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**SCU-NEWSLETTER No. 3-11**  
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**1. Present tasks.**

The newly launched book 'MI6' by Professor Keith Jeffery is the Official History of MI6 from 1909 to 1949. It largely confirms the points I have been making about the importance of the part played by MI6 (Section VIII) under Gambier-Parry in the overall success of ULTRA. I am more determined than ever to ensure that the part he - and his various units played - is properly recorded at Bletchley Park. It is likely that this will be the subject of a SCU-Newsletter 'Special' later on.

**3. The next April SCU/RSS Meeting is being held on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> April in Bletchley Park Mansion.**

Some of you receive Bob King's Newsletter directly and will therefore know that yet again Bob has arranged a most interesting programme. For those not on his direct list, there will be a talk by Wilf Neal who was in our SCU/SLU attached to General Patton's 3<sup>rd</sup> US Army in its drive through France and into Germany. Some will already know a little of his exciting journey from the 'Patton' story published by ARRL and attached to SCU-Newsletter 2-10 last year. Bob Painter is to tell us more about his work in Palestine and Sue Winn, ex-Wren and Bombe operator, is to tell of her time at Bletchley Park. It is an interesting programme plus - a surprise item ?

**4. Philco's staff and MI6 (Section VIII) – This has long been one of our biggest puzzles !**

In SCU-Newsletter 1/11, I asked how Philco could release so many of its top wireless engineers and technicians from its staff to MI6 in 1938 ? The company described itself as 'The world's largest manufacturer of radio sets' and traded in the UK in the mid-1930s as 'Philco Radio & Television Corporation of Great Britain Limited.'

It all started with Richard Gambier-Parry being 'recruited' from Philco into MI6 by 'C' – Admiral Sir Hugh Sinclair in March 1938 – well before he purchased Bletchley Park as his 'War Station'. From June 1938 onwards more senior staff left Philco and joined Gambier-Parry's infant MI6 (Section VIII). I have listed them and their role at Philco, in Item 5 below.

One of the abiding puzzles is – *how and why* – Philco allowed so many of its senior staff to leave and join Richard Gambier-Parry in his infant Section VIII in 1938 ?

The American company **Philco** started life as the **Philadelphia Storage Battery Company** in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and became the world's leading player in the new radio era. Factories were opened in a number of countries and Britain was a major Philco market. In 1935 they built a new plant at Perivale just outside London. Philco was certainly the second biggest manufacturer of radio sets in the UK.

Incidentally, we have always described Richard Gambier-Parry as being the General Sales Manager of Philco but in the picture below you will see he is referred to as 'Mr. Dyer's Assistant.' Perhaps he combined the important roles of Assistant CEO and General Sales Manager ?

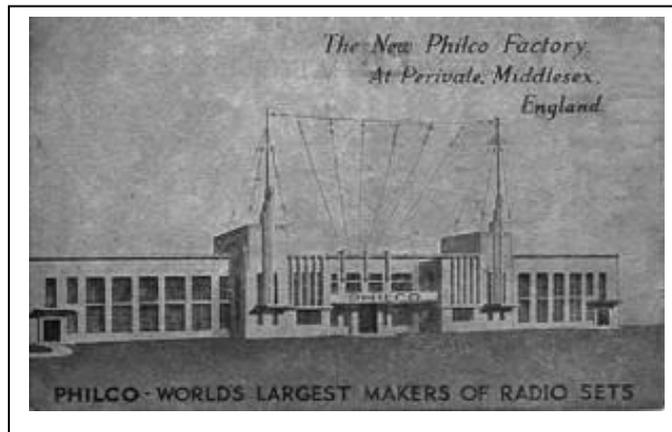
*Ground is broken for the new Philco-GB factory at Perivale in Middlesex, west of London  
Here we see Carleton Dyer - CEO of Philco-GB cutting the first spade of earth in March 1935.*

*Richard Gambier-Parry is standing to the right.  
Described here as being 'Mr. Dyer's Assistant'.*



This the cover of the promotional leaflet depicting Philco's new plant with the claim:

**'Philco - World's largest Makers of Radio Sets'**



In 1937 Philco produced 1,500,000 wireless sets in the USA and that figure, I understand, was down on the previous year with considerable Trade Union disputes in their factories in the United States.

I said in SCU-Newsletter 1-11 that the Managing Director of **Philco Radio & Television Corporation of Great Britain Limited**, was Carl Dyer. I suggested he had been complicit in the departure of so many of his senior and talented staff but also in passing, one wondered how the company operated without them? I could not fathom out why the exodus was allowed unless, like some other Managing Directors of major companies in the UK, he was a member of the 'Z' Organisation – a division of MI6. That is now a likely reason for Philco allowing this to happen. Whether Dyer's 'Lords and Masters' at Philco in the US were privy to this exodus is a mute point!

There is a suggestion that Philco-GB were affected by the Trade Union troubles in the US factories. However, it is impossible to judge now if this was a factor in the quite dramatic departure of so many senior Philco-GB staff from Perivale in 1938. Certainly the factory at Perivale continued to operate and on the outbreak of war in 1939, turned to making wireless sets for military purposes. Later it made thousands of sets for SOE (Special Operations Executive) formed on specific orders from Winston Churchill to *'Set Europe ablaze.'*

When I started my research for 'The Secret Wireless War' back in early 1997, I found as many old colleagues as I could. However, after its launch at Bletchley Park in 2003, I had letter from Chris Bryant whose father Eric Bryant, was in MI6 (Section VIII) at Whaddon and yet another ex-Philco 'recruit.' His story would most certainly have been mentioned in the book, as he too had held important posts at Philco-GB.

Chris Bryant is a Godson of Carl (Carleton) Dyer and has provided me with most helpful information and pictures. His father Eric Bryant was a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps in World War I – then transferred to the infant RAF as it was formed. He continued until his Commission ended in 1928 and he went into the emerging wireless industry. First he was with Mullard selling wireless valves all over the country and then, to better himself, he joined the most technically advanced company in the wireless industry – Philco-GB.

By 1937 he was Northern Sales Manager of Philco based in Leeds. In 1938 it became obvious that senior Philco staff were leaving, starting with Richard Gambier-Parry. However, Eric continued as a senior member of the company – latterly as Contracts Manager working with Government departments. He continued working for them until June 1940 when he received a call from MI6 HQ at 54 Broadway in Westminster. Clearly that was instigated by Richard Gambier-Parry. He was enrolled as into SSU 1 (the forerunner of SCUs), the militarised version of MI6 (Section VIII). He was enlisted as a Captain in the Royal Corps of Signals but of course paid by MI6.

However, in 1943 Carleton Dyer had become a Director at the Ministry of Aircraft Production with special responsibility for procuring the large quantities of valves and magnetrons needed for radar production. Later that year, Eric Bryant was transferred out from Section VIII to assist Dyer and travelled extensively in the Canada and the United States in the search for the wireless components required.

**The US Army's 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division** secured the famous bridge at Eindhoven on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1944 and only a few days later on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1944, a Combined Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee party – led by Sir

Robert Watson Watt [*inventor of Radar*] – was at the Phillips Eindhoven factory in the town seeking information on its production and research.

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Its official title was CIOS file No. III-1. In the list of ‘Personnel of Inspection Team - Valves’ we find the name of **Mr. Carleton Dyer - M.A.P.**

#### **5. Senior Philco staff that left to join MI6 – mostly during 1938.**

Richard Gambier-Parry: *Assistant CEO and General Sales Manager left in March 1938.*

Robert (Bob) Hornby: *Philco’s Chief Engineer and Head of Philco’s R&D department left in July 1938.*

Arthur ‘Spuggy’ Newton: *Design Engineer in R&D and Philco’s car radio specialist left in July 1938*

Wilf Lilburn: *Manager of Philco’s Scotland region based in Glasgow left in 1938.*

Robert (Bob) Chennells: *Design Engineer at Perivale left in 1938.*

*[The above two lived with us in Caterham in 1939 whilst working on the SIS ‘Funny Neuk’ wireless station.]*

Charlie West: *Manager of Philco’s Chassis workshops left in 1938. He was my first ‘boss’ at Whaddon Hall.*

Alfred (Alfie) Willis: *Manager of Philco’s Midlands Region based in Birmingham left in 1938.*

Eric Bryant: *Manager of Philco North based in Leeds. He joined after the others in 1940.*

Ewart Holden: *He had a specialist Philco retail outlet in Twickenham and joined in 1939.*

Charlie Pugsley: *He had a specialist Philco retail outlet in North London joined probably in late 1939.*

I knew all of these men to speak to except Eric Bryant. In the case of Richard Gambier-Parry **HE** spoke to me !

#### **6. Just some of their achievements in Section VIII’s work in both – SIGINT and HUMINT.**

There are stories about most of the above men in ‘The Secret Wireless War’ and they all played a leading part in Richard Gambier-Parry’s team. Starting with this SCU-Newsletter I shall point to just a few of their many achievements commencing with Arthur ‘Spuggy’ Newton:

His talents were in great demand, as he was a very competent wireless engineer. He started as a marine telegraphist, having qualified with his friend Wilf Lilburn and spent time in the merchant navy before joining Philco. He left in 1938 and joined Gambier-Parry in MI6. Spuggy was away from the UK almost continuously over a near three-year period. This included three covert trips to Brussels during which he installed a two-way communications link with the UK. He trained a number of Belgian nationals in the use of our wireless gear – well before the Blitzkrieg started and they were the nucleus of our later agent network.

Spuggy’s next venture outside England was to Nuremberg and then on to Prague and Warsaw, installing two-way communications and performing tests with Station X at Barnes, Prague and Brussels. He journeyed on to Tallinn in Estonia, then to Helsinki and Stockholm.

He made another trip to Prague to install wireless equipment in the British Embassy basement, but this time he was caught up in the German invasion of the Sudetenland and ushered out of Prague with Sir Walter Runciman’s abortive mission.

There were two trips to Rome, on to Lisbon and Madrid, installing two-way connection and testing the wireless transmissions from those places to the MI6 station ‘Florence House’ at Barnes alongside the Thames. He made two trips to Athens and installed a wireless station in the Embassy and on a motor-yacht at Patras.

*This is ‘Spuggy’ in his element – fitting a car radio although it was more likely to be a radio telephone. He had a Rover saloon car he kept at Whaddon Hall and it was quite the most polished and cared for you ever saw !*



Four round trips were made to The Hague, again installing two-way wireless links to Britain, touring Holland establishing wireless installations in three separate villages, including Delfzi on the north Holland/German frontier. Spuggy was finally escorted out of Holland, the day after Best and Stevens were captured by the Gestapo on the Dutch frontier in the famous ‘Venlo-Incident.’

Gambier-Parry’s staff used many ways of entering a foreign country but the most legitimate was the use of a Courier’s Passport. The one below was issued to A. C. Newton in January 1941 and signed by Lord Halifax the Foreign Secretary in Churchill’s wartime Cabinet. He used it to travel to Istanbul, via Takoradi in West Africa. An unlikely route but read his full story in ‘The Secret Wireless War’ – *you could not make it up!*

On reaching Istanbul, he fitted our up-to-date wireless equipment in the British Embassy and the ‘Wireless Room’ is mentioned in the film ‘Five Fingers’ starring James Mason. The film is based on the true story of Elyesa Bazna known to German intelligence as ‘Cicero.’

He went from there to Belgrade to fit wireless in the Embassy then had to dash for the border as Germany invaded, first Yugoslavia and then Greece. He left Athens in a refugee ship that was frequently dive bombed by the Germans on its way to Alexandria. From there he went to Cairo and more adventures !



On the rare occasions when Spuggy was in England he worked with Bob Hornby and assisted in the design and construction of new wireless sets. Earlier, in 1938 and 1939, he had helped oversee the work on the bungalow wireless station at Woldingham, known as 'Funny Neuk' and those under construction at Bletchley Park, as well as helping to expand the station at Barnes.

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He then became involved in installing our wireless equipment in boats and cars. The very first 'Signals Liaison Units' (SLUs) were designed and built by 'Spuggy' Newton and his long-time friend Wilf Lilburn. The first wireless vehicle was built into a Dodge saloon but I am not certain what they used for the second – probably an Oldsmobile or a Humber ?

The work was carried out in October and November 1939 at Bletchley Park as it was then Section VIII's base with the pending closure of Barnes. The two cars were sent to France, one to the BEF (British Expeditionary Force) at Wachines and the second to the RAF Advanced Air Striking Force at Meaux. Their role was to handle early SIGINT emanating from Bletchley Park. 'Spuggy' went with one of the cars as its wireless operator and in the other car was Bill Sharpe – later Lt. Col. Bill Sharpe. He was my boss in Calcutta before the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan – then all our plans were put on hold – *but that's another story.*

*This is 'Spuggy' around 1944 in rather more formal attire as Captain in the Royal Corps of Signals.*

*However, bear in mind he was at all times an officer in MI6 and not paid from Army funds.*

*This how I last saw him at Whaddon Hall in early 1947 when I collected my final cheque from Major Charlie Crocker our paymaster before leaving MI6 to join the family business – selling bathrooms !*



**However, perhaps the best tribute I could pay to this brilliant engineer is that the FIRST intimation anyone in the UK had that the Germans had crossed the Polish borders on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939 – was from the MI6 wireless set earlier installed by Arthur 'Spuggy' Newton – to our receivers here.**

**The station was called ZRO and our operator was Gerrish. The pre-arranged message to Richard Gambier-Parry was '77077' and that was the code for 'The Germans have crossed the Polish Border.'**

#### **7. Yet another puzzle ?**

Few are aware that a deputation of seven British business leaders met with Goering in Germany on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1939 – with the approval of Hitler – in an attempt to avert the looming war, less than a month before it broke out on 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1939. I shall be writing more on this most fascinating episode in the next SCU-Newsletter and will show a connection with MI6 (Section VIII).

#### **8. A little help please.**

We are sending this SCU-Newsletter well before returning home but we are not happy to trust the post in Tenerife to the dozen or so that we still send to veterans and/or those without connection to the Internet. One of you kindly offered to produce Mona De Witte's dissertation for them but I have mislaid your name. Providing you are willing to post this SCU-Newsletter, I would be grateful if you contact me by e-mail and I will send the addresses to you.

**Jane and I send you our best wishes from the warm sunshine of Golf del Sur in Tenerife.**

**We hope to see some of you at the Bletchley Park Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> April.**

*Geoffrey*  
Geoffrey Pidgeon