

3, Arundel House,
Courtlands,
Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey
TW10 5AS.
Telephone: 020 8940 3223
email: geoffrey.pidgeon@virgin.net

SCU-NEWSLETTER No. 1-11
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1. What's in a name ?

The SCU-Newsletter is now being sent to a larger audience in more countries. Perhaps some new readers are confused by my bad habit of swinging from calling the organisation **MI6** and sometimes **SIS**. The following paragraph in *Italics* is lifted from the SIS Official Website – and that is probably a flogging offence. However, in World War II the organisation was divided in Sections using only Roman numerals. I was in MI6 (Section VIII) [The communication arm of SIS]. Our boss the brilliant – Richard Gambier-Parry – took the use of Roman numerals further. The wireless sets we made were branded MkIII (our most successful transmitter) *never* Mk3 and of course, you all know the MkVII – the transceiver that was later developed as the MkVII/2 – the Paraset !

'MI6' has become an almost interchangeable title for SIS, at least in the minds of those outside the Service. The origins of the use of this other title are to be found in the late 1930s when it was adopted as a flag of convenience for SIS. It was used extensively during the Second World War, especially if an organisational link needed to be made with MI5 (the Security Service). Although 'MI6' fell into official disuse years ago, many writers and journalists continue to use it to describe SIS.

Just to make your life more difficult, during the war neither was used to describe the unit when abroad. Instead, the organisation in Cairo for example, or in India where I was sent in 1945, the title was I.S.L.D. Inter Service Liaison Department. Thus my urgent travel warrant on page 337 of 'The Secret Wireless War' shows us as being '*urgently required..*' in New Delhi at I.S.L.D. It was intended that I go to help build a new SCU/SLU station in Manila but then the bombs were dropped on Japan so that year – I travelled no further than Calcutta.

2. The 'Venlo Incident' and the solution to a 70 year old puzzle.

Most historians consider the 'Venlo Incident' to be the low-point in the pre-war chronicles of the Secret Intelligence Service. The recently published Official History of 'MI6' by Professor Keith Jeffery appears to agree and there are numerous references to it in his book. It was hugely embarrassing for the Service but for those not aware of its importance, I will give a brief summary. In the 1930s, the work of MI6 agents abroad was largely funded out of the revenue from 'Passport Control Offices' issuing visas and the like. They were part of MI6 and attached to the embassy so that the 'Head of Station' (controlling MI6 operations in the country) was usually the local 'Passport Control Officer' or PCO.

The 'Z' Organisation was a secret service unit operated in parallel with the Passport Office system from 1934 until the outbreak of war. It was run by Colonel Claude Dansey but funded by SIS. One of its members was Capt. S. Payne Best and he was posted from Switzerland to The Hague to assist Richard Stevens the SIS Head of Station – or PCO. Richard Best brought with him contacts in Germany that he regarded as promising connections with important anti-Nazi circles.

In early October 1939 he persuaded Stevens to communicate the news to London where it was taken up at the highest level – this is well documented on pages 382 and 384 in 'MI6.' However, the upshot of the exchange of messages was that Best and Stevens were allowed to *progress* the contacts whose credentials seemed to good to ignore. Unfortunately, the two had the bit between their teeth and stormed ahead with the project, not knowing they were on the end of a brilliant double-agent operation run by the Nazi Sicherheitsdienst (the SD security service).

At a meeting in his office in The Hague during late October, Stevens provided his German contacts with an MI6 wireless transceiver to facilitate communications. The Germans took the set to Düsseldorf, where they tried to operate it from a safe house, which had become their operational base. It soon turned out that the British wireless was too weak, but after the SD had replaced it by a stronger German one, communications started on 2 November.

Best and Stevens were persuaded to meet the so-called emissaries at a restaurant at Venlo right on the Dutch/German border and the rest is well documented. They were snatched and forced to cross the border into Germany and remained prisoners until 1945. However, they had lists of their Dutch contacts with them and later gave very fulsome details of the SIS organisation in London – *they later claimed* – because they thought the Germans already knew it all !

On page 318 of 'MI6' it reports that "***After Gambier-Parry had sent a prototype to Stevens at the Hague in March 1939,***" but the question is who delivered this set to Stevens ?

Now I can reveal it was Wilf Lilburn. Wilf lived with us at Caterham in Surrey in 1939 whilst working on the nearby 'Funny Neuk' SIS wireless station. Some five years ago his widow Joyce Lilburn, gave me many of his papers, including a number of passports. I attach a copy of one issued on **March 23rd 1939** showing his details and photograph on pages 2 and 3. The official Foreign Office date stamp is quite clearly 23rd March 1939. On the first page showing Visas and travel details we find he travelled to Holland via the Hook of Holland and that is date stamped **11th March 1939**. Below that is a stamp allowing a temporary visa from the period **20th March 1939 to 20th March 1942**.

I have contacted the Royal Dutch Embassy in London and the Passport Office in London and both are intrigued by the dates. The only real suggestion – from both of them – is that the passport and visa officials in Holland had simply not turned up the dates on their stamps! The two extracts from Wilf's passport are attached.

The wireless set handed over by Wilf was made by Section VIII at Barnes, or possibly in the Hut 1 workshop at Bletchley Park. It was our MkII in its transceiver version designed by Bob Hornby and Wilf Lilburn.

Pictures of the MkII handed over to the Germans are attached and come from German Intelligence sources – courtesy of David White. The upper picture highlights a 6L6 valve, a crystal that was set to a special MI6 wireless frequency along with a mini code pad. Even now, one is aghast at the sheer stupidity of Best and Stevens. The lower picture shows the interior in detail, the Morse key and headphones. Those familiar with our MkIII transmitter will be interested in the similarity of the cabinet design – in wood and with a drop down front.

(More details of the incident itself – and of the information so freely given to the German authorities by these two important SIS personnel – is shown in a book (also entitled MI6 !). This was published in 1983 by the military historian Nigel West and shown as an appendix on pages 248 – 253.)

3. Whoops !

I must thank David Hamer in the USA for pointing out that Richard Gambier-Parry's portrait in the last SCU-Newsletter incorrectly described his pilots' wings as being Royal Air Force. It should of course have read Royal Flying Corps. Those of you with the later editions of 'The Secret Wireless War' will have a portrait of our 'Boss' in the 'Epilogue' on page 369. My caption reads "***...and his wings as a Royal Flying Corps pilot.***"

I really should read my own books !

4. The MkII as supplied to The Hague by Wilf Lilburn and later handed over to the Germans.

After I agreed to write 'The Secret Wireless War' one of the earliest questions from David White was '*What is the MDJ wireless set ?*' John Darwin was a pre-war member of SIS, albeit as Managing Director of Saunders-Roe the aircraft manufacturers on the Isle of Wight. He was a friend of Admiral Sir Hugh Sinclair Chief of the SIS and a member of the 'Z Organisation' run by Claude Dansey. He kept a detailed diary (can you believe it ?) of events and conversations with members of the various organisations he met. I can say with certainty that keeping an open diary, as a member of SIS before World War II, was a major criminal offence.

However, I quickly realised that Ted **Maltby**, John **Darwin** and Mickey **Jourdain** had used their initials **M.D.J.** to describe the **MkII** wireless transceiver that none of them had created. It was a rather conceited decision as Bob Hornby and Wilf Lilburn – both from Philco designed the set. These three – Maltby, Darwin and Jourdain – each hoped to become the deputy to Richard Gambier-Parry but it was Maltby who succeeded in the end. (*) They needed to apply numbers to the sets being made and hence the Mk1 – MkII – MkIII – onwards series.

(*) See 'The Secret Wireless War' Chapter 21 'The Extraordinary Diaries of John Darwin.'

5. The SOAP.

I first showed the SOAP to Eddie Wilson who runs the Newhaven Fort wireless museum. The Fort was constructed in Victorian times as part of our coastal defences and was constantly manned right up to the end of World War II. It continues to attract visitors and amongst many other features and displays – its wireless museum houses a collection of vintage amateur radio equipment from the late and famous Cyril Fairchild G3YY.

I sent Eddie's report and pictures to Pat Hawker – the doyen of wireless amateurs – and he too sent me his comments. Pat (Chapter 34 in 'The Secret Wireless War') is an acknowledged expert and wrote numerous articles for 'RadCom' the wireless journal of RSGB – The Radio Society of Great Britain.

These were sent to Bob King, another well-known amateur and a wartime Vi from SCU3 (RSS) days – see Chapter 35. Then I sought suggestions from David White the Curator of the Bletchley Park Wireless Museum.

It seems they are collectively 'Mystified' or 'Puzzled' but one thought from Pat and David is that they *might be* smuggling in components. However, they would also have needed a power source, a variable condenser and it would have to be crystal controlled. In view of the varying technical reports these gentlemen have given, I have decided to leave it over until next time and devote a special Newsletter to it.

By then I would hope to have more information. For the time being, I can only say for certain that Richard Gambier-Parry and Jack Saunders took the SOAP to Tallinn in Estonia in August 1939 – at roughly the same time as Ted Maltby (Gambier-Parry's deputy) took wireless gear to Riga in Latvia. It must have been *extremely* important for these two gentlemen to be away from Britain at that time.

The Estonian intelligence service was monitoring Russian wireless traffic and that would have been invaluable to us. I should also mention that the Head of Station, in both Estonia and Latvia, were running important agents in the Baltic and needed to transmit their information back to London. I do not suggest for a moment that the SOAP was the means – *but the mystery remains!*

6. Philco's staff and Section VIII.

Philco started life as the Philadelphia Storage Battery Company in the early part of the 20th century and became a substantial world-player in the new wireless era. Britain had a major Philco factory and was certainly the second biggest maker of radio sets in the country. One of the abiding puzzles is how – *or why* – Philco allowed so many of its senior staff to leave and join Richard Gambier-Parry in his infant Section VIII in 1938?

Richard Gambier-Parry had been the General Sales Manager of Philco and left 'to join the War Office' in March 1938. Over June and July of that same year, Gambier-Parry recruited **Bob Hornby** its Chief engineer and Service Manager and **Arthur 'Spuggy' Newton** his assistant; its brilliant exponent of car radio and short wave expert. '**Alfie**' **Willis** Manager of the Philco Midlands Region rapidly followed, along with **Wilf Lilburn** holding the same important post in Glasgow covering the whole of Scotland. **Charlie West** was Manager of the Philco chassis-making department. **Ewart Holden** and **Charlie Pugsley** ran Philco Radio retail outlets and others joined the exodus to Richard Gambier-Parry.

The Managing Director of Philco Radio UK was Carl Dyer and he seems to have been complicit in the departure of so many of his senior staff. I cannot fathom why unless – like some other major company Managing Directors in the UK – he was a member of the 'Z' organisation?

7. Mona De Witte

In SCU-Newsletter 4/10 I mentioned the brilliant thesis by the French student Mona De Witte who had just received her Master's Degree in British History – *magna cum laude!* I have sent this as a separate SCU-Newsletter 2-11.

Jane and I are shortly leaving for Tenerife for three months holiday in the sun. However, I have a laptop with me so I shall keep in touch.

Jane and I send our best wishes for the New Year to you and yours.

Geoffrey

DESCRIPTION
SIGNALLEMENT

Profession }
Profession }

Levi Krumm

Wife-Femme

Place and date
of birth }

*St. Anthony,
20 August 1910*

Lieu et date
de naissance }

Residence
(Résidence)

5-8, Kingsway

Height
(Taille)

5' 8"

5' 8"

Colour of eyes
(Couleur des yeux)

Blue

Colour of hair
(Couleur des cheveux)

Dark Brown

Special peculiarities
(Signes particuliers)

CHILDREN - ENFANTS

Name
(Nom)

Date of birth
(Date de naissance)

Sex
(Sexe)

PHOTOGRAPH OF BEARER



WIFE FEMME

(photo)

2 3 MAR 1939 2

W. Krumm
LONDON

SIGNATURE OF WIFE. Et de sa femme.

Missa de Hoek van Holland

VISAS

Gezien bij aankomst te
HOEK VAN HOLLAND
 11-11-1939
 Holde Doornlaagster
 Hoek van Holland

Voorlopige verblijfsvergunning,
 Lohndone oordere Intrekking
 van **20 MARI 1939**
 tot **20 de april 1942**
 te Otravonhage, **20 MARI 1939**
 De Hoofddoelcommissaris van Politie,
 Namens dezen,
 De Inspecteur van Politie,

Missa

AND NORTHERN IRELAND

COMMISSARIAT SPECIAL
 PORT AERIEN DU BOURG-LA-DUIGNY
VISAS
27 AVR. 1939
 EMBARQUEMENT

COMMISSARIAT SPECIAL
 PORT KERINGHOU DU BOURG-LA-DUIGNY
5 AOÛT 1939
 DEBARQUEMENT

COMMISSARIAT SPECIAL
 PORT KERINGHOU DU BOURG-LA-DUIGNY
21 MARI 1939
 DEBARQUEMENT

COMMISSARIAT SPECIAL
 PORT AERIEN DU BOURG-LA-DUIGNY
28 AOÛT 1939
 EMBARQUEMENT

COMMISSARIAT SPECIAL
 PORT AERIEN DU BOURG-LA-DUIGNY
11 AOÛT 1939
 EMBARQUEMENT

COMMISSARIAT SPECIAL
 PORT AERIEN DU BOURG-LA-DUIGNY
6 AOÛT 1939
 EMBARQUEMENT

COMMISSARIAT SPECIAL
 PORT AERIEN DU BOURG-LA-DUIGNY
20 MARI 1939
 EMBARQUEMENT

COMMISSARIAT SPECIAL
 PORT AERIEN DU BOURG-LA-DUIGNY
20 MARI 1939
 EMBARQUEMENT

