

Chariots of Fire

Directed by Hugh Hudson

Cast overview:

Nicholas Farrell	....	Aubrey Montague
Nigel Havers	....	Lord Andrew Lindsay
Ian Charleson	....	Eric Liddell
Ben Cross	....	Harold Abrahams
Daniel Gerroll	....	Henry Stallard
Ian Holm	....	Sam Mussabini
John Gielgud	....	Master of Trinity College
Lindsay Anderson	....	Master of Caius College
Nigel Davenport	....	Lord Birkenhead
Cheryl Campbell	....	Jenny Liddell
Alice Krige	....	Sibyl Gordon
Dennis Christopher	....	Charles Paddock
Brad Davis	....	Jackson Scholz
Patrick Magee (I)	....	Lord Cadogan
Peter Egan	....	Duke of Sutherland

Biography of Eric H. Liddell 1902 - 1945

Eric Henry Liddell was born on the 16th January 1902 in Tientsin (Tianjin) in North China, second son of the Rev & Mrs James Dunlop Liddell who were missionaries with the London Mission Society.

He was educated from 1908 to 1920 at Eltham College, Blackheath, a school for the sons of missionaries. Eric, with his older brother Rob, were left at their boarding school while their parents and sister Jenny returned to China. During the boys' time at Eltham College their parents, sister and new brother Ernest came home on furlough two or three times and were able to be together as a family - mainly living in Edinburgh.

In 1920, Eric joined his brother Rob at Edinburgh University to read for a BSc in Pure Science. He graduated after the Paris Olympiad in 1924. Athletics and rugby played a large part in Eric's University life. He ran in the 100 yards and the 220 yards for Edinburgh University and later for Scotland. He played rugby for Edinburgh University and in 1922 played in seven Scottish Internationals with A. L. Gracie.

As a result of having insufficient time for both running and rugby he chose the former, aiming for the 100 metres in the Paris Olympics. When he learned that the heats were to be run on a Sunday, he switched to the 400 metre competition as he was not prepared to run on that day. He won a gold medal for the 400 metres and a bronze medal for the 200 metres at the Paris Olympics.

After the Olympics and his graduation he returned to North China where he served as a missionary from 1925 to 1943 - first in Tientsin (Tianjin) and later in Siaochang. During his first furlough (1932) he was ordained as a minister. On his return to China he married Florence Mackenzie (of Canadian missionary parentage) in Tientsin (1934). They had three daughters, Patricia, Heather and Maureen, who now all live in Canada.

Living in China in the 1930s was potentially very dangerous and in 1937 when Eric was sent to Siaochang where he joined his brother Rob. He was now crossing the Japanese Army lines. In 1941 life in China was becoming so dangerous that the British Government advised British nationals to leave. Florence and the children left for Canada.

During 1941 - 1943 Eric stayed in Tientsin, then in 1943 he was interned in Weishien Camp until his death in 1945.

Questions:

1. In two separate paragraphs, compare the dreams and drive of Liddell and Abrams. Explain what the time period meant to each man's dreams and desires.
2. How does the real life Eric Liddell contained in the short biography above compare to the film version that is presented in *Chariots of Fire*?
3. Considering the actions of Eric Liddell, at what point would you sacrifice your dreams and desires for things that you truly believe in. (one paragraph)