

Barbara Joy GADD – Baptist Missionary Society

The Minutes of the General Committee reported in November 1939: “The following BMS students are in residence at Carey Hall, viz:- Misses F Aurora Brook [subsequently posted to Ratnapura], Nora Fleming, Barbara Gadd, Eileen Motley, Muriel Ponchaud, Kathleen Shuttleworth & Eileen Wheatley.” The same minutes report that Miss B J Gadd was awarded the Angus Scholarship of £13 6s 8d.

It was reported in the Minutes in April 1943 that Barbara had first been interviewed in October 1938, and that her offer of service had been provisionally accepted on the understanding that she would take a course of training at Carey Hall. She was at Carey Hall between September 1939 and July 1941, and then took up a teaching appointment at Stoke Park Secondary School, Coventry. She had now made a renewed offer of service to the Baptist Missionary Society and had been accepted.

In the Minutes of July 1943 it was reported that Miss B Gadd might take up the study of Bengali but that it would be better that she should continue teaching until a passage was available to her.

The Minutes of November 1943 report that Miss B J Gadd has accepted an appointment in a school in Kent [Sittingbourne].

Miss B J Gadd left for Colombo on 15th November 1943, accompanied by Miss Lily Reece.

The Minutes of April 1944 announced that Miss Gadd was to succeed Miss Brook at Ratnapura.

The Minutes of November 1944 report, with regard to the Girls Boarding School, that it had been decided that the school should be brought back to Colombo at the earliest possible opportunity, and that Miss Gadd should be Acting Principal until the end of December. Miss Gadd had been appointed Vice Principal of Matale, and was to commence her duties there as such in January 1945.

She spent Christmas 1944 with Aurora Brook at Ranasinghe Hall, Colombo with Miss Lily Reece, and then went to Matale.

She passed her first year Sinhalese exam with Distinction, the certificate being dated 19th June 1945. In October 1945 she was writing from Ratnapura, and she took a trip to India some time in 1946, returning on 9 May 1946.

Extract from a letter written by Barbara on 22 January 1947 from 46 Kynsey Road, Colombo: “We are dreadfully short of clothes, & textiles are still very difficult. Going about in the heat on trams and buses is very hard on the clothes. Food is getting dearer in some ways – e.g. tea has leapt from 1.75 to 2.25 as a result of these tea-auctions. I expect

you will have to pay more too. Our school tea (the cheap kind) has nearly doubled in price – last term coconuts more than doubled. Now, vegetables are dear because of the floods. I wish we had a medical mission here. The cost of being ill is, as ‘Punch’ would say, “quite prohibitive”.”

She passed her promotion and was confirmed to the status of full missionary in April 1947.

In November 1948 she was suffering from anaemia and being tested for hookworm, although she proved not to have the latter. In December 1948 amoebic dysentery was diagnosed, and she went several times a week to the hospital as an out-patient for injections of strychnine! Miss Bowser at BMS, London HQ commented that she ought to allow herself to be admitted, but she continued to call in to her office to check on post, and to write letters from her sick bed.

She took furlough in 1949, during which time her post was covered by Miss Allsop, who returned to England in early 1950 and settled in Hastings. Barbara returned to Ceylon aboard the P&O Corfu, mentioning in a letter dated 20 January 1950 (probably posted from Port Said) that she was expecting to reach Colombo on 1 February 1950.

In a letter dated 1 October 1950, Barbara reports that 5 school girls were baptised at Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church.

A letter dated 24th October 1951 mentions that Barbara has been taken into hospital in Colombo. Her last letter on file is dated 13 November 1951, at which time she appeared to be out of hospital.