

Role Play

What is your name? Eric Liddell

Other information: Born: 16 January 1902 in China

Died: 21 February 1945 in a labour camp in China.

You were called the "Flying Scotsman" when you were younger because you were so fast at running. You were the best athlete in your school and the fastest runner in Scotland while at Oxford University. Newspapers carried stories of your feats at track meets, and many articles stated that you were a potential Olympic winner. You were famous and everyone expected you to win medals for Britain!



But there were important heats to compete in and they were on a Sunday. You didn't believe running on a Sunday was the right thing to do, because you believed the bible states that Sunday is for resting and for God. So you refused to run in those heats on a Sunday, for your favoured distance, the men's 100 metres. You preached a sermon at church instead!

But you still competed in the men's 400 metres at the 1924 Summer Olympics in Paris and you won! When you returned to the UK a hero everyone expected you to carry on competing for the country but you gave up running at the height of your athletic career to go to China in 1925 to serve as a missionary teacher.

You were captured during WW2 and died in China in a civilian labour camp.
What do you consider to be your greatest achievement in life?

You always considered your work in China to be a far greater achievement in life than your Olympic medals. Your first job in China was as a teacher where you used your athletic training to coach children and build their self-esteem and confidence.

In 2008, just before the Beijing Olympics, Chinese authorities revealed that you had been offered a chance in 1945 to leave the labour camp in which you were held, but had refused and instead had given your place to a pregnant woman. Apparently, the Japanese and British, with Churchill's approval, had agreed this prisoner exchange at the request of Liddell. News



of this final act of sacrifice surprised even your family members. You died in that camp from a brain tumour that could have been operated on if you had left the camp and gone home.

You were perhaps Scotland's greatest athlete who gave it all up to help children in China, even giving your chance of freedom from a labour camp to a pregnant stranger.