



**The Caldwell Family at Joy and Roddy's
Ruby Wedding Anniversary**

The Caldwells in Malaya

A Short History

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Foreword

Ever since the family returned to the UK, Mum and Dad would always be telling us of things that had happened in Malaya.

Dad died 21 years ago and since then we have, as a family, been asking Mum to write down her memories of life in Malaya, for the grandchildren. Unfortunately she resisted all attempts to get her to do it.

It was only when my husband Ian and I decided to return once again to Malaysia for a, “trip down memory lane” holiday, that the idea of this piece of writing came about. Our friends Melissa and Tony Mash were to accompany us on the trip.

When I started to tell Mum of our planned itinerary, suddenly all the stories came flowing out and I started documenting them. Every day there would be several phone calls with rekindled memories. I then asked my sisters for their memories and together with my own I started to compile the family memories of our life in Malaya. Here they are.

The History of the Caldwells in Malaya

Background

Roderick Alastair Caldwell was born in Paisley, Scotland 29th May 1926. He did his engineering apprenticeship at Fleming and Fergusons dredge builders in Paisley.

He got a job with Osborne and Chappel as a tin mining engineer along with some of his friends and arrived in Malaya in September 1947. He later got his Dredge Master's certificate.



**The Young bachelors arriving in Malaya.
Roddy is in the centre, bottom row.**

He worked at Hong Kong Tin first in 1947 and then Petaling Tin in 1948-9. His manager there was George Kidd who was married to a Chinese lady called Irene. This was the time of the Communist insurgents and the period known as the Malayan Emergency. At the time there were many British Police Officers serving with the Federation of Malaya Police, the greatest number having previously served with the Palestine Colonial Police Force. Gill Atherton a British police officer was one of his friends as well as Dickie Bird another police sergeant and Bill Stafford a police detective. This was a dangerous period to be a European tin miner or rubber planter.



Armoured Cars and police officers protected the miners.



A Bucket Dredge in operation, probably at Keramat Mine, Bidor.

Romance

Joy Patricia Caldwell [nee Jones] was born August 11th 1928 in Birmingham, England.

Both Joy and Roddy belonged to the Ted Heath Big Band Fan Club. Joy was secretary of the Birmingham branch. One of Roddy's friends in Malaya, McDougall, sent Joy a letter supposedly from Roddy asking her to be his Pen friend.

Joy replied to the letter but Roddy, unaware of what had happened, sent a letter back saying he had not written to her and was not interested. Joy then sent him back the original letter and, when he received it, he realised what had happened .So he apologised and they corresponded for 3 years .Years latter when ever they talked about McDougall they always said "God Bless McDougall" as without him they would not have met.

When Roddy returned home on leave in 1950, Joy was waiting for him at Southampton. They got engaged within 3-weeks and Roddy extended his leave so they could get married .They married in February 1951 in Northfield, Birmingham.



Joy and Roddy's Wedding Day.

Life in Malaya – 1951-1954

In June 1951 they travelled out to Malaya on the MS Willem Ruys. Their route took them from Southampton, Port Said, through the Suez Canal, Aden, Bombay, Columbo, and, after several weeks, landed in Singapore.

This must have been a very comfortable start to married life. Owned by Royal Rotterdam Lloyd, the ship was less than 4-years old and was the pride of the fleet with every modern convenience for its passengers.



An Artist's Impression of MS Willem Ruys.



Tourist Class Lounge Bar and Main Dining Room.

On arrival in Singapore they travelled up to and stayed overnight in KL but they had not realised that it was the Races week so all the better hotels were full. They drove round and round the city with the taxi driver taking them to one hotel after another, each one looking worse than the previous, until they finally found one that had a room. They did not realise until they had checked in that it was in fact a brothel!! Joy was petrified and refused to leave the room until the next morning. She lay awake all night listening to the noises surrounding them. The rooms had open partitions at the top of the walls so there was no mistaking what was happening in the adjoining bedrooms!



Newly Weds Arrive in Malaya

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Lahat

Their first home in Malaya was in Lahat. Here, whenever Roddy was on night duty, he would go off to work at 7 pm till 7 am and, as it was not a very safe area, Joy would lock herself in the bedroom. She would hear the Jagahs (Special Constables) patrolling around the outside of the house. She would often stay awake reading all night, and she would only sleep when Roddy returned in the morning.



The first home at Lahat



The Jagahs with the Amah Jam and her son Guy.

The Special Constables were generally Malay volunteers who after a brief period of training were given firearms and tasked to protect European miners and planters who were targeted for ambush and assassination by the Communist terrorists.

Hence, special constables with armoured trucks were used to protect them while on the way to and from the mines and

permanent platoons of constables would patrol the European homes and plantations.

Both Joy and Roddy also had to have firearms training as, like all Europeans, they were prime targets for the insurgents to attack. Joy was known locally as “Annie Oakley”. Their vehicles were also armoured plated and the Jagahs were always on guard. Curfews were often imposed after dark.



Joy as “Annie Oakley”.



The Armoury.

Several expats were killed. One day, while living in Lahat, the Amah came running to Joy shouting that Tuan had been shot. She immediately thought it was Roddy that had been killed. It turned out to be one of the relief managers from another estate who had gone down to the local coffee shop to phone head office. The terrorists came up behind him and shot him in the back of the head. The intended victim was the manager of the Estate. Another local manager, Ev Dabb, was also ambushed and killed on the road. Duncan McKay working at Ipoh Tin near Puchong also had an attempt on his life. He was on his way to the dredge for his night shift when the attack occurred; one of the Jagahs with him was killed. On hearing the shots the other Europeans and special constables rushed to help. One terrorist was killed.

George Wilson, the 39-year old assistant manager at the Waterfall Estate (near Rawang) was ambushed and also killed. This was tragic as the shooting was witnessed by his 6-year old son, Georgie. Then a terrorist told young Georgie to run home. Mrs Wilson, having heard the shots was hiding in the rubber when she heard Georgie shouting “Mummy, Mummy, Daddy’s dead”. It was said that 150 insurgents took part in that ambush.



Joy with the Wilderman girls.

In Lahat they were also friendly with a Dutch family called the Wildermans.

Tekka, Taiping

In 1952 they moved to Tekka Taiping. At this time there were very few European women living on the estates. Often the planters and dredgers would have a night out in the local town, go to see a film and then have a Chinese meal. As Joy would often be the only woman with a 12 man escort, she enjoyed these evenings!!



Tekka Taiping

they wanted beef they would have to order it several weeks in advance and it came from Australia. There was also an ice cream parlour there called the “Milk Bar”.

When Joy was pregnant she had to fly to her anti natal appointments in a small plane due to the danger of ambushes from the bandits. Once she no longer could fly she went in an armoured plated car with a police escort. A few weeks before she gave birth she went to stay with friends, Bill and Rena Lilly and their two sons, who lived near Batu Gajah to await the baby’s arrival.

Alison Isobel was born at Batu Gajah Hospital on the 14th June 1952. As the company car had broken down Roddy did not get to the hospital to see Joy and Alison for four days.

When they were living in Tekka Taiping, the wife of the dredge master, Bill Pearce, was very snooty and aloof and did not mix with the other women. She would only allow Joy to have the company car once a week so that she could go into town to do the shopping. Joy and Roddy enjoyed shopping at Whiteaway and Laidlaw’s department store in Ipoh. They had branches in Penang, Singapore, KL Ipoh and Teluk Anson. This store was nicknamed “Right Away and Paid For “, as it operated on cash payments only.

They would also shop at the Cold Storage, Ipoh for fresh dairy products and meats. If



Alison born 14th June 1952

During those four days Joy had a stream of visits from all the bachelors from the other estates, including Alex Williams and Tony Hall who came to visit in his red sports car.

According to Joy he was tall, dark and very handsome. He came several times armed with flowers and chocolates. Every time a male visitor came the nurses would ask Joy “is this one your husband?” and she had to keep saying “No not this one”.

As Alison was a British Citizen, her birth had to be registered in the UK first at Somerset House, before it could be registered in Malaya and, as a result, her birth was not registered for 6 months.

Alec Morrow and Alan Craig were both assistant dredge masters at Taiping and would often spend time at the Caldwell house, playing with Alison.



Joy and Alison with Alec Morrow and Alan Craig

When Alison was about 6-months old she had been put in her pram on the veranda at the side of the house. Joy tipped the basket of toys into the pram for her to play with, then realised that there was a snake curled up in the basket. It had fallen asleep, but was now stirring in the pram. With one swipe using the basket she threw the snake out of the pram into the garden! It was also about this time that one day while getting Alison’s bath ready, Joy had placed her on the table and Alison managed to roll off it, falling to the floor and hitting her head!! (This explains a lot!) Because Roddy was on nights and sleeping and not wanting to wake him, Joy picked her up and ran to the top of the garden, trying to stop her crying.

Killing Hall Tin

By Alison's first birthday in 1953 they were living at Killing Hall Tin. Although friends of the Caldwell's, Peggy and Matt Cameron and Bill and Margaret Boyd lived on the other side of Puchong they used to meet up with their families regularly. Bruce and Ella Leith were also friends and neighbours.

Jane was their Indian Amah then and her father Anthony was their cook.



The house at Killing Hall Tin.



Alison and Joy with Bruce and Ella Leith.

Despite the rigours of living in a country virtually at war with a murderous Communist regime intent on removing all European planters and miners - travelling in armoured cars, the ever present Jagahs and gun toting husbands, sworn in as Auxiliary Policemen, life went on as normal as possible.

Yes, ladies being ladies made sure that their social life would remain as undisturbed as it could be in the circumstances. There was always time to meet up with friends for morning coffee or afternoon tea, a walk in the park or relaxing under an umbrella.



Ladies in the afternoon sun.

Kinta Estate, Batu Caves

In 1954 they then moved to Kinta near the Batu Caves, close to KL. Whilst there, Joy taught children dance at the nearby Army camp. It was at this time they advertised for an Amah to look after Alison (she was such a handful!!). A lovely Chinese girl came for an interview and was offered the job. It was later discovered that she had had leprosy and was just at the end of her treatment. She had been disowned by her family and had been living in a home with other people suffering from the disease. She had been told she could get a job but was on strict instructions not to work with children until she was fully cleared. But she had defied them and had got the job with the Caldwells. This was only discovered when someone came from the home to visit her and discovered what her job was. Apparently all hell broke loose and she was sent back to the home. Joy and Roddy were really upset as she was a lovely girl and they had become very fond of her. They then heard she had gone missing, and it was thought she had run away with her boyfriend. The doctor from the Leprosy Home came to the house to examine Alison to make sure she had not contracted the disease. The doctor and his wife then became friends of Joy and Roddy.

Evenings were often spent in the Sergeants Mess at the local Army Camp and it was here they became friends with Dave and Ruby Johnston. Dave was driver to the British High Commissioner General Templer. They remained friends for many years.



An evening in the Army Mess with Bruce and Ella Leith.

Then in late 1954 they returned to the UK, with a view of staying, as they were expecting a second child.

Life in Malaya – 1955-1957

Patricia Ann (Trisha) was born on 10th February 1955 at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

They found, however, they both missed Malaya too much. So Roddy applied for and got a job with Anglo-Oriental (Malaya) Limited. In May 1955 Roddy returned to work in Malaya at Kinrara where he was a relief manager, and Joy followed when Trisha was 10- months old with the two girls. They were able to renew their friendship with George and Irene Kidd who lived nearby and that friendship continued for many years.

They were only in Kinrara for a few months before moving to Kampa Malaya Tin Dredging Company and then in 1957 to Kramat Tin which was deep in the jungle.

Kinrara Memories

It was while living at the former that they had notification from the local police that the army had killed some bandits in the jungle behind the house. The house was on a hill. They were going to bring the insurgents dead bodies tied to poles down the side of our house. Joy asked the Amah to take the girls up to their bedroom so that they did not witness the upsetting sight but the Amah did not want to miss out on seeing what was happening so she took the girls into the bathroom where they all stood on the bath to look out of the side window and saw all that was happening!



Joy and Roddy with Irene and George Kidd and friends.

Another memory was that the local goat herder when collecting his goats realised that one was missing. The villagers then found a very large sleepy python with a goat inside it. Once pythons have eaten they become very docile and give very little

resistance. The locals laid the snake on a plank of wood and straddled it across two bikes. They then brought it down to the office. Roddy sent a message to Joy to tell her to bring the girls down to see it. By then it had been stretched out and tied to a tree. A local child went to touch it and the snake swiped its tail, knocking the child over. The locals then dragged the snake to the river where they decapitated it; slit its stomach to cut out the goat (dead of course). They then sliced up the snake and that night there was a banquet in the kampong of roast snake, duck and goat. Joy and Roddy turned down the offer of joining in the feast!

Although she did not go for the snake banquet Trish did have a taste for eating the wild life. Joy caught her munching away at the eggs of a chit chat (house Gecko) lizard she had found. She thought they were sweets and ended up having to have her mouth washed out.

Kampa Malaya

While living at Kampa Malaya one of Joy and Roddy's friends was an Australian bachelor called Paul Buckley. Paul had an Indian live-in girlfriend called Jean. Paul's mother was coming to visit him for 12 months from Australia so he moved Jean into a local boarding house as he did not want his mother to know about her.

Mrs Buckley was quite astute and when Paul was not around found the key to a locked cupboard and found a lot of Jean's belongings so told Paul she knew he was living with someone and she wanted to meet her. She got on very well with Jean and approved of Paul's choice of partner. Unfortunately, Joy and Roddy lost touch once Paul returned to Australia at the end of his contract.

The manager of the dredge where Paul worked was called Eric Davis and Joy and Roddy got on very well with him and his Chinese wife. They had a lovely little boy.

One day while in the office Roddy noticed a Malay man loitering on the bridge. He was on a bike and was cycling round in circles on the bridge. Just then a Chinese man in a car drove carefully across the bridge. The man on the bike appeared to deliberately ride his bike at the car and was knocked off. Roddy having witnessed the scene phoned for the police and ran down to help. The man on the bike accused the driver of deliberately knocking him off his bike. It ended up as a court case and Roddy had to go as a witness. The Malayan judge having heard the evidence dismissed the case in favour of the car driver. A few days later the Chinese gentleman and his wife came to visit Roddy as they had a gift for him and wanted to thank him for being a witness, as it was felt the bike rider had deliberately driven in to him so that he could claim compensation. It turned out the car driver was the son of a soft drinks magnate who owned a National company. He and his wife became friends of the Caldwells and would often visit.

Kramat Tin

When at Kramat Tin at Bidor meals were distributed daily from a central kitchen due to the food rationing – this was to prevent the local population passing food stuff onto the insurgents. Alison and Trish used to go down to the kitchen at lunchtime and after everyone had been given their meals, the girls would coax the cook to let them each have a big piece of the rice crust from the pans. They loved it. One day having made their daily visit for their treat they were walking up the road, bare footed and only wearing a pair of briefs, when coming towards them was Roddy with one of the company managers. The manager in a rather disgusted voice asked who on earth were these children and Roddy, very shamefaced, had to admit they were his!!!



The Ragamuffin Children.



Waiting for the weekly wages drop.

Every week there was a wages drop. A local dentist from Ipoh volunteered to fly a small plane around the area dropping off the wages at different estates. Alison and Trisha regularly accompanied the guards to the drop off site and would stand at the road side overlooking a large flag with a number on it, so that the pilot knew where to do the drop.

Whilst living at Kramat Tin, the manager of the Rubber estate had a swimming pool at his house. All the local children, including Alison and Trish, used to swim and play in the pool. One day Joy discovered them both frantically scratching their heads and on inspection discovered they had become hosts to head lice. In those days there were no special treatments for head lice, so the girls ended up having rather severe hair cuts and then their heads washed in kerosene to kill the lice! They were not allowed in the pool again.



Alison, Trisha and Friends.

Merdeka

The Federation of Malaya achieved its independence from British Colonial rule at the stroke of midnight on 30th August 1957. For Malaya “Merdeka” had come at last!

The formal ceremony took place at the newly built Merdeka Stadium in Kuala Lumpur when The Duke of Gloucester, representing HM The Queen, presented Tunku Abdul Rahman with the instrument of independence. However there were thousands of small ceremonies that took place across the country and Kramat Tin was no exception.



Merdeka Day 31st August 1957 at Kramat Tin.

The family then came home on leave after Merdeka. During this time Roddy got notification that various tin mines were being closed and he was made redundant. He then applied and got a job with Harrison and Crossfield's, Golden Hope Rubber Estate Limited working in the Palm Oil Industry and the family returned to Malaya in 1958.

Life in Malaya – 1958-1963

Selaba Estate

They lived for 12 months on Selaba Estate, near Teluk Intan, while the Palm Oil Factory was being constructed. The estate was originally part of Selaba Rubber Estates Limited, registered in 1909 with the objective of acquiring estates in Lower Perak. For many years the estate prospered with rubber but as raw rubber prices fell the estate started to switch to Oil Palm. This required a new Oil Palm factory. Roddy's task was to build it.



Selaba Factory being built.

Morib

They were then sent to Morib for 6-months in 1959 to cover the manager's leave. While there Joy and Roddy were invited to the Sultan of Selangor's birthday Tea Party at the Palace just up the road. It was held on the 13th of May 1959.



Joy on her way to the Palace.



The Sultan of Selangor arrives.

Joy's cousin Jill and her husband John lived in Singapore. John worked for the Australian High Commission. They had two boys Joby and Jamie who were a little younger than Alison and Trisha. They would often come to stay and did so while the Caldwell's were living in Morib, a lot of fun was had on the beach across the road from the bungalow.

Whenever the Caldwell's went to visit Jill and John in Singapore, they would put a big mattress in the back of the station wagon car so that the girls could sleep while they drove through the night, arriving in time for breakfast.

The manager's bungalow where they lived, had a swimming pool in the garden but Alison and Trish have memories of this being empty while they lived there. A while after the manager and his family returned from leave, the Caldwell's heard of the tragic death of the manager's twin daughters who had both drowned in the pool.

By then the Caldwell's had returned to **Selaba Estate**.



Jill and John with Roddy and the Girls.



The Official Opening of the Oil Mill, Selaba Estate.

Here at Selaba they had a lovely modern bungalow (now demolished) with orange trees in the garden. The bungalow was set in a clearing amongst the rubber plantation. They had chickens in the gardens and monkeys from the surrounding rubber plantation would come down into the garden to pinch the feed and the eggs. Roddy used to take pot shots at them with his pistol. The chicken food attracted rats and Kebun, (Malay for gardener), used to kill them by stamping on them! The girls also remember Roddy shooting dead a rabid stray dog that had got into the garden.



The Bungalow at Selaba Estate.



Kebun.

Alison and Trisha enjoyed roaming around the garden and could often see the monkeys in the trees. Once when Trish had been in trouble (again) she decided she was going to run away from home to live with the King of the monkeys, so she would be the Queen and, with a little encouragement from Alison, they packed her bag and set off to the perimeter fence to wait till it got dark so she could make her escape.

Fortunately Joy came looking for them and was astounded when she found the packed bag. Needless to say the girls got a strict telling off.

It was whilst living at Selaba Estate that, one Sunday afternoon, having been sent to their bedroom to rest (Joy and Roddy always went for a “lie down” on a Sunday afternoon !) Trisha and Alison noticed a large snake had slithered under the door and was approaching the bed. The two of them stood on the bed clutching each other screaming for help .Within seconds, Joy and Roddy appeared at the door closely followed by Kebun who, armed with a machete, killed the snake.

The girls also remember there being an enormous beehive in a tree. Some of the workers from the factory had been sent to deal with it. They smoked it out, but this resulted in the bees swarming and several people getting stung.

They can also remember the Circus coming to town and the circus train coming along the road in front of the bungalow and being allowed out to stand at the road-side to watch the parade.



The reunion with Arjunan in 1993.

Pontianak was the local “mad woman” and the girls were terrified of her. She often could be seen walking down the drive especially at dusk and the girls would run indoors shouting “Pontianak, Pontianak”.

The Caldwelles had a lovely Indian driver for the family called Arjunan. He used to drive Alison to her school, the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus, in Teluk Anson every day.

In 1993, Joy returned to Malaysia and Teluk Intan with Alison, Ian and their boys Alastair and Ben. Their visit had a very special mission, to take Roddy’s ashes to be scattered in Malaysia (as he had requested).

They visited Selaba Estate while they were there and were able to meet up with Arjunan. It was a very tearful reunion.

Ah Lan was the main Amah and could often be seen hanging out the washing with a cigarette hanging from her bottom lip but she always had a smile for you.

Being able to employ such wonderful local people to look after the family, the house and gardens was a privilege the girls will never forget.

They also remember Joy taking them to the local Chinese hairdressers to have their hair permed, it took hours and they came home with a mass of frizz.



Al Lan at work.



The Frizz.

Friends in Teluk Anson included Noreen Beuclerk, whose husband was Bank manager in town.



Noreen Beuclerk.

Fire Walking



Along the road.

The fire walking ceremony happened annually at the Selaba Kampong on Selaba Estate. This is a Hindu festival originating in Tamil Nadu, South India that is celebrated during the month of Aipasi (or Aippasi) of the Tamil calendar - in the Gregorian calendar, a day in October or November. The ceremony is in honour of Draupati Amman, who is considered to be the incarnation of Mariamman, the Hindu goddess of rain.

The family always attended the festival events, which would start early in the morning with a procession led by the priest from the temple, carrying a large brass pot on his head, would walk up the main road then come to a

small river behind the bungalow. The crowds would gather along the bank.

There the priest would go through a cleansing ceremony in the water. Later in the day the family would go to the Kampong to watch the fire walking take place. The Priest would come to the table they were all sitting at, to bless everyone by putting a spot of ash on everyone's forehead.

Alison and Trisha were very frightened of the priest as he was quite scary and would always hide under the table until he had gone.

Hot coals would have been burning all day; these were then raked over in a long furrow. Led by the priest who would walk slowly over the red hot coals, the local men would follow, some walking slowly others running.



Entering the Kampong for the fire walking.

One year Kebun took part. It was amazing the next day to see not a single burn on his feet.



The Hot Coals.

Women and children were not allowed to take part but on one occasion a man slipped through security and ran across the coals holding his child. There was uproar as this practice was banned following a similar occasion in a previous year where the father had fallen and the child had been badly burnt.

Thaipusam

Thaipusam, another Hindu festival celebrated the Tamil community on the full moon in the Tamil month of Thai (January/February), was also enjoyed in Teluk Anson. The colourful festival commemorates the occasion when Parvati gave her son, Lord Murugan (the Hindu god of war, victory, wisdom and love) a Vel "spear" so he could vanquish the evil demon Soorapadman, known to be the tormentor of all good souls in the universe.



Man running across the fire carrying a child.

There would be a big bathing ceremony in the morning in the river. The participants were then put into a trance-like state while large meat hooks were pushed through the flesh on their backs and they would then pull small carriages attached to these hooks. Some would have skewers pushed through their cheeks, while others would have cage-like devices (Kavadis) placed over their shoulders with spears going into their bodies.



Carrying the Kavadi.

They would then parade around the town for several hours with drums playing loudly - all very exciting.

More Selaba

On one occasion the river at the back of the bungalow flooded into the garden and sandbags had to be placed around the bungalow. The water resulted in lots of centipedes and these could be seen climbing the walls. Fish could be seen swimming around the house.

One night after a few drinks Roddy thought he had had too much and was hallucinating as he could see a frog climbing the wall, then jumping down and repeating the whole process. He was very relieved when Joy asked him if he had seen the frog (mind you she might have been hallucinating as well!).

While living there, the family experienced a burglary. It was felt it was an inside job as the glass from the window that had been smashed was on the wrong side of the floor. The police were called but were worse than useless in their investigation. The suspect was the husband of the Amah, who had been the driver to Pierre Renault (the Rubber Plantation manager) and he had recently been sacked but the accusation could not be proven. They lived in the quarters at the back of the house. Shortly afterwards they left.

Pierre and Betty Renault were a French couple. When they went home to Paris on leave, the deputy manager Gilcrest was in charge. He was not very popular with the workers, as he was very strict. The workers went on strike in protest and threatened to riot. Roddy went to see the workers and managed to quell the unrest. When the Renaults returned from leave, Gilcrest was transferred.



Tom Johnstone, Trisha, Joy, Gillcrest, Pierre and Betty Renault.

While living at Selaba Joy had a little scooter which she used, to go to shop in the market in town. One day while coming home from market, a motor cyclist overtook her and clipped her wing mirror. This caused her to swerve and fall off the scooter.

The accident happened outside a local coffee shop. People came to help, Roddy was sent for and Mr Kumaran the estate dresser (or medic), as Joy had injured her arm. She never went to the market on the scooter again.



The Clock Tower in Teluk Anson Town Centre.

Visitors and a New Arrival

While living in Malaya both Joy and Roddy's parents came to visit.



Roddy's parents, James and Janet.



Joy's parents, Lillian and Ted.

And Fiona Jean was born at Batu Gajah on 30th May 1961.



Fiona at Batu Gajah Hospital.



Ah Moy and Ah Lin with Fiona.

Two young girls Ah Moy and Ah Lin were employed to look after her (she was such a handful, still is!!)

Gran and Granddad Caldwell came to visit for 6 months. Alison has memories of her Granddad walking her round and round the gardens teaching her the times tables till she was perfect (she still is to this day!!). The girls can remember on one of these occasions seeing a monkey up a tree mimicking Granddad Caldwell as he smoked his pipe. The monkey grabbed a stick and was doing the same.

The Lower Perak Club

During their stay the Lower Perak Club was opened and they went with Joy and Roddy to the Opening Evening where the club was opened by the Sultan of Perak, the Sultan of Selangor and Prince Zubia were also there.



The Sultan was presented with a silver salver by Jack Whyte who was Australian. Jack was the President of the club and he and his wife Elaine were friends of Joy and Roddy (they had twin boys) as was Prince Zubia, he used to visit their home often and enjoy their hospitality.

During Gran and Granddad Caldwell's visit the girls remember going to KL and in their best dresses being taken to the Coq D'Or (a very posh restaurant) for lunch. Half way through the meal, getting bored Alison decided to visit the Ladies Room. Never having seen a bidet before she started to fiddle around with the taps and the next thing a fountain of water shot into the air and she got drenched. She looked quite a sight coming back into the restaurant very soggy.

The European community had an active social life. Because they were widespread across the area, they would often hold parties when people would stay the weekend. Once a month the Vicar would come to stay and hold a short service then they would all have a party. The vicar liked his whisky!

Their other friends in Teluk Anson included Dick and Louise Griffiths. Dick was a manager of a rubber plantation up river and Louise was a doctor in Teluk Anson. They met while both working in Malaya and married. Louise worked at the hospital in town; she then went into practice with Tony Morrow, an Irish doctor. Going to visit them involved a boat trip up the river through the jungle to their plantation.

Neighbours at that time were Gillian and Henry Russell Smith at Sebrang Estate, and Vera and Alex Russell who were also rubber planters who had a son called Jonathan, he was sent back to boarding school in the UK.

Tom Johnston, a bachelor who worked on Selaba Estate, was a firm favourite of Alison and Trish.

One Sunday, while at the Nova Scotia Plantation swimming pool, the girls having been told to stay in the shallow end but decided to go to the deep end and play a game of throwing their rubber rings into the water then jumping into the rings. The first few times were fine, but the next time Alison tried, she missed and started to panic trying to reach the ring. As she went under the water again, suddenly Tom spotted what was happened and jumped into the pool fully clothed with another chap to rescue her. Needless to say she got a firm telling off, but was so frightened by the experience it has stayed



Nova Scotia Plantation Pool.



In the swimming pool

with her ever since, thus explaining why she does not like to get her head under water.

Alison returned to Scotland at the end of 1961 to live with her grandparents so that she could go to school in the UK. She hated the cold weather, having to wear clothes, and missed her mum's roast potatoes.

After Alison went back to the UK, Trisha can remember getting into trouble a couple of times (did not have her big sister to guide her!).

There was a garage at the back of the bungalow that was filled with old packing cases etc. The garage was filled with rats and Trish was forbidden to go in there but because she knew a cat had got her kittens there, she would sneak in to see them.

Another time, when she was about 6, she got into big trouble as she was caught stealing money from the living quarters of the estate workers at the back of the bungalow (she had nowhere to spend the money). Roddy, on finding out what had happened, frog marched her to where all the workers were, made her apologise and hand the money back. Then he put her over his knee and much to the amusement of everyone, he tanned her backside.

She said she felt very embarrassed but never did it again.

Trisha was taken ill with Dengue Fever and measles and was very poorly. Fiona was also very ill. When she was given her triple vaccine she had a reaction and Mr Kumeran, the estate dispenser, rushed to the house and had to give her an injection of adrenalin. Both girls ended up being hospitalised at Batu Gajah.



Trisha and Fiona.

Alison was not the only family member to have an encounter with snakes. One day, when Fiona was about a year old, Trisha was pushing her around the garden in her pram and they suddenly came upon a snake on the path, she screamed and ran back to the house, leaving Fiona with the snake. She said she was going for help! Again Kebun came to the rescue.

Another time when Fiona was about 10 months old, she was sitting in the playpen playing. Joy came out of the kitchen and suddenly saw a very large monitor lizard making its way towards Fiona. Joy screamed and the family dog came running into the house, picked up the lizard and took it into the garden and killed it.

She also remembers there being a python snake with its babies found in one of the big drains outside the house. The amah and Kebun poured boiling water onto the snakes killing them instantly - all very gruesome.

It seems as if Trisha was always getting into trouble. One day while out playing in the garden with her dolls, she was enticed by two young local boys who were goat minding. They offered to take her to see some baby goats. She left the garden and was following them into the rubber trees when Joy noticed she was no longer in the garden. She spotted her in the distance and ran after her. The two boys ran off. Immediately a search of the estate was set up but the boys were never found.

The rest of the family returned to the UK finally in 1963 as Joy and Roddy wanted to keep the family together and did not want to send the girls back to boarding school in the UK.

They settled in Birmingham.



Fiona cooling off.

The Trip Down Memory Lane (2013)



With Sister Sanish.

Returning last July to Malaysia was fantastic. So many memories came flooding back. Being able to visit Batu Gajah Hospital and to actually be taken to the delivery room where I was born all those years ago was very emotional and a few tears were shed. The welcome we got from Sister Sanish was just lovely. We even were able to pinpoint the room Mum was in after I was born.

Then on to Teluk Anson (now Teluk Intan), and my old school, the SMK Convent School. Again we got a very nice welcome from the Principal, Staff and Pupils. The teacher who showed us around the school, Tan Bee Na, took great delight in telling all the girls that I had been at the school before she was even born!



Today's School Badge.

The girls thought this was very funny and I felt very old!!! The pupils were a delight. The playground and canteen brought back more memories. Teluk Anson certainly has grown as a town but it was nice to see the familiar water tower and market area.

Selaba Estate was next on the trip. We were welcomed and given a guided tour of the factory dressed in steel-capped boots, high visibility jackets, and helmets. Boy was it hot! What a surprise when we discovered the young Malaysian engineer who was showing us around had been born in the

maternity hospital in New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA, as was our friend Melissa who was with us. It's a small world.

The trip to Perak was made complete with a visit to the old Osborne and Chappel tin mining dredge, TT5, the last dredge in Malaysia. This brought back to life all the old photos we had of Dad when he worked as a Dredge Master.



The Last Tin Dredge in Malaysia TT5.

The final leg of our pilgrimage was to Penang and Batu Ferringi Beach where my Dad's ashes are. It was his wish that when he died he be returned to Malaysia - again a very emotional moment.

The trip really rekindled our love for the country. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming, the scenery stunning and it is all-round a beautiful place. I was so pleased that we managed to get back and Malaysia will always have a special place in the hearts of the Caldwell family.

Despite the fact that the above has been cobbled together with thoughts and memories from all the family, I could think of no better way than to end this set of happy family memories than with a set of personal quotes from Mum, Trisha and Fiona.

Alison Cotterill

Quotes

“When I went to Malaya in 1951 it was a big adventure. The Emergency was on and at times it could be quite frightening but things settled down after Independence. I loved Malaya and have returned many times on holiday. I think about my life there and how happy our time was in such a beautiful country.”

Joy Caldwell

“Spending most of my childhood in Malaya was a happy, magical time. Full of treasured memories that I often look back on.”

Trisha Roberts

“I was only 2-years old when we returned from Malaya so I don’t have any clear memories of my own, but my family have conveyed many stories of their life in Malaya. Their accounts are so descriptive, informative and fun-filled that I almost feel I have lived the whole experience myself. Malaya has meant so much to my family and will always be a part of our lives. I pass these stories onto my own family and hopefully one day they will get the opportunity to visit and truly appreciate the beauty of the country.”

Fiona Mortimer

The End