



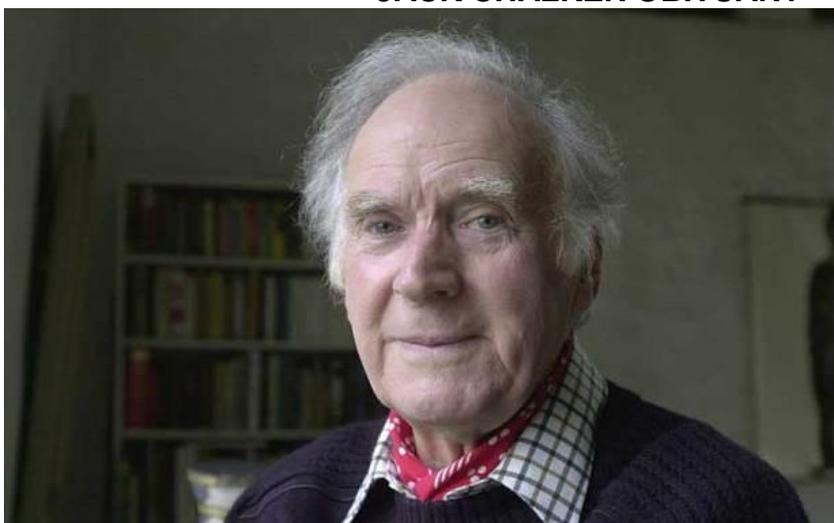
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BURMA THAILAND RAILWAY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION (Inc)

To perpetuate the memory of the privations and sacrifices of Allied Prisoners of War and the selfless dedication of the medical personnel during the construction of the Burma Thailand Railway by informing current and future generations through all forms of education and particularly with Quiet Lion Tours to the Burma Thai Railway; The River Kwai; The Three Pagoda Pass; Anzac Day at Hellfire Pass and Kanchanaburi War Cemetery.

THIRTY-NINTH NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2014

JACK CHALKER OBITUARY



It is with great sadness that we inform our members of the passing of Jack Chalker (96). Jack was a British artist who drew and painted the atrocities he witnessed as a prisoner of war on the Burma-Thailand Railway. His father, Alfred, was a stationmaster who had been awarded an MBE for dispersing troops during the First World War. After attending Alleyn's School, Dulwich, Jack trained in Graphics and Painting at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He won a scholarship to the Painting School of the Royal College of Art, London but before he could take it up Chalker was drafted into the British Army at the outbreak of the Second World War.

He joined the Royal Field Artillery as a bombardier and was posted in February 1942 to Singapore, where he was captured by the Japanese. He spent time in Changi Prison and two labour camps before being sent to work on the Burma-Thai Railway, arriving at a camp on the Konyu River in Thailand after a five-day train journey. He then commenced to record the lives of POWs through drawings and paintings.

During his time on the railway his Japanese camp commandant learnt of Chalker's artistic talent and made him produce watercolour postcards to send back to his family in Japan. "I was ordered to produce 20 paintings a day under threat of being beaten up and incarcerated unless they were forthcoming, and this I did for a few wearisome weeks," he recalled.

In contrast to the devastation shown in much of his work, other drawings capture the beauty of the local plants and flowers. Chalker worked on a stretch of the line at Kanchanaburi Province in the west of Thailand. His sketches and watercolours, along with the works of his fellow PoW artists, Philip Meninsky, Ashley George Old and Ronald Searle, now form a valuable record of the brutality

experienced by the men who were made to work for the Japanese forces, sometimes for up to 16 hours a day. Many of the paintings are now located at the Australian War Memorial. His works, together with those of fellow POW artists form a unique record of prisoners' suffering.

In later life Chalker described the conditions on the railway as "singularly horrific". Torture, malnutrition, illness and execution were daily perils. "If you weren't working hard enough they would make you stand and hold a stone above your head," recalled Chalker. "You picked it up, which was better than collapsing because then they kicked you all over the place."

That image – of a sick, beleaguered man holding a boulder aloft – is one of many that he captured on paper. Chalker managed to produce an exceptional body of work, numbering over 100 drawings, sketches and paintings, detailing the hellish circumstances of his captivity between 1942 and 1945. On his capture, Chalker hid a few watercolour paints and pencils in a secret compartment in his haversack. For canvases, he stole paper from his captors and used the pre-printed postcards that prisoners were given to send home.



Weary Dunlop amputating a leg – J Chalker

His works provide a gallery of horrors: emaciated prisoners at the dysentery latrines; cholera tents; a man having his hands hammered for stealing food; a spoon used as a surgical device to extract maggots from a wound. In one, the celebrated Australian surgeon Colonel Edward "Weary" Dunlop carries out an amputation. In addition to Chalker's unflinching images he kept microscopic diary notes.

He stashed the drawings and paintings in hut roofs and bamboo poles, which he then buried, and even in the artificial limb of a prisoner. Only once did he get caught.

"A guard found me hiding some stuff and I got beaten up," Chalker recalled years later. "The guard tore one drawing up in front of me, but when I came back later I found the pieces under a rice sack. All the others had been destroyed, but this one had survived. It is a symbol of the whole thing."

The minor miracle whereby Chalker's paintings and illustrations were saved for posterity was largely due to the intersection of courses between Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop and Jack Chalker. They had both been at Konyu, Hintok and Tarsau Camps but not at the same time. They came together at the Chungkai camp near Tamarkan. Weary arrived there some time after Chalker and began the systematic recording of work from before and at Chungkai and recruited the British artists, Phillip Menisky, Old, Stanley Gimson and Jack Chalker.

Later at Nakon Patom Weary was bemused when the masseur (Chalker) who had been with him in Chungkai and who had illustrated Markowitz's work with ulcer patients and amputees, wished to sculpt his head in clay. Jack Chalker was talented and Weary's favoured medical illustrator. He was keen to keep him in his orbit, for his well-drawn technical illustrations amplified the case notes he was meticulously writing up with a view to publication after the war.

This cache of drawings was returned to Chalker after the war. For more than a decade after his repatriation he could not sleep properly. Nor could he look at his drawings and paintings: it would take 40 years for him to take his works out of the box in which they were stored. After further work on it, it gained wide attention when sold at auction in 2002.

In 1950, after teaching History of Art at Cheltenham Ladies' College he became principal of Falmouth College of Art. He was awarded an honorary degree by the University of the West of England in 2003. His art helped him to retain a semblance of humanity. "I was glad to have something to do, and it was such a privilege to be with so many interesting, wonderful people," said Chalker. "There was one man, who was absolutely skeletal, a senior lecturer in mathematics at university, and he really loved mathematics and he talked quietly about maths and what a lovely subject it was and he made me feel that calculus must be wonderful. And then he suddenly died one afternoon."

Jack Chalker, born October 10 1918, died November 15 2014



Chunkai Hospital – J Chalker

BOARD AND COMMITTEE ELECTED AT THE GENERAL MEETING OF THE BURMA THAILAND

Election of Office Bearers

Chairman	Eric Wilson
Senior Vice Chairman	Ian Holding
Immediately past Chairman	Hugh Warden
Senior Vice Chairman	Neil MacPherson
Secretary	Krishna Vanderweide
Treasurer	Krishna Vanderweide
Newsletter editor	Ian Holding
Web site	Eric Wilson
Membership	Eric Wilson
Tour Organiser	Ian Holding
Our Leader	David Piesse
Committee	Alan Macpherson
Research	Peter Winstanley
Chaplain	Barry May

2015 Quiet Lion Tour – country visits

Organisation of the 2015 tour is progressing smoothly. A good level of interest has been received and places are now filling fast. David Piesse and Ian Holding recently visited Wagin and Esperance to encourage support for the for 2015 Anzac pilgrimage to Thailand. David continued the tradition of cooking dinner for 30 members of the Wagin Lions Club. Strong support for involvement in next year's Thailand Tour.

Wagin's Lions is part of the tour great supporters, though many prisoners of war on the Burma Thailand Railway it is no wonder. After dinner Meg Pearce granddaughter of Jo Pearce (ex 2nd 4th Machinegun Battalion gave an account of her trip with her father Tom. A copy of the speech is attached.

Friday morning was the long drive to Esperance where David and Ian were warmly welcome by Cindy from Esperance High School. They met and talked to some of the student who will travel to Thailand in 2015. There is great support for the tour in Esperance and it is a great tribute to Ernie Redman that the support continues to be strong.

Quiet Lion Tour 2014 - By Meg Pearce

Good evening. For those of you I haven't met personally my name is Meg Pearce and I was the 2014 representative for The Quiet Lions tour.

I would like to begin by acknowledging and saying a huge thank you to the Wagin Lions Club for giving me the opportunity to go on this journey to Thailand.

With the exception of my little brother Jack, all my immediate and extended family have been on this trip and I had heard many moving and wonderful stories of courage, humour and mate ship and I was very excited to go and experience it for myself.

Growing up, I was taught of the bravery and sacrifice of the men and women who fought for their country in wartime and the hardships that they endured.

As I got older, I learnt about the huge impact wars had on globalization and our world economy. However, it's quite evident in today's youth that the knowledge of wars and the impact they have, still does not go beyond the basics taught in History class.

It is in the understanding and hearing of the stories of war heroes that truly helps to develop an even greater appreciation for those men and women who fought and continue to fight in all wars. I do see it as my responsibility to pass on what I have learnt and the stories I have heard, so that we will never forget.

When reflecting back, I tried to think about key moments of the tour that really resonated with me.

Each place told a different story and taught me something new.

The dawn service itself was haunting and beautiful. It produced such mixed feelings. I had feelings of overwhelming pride for our country, a great sadness for man, yet also great joy that we can come together to share those stories and to remember. But, for me, the highlight would have definitely been the walk along the remnants of the Railway line to Hellfire Pass.

I don't know what surprised me more; Snowy, power walking straight past us through that first cutting (putting us all to shame) or, how beautiful the scenery was.

Seeing it made it hard to picture or imagine the haunting stories about what the men working on the railway endured. I found walking through those cuttings and embankments on your own very moving.

It gave me a better understanding and perspective.

I mean, I was sweating just strolling along with my 1.5L bottle of water and damp towelettes.

It's truly remarkable that these men were working 12 to 18 hours every day in those conditions. The bravery, ingenuity and resilience the men showed in dealing with their circumstances and the mate-ship between the prisoners must truly have been a bond that is beyond our imagination.

A huge mention must go to Snow and Neil. Meeting and having them on this trip made it very special and I was honoured to meet them both. You can hear the stories and the facts about the

war, from a third party, but being able to talk to them and hear direct recounts, was truly incredible and will always be with me.

They teach us all a great life lesson. They faced and witnessed unimaginable horrors yet their love of life and kind and caring natures are so evident.

With some being a little cheekier than others - Snow. His diet of Singha and Ice cream at any time of the day still amuses me - but I say let the man do what he wants, he definitely deserves it.

It truly is the people that made this trip the remarkable experience it was. I absolutely loved getting to know everyone, and the different stories that they had to share about their families and friends.

Anzac day and this trip, means something different to everyone, but we were all united by the desire to learn and experience.

We were a smaller group this year, which really gave us the opportunity to get to know each other and to create new friendships. I have a natural tendency to just talk, at people most of the time, so a small group meant everyone had to put up with me. My only regret was getting sick just before the talent show, but then again I heard everyone singing the national anthem every morning, so perhaps it was my body's way of saying "enough".

I would especially like to thank David Piesse. From my first conversation with him, it was obvious that he had so much knowledge and passion to share on this trip. He sparked everyone's interests with his facts and stories, and passed on that passion to anyone he spoke to. You were such an integral part of my learning, so for that I would sincerely like to thank you. Granddad was always so fond of you, and I can see why.

As a child, you see your grandparents as people who love you, spoil you and feed you all the things you aren't allowed at home and in my case that was a never ending supply of shortbread creams and ice-cream.

But as you grow, you begin to see them differently and to understand them more.

My Grandfather, Joe Pearce is very special to me and has been integral in my growing up. His values and outlook on life were simple and admirable.

My brothers and I could not be more proud of the person we got to know.

It is such a credit to him and other POWS like Snow and Neil that they experienced such an unforgiveable part of humanity, but still managed to be the kind and caring people we all love.

It was always Granddad's wish for all his family to go to Thailand on this trip and to learn more of Australia's history, and of his own. He would have loved to hear about everything I experienced, and all the cheeky stories; and I'm just sorry that I didn't have to opportunity to share it with him.

It was fantastic having my Dad on this trip as well. Having already gone back to Thailand with Granddad, what he could share with me was invaluable, especially when walking through the Hintok cutting where Granddad had worked.

So, thank you Tombo for coming, and supplying the Pringles when we were no longer able to eat anything sweet and sour.

This 2014 Quiet Lion Tour to Thailand was such a meaningful and special trip. I would like to again say thank you to the Wagin Lions Club for the opportunity and to everyone who helped organize the tour.

I learnt so much and met so many wonderful people; this experience was a memory for life.

Thank you.

(Meg. Travelled on the 2014 tour sponsored by the Wagin Lions)

Quiet Lion Tour 2015

Don't forget there are still a few places left in next year's tour

ITINERARY QUIET LION TOUR OF THAILAND 2015

DAY 1 FRIDAY

17th APRIL 2015

6.10AM Assemble Perth International Airport (Perth Travellers)
9.10AM Depart Perth International Airport. TG484
5.00PM Arrive Suvarnabhumi Airport Bangkok. (Welcome and arrival dinner).
Overnight accommodation Royal Benja Hotel Bangkok

DAY 2 SATURDAY

18th APRIL 2015

8AM Briefing and get-together after breakfast. (Teachers/Carers dine together once)
8.30AM Visit the Royal Summer Palaces at Bang Pa-in & the ancient capital Ayutthaya.
Lunch cruising down the Chayo Phraya River. Free time after cruise to shop.
(Juniors under supervision). Overnight accommodation at Royal Benja Hotel.

DAY 3 SUNDAY

19th APRIL 2015

7.30 AM To Nakom Pathom, Ban Pong, Nong Pladuk, Tamuang and Kanchanaburi. Burma
Thailand Railway Centre. Lunch at Tida Loa Restaurant. Chungkai Cemetery and
cutting and Jeath Museum
Welcome Dinner and Overnight accommodation at Pung Waan Resort and Spa.

DAY 4 MONDAY

20th APRIL 2015

7.15AM To Kanchanaburi Cemetery and Burma Thailand Railway Centre.
10.40am Train to Wampo Viaduct with lunch by River near viaduct. Visit Tarsao hospital
and camp sites (Pung Waan Kwai Noi Resort), Tarsao & Sai Yok Noi Falls
(Tonchan South Camp).
Welcome Dinner and overnight accommodation at Home Phu Toey.

DAY 5 TUESDAY

21st APRIL 2015

8.00AM Taknun Camps and Khao Lam Dam (lunch at Dam staff club). Pass Brankassi and
Hindato camps. Walk the Burma Railway Heritage Trail from Hintok Road through
Hintok Cutting to Hellfire Pass Museum.
Overnight accommodation at Home Phu Toey.

DAY 6 WEDNESDAY

22nd APRIL 2015

Kanit & Oonjai remembrance. Buddhist ceremony. Visit scene of Hintok Road POW
Camp, Kinsayok Camp area, Sai Yok Yai Waterfalls, Houseboat trip and lunch on
River Kwai terminating Konyu River Camp and the Hintok River POW Camp.
Return to Home Phu Toey via Konyu River Camp and Hintok Road. Overnight
accommodation at Home Phu Toey.

DAY 7 THURSDAY

23rd APRIL 2015

Free day. Weary Dunlop Park and Jack Chalker Gallery.
Farewell dinner and concert as guests of Khun Suparek
Overnight accommodation at Home Phu Toey

DDAY 8 FRIDAY

24th APRIL 2015

8.00AM To Kanchanaburi via Thadan Elephant Park, Thadan Bridge and Lat Ya.
11.30 AM Juniors practice drill for wreath laying ceremony (at Cemetery).
Lunch on two rivers.
5PM Media interviews for exPOWs and families.
5.30PM Reception for special guests and Quiet Lion Group.
7PM Light and sound show. Dinner for special guests and Quiet Lion Group.
Pack bags before retiring.
Overnight accommodation at Home Phu Toey.

DAY 9 SATURDAY

25th APRIL 2015

2.30AM Early wake-up.
3.00AM Bags at reception. and leave for Dawn Service in Hellfire Pass.
7.15AM Breakfast at Home Phu Toey front entrance..
8.00AM To Kanchanaburi for juniors practice for wreath laying and 10AM Anzac Day
Ceremony at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery. Lunch at Baan Rao Restaurant.
12.45PM Football match at Kanchanaburi Stadium or xxx College.
2.20PM Depart for Bangkok.
Overnight accommodation at Royal Benja Hotel

DAY 10 SUNDAY

26th APRIL 2015

Free day
2PM Late Check out with arrangements with access to some rooms for toilet, change of
clothes and luggage access.
7 PM Dinner .
8.30 PM Leave city for airport.
11.55 PM Depart Bangkok for Perth per TG 483
Arrive Perth International Airport APPROX 7.50 AM. **Monday 27th April.**