Malaya — a Family Affair

Hilary Custance Green

[This started life as a talk for the October 2019 MVG Annual lunch. It began with a reading from a book, followed by 43 images, with notes, illustrating our family's life and connections to Malaya. This version has more text and many fewer images.]

Alan and Barton Custance Baker and friend

A children's story to start with:

Roger, Ann and Jeremiah Bard were sitting in the shade of a Mangosteen tree in the garden of their home in Singapore. The blazing tropical sunshine seemed to have drawn the colour away from the flowers… now there was only light, brilliant, hot light and dark places of shade under the trees.

"Did you hear the bombs last night?" asked Jeremiah. "They woke me up, then Amah came and I went to sleep again."

"Mummy says we'll be going to Australia very soon. Our luggage is packed and Daddy is bringing us new coats…" It was Ann speaking, and she sounded very mournful. "I wish Daddy could come too," she added.

"He's got to fight the Japs," said Roger…

"There's a car coming!" Jeremiah ran across the lawn. … "It's Dr Jasper!"

The car stopped and an elderly man got out. His sandy greying hair was ruffled and his khaki shorts and shirt looked as if he had slept in them; but his eyes looked as if he hadn't slept for a long time. "Hello children," he said. "I've just seen your father; he asked me to take you down to the jetty and put you on board the ship. He's too busy to get away just now. Your mother will be going straight there from town." … I've got your new coats so run upstairs and tell Amah I've come for you. I'll wait here."

They went into the cool marble-floored hall and Ah Seng, the head boy, appeared from an inner room. His white starched suit was spotless and his black hair shone as always, but the deep lines in his kind face were new; they made him look very sad.

"Tabek Tuan," he said quietly.

"Tabek, Ah Seng. I come to take the children to the ship." Dr. Jaspar spoke in Malay. "They must go at once. Where are your children, Ah Seng?"

"Their mother has taken them into the country; I think they will be safe there. Tuan, you are very tired. I have prepared sandwiches; please sit down while I fetch them."

Thankfully the doctor sank into a deep rattan armchair. His eyes smarted and he rested them on the green maidenhair ferns that were grouped in Chinese pots about the hall. Then he fell asleep. Returning with the sandwiches and coffee, Ah Seng watched him for a few moments before calling his name softly. Instantly the doctor woke; just those few minutes of deep sleep had been sufficient to wipe the grey wash of fatigue from his face.

"Eat, Tuan," said Ah Seng. "I have packed more … for the Tuan Doctor to take in the car."

"Thank you, Ah Seng. … I feel much rested. Mem Bard will meet the children on the ship: if there is not time for her to return here do not think she has forgotten. She will never do that, but mothers should be with their children in these terrible days."

As he spoke they heard the children coming downstairs. The Amah was carrying Jeremiah, whose arms were tightly round her neck.

The Amah was carrying Jeremiah

Illustration by T. Ritchie

"Why won't you come with us, Amah, why won't you?" he kept asking, and she answered in a sad, bewildered voice:

"No can come, Baba. Amah must stay with Chinese people, wait for Roger and Ann and Jeremiah come back again."

Dr. Jasper took the small boy from her. "Come, old chap," he said, "we must go."

One after another the children flung their arms round Amah's neck, hugging and kissing her, then shook hands with Ah Seng … Everyone was crying …

The road leading into town was an avenue of Ancenna trees with here and there a slender Jacaranda. The blossoms were falling and the road surface was a sheet of gold patched with … violet … It was so lovely and the air so sweet that the children and Ahmad, the Malay driver, were soon wiping their eyes and sniffing ... great gulps of scented air. "We'll come back, won't we, Dr. Jasper?" asked Roger when he had got his voice under control.

"Of course you will."

"What are you going to do, Dr. Jasper?" asked Jeremiah. "Are you going back to Kelantan?"

"My plans aren't certain, old chap. … " As if to change the subject he spoke of the people the children had known … in Kelantan.

"I remember Tengku Mahmoud," said Ann, "and I remember Mr. Tokanawa, the Japanese dentist."

"So do I. I thought he was nice; he let me treadle his machine." Regret for the happy Kelantan days was in Jeremiah's voice.

"I expect he's a soldier now, don't you, Dr. Jasper?" asked Roger.

"I expect so, Roger. Ah, here we are!"

Ahmad had edged the car through a traffic jam and brought it to a standstill.

"I don't see mummy anywhere," Ann remarked as they got out.

There was a great crowd and everybody seemed to be distracted and walking and running about in an aimless sort of way; …

This children's book – one of three written by our grandmother Barbara Baker – was published in 1948. Titled the *Herewegoes,* it featured three children who were evacuated from Singapore on a boat that was bombed. I will return to this story later on.

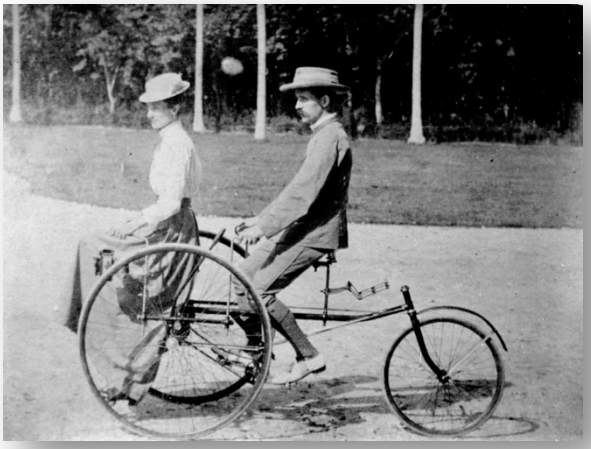
Like so many members of the MVG my three brothers and I were, in a sense, cradled in the Far East, though none of us have lived there. As a child you don't question that your best games were played hiding in a Chinese drum, that your grandmother's books featured children who changed into tigers and lived in the jungles of Malaya. And, from a darker chapter, when you played paper, scissors, stone it was natural count in with, "ichee nee sang". So I learnt my family history slowly and very piecemeal, with *many* still unanswered questions – this talk is simply a family story, but maybe one that represents some of the shifts in the world over the last century and a half.

Although there are two men in the family who have reached the margins of history books, William Evans (1860–1936) and Alan Custance Baker (1885–1969), the story I hope to tell is the one that includes the less visible members of the family and how they affected generations to come. William Evans was my father's maternal grandfather. He went to grammar school and was one of the first non-Eton boys to get a place at Kings College Cambridge. He got a First in maths. He then sat the Indian Civil Service exams with a hangover and was lucky to get a place in the next level down, the Malayan Civil Service. He arrived in Singapore in 1883. There he opted for the Chinese section and set off on the slow boat to China, losing six months pay playing poker with the captain on the way!

Back in the Straits Settlements eighteen months later, William was fluent in seven dialects and with a good command of Chinese character writing. He worked in Malacca and Singapore, becoming Protector of the Chinese in 1895 (and known thereafter as Chinese Evans). Much of his work involved controlling and putting down secret societies and triad members. The story runs that the magnificent Chinese drum of our childhood games was confiscated after a raid on a Triad HQ and never returned. You can hide a child (or two) in this drum and the sound, when beaten, carries a very satisfying distance.

Apart from a two-year spell in South Africa, William remained in the Straits until he retired in 1914. William's detailed career record reveals a dedicated Civil Servant, but it also hides a loving husband, father and grandfather.

Back in 1890 William had married Matilda (Tilly) Turner, a 29-year-old widow. They produced a rather gulp-making three babies in three years – Joyce 1892, Bill 1893 and Barbara (our grandmother) 1894. Two were born in Penang and the last in Britain. William's letters to Tilly are preserved and when they were apart, he wrote frequently with endless longing for her return and with loving thoughts for his babies.



Tilly and William Evans

Tilly is something of a mystery. The only clue yet among our papers is a delightful book, *Banana Blossom*, printed in Singapore in 1907 and illustrated with her delicate watercolours. Tilly writes the story from the point of view of a Chinese child-bride suddenly transported to Malacca. She describes her new life in a strange place; the local people and landscapes; her hopes and the arrival of her much-longed-for babies. There is a moving scene when her baby daughter, the Banana Blossom of the title, is revived after nearly drowning.

For colonial children, carefree childhood years were short. Faded sepia photos show Tilly and William's three children Joyce, Bill and Barbara Evans with their amahs, or dressing up at parties and having fun. But by 1901, a British census for a boarding house in Birkenhead lists all three children, aged 7, 8, and 9, plus three small girls born in India. They were all in the care of an older woman and a young governess.

Joyce, Bill and Barbara Evans

You have to wonder what the writer of *Banana Blossom* felt about this tradition of exiling young children to Britain during their school years. In uncomfortable contrast, a photo of 1905 shows William and Tilly, in rather solitary state, on the steps of their palatial Malacca residency.

However, by the children's mid teens the family were together again in Penang where William was resident Councillor. Joyce is doing well in the ladies shooting team and Barbara's literary ambitions are emerging; she is editing (and providing many of the articles, poems and drawings for) her own paper – the somewhat tongue-in-cheek *Penang Hill Weekly*.

Joyce and Barbara had been governess-schooled in the best traditions of the day for Young Ladies – they could play the piano, paint, sew, write poetry and prose, play bridge and tennis, shoot and ride horses. But note – no cooking and no science.

So, for Barbara, in 1913, aged 19, and the first of the siblings to be married, wedded life came as something of a surprise. She married Alan Custance Baker (1885–1969), nine years her senior. Alan was a dedicated, conscientious member of the Malayan Civil Service, a linguist with a cosmopolitan outlook (a French mother), a gusto for hard work and life and a *strong* sense of duty. His CV, like his father-in-law's, shows steady work up though the Service ranks, though in Alan's case there was a three-year disruption for WWI.

Alan Custance Baker

While the war itself had almost no impact in the Straits Settlements, the ex-pat community was strongly affected and duty called. Many, like William, joined the Malacca Volunteer Rifles. Others went to Britain to enlist. And when in 1916 Barbara's sister, Joyce, got married to a rubber and mining broker, Roger Prentis, her brother, the groom, and one other were all in uniform.

For Barbara and Alan having a family was overshadowed by the horrors of the Great War. Barton (our father) was born in Penang in 1915, then baby Alan in Britain in early 1917. At the same time his father, Alan, endured the trenches, while trying to write positive letters home, passing on jokes such as 'will you stop washing your muddy boots in the water I'm about to sleep in!' That October Alan's luck ran out when he was shot through the lung at Passchendaele. His actions earned him the Military Cross. He recovered and in 1918 was transferred to the Intelligence Corps and returned to France, where he was gassed and wounded by shrapnel. In 1919 he was demobbed and back at his desk in Malaya by June. He did put in a request for some post-war leave, but the Colonial Office turned it down on the grounds that he was needed and had already been on Home Leave for some years! Their third son, John, was born in Penang in 1921.

These post-war years in Penang are the Malaya our father, Barton, remembered best. And it is the household staff that remained in his affections. They lived in a house (122 Scotland or York Road) with large gardens and the head gardener taught them how to fish and make traps for birds – not that they ever caught any.

122 Scotland or York Road

Ah Ho & Ah Kew with Barton, Alan & John

Their Amahs, (Che) Ah Ho and (Che) Ah Kew, were more or less parents to them, loving and scolding them and teaching them games They picked up Malay from their playmate, Ali, son of Hassan, the syce (chauffeur). They loved to play with fighting kites and kept badgering Hassan, who was an expert, to make them. Ali taught them Taro Taro (or pelmanism) and beat them easily.

These early memories were clearly a joy, but in 1922 came the inevitable shift. Barbara took the children, aged 7, 5 and 18 eighteen months back to England. Grandmother Tilly had died and grandfather William, known as Pop to all the children, set up a home in South London for them and also for Joyce's son, Richard. The four boys lived with him all through their schooldays, even small, fragile, asthmatic John.

Barton, Alan, Pop, John & Richard

As a mother figure to the boys, Pop drafted in Ada, Tilly's formidable sister, an ex hospital matron. Ada experimented with diets, such as the Hay diet, and my father remembered miserable meals of only beans, or worse, only brains. Great Aunt Ada remains a family legend.

Ada Turner (aka Great Aunt Ada)

In 1925 Mowbray's published Barbara's first book of poetry for very small children, *The Joyful Way*. Her dedication to her babies *(Because of the joy you brought us,/Because of the dreams come true,/Lancelot [Barton], Alan, and little John/This book is written for you.)* hints at how hard she found parting from her children. This book with its later companion *Dance and Sing* was on its 10th impression by 1946. One of her later poems, *A Spike of Green,* still appears in anthologies and even on the Internet today.

Buried in a tattered loose-leaf notebook of Barbara's that opens with records of poetry, articles and books submitted to publishers between 1924 and 1976, I found further heart-breaking evidence of the pain of being apart from your children. Barbara, turning the last page of a letter from Pop, found this post-script. 'My dear, I am deeply grieved to have to tell you that John has got pleurisy.' She writes: 'John, frail little John, lying in bed with his left side hurting and three weeks of sea and land between us…How can his small body stand it.' She and Alan decided that night, that if he survived, Barbara would take him to live in Switzerland for a bit. She did and this helped him grow stronger.

Alan and Barbara were both on leave in England in about 1926–7, so they missed her brother Bill's wonderfully 1920s wedding to Molly Welby. Bill settled in Malaya as a rubber planter and he and Molly started a family.

For Alan and Barbara the late 1920s and 30s were incredibly busy. Alan fulfilled all his administrative duties meticulously. He and Barbara also worked hard to fulfil their greater roles, which they genuinely loved. They were there to help advise and train local people to enhance trade, education, medicine, law etc in the service of the country in which they saw themselves as guests. They were also there to learn from local people. In his last report (1938) Alan wrote:

> 'It should be remembered that a Malay Officer who is in close contact with his people… has a fund of knowledge and experience not readily available to the British Officer, and that an advisor who wants to teach usefully can never forget to learn'
>
> … 'The history of the world has shown that nothing that is based on force or compulsion has any enduring value.'

Wall Hanging presented to Alan by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce

At some point in the late 1920s or early 30s the Chinese Chamber of Commerce presented Alan with a magnificent embroidered silk and metalwork hanging. The middle section shows Alan (right of centre, with a pink face and white beard) receiving their thanks.

Barbara, too, received honours in about 1936/7. She had made education for girls a special interest and she was made an honorary princess by His Highness the Sultan of Kelantan, in gratitude for her help in this and her support of the silver trade in Malaya. There's one other thing that Barbara did in early 1939 that I would like to remember. They were soon to retire and they worried about the costs of living in England, but she convinced Alan that they should stand as lifetime guarantors to the father of Barton's Jewish German exchange student & friend. They cabled their agreement just in time for his father to escape to England.

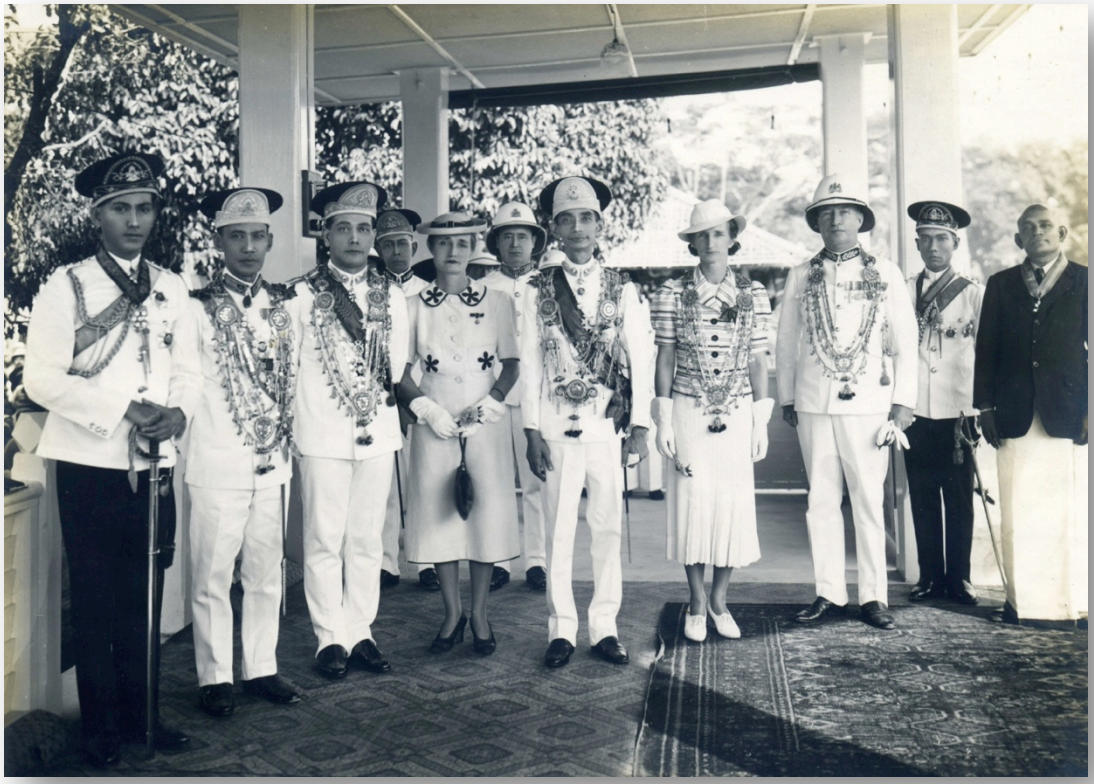
'Dattine BEB [Barbara Evans Baker] who is to be honoured.'

Barbara, Bentley and Alan

Barbara and Alan also had plenty of fun at home in Kota Bharu. Among other things, they held musical and theatrical events, went to the races, played tennis and golf and went waterfall gliding. They owned a Great Dane called Bentley, though he had a penchant for eating goats that was his eventual downfall.

They also travelled widely, hiking in rarely visited territory and writing up their experiences, Alan for the Royal Asiatic Society, Barbara in articles for the *Straits Times*, the *Singapore Free Press* and others.
Socially, they enjoyed events across the extraordinary spread of nations that made up the population of the Straits Settlements. In February 1940 Barbara wrote a dizzying letter describing their final week before retirement and return to Britain. They had a continuous stream of friends staying, including musicians for whom Barbara was accompanist:

> … Besides this on Wednesday night (the night they [Truda & Charles Nunn] arrived) we all went out to dinner, on Thursday golf in the afternoon, Derek came to a very early dinner and we went to an amateur show got up by H. H. [His Royal Highness]'s brother for the Malaya Patriotic Fund. On Friday out to dinner again as well as a family golf foursome. On Saturday Margaret and Charles Young also came to spend the week-end with us. … That night His Highness gave us a Farewell dinner at



His Royal Highness the Sultan of Kelantan (centre) with Barbara and Alan to his left

the Balai (orders and decorations). There were about sixty people there and the Sultan made an absolutely sweet speech about Alan and me and then gave Alan a copy on vellum in a silver casket on a silver dish of old Malay silver and to me he gave a most lovely silver dish that is at least a hundred years old. He told me that he had never done this for any other British Advisor. We were deeply touched and Dad made a very good speech in Malay. After dinner we all watched a Mahjong, a sort of Malay play interspersed with Siamese, Javanese & Malay dances, most interesting and the surroundings were beautiful because at the Balai the crowd (women and children) are allowed to come in and watch and they all wear their gayest clothes. It makes it very hot but lovely to look at. That night we did not get home until 1 o'clock. Next morning we had more music, the Malays came and Truda and Charles played the piano which he does really well and in the afternoon Dad and I had to go to a tea party at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce where more speeches were made and he was presented with an address in a silver frame. … We then hurried home and took Bentley [the dog] and Truda for a short walk.

That evening we had Derek and the three Malay District Officers to dinner and after dinner ten more people came and we gave our final concert positively last appearance! …

On Monday morning all our guests departed, but it was a busy day. I had a St John meeting at 12 to hand over my secretaryship and in the afternoon we went to a farewell tea at Pasir Mas and in the evening ate khuzi with Tengku Sri Akar and many other friends and then went to the pictures, and yesterday we motored to Krai 48 miles up river by launch to lunch with a very old friend. We got back exhausted for tea.

Today we lunch with the Indian community and then go to Krai again for the evening for a Farewell at the club. And so it will go on except for Monday and Tuesday, which have been kept empty for packing and so on. …

Among their particular friends was Tengku Mahmood Mahyideen, son of the Sultan and Head of Education in Kelantan.

By 1940, of course, Britain was already at war and enormous efforts were being made to raise money by both ex-pats and local people via the Malay Patriotic Fund to send back to beleaguered Britain. The other effort was the training of Malay Volunteer groups. Alan was much involved with this and anxious about the possible Japanese threat. Having travelled through jungle himself he saw it as no bar to determined men. He is supposed to have warned Sir Shenton Thomas several times about a possible land invasion through the northeast corner of Malaya – but he was ignored.

With Alan and Barbara's return to England in 1940, it might be thought our family links to Malaya would end. Fate had other ideas. In early 1941 Barton, their oldest son and our father, was offered (as in 'invited to volunteer') to Captain a Signals Line Section going to Malaya. Naturally, he embraced the idea, imagining that his wife (our mother) Phyllis and their baby son, Robin, would be able to join him in the peaceful Far East. He consulted his parents about luggage and they advised a metal-lined trunk and 28 sets of shirts and shorts, two a day for a week and 14 in the laundry! He brushed up his Malay and on the voyage East taught his men enough to get by.

Barton's first letter home from Singapore dated 4th October 1941 began with a prescient Malay *pantun.* Translated, it reads: *Whence are you and where away/Grass is taller than the grain/Where will be the year and day/That we two shall meet again?* In Singapore he met up with his aunt and uncle, Joyce and Roger (Prentis). He reported: 'Roger's [rubber and mining] business almost gone, he is president of many committees including one investigating Army contract troubles.' He also mentioned that Joyce was recovering from a double mastectomy. He wrote: 'she now wears a slightly padded bra and looks about 35 [she is 50]. … Runs a War Market and gives about $3000 per month to charities. … She has been doing quite a lot of broadcasting "Home Front" type stuff.' She had also been awarded the King's Silver Jubilee Medal for her shooting.

Roger and Joyce Prentis

Barton and his 70 men (RCOS, 27 Line Section) trekked north into Malay proper, putting up power and telephone lines all over Johore and Pahang. They had adventures with hornets and even a tiger and, in spite of the looming threat of war, letters home show that they relished the work. This all changed in early December with the Japanese invasion of Malaya and the bombing of Pearl Harbour. On that day, 8th December 1941, Barton wrote to Phyllis on a small scrap of paper:

> Darling Wife, very darling wife just now. War declared this am. You will have read all about it in the papers. Bombs on S'pore, landing in Kelantan. All safe so far. Dad will explain the position to you. He has a very thorough knowledge of the strategical positions in the country and probably has a good idea where I am. …

By January 1942 they had retreated to Singapore and the advancing Japanese had murdered George Kid, Alan's unlucky successor as Advisor to the Sultan of Kelantan.

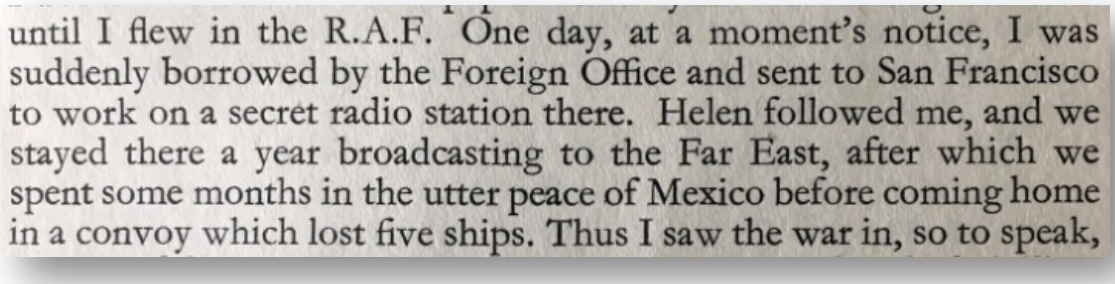
Then, on the 13th February 1942, in the mayhem leading to the Fall of Singapore, Joyce was evacuated on the SS *Kuala* – other members of the Malay Volunteers Group will also have had relatives on this ill-fated vessel. Joyce was just one of the many who lost their lives, either in the bombing, in the water, or on the island of Pompong. Tengku Mahyideen was also on the *Kuala* and in touch with Joyce. He survived and later wrote an account of his experience. News of her death *did* reach Britain before Capitulation, but from that point on a curtain of silence fell between Malaya and Britain.

So Barbara and Alan now had a son, Barton, and a brother-in-law (Joyce's husband), Roger, missing in Singapore, and a son, young Alan, serving somewhere in the Middle East. Other family members, Bill Evans (Barbara's brother) and Richard (Joyce's son), were in Britain and had joined up. Then there's little John, twenty-one years old, 5' 4", with a 29"chest and chronic asthma. Without telling anyone, he volunteered for the RAF, and had an all-out battle with the Medical Board – a good game, played slowly, he noted – who graded him level III (not fit for much) and he won. By 1943 he was a navigator/ observer on Mosquitos and flying over France and Germany.

Barbara, Alan and Phyllis, like so many others with relatives missing in the Far East, waited months and then years, endlessly hoping for any kind of news. Always mindful of the censor, they wrote cheerful, innocuous letters that they handed in to the post office. These letters disappeared into the blue and they never heard anything back. Barbara mourned her sister and threw herself into several war projects and also her writing.

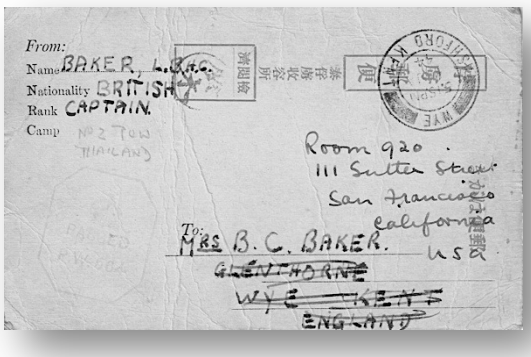
Before the war Barbara had written a story about three children who find three rings that could turn them into animals. The children become tigers and have wonderful adventures in the jungle. Her boys had loved this story, so she worked on it and looked for a publisher. Leonard Woolf, who ran the Hogarth Press, took it and *The Three Rings* finally appeared in print in 1944.

However, by this time Alan and Barbara were in San Francisco. The Foreign Office had approached Alan in late 1943 to ask if he and Barbara would help with propaganda broadcasts on the World Service to Malaya. In San Francisco they worked non-stop, both of them broadcasting in Malay. They also stopped writing to Barton for fear their work might cause him problems with his captors. Recently my brother, Stephen, sent me this passage from (journalist and novelist) Noel Barber's first autobiography. Noel had met Barbara and Alan in Malaya more than once and had mentioned Alan in other writing as 'that jolly chap Baker'.



until I flew in the R.A.F. One day, at a moment's notice, I was suddenly borrowed by the Foreign Office and sent to San Francisco to work on a secret radio station there. Helen followed me, and we stayed there a year broadcasting to the Far East, after which we spent some months in the utter peace of Mexico before coming home in a convoy which lost five ships. Thus I saw the war in, so to speak,

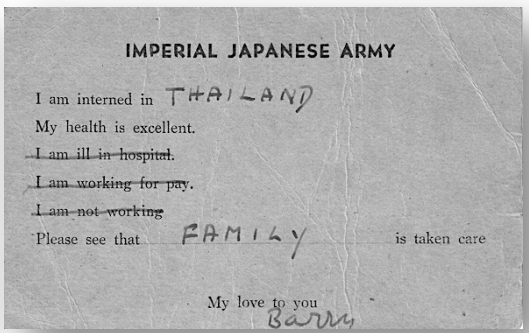
In January 1944 a ray of hope that Barton might still be alive reached San Francisco. This first communication from the jungles of Thailand, meant for Phyllis in England, had been forwarded by mistake to San Francisco. This gave them hope though their joy was tempered by the speech given in Parliament the very next day by Sir Anthony Eden. His opening words were: "I fear I have grave news to give to the House… it becomes my painful duty…" and he went on to describe in appallingly blunt and frank terms the conditions prevailing in the Thailand-Burma railway camps. He talked of both general conditions and individual atrocities.



From:
Name BAKER, L.C.C.
Nationality BRITISH
Rank CAPTAIN.
Camp No 2 TOW THAILAND

Room 920
111 Sutter Street
San Francisco
California
U.S.A.

To: MRS B. C. BAKER.
GLENTHORNE
WYE
ENGLAND



IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY

I am interned in THAILAND
My health is excellent.
~~I am ill in hospital.~~
~~I am working for pay.~~
~~I am not working~~
Please see that FAMILY is taken care

My love to you
Barry

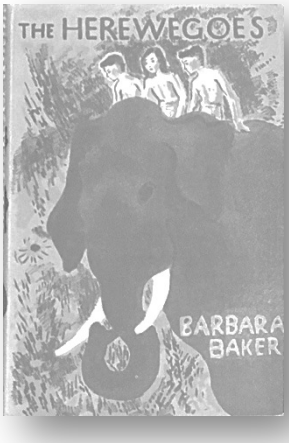
Very sadly, a year later, on May 10th 1945, Barbara and Alan had the cable that every parent dreads, their beloved son John had died in an air accident in Calgary. He had flown 115 sorties and had a DFC and Bar.

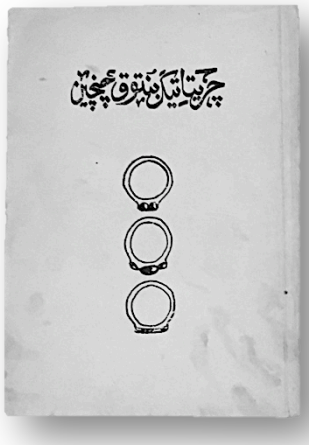
On the day that Hirohito accepted the terms to end war in the East, Barbara wrote to Phyllis:

> Yesterday, when I heard all the sirens & the bells & the hooters & the shouts I wept again for John & for all Barton has suffered but now I must be full of hope as I am sure you are. You are both young & food & happiness & long hours of sleep will restore nearly all that these years have taken from you.

Barton and their middle son, Alan, both survived. Their work in San Francisco did not end immediately; it increased. Barbara wrote: 'We have been very busy for several days not leaving the office until 11pm. & getting back there at 5 or 6 am with a bit of sleep in the day time.' In his memoirs Barton recorded that: 'Several ex POWs have since told me that they had heard these broadcasts and had recognised my mother's voice.'

Barbara and Alan returned to the UK in 1946 and Barbara with enormous courage wrote another children's story. This is *The Herewegoes* whose opening pages I quoted at the beginning. The children in the story embark on the evacuation boat, but their mother never appears. Their ship is bombed and they land in the water in lifejackets wearing their magical coats – the Herewegoes – that make them invisible. They fetch up with a steward on an island near their birthplace Penang and meet up with an old Malayan friend. They have adventures with elephants, alarming times when their old Japanese dentist turns out to be A Bad Man, and, being a children's story, it all ends happily. During the writing process, Barbara must have thought of her sister on the SS *Kuala* and, with her heart full of sadness for John, can be forgiven for making little Jeremiah into a hero. *The Herewegoes* was published in 1948, and in 1951 a Malayan edition of *The Three Rings* came out.





We children found Barbara's stories of life in Malaya thrilling. She and Alan shared their love of the East with a whole generation and this has resulted in several marriages across the races in our wider family.

Finally, Alan never stopped work. In a letter near the end of his life (1969), he wrote:

> I only work now for the BBC Indonesian Section, who are still freely listened to in Indonesia, [I work] for peace, a little common sense, and to avoid the self destruction of ignorance and hatred.