIS LINE FOR SIGNALS USE ONLY				
FROM (A)	Originator		Date-Time of Origin	
Adv 3 Ind Div			27 2000	
Adv HQ 14, 16, 23, 77, 111, and 3 W A Bdes Rear HQ 14, 16, 23, 77, 111, & 3 W A Bdes Main Special Force, Rear 3 Ind Div. Combined 3 Ind Div. No 1 Air Commando (W) For Information (INFO)			OFFICE DATE STAMP 	
14 Army, 3 T A F, Tp Carrier Comd, 221 Gp				
Originator's No.				
0 1500				
From B G S (.) Regret inform you WINGATE missing believed killed in air crash 24 Mar (2) B G S takes comd temporarily (.) LENTAIGNE to take over later (.) All ranks will agree most fitting memorial in early achievement of his purpose (.) All infm				
THIS MESSAGE MAY BE SENT AS WRITTEN BY ANY MEANS { EXCEPT WIRELESS }		IF LIABLE TO BE INTERCEPTED OR TO FALL INTO ENEMY HANDS, THIS MESSAGE MUST BE SENT IN CIPHER (sgd) xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx		ORIGINATOR'S INSTRUCTIONS DEGREE OF PRIORITY Immediate MOST SECRET
SIGNED S. S. P. Ld.—Pt. Order No. 324/B/G. 717—Dated 29-10-43—50,000 Pads.		SIGNED Brig.		27 2240 Time System Op. THI or TOR Time cleared

The story of Maggie the Mule concludes:

The Brigade, now commanded by Jack Masters had formed a road and rail block at a point known as Blackpool. In his book, *The Road Past Mandalay*, Jack wrote: *I went to the mule lines and saw Maggie quietly eating bamboo, she had a red gash in her belly and her entrails were hanging out. She seemed in no pain and I hugged her neck, while Briggs shot her for me.*

Neither Masters nor Briggs were true animal men, not having had much training with mules or a natural aptitude for them, but I am confident that both would have shed tears after putting her down. She had for so long been an idol to us all. All this was more than forty years ago, but I still think of her and a lump comes into my throat. If ever an Army service animal was truly loved, it was Maggie. And if she is up there waiting for me, please God let me see her again when my time comes.

This delightful article was first published in 1987, within the summer issue of Dekho magazine. The author was Major Frank Turner, the Animal Transport Officer for 111 Brigade.



Burma's Secret Jungle War

Former mountaineer and author, Joe Simpson travelled to Burma in 2015 to retrace the wartime footsteps of his father, Lt.-Colonel Ian Simpson, formerly of the 4th Prince of Wales' Own Gurkha Rifles. His father had commanded part of Morris Force, a slightly smaller-sized Chindit unit, ordered to operate within the Kachin Hills in the far northeast corner of Burma during Operation Thursday.

There can be no doubt that the underlying theme of this documentary was the relationship between father and son, and sadly at times, the difficulties in communication between them. Accompanied by ex-Army officer and explorer, Ed Stafford and using his father's contemporary notes and diaries, Joe Simpson covers the majority of his father's wartime journey; searching out the Dakota landing strip at *Chowringhee*, then crossing the fast flowing Shweli River by raft and finally moving up into the hills beyond the Irrawaddy township of Bhamo.

Anyone with an interest in the Chindit story, or in Burma itself would have found this documentary worthwhile viewing. It certainly gave the observer an excellent insight into the beauty of the country,

the people, with their generosity of spirit and modest nature. Juxtaposed to this, were the political difficulties encountered by Simpson in gaining entry to some of the territory previously trod by his father in the Kachin and Shan States.

Overall, I felt that the program was a worthy project and gave the viewer an excellent appreciation of Burma and its terrain. I was however, disappointed with the lack of information about Colonel Simpson's time as a soldier and the contribution made by Morris Force in particular, during the wider Chindit campaign of 1944. (Review by Steve Fogden).



Dates for Your Diary and Other Notices

Walsall 2017

The Chindit Society Annual Reunion will be held on **Saturday 3rd June 2017**, at the Village Hotel, Walsall WS2 8TJ.

Booking details for this weekend can be found on the separate attachment to this newsletter. We look forward to seeing you there.



Vic Whittingham

We are sorry to have to inform you of the sad passing of Vic Whittingham, who died on the 8th December 2016 aged 94. His funeral was a quiet affair reserved for close family and friends and was held at Cheltenham Crematorium on the 29th December.

Vic had been a longtime member of the Chindit Old Comrades Association and often marched proudly as part of the Cenotaph Remembrance Parade in London. He was Membership Secretary for the Royal British Legion branch in his home village of Bredon and for a time, Vice-President of Worcestershire County Cricket Club. Vic served with the RAF in Burma and was attached to the 6th Nigerian Regiment in 1944.

Society Membership Forms

We have decided not to include a full-page membership form within the pages of this issue of the newsletter. If you would like a membership form, or require details of how to join the Chindit Society, please contact us at: info@thechinditsociety.org.net

Medals of Sgt. Harold Bottomley

On the 1st March this year, the war medals of Sgt. Harold Bottomley were sold at London Auctioneers, Dix Noonan Webb Ltd. The set of five, including his Burma Star and Military Medal sold for £5500.

Harold, originally from Chadderton near Oldham, served with the Commando Platoon in 20 Column on Operation Thursday. His award of the Military Medal was in recognition of his cool and gallant leadership during the almost continuous enemy onslaught against White City on the 13th April 1944. Out of financial necessity Sgt. Bottomley sold his medals in 1982 and they have been offered up for sale no fewer than four times since that year. Harold sadly died on the 11th November 1993, his 75th birthday.



The Chindit Society Team



President - Holly Wingate

Media - Tony Redding

Vice President - Alice Wingate

Archivist and Editor - Steve Fogden

Chairman - Paul Shenton JP.

Chaplain - The Reverend Canon Jonathon Gough

Vice Chairman - Position Vacant

Secretary - Mandy Walsh

Welfare - Joanna Cowley

Treasurer - Eddie Chandler

Exeter Event Manager - John Pearce

The Chindit Society website

The Society is pleased to announce that our website is now online. Managed and edited by **Alice Wingate and Ed Pearce**, the aim of the website is to bring together in one place, the story of the Chindits and their unique contribution to the Burma Campaign in WW2. Please feel free to visit the site by following this link: <http://thechinditsociety.org.uk>



Chindit Bibliography

There is now a Chindit related bibliography available for members of the Society. This document, comprising over 90 titles comes in pdf form and will be available via email on request. Many of the books will be well known to our members, but hopefully, some of the others included in the listing may not be. The information relayed is basic; consisting of title, author and where known, the year first published. Please contact us at: info@thechinditsociety.org.net

Charlie Richards Remembers

Pte. 4868300 Charles Richards was a member of 74 Column on Operation Thursday. The former 7th Leicester recalled:

Picture the scene, an airfield in Assam, mid-March 1944. The area is alive with activity, Dakotas dotted around and rows of squat square sided gliders ready for lift off. On the perimeter mules quietly munch away, while officers peer over maps, muttering place names such as Aberdeen, Broadway, Blackpool, White City, which had no connection with Granite cities, stage musicals, golden miles or dog racing.

We now zoom in on a tented area where an American glider pilot is holding court over a group of open-mouthed squaddies. He is boasting that he had hopped into bed with Betty Grable; us mere mortals had to be content to drool over her sexy gyrations on the silver screen. Such was our envy that our eyes matched the jungle green of our kit; alas no big scandal, as this was Betty's former husband, Jackie Coogan (pictured right), the film star from the late twenties. This was a touch of light relief before the main event.

