Haverhill People



Frederick (Fred) Trevor Baker

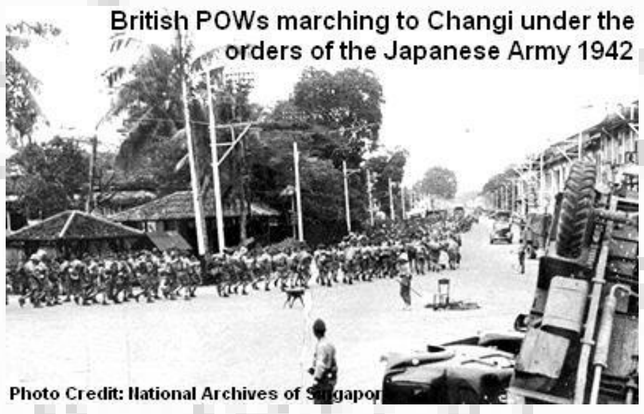
… was a milkman - did he deliver your milk?

Fred was born in Haverhill in 1915, the youngest child of John Henry Baker and his wife Lily Clara nee Wilson. He had two sisters and three brothers. His father was originally from Gt Chesterford, and his mother was from Duxford. They had moved to Mill Road, Haverhill about 1906. John Henry Baker ran a Fruit and Veg business in the town and was also involved in the Salvation Army. He died in 1932.

Like most local children, Fred attended the Cangle School. When he left school he found employment as a milkman – a job he really enjoyed.



In 1939, Fred joined the army as a private in the Suffolk Regiment. In 1941, he was one of the 5th Suffolks bound for the Middle East but after the attack on Pearl Harbour they were diverted to Singapore. On 15 Feb, 1942, a fortnight after arriving, the Allies surrendered becoming Japanese POWs. Fred and his comrades spent the next 3½ years enduring terrible conditions. He finally returned home in Oct 1945.



British POWs marching to Changi under the orders of the Japanese Army 1942

Photo Credit: National Archives of Singapor

Soon after his repatriation, Fred left the Army but with little work available he re-joined the Army. While on a Training Exercise in 1948 he met Betty Smith from Dunstable.



Betty M Smith

Fred and Betty married in September 1948 and lived in Dunstable for two years. Fred was in and out of hospital with what would now be recognised as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - then it was called suffering with his nerves!

In 1951, Fred and Betty decided to move to Haverhill. They found a house on the newly built Duddery Hill which was to become home for their three sons. After a spell of trying different jobs, at the Haverhill Laundry and Bourn Bridge Service Station, he returned to his favourite work - Co-op Milkman.



Fred and Betty Baker: Information provided by their eldest son, Glyn.

The Job: 7 days a week, 1 day off a fortnight. First delivery about 5:30am.
Battery operated Milk floats, unheated and the door left open for ease of exit.
In the 1960s they had Bedford vans with doors and a heater!
Milk was pasteurised and bottled on the premises.
In January, 1963 snow stopped Fred delivering milk to the top of Wratting Road.



Fred was diagnosed with bowel cancer and after a 6-week illness, died on 22nd November, 1968.

Haverhill Family History Group

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