



In 1937, his happy life was interrupted by the invasion of the Japanese forces into Northern China. During the occupation, Eric's work became dangerous and traumatic as he witnessed the brutality of the Japanese soldiers. He helped the victims in whatever way he could.

On one occasion he found and picked up two Chinese men, victims of a botched execution. He cared for them and though one died, the other, who had narrowly escaped decapitation slowly recovered. He was a trained artist, who not only found healing but peace with God.

A prostitute from Tientsin told a neighbour how Eric had put up a shelf on the wall of the room where she lived alone. "He was the first man to do something for me without asking for a favour in return."

### Prisoner of War

Despite British government advice to British nationals to leave China, Eric Liddell stayed, though his pregnant wife and two daughters returned to Canada. He would never see them again. He believed what God had said in the Bible, "Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will

strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand."

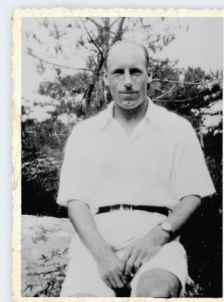
In 1943, the Japanese rounded up westerners and sent them to Weihsein Internment Camp. Eric continued to help all needy people around him, sharing his food with them. He even organised and refereed football matches for young people. When he found a boy with no shoes in the cold winter, Eric gave him a pair of his running shoes. As he put it, he wanted to be part of God's "amazing offensive of love." He began each day spending one hour reading the Bible, praying and singing hymns to God. A book of his was published titled, 'Prayers for Daily Use.'

He begged his fellow prisoners not to hate the Japanese, but to pray for them and show them forgiveness.

Life in the camp worsened as food and supplies became more scarce. A POW exchange was negotiated for him, but selflessly he gave it to a pregnant woman, choosing to remain and continue serving the other prisoners. Nevertheless, his health began to fail, and his longing for his family, which had increased with the birth of his third daughter, only intensified his suffering.

Eric died in the camp of a brain tumour, exacerbated by exhaustion & malnourishment on February 21st, 1945. His race was over.

He was mourned and honoured both in the camp and over all of Scotland. Today, there stands a monument to him on the site of the former Weihsien Internment Camp, and his home has been protected as a historical site in China. Eric went to his real home, heaven, not because of what he had done, but because of what Jesus did for him.



'When God our Saviour revealed His kindness and love, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.'



To find out more about  
Jesus Christ please visit:  
**tell-me-more.org** or  
contact Roger Carswell,  
c/o Unit C, Tomlinson Road, Leyland, PR25 2DY, UK

**10 Publishing**  
a division of 10 of those.com

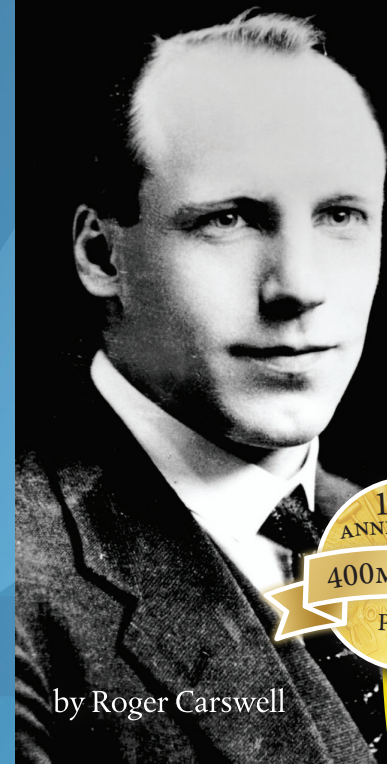
www.10ofthose.com

**DayOne**  
www.dayone.co.uk



# Eric Liddell

## The Olympic Flying Scotsman



by Roger Carswell

The inspiring film, 'Chariots of Fire', reminded the world of Eric Liddell who ran for gold at the Paris Olympics in 1924. He was the Usain Bolt or the Michael Phelps of his day.

Eric Liddell was born in 1902 in the city of Tianjin in China. His parents were Christian missionaries there. It was at school in the U.K. that over time he gained sporting fame in rugby and as a runner. In a school report, his

Headmaster wrote, 'I do not think Liddell is as good as he appears to be, but somehow I cannot catch him.' He went on to play rugby for Edinburgh University as a three-quarter back, where his speed and agility were noticed. Soon he was playing for

his national team, winning seven caps.

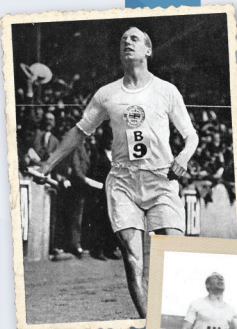
He was always a shy, self-effacing personality. He showed gentleness, sportsmanship and genuine concern for others, and though they didn't make the headlines, they won for Eric the admiration of his peers. He used to shake hands with each competitor before every race.



He could not afford to hire a trainer, but he found one, Tommy Mc KERchar, who would coach him for the sheer joy of it. Tommy was short and portly, always smoked a cigar but could watch a man run and know instinctively how to help him improve.

## Olympic Games, 1924

Eric was selected to run for the British team in the 1924 Paris Olympics. In the film, 'Chariots of Fire', he is heard saying, "God made me fast, and when I run, I feel His pleasure." In reality, he may never have uttered these words but they certainly truly capture the spirit of the man! Before going to Paris, he learnt that the heats for the 100-metre dash were to be held on a Sunday. Eric was a Christian – he had trusted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour – and believed that Sunday was a day for worship, not for running. Of course, there were thousands of others who believed the same, but none of them were expected to win the 100 metre race! So, much to the consternation of the officials of the Olympic team, he opted out of that race. He was accused by some of lacking patriotism, and having wrong priorities. For Eric Liddell, this was not the ultimate race. His relationship with God was far more important.



Setting each Sunday aside for the worship of God was simply the right stand to take. When a determined Olympic committee member suggested to him that the Continental Sabbath ended at noon, Eric replied, "Mine lasts all day!" For him, Jesus had died paying the penalty of his sin, and was his living Lord and Saviour. He would not want to disobey the One who had loved him, and given Himself on the cross for him.

Eric sacrificed his place in the 100 metres, and preached in a Paris church on the day of the race. Instead, he ran in the 200 metres winning a bronze medal, and then in the 400 metres.

When he left his hotel to go to that race one of the British team masseurs pressed a folded note into his hand. It read, 'It says in the Old Book, "Him that honours me, I will honour." Wishing you the best success always.' In the third and final race for the gold, pipers played eight bars of Scotland the Brave. On the final stretch of the race, Liddell threw back his head and put on a burst of speed that brought him victory by five metres. The crowd went wild. Eric had set a new world record of 47.6 seconds. He was delighted; though he knew that God was not obligated to give him such a prize.

Eric had done what he knew to be right, and that was enough, though God had been good to him. He said, "I don't need explanations from God. I simply believe in Him and accept whatever comes my way." For the next two years he spoke at hundreds of events, not so much about his sporting prowess, but about Jesus, who lived, died and rose again so that people could find forgiveness and come to know God. His motto was: *Christ for the world, for the world needs Christ.*

## China again

The second half of Eric Liddell's life is every bit as inspiring as the first, though in a different way.

With his fame, Eric could have had success in almost anything in Scotland, but he returned to China as a science teacher. The country was suffering from the effects of war and famine. He married the daughter of Canadian missionaries, and together they had three daughters. In 1927, he broke the Far Eastern records in the 100, 200 and 400 metres.

