



30/2 ANGWIN STREET
EAST FREMANTLE WA 6158
TEL/FAX: (08) 9339 8237
EMAIL: info@btrma.org.au
WEBSITE: <http://www.btrma.org.au>

BURMA THAILAND RAILWAY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION (Inc)

OBJECTIVE: 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.

NEWSLETTER FOURTY SEVEN MARCH 2018

Quiet Lion Tour 2018

Places are still available on the QUIET LION TOUR 2018 which departs Perth on 16th April 2018 and returns on 27th April 2018. If you are considering taking part in this most interesting and informative tour you are advised to make a booking now.

The political situation is stable, the new King settled in and the Military control accepted. No demonstrations are occurring nor are any expected. There are no health threats current and this is likely to remain over the period of the tour.

The Quiet Lion Tours have always featured High School students from around Australia who are sponsored by various charitable and service organisations. The focus on students is to celebrate the work done by the doctors on the railway and to perpetuate the message that "we may forgive but we will never forget" the horrific story of the Burma Thailand Railway. The tour normally includes survivors of the railway construction, but this is subject to the health of the POWs and is not guaranteed.

The Tour is for 12 days (11 nights) and the focus is on the story of the Australia POWs, their camps and the Australian doctors culminating in the ANZAC Day Dawn Service in Hellfire Pass and the Memorial Service in the Cemetery at Kanchanaburi. Many sites of Prisoner of War camps, the Bridge on the River Kwai, hospitals sites and other areas of interest are visited as part of the tour.



Descendants of ex-POWs who have become authorities on the Burma Thailand Railway travel on the tour and provide commentaries in addition to English speaking Thai guides.

The Quiet Lion Tours commenced in 1985 and travel to Thailand to honour Sir Edward “Weary” Dunlop, all other doctors who tended the sick and all the Prisoners of War who were on the Burma Thailand Railway. The tours are operated by the Burma Thailand Railway Memorial Association, a non-profit group dedicated to preserving the memory of those who toiled on the Death Railway as Prisoners of War of the Japanese.

Several days are spent in Bangkok for tourist, shopping opportunities and to acclimatise to the local weather conditions. Accommodation comprises of four nights at a top hotel in Bangkok, two nights at a riverside resort in Kanchanaburi and five nights at the Home Phu Toey Resort (on the River Kwai near Hellfire Pass) which includes the Weary Dunlop Peace Park.

Arrangements can be made for travel from any state or territory in Australia. Itinerary, associated information and booking conditions are available on the BTRMA website.

Interested people should contact:

Tour Organiser Ian Holding 0418 832 281 iholding@sinosteel.com.au

Tour Leader David Piesse (08) 9447 7505 djpiesse@gmail.com

Itinerary – Quiet Lion Tour of Thailand for ANZAC 2018

DAY 1 MONDAY 16th APRIL 2018

1.20 PM Assemble Perth International Airport (Perth Travelers)

4.20 PM Depart Perth International Airport TG482 arrive 10.20 PM

3.25 PM Melbourne International TG466 arrive 9.45 PM

3.25 PM Sydney International TG476 arrive 10.20 PM

2.00 PM Brisbane International TG474 arrive 8.20 PM

Overnight accommodation at Royal Benja Hotel Bangkok

DAY 2 TUESDAY Pink day 17th APRIL 2018

8.00 AM Wake up call. Breakfast.

9.30 AM Teachers and Carers to be briefed by Committee

10.00 AM Visit the Royal Summer Palaces at Bang Pa-in & the ancient capital Ayutthaya.

Lunch

4.00 PM Dinner cruising on the Chayo Phraya River.

Overnight accommodation at Royal Benja Hotel

DAY 3 WEDNESDAY 18th APRIL 2018

6.30 AM Wake up call. Breakfast.

8.00 AM Teachers and Carers to be briefed by Committee

10.00 AM Palm sugar

Furniture factory

7.00 PM Dinner

Free time to shop (Students under supervision)

Overnight accommodation at Royal Benja Hotel

DAY 4 THURSDAY Orange day 19th APRIL 2018

6.30 AM Wake up call. Breakfast.

7.30 AM To Nakom Pathom, Nong Pladuck, Ban Pong, Tamuang and Kanchanaburi.

 Lunch at Tida Loa Restaurant and the bridge over the river Kwi Noi,

 Visit Burma Thailand Railway Centre (TBRC)

 Welcome Dinner and Karoke.

 Overnight accommodation at Pung Waan Resort

DAY 5 FRIDAY Blue day 20th APRIL 2018

6.30 AM Wake up call. Breakfast.

7.30 AM Group Photo

8.00 AM Visit Chungkai Cutting and Cemetery and then to TBRC

10.40 AM Train to Wampo Viaduct with lunch at Jungle Training Centre.

 Visit Tarsao hospital and camp sites (Pung Waan Kwai Noi Resort) and Tarsao.

 Students to practice marching and wreath

 Overnight accommodation at Home Phu Toey

DAY 6 SATURDAY Purple day 21st APRIL 2018

7.00 AM Wake up call. Breakfast.

9.00 AM Visit Hellfire Pass Museum. laying Sai Yok Noi Falls (Tonchan South Camp)

11.30 AM Juniors practice drill for wreath laying ceremony (at Cemetery).

1.00 PM Australian Rules Football Match – Thailand Tigers

 Lunch at Football ground.

 Overnight accommodation at Home Phy Toey

DAY 7 SUNDAY 22th APRIL 2018

6.45 AM Wake up call. Breakfast.

8.00 AM Buddhist Ceremony.

 Kun Kanit, Kun Oonjai and POW Remembrance.

 Visit scene of Hintok Road Camp, Kinsayok Camp area, Sai Yok Yai Waterfalls,

 Houseboat trip and lunch on River Kwai terminating at the Hintok River POW Camp.

 Konnyu River Camp

 Overnight accommodation at Home Phu Toey.

DAY 8 MONDAY 23th APRIL 2018

6.30 AM Wake up call. Breakfast.

8.00 AM Takanun 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 Phy Toey

Free Day	Visit Weary Dunlop Museum and Jack Chalker Gallery.
7.30AM	Optional Three Pagoda Pass Tour.
5.00 PM	Media interviews for exPOWs and families
6.00 PM	Welcome reception Weary Dunlop Museum
7.00 PM	Light and sound show.
7.30 PM	Dinner with Australian and New Zealand Ambassadors and Quiet Lion Group
	Pack bags before retiring
	Overnight accommodation at Home Phu Toey

2.30 AM	Early wake-up.
3.00 AM	Bags at reception and leave for Dawn Service in Hellfire Pass
7.15 AM	Breakfast at Home Phu Toey front entrance
8.00 AM	Group Photograph and leave for Kanchanaburi for juniors practice for wreath laying and
11.00 AM	ANZAC Day Ceremony at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery
1.00 PM	Lunch at Baan Rao Restaurant
2.20 PM	Dinner and overnight accommodation at Pung Waan Resort

6.30 AM	Wake up call. Breakfast.
8.00 AM	Return to Bangkok. Long tail boats through the floating markets
	Lunch and Cultural Show at Rose Garden Resort
7.00 PM	Final Dinner
	Overnight accommodation at Royal Benja Hotel

Free day for shopping. Juniors under supervision			
2.00 PM	Late Check out with arrangements for access to some rooms for shower, toilet, change of clothes and luggage access		
3.00 PM	Depart Bangkok for	Sydney	TG475 arrive 7.20 AM Saturday
7.00 PM	Dinner		
8.00 PM	Leave city for airport		
00.01 AM (Sat)	Depart Bangkok for	Perth	TG483 arrive 7.45 AM Saturday
		Melbourne	TG465 arrive 12.05 PM Saturday
	Brisbane passengers overnight at Royal Benja		

DAY 13

SATURDAY

28th APRIL 2018

3.00 AM (Sat) Leave for airport

9.00 AM Depart Bangkok for Brisbane TG473 arrive 8.50 PM Saturday

Itinerary current 18th October 2017

Jack Chalker

Jack Chalker, who died on 15 November 2014 aged 96, was a British artist who drew and painted the atrocities he witnessed as a prisoner of war on the Burma Thailand Railway, also known as the “Death Railway”.

Made universally known by Pierre Boulle’s book (and David Lean’s film) *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, the railway is now a byword for war crimes. More than 12,000 Allied prisoners perished during its construction, along with at least 90,000 Asian labourers.

“The sad thing is that here is a race, the Japanese, with an enormous sense of beauty,” said Chalker, “and yet suddenly there was this.”

The construction of a 258-mile railway line between Bangkok in Thailand to Rangoon in Burma during 1943 was intended to provide a supply route for Japanese forces in Burma.

Chalker, a bombardier who had been captured at Singapore, 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.

In later life Chalker, with great brevity, 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. 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.”

Jack Bridger Chalker was born on 10 October 1918 in London. His father, Alfred, was a stationmaster who had been appointed MBE for dispersing troops during World War I. Jack won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art but found his studies interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War. He joined the Royal Field Artillery 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 Thailand Railway, arriving at a camp on the Konyu River in Thailand after a five-day train journey.

During his time on the railway his 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.

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.”

On Chalker’s release in 1945 he joined the Australian Army HQ in Bangkok as a war artist; some of his work was used in evidence at the Tokyo war trials. On his return to England he resumed his studies, graduating from the Royal College of Art in 1951.

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.

In 1950, after teaching History of Art at Cheltenham Ladies’ College he became principal of Falmouth College of Art and, in 1957, principal of West of England College of Art, where he remained until his retirement in the mid-1980s.

He also worked as a medical illustrator and was elected a fellow of the Medical Artists Association of Great Britain. In retirement, he made anatomical models for the medical firm Limbs and Things (he was “famous for his bowel”) and, having settled at Bleadney in Somerset, gave regular talks about his wartime experiences.

Chalker wrote two books: *Burma Railway Artist* (1994) and *Burma Railway: Images of War* (2007). The latter was published in Britain and Japan.

In recent years he was sought out by the Japanese media keen to interview him as part of the process of reparation. A BBC Four documentary, *Building Burma’s Death Railway: Moving Half the Mountain*, screened some year ago, drew heavily on Chalker’s stark images to illustrate prisoners’ stories.

He was awarded an honorary degree by the University of the West of England.

In 2002 Chalker, then 83, auctioned a collection of approximately 100 of his wartime works at Bonhams in London. “I feel reluctant and in a way guilty about doing this, but it will help us out,” he said.

Bidders competed fiercely for works and many were later donated by a buyer to the Australian War Memorial, including “Two working men, Konyu River camp”, a pen, brush and ink work on paper which 70 years earlier had been ripped up by a Japanese guard.



Jack Chalker married, first, during the war, Anne Maude Nixon; the marriage was later dissolved. He married, secondly, during the 1950s, Jill; that marriage was also later dissolved. He married, thirdly, Helene (née Merrett-Stock), who survives him with a son of his first marriage and a son and daughter of his second marriage.

Jack visited Australia a number of times for reunions and joined Australia surviving POWs on several trips back to Java and Thailand.

In 2009 Bill Haskell and Eric Wilson had a “Grand Tour” when they travelled to England to catch up with past travellers on Quiet Lion Tours. They visited Jack Chalker at his Wells, Somerset, old mill home/studio with Rod Beattie of the Burma Thailand Railway Centre, and Julie Summers (author grand-daughter of *The Colonel Of Tamakan*, Phillip Toosey) and many other friends connected with the story of the Railway. It was a great event for all concerned.

Bill Haskell and Jack Chalker’s shared pleasure at meeting their old friends was great to see.

Cranston Albury McEachern

Cranston Albury McEachern (1905-1983), army officer and solicitor, born 9 September 1905 at Dongara, Western Australia, educated at Brisbane Grammar School, commissioned in the Australian Field Artillery, Militia, in 1924; and in 1936 he was commanding the 11th Field Brigade as a major (1929).

In February 1937 McEachern was promoted to lieutenant colonel. Following the outbreak of World War II, he gave up his law practice and on 1 May 1940 joined the Australian Imperial Force as a major. He regained his lieutenant colonelcy in October on being appointed to command the 2/4th Anti-Tank Regiment, which deployed to Malaya (Malaysia) with the 8th Division. The unit saw action against the Japanese from 27 December 1941 until the surrender on 15 February 1942. McEachern's superior, Brigadier C. A. Callaghan, reported that, throughout the operations, he was 'an inspiration to his Regiment owing to his outstanding ability, command and control which were exercised without regard for personal safety'. From 6 February he commanded the divisional artillery in Callaghan's absence. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (1947).

In captivity McEachern was assigned to command the Australian part (2,220 men) of 'D' Force, sent in March 1943 to work on the Burma Thailand Railway. At the Hintok Road camp, Thailand, he commanded the whole formation plus Dunlop Force (when Lt Colonel Dunlop agreed to concentrate on medical administration), some 5,000 Australian and British troops. His men worked on the 'Pack of Cards Bridge' and 'Hell Fire Pass'. He was promoted to colonel and temporary brigadier with effect from April 1942. When Japan surrendered in August 1945, he was the senior Allied officer in Thailand. He took charge of repatriating approximately 30,000 troops. Claiming to the Japanese an authority he did not hold, he persuaded Japanese officers not to comply with Allied orders to concentrate their former prisoners in the Bangkok area. He knew that the already emaciated and malnourished soldiers would have been marched long distances, sometimes more than one hundred miles (161km), and hundreds might have died. In November 1945 he returned to Australia.

For his services while a prisoner of war he was mentioned in despatches.

He transferred to the Reserve of Officers on 19 February 1946 as an honorary brigadier.

McEachern resumed his legal practice; Cranston McEachern & Co.

Honorary colonel (1966-70) of the Australian Cadet Corps, Northern Command.

He continued in full-time legal practice until his death on 15 October 1983 at Bridgeman Downs, Brisbane and was survived by his wife and their daughter and two sons, and the son of his first marriage.

Note to article - Singapore Parties

D Force. Under joint command of British Lt Col G.G. Carpenter and Australian Lt Col Mc Eachern, 5,000 POWs, 2,780 British and 2,220 Australian departed Changi **14 to 23 March 1943** for Ban Pong. The Australians were organised into three battalions, "S" "T" "U", commanded by Lt Col McEachern, Major E.J Quick and Capt Reg Newton. This mixed force were spread over an area including Tarsao, Hintock, Konyu and Kinsayok and some worked on the notorious Hellfire Pass cutting.



For those on Facebook, we have recently created a public **Burma Thailand Railway Memorial Association Inc.** Page to share interesting news and articles relating to BTRMA.

Page: www.facebook.com/BTRMAinc

Please feel free to invite your friends, relatives and colleagues to like our Page to promote the work of the Association and memory of the privations and sacrifices of POWs and medical personnel during the construction of the Thai Burma Railway line in WWII.

We also have a **Quiet Lion Tour** Facebook Group for past tour participants to connect and share stories.

Group: www.facebook.com/groups/877471688958808