

NADIA EVATT

Lived at Smugglers Way, Shophouse Lane, Farley Green, near Guildford, Surrey
from 1939 to 1983

Main Online Sources: Geni.com, Find My Past, Discovery National Archives, London Gazette, Czech And Slovak Things (CAST), Czechoslovak Military Archive (VHA), Forces War Records, Free Czechoslovak Air Force Association (FCAFA), Wikipedia and referenced websites

Additional information was provided by Nadia's son Humphry Evatt [*in italics*].

NADIA EVATT was born Naděžda Nosková on 26 October 1900 in Jihlava, a town on the border of Moravia and Bohemia. The area was then in the Austro-Hungarian Empire but became part of Czechoslovakia in 1918. The capital city Prague is 80 miles to the north-west and the second city Brno is 55 miles to the south-east.

Nadia left school at 16. From the age of 18 she worked as a secretary in the British Legation in Prague. Through her work and family, she was well connected with many political figures. She was also a great anglophile. She visited her brother in London in 1919 at the new Czechoslovak Embassy and the United States, coming in national costume (kroj) with a troupe to celebrate the foundation of Czechoslovakia. It was in Philadelphia, by the Liberty Bell, that the independence of Czechoslovakia was first proclaimed in the USA, published by Czechoslovakia's Paris-based Provisional Government on 18 October 1918.

NADIA'S PARENTS

Nadia's father was **Karel Otakar Nosek**, a Doctor of Law, born in 1861 in Klattau (now Klatovy) in south-west Bohemia. He died in Prague in 1907 age 45. Her mother was **Isabella Neffová (1870-1940)**, the daughter of **Jan Neff (1832-1905)** *who was an important businessman and patron of the arts and education, friend and patron of Antonín Dvořák. As a Moravian 'buditel' (national revivalist) he had got to know Professor Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (born in Hodonín, Moravia; whose father was born in Kopčany, now in Slovakia), who from 1918 was the first President of the new independent Czechoslovak Republic: "and that had a major effect on how the later generation of the family were successful until 1948".*

NADIA'S BROTHER

Nadia's brother was **Vladimir Nosek**, born in 1895 in Leipnik (now Lipník nad Bečvou) in Moravia. His biography is on the website of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs: https://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/o_ministerstvu/organizacni_struktura/utvary_mzv/specializovany_archiv_mzv/kdo_byl_kdo/nosek_vladimir.html

After graduating from the Prague Business Academy, Vladimir came to Britain *to continue his business studies in Liverpool*, and he also began working as a journalist. From the end of 1915 he was secretary to Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk when both were in London campaigning for the independence of Czechoslovakia from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. When Masaryk became the first President of Czechoslovakia in 1918, Vladimir *was chargé d'affaires* at the first Czechoslovak Embassy in London.

In 1920 Vladimir married Londoner **Margaret Ann Hayes** (1898-1998), *a pianist who had studied on a Scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music, at St George's Hanover Square.* He later served in the new Czechoslovak Republic's embassies in Sweden, Bucharest, Vienna and from 1934 Brazil, where he remained throughout the war. *He helped hundreds of refugees who streamed into Brazil after the fall of France.* He returned to Czechoslovakia in March 1946 but was dismissed by the Ministry after the Communist coup in February 1948. He returned to Rio where he died in 1964. His widow Margaret died over 30 years later in Sussex.

NADIA'S SISTER

Nadia's sister was **Véra Nosková**, born in 1897 in Moravia. *She went to school in Prague and became a Doctor of Pharmacology. She spent some of the inter-war years in Baghdad, including at the Czech hospital founded, with a loan arranged personally by President Masaryk, by Ilona Borská.* Véra died in 1969 in Dubrovnik, then Yugoslavia now Croatia.

NADIA'S FIRST HUSBAND

Nadia married **Jan Evangelista Port** in Prague in June 1922. *The couple were divorced in 1927, finalised in 1930.*

Jan had been born in 1894 *at Dýšina* in the Pilsen (Plzeň) Region of Czechoslovakia. His grandfather was **Jan Robert Port** (1843-1904), *who with his wife edited and produced a newspaper "Plzenské listy" and ran an important printing company, "one of the most important figures in Czech patriotic life in Pilsen in the second half of the 19th century" according to Wikipedia which has his biography and that of his grandson.*

From 1929 to 1932 Jan E Port was a teacher at the Conservatory of Music in Prague, where he taught at the Drama Department of Fine Arts History. He became a Doctor of Philosophy in 1930. From 1921 to 1945 he worked at the Vinohrady Theatre in Prague, first as a secretary, and from 1937 officially as a director. After the war, he worked in the theatre department of the National Museum and as a teacher at the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts (DAMU) in Prague, where he lectured on costume design. *He also directed many theatrical productions for children and was an expert in puppet theatre.*

Jan Port remained in Prague throughout the war under Nazi occupation and after the war during the Communist regime. He died in 1970 in Prague. His literary legacy, numbering over 300 items, is stored in Prague's National Museum.

NADIA IN 1939

Nadia's name is in the Visitors' Book of Smugglers Way in July 1939. She fled permanently to England a couple of weeks before war broke out, when her task had been to 'rescue' the British Ambassador's dog.

"Nadežda Port" (amended later to Evatt) appears in the national Register taken on 29 September 1939 shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War. She was living at Smugglers Way, Farley Green, Surrey (Shophouse Lane added in red) as a divorced woman with two married women of a similar age: Jay Gibson and Adela Mowbray.

Smugglers Way	96	J Gibson	Yay	F	ma's 98	M	unpaid domestic service
This record is officially closed.							
ditto	96	Mowbray	Adela	F	ma's 90	M	unpaid domestic service
This record is officially closed.							
ditto	96	EVATT	Nadia	F	ma's 00	D	unpaid domestic service

All 3 women's occupations were listed as 'unpaid domestic service' - rather odd as the usual terminology for 'housewife' in the Register is 'unpaid domestic duties'. Jay Gibson was a friend of Adela Mowbray, *who was the wife of a good Army friend of Major Evatt's called Harold Mowbray*. The 2 redacted entries are almost certainly the young daughters of Jay Gibson and the Mowbrays. Harold Mowbray does not appear elsewhere in the Register and was probably working for British intelligence by this time (see Appendix 3).

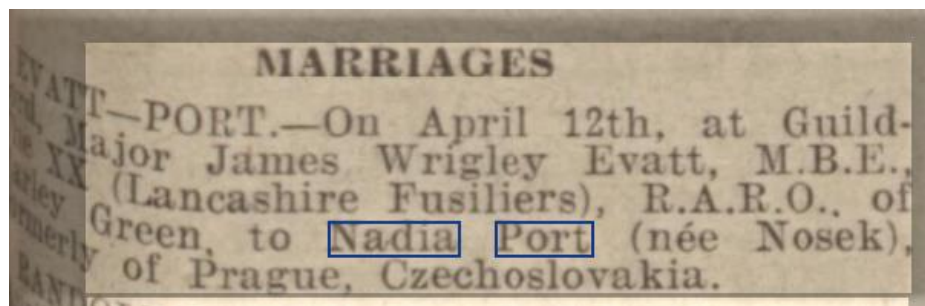
On 15 December 1939, Nadia Port and her daughter were issued with a Certificate of Naturalisation as British citizens. The official notice duly appeared in the London Gazette:

Port, Nadia; Czechoslovakia; Secretary;
Smugglers Way, Farley Green, Nr. Guild-
ford. 29 December, 1939.
Port, Nadia. Child of Nadia Port.

"My mother was lucky to come by an official route and on arrival was granted British naturalisation, due to her connections including that with Vernon Bartlett who was an MP at that time. He had made a career by understanding and writing of Czechoslovak affairs during the 1930s, aided by my uncle Ladi, Vladimir Nosek." See Appendix 2.

NADIA'S SECOND HUSBAND

From the Surrey Advertiser 20 April 1940:



JAMES WRIGLEY EVATT was born on 4 February 1891 at Cando, Towner County, North Dakota, United States. His father was **Rev. Robert Bayly Evatt**, born 1854 in County Monaghan, Northern Ireland. In 1880 Robert married in Belfast Rebecca Phillips (born 1856 in Ireland). At the 1881 census, the couple were living in Applethwaite, Westmorland, England where Robert was an independent minister of religion. Rebecca Evatt died in 1885 in Omskirk, Lancashire. In early 1890 widower Robert Evatt married **Margaret Wrigley** (born 1859 in Bury, Greater Manchester) in Kendal, Westmorland. Shortly afterwards, at the end of March 1890, the couple sailed from Liverpool to New York for a new life in the United States. Sadly, Margaret died a year later, *on 11 March 1891, of puerperal fever following the birth of James on 4 February*. (See Appendix 4 for later information about James' father.)

James was brought up from babyhood in the Lake District by his mother's sister Sarah Scholes Wrigley (1850-1924) and brother James Wrigley (1854-1931). Their father James

Wrigley (1816-1891) had been an important industrialist (in paper manufacturing) and benefactor in Bury who had retired with his family to Windermere. He died in April 1891, a month after his daughter Margaret. His widow was Sarah Wrigley née Grundy (1819-1900).

At the 1901 census, James W Evatt's aunt and uncle, siblings Sarah and James Wrigley, both single, were living 'on own means' at Ibbotsholme, Troutbeck, near Windermere. Young James himself appears in the 1901 census as a 10-year-old boarder at The Craig, a preparatory (private) school in Lake Road, Bowness-on-Windermere, Westmorland. His birthplace is given as USA (British subject).

James W Evatt went on to attend Rugby School and passed out at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 1910. In November 1910 his citizenship status was confirmed when he received a certificate of British naturalisation *signed by Winston Churchill, then Home Secretary*. Shortly afterwards James was promoted from Gentleman Cadet to Second Lieutenant.

At the 1911 census, James W Evatt was an officer in the Lancashire Fusiliers based at Assaye Barracks, South Tidworth, Hampshire. He went on to serve with the 2nd Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers, rising to the rank of Captain. *He served in and was gassed during the First World War and felt the physical and mental effects for the rest of his life*. His First World War medal cards are available at The National Archives and his name is on the wooden memorial plaque in Albury Village Hall <http://www.alburyhistory.org.uk/ww.html> He was a career army officer; for example, in April 1921 he was serving in Dublin during the Irish War of Independence: a couple of his reports are publicly available. By 1927 he was a Major on the Active List. His M.B.E. was a military award *while he was a Captain*.

James W Evatt had married **Helen Alice Chaytor** in 1915 in Worcester where she was born in 1894, the daughter of Rev Charles Chater of Worcester. The couple had 2 children named after themselves: Helen Margaret T (*known as Peggy*) born in 1916 in Worcester and James Leslie Alban (*known as Jim or Bill*) born in 1923 in the Guildford area of Surrey. Helen and her daughter had been living in Hambledon, Surrey at the June 1921 census when their husband/father is recorded as serving with the Army. The couple divorced in 1934.

In the September 1939 Register, Helen Evatt is listed as a divorced woman with private means, living at Jays Wood, The Sands, Sandy Cross, Surrey, where she died in 1972. Her daughter, now with the married name of **Helen Wrench**, was living in a hostel in Marylebone, London as a secretarial worker for the Women's Auxiliary Fire Service. She and her husband Kenneth Benjamin Wrench (1910-2004), a Metropolitan police constable, had had a son Peter in 1938. The couple both remarried after the war.

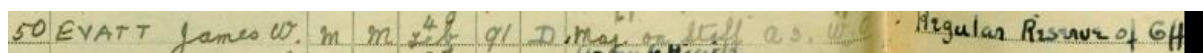
SMUGGLERS WAY (*now totally rebuilt and renamed Upper Field*)

After the separation from his wife, Major James W Evatt lived at 'Unstead Cottage' near Godalming (see Appendix 1). In 1937 he commissioned an architect, E Emerson, with R V Tutte, to design 'Smugglers Way' on a 3-house plot in Upper Field, Farley Green, part of the land of Shophouse Farm. Emerson also built 'Jays Wood' where Major Evatt's first wife settled.

Major Evatt installed a housekeeper called Miss Elkins into his new house and commuted from Clandon station to London where he was employed by the War Office on the care of ex-Servicemen.

In the summer of 1937, Major James W Evatt met Nadia Port, apparently for the first time, while she was on holiday with her daughter in Austria. He was acutely aware of an impending future European war, and no doubt making preparations, as he was travelling around the Balkans, ostensibly with the British Legion.

When the September 1939 National Register was taken, James W Evatt was not at home but staying at the Army & Navy Club in Charing Cross, London, of which he was a member. He was listed as divorced, with the occupation "Major On Staff, A.S.W.O. (Advancement for Social Welfare Organisation), Regular Reserve of Officers (R.A.R.O.):

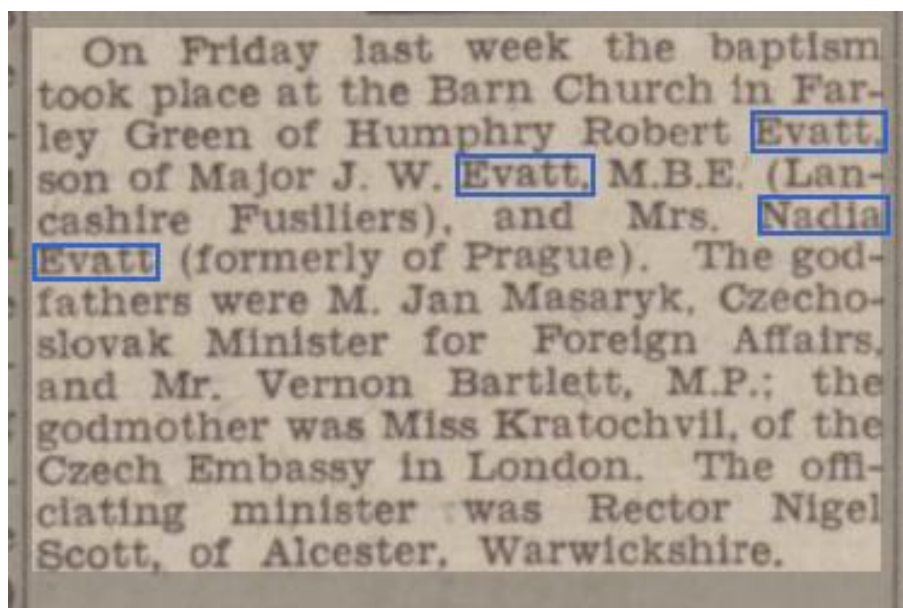


50 EVATT James W. m m 24 91 D. Maj. on Staff A.S.W.O. Regular Reserve of Off

During the war, Major James W Evatt worked for the War Office including in the Ministry of Supply. Meanwhile at Farley Green, *the Visitors Book of Smugglers Way* records regular visits from 3 Czech airmen who came to the Evatts to rest from their service in No 311 (Czechoslovak) Squadron.

NADIA'S SON

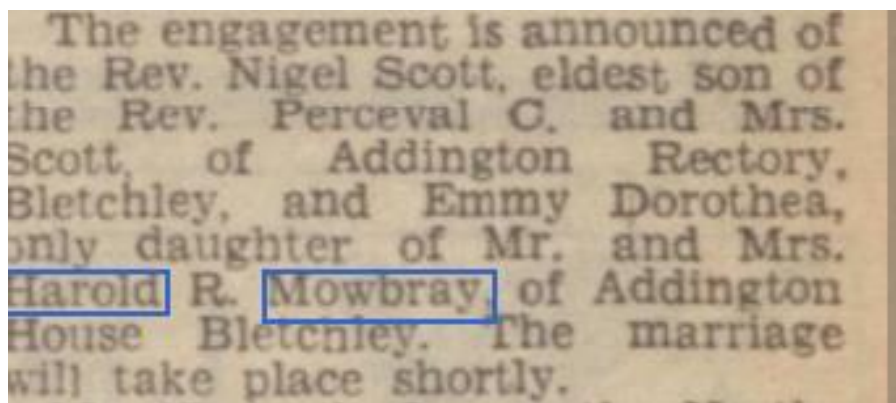
From the Surrey Advertiser 23 September 1944:



On Friday last week the baptism took place at the Barn Church in Farley Green of Humphry Robert Evatt, son of Major J. W. Evatt, M.B.E. (Lancashire Fusiliers), and Mrs. Nadia Evatt (formerly of Prague). The godfathers were M. Jan Masaryk, Czechoslovak Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Vernon Bartlett, M.P.; the godmother was Miss Kratochvil, of the Czech Embassy in London. The officiating minister was Rector Nigel Scott, of Alcester, Warwickshire.

Humphry Robert Evatt was born in February 1944 in Guildford. He was baptised at the Barn Church in Farley Green in September 1944. His Czech godfather was Jan Masaryk, the son of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the first President of Czechoslovakia 1918-1937. Jan had been Czechoslovak ambassador in London from 1925 to 1938, then foreign minister in the Czechoslovak government-in-exile in London 1940–1945, then foreign minister in the Czechoslovak governments in Prague from 1945 until his controversial death in 1948 age 61.

The officiating minister at the baptism was **Nigel W Scott**, Harold and Adela Mowbray's son-in-law (see Appendix 3). He had married their daughter 3 years earlier, shortly after this engagement announcement in the Northamptonshire Mercury of 18 July 1941:



James Wrigley Evatt retired in 1955 and died in July 1964:

EVATT James Wrigley of Smugglers Way Farley Green near Guildford died 30 July 1964 Probate London 1 October to Nadia Evatt widow and Nigel Keith Farrar Porter solicitor. £7095.

NADIA'S DAUGHTER

Nadia Port/ová (known as *Nadenka*) had been born in September 1924, in Prague. She was sent to school in England in 1936, aged 12. On the recommendation of her Aunt Margot Nosek she went to Wentworth School in Boscombe, Poole, Dorset. After initially struggling with English and home sickness she grew to love the school, particularly the headmistress, Miss Bourne with whom she kept in touch till Miss Bourne died.

Nadenka, as "PORT) EVATT Nadežda 1924" is on the list of refugees supported by the Czech Refugee Trust Fund.

Nadenka left school at 16 in 1940 uncertain of what to do next. Her mother enrolled her into the Isadora Duncan School of Dancing at Blackheath in Surrey, within walking distance of Smugglers Way. She then went to a crammer to study for the Oxford entrance exam. She was accepted into St Anne's College to read PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) in 1941, and lived at Cherwell Edge, a hostel run by the nuns of the Holy Child Jesus. There she became a Catholic. She spent a lot of time attending lectures from the likes of Ronald Knox, C S Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. She would have preferred to have read English literature, but nevertheless it became a lifelong passion.

An important Czech friend at Oxford Anna (Anča) Stransky, granddaughter of Adolf Stransky, a minister in the 1st Czech government in 1918 and founder of the newspaper Lidove Noviny, and daughter of Jaroslav Stransky, minister in the Free Czech Government under Beneš in London. Her father also founded Radio Free Europe which was continued by his son Anča's brother, Honza, with whom Nadenka's daughter Katharine stayed in New York. He was a great friend of Vaclav Havel, who also stayed with the family in New York.

When Nadenka came down from Oxford, by this time with a new baby brother (Humphry), she worked for UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) with Anča, and stayed at the Stransky flat in London. Anča Stransky married Dr Přemek Sonnek who had studied medicine at the university in Brno at the same time as Bedřich Valner and like him

fled to England in 1948. Dr Sonnek's wife and father escaped through Germany but they had to leave their 1 year old son behind in Czechoslovakia. He was later repatriated with the help of the Red Cross. Dr Sonnek worked in a London Hospital and later practised as a GP in Canvey Island.

Nadenka was a beautiful young woman. She was in the Stransky kitchen, cleaning the fridge, when Bedřich Valner arrived at the address of his childhood friends from Vír in Moravia. He had just managed to get to England having bravely escaped as a prisoner of war (see below). Nadenka and Bedřich got engaged on VE Day and married on 19 June 1946 in the Loretta in Prague. Nadia senior and Humphry aged 2 flew to Prague in a Dakota aircraft arriving late, at the end of the service. Bedřich, having completed his interrupted law degree, was posted to the Czech Legation in Cairo. (Katharine thinks they did not realise that they would never go home.)

Their daughter Katharine Mary was born at the Anglo-American hospital in Cairo on 10 March 10 1948. There were 2 further children: Luke Hubert in 1951 and Nicholas Edmund in 1953, both born in Surrey. Nadia Valner died in June 2007 in hospital at Guildford. Both Luke and Nicholas had highly successful careers as lawyers, Nicholas becoming the leading music lawyer amongst whose clients were the Beatles and many classical artists.

NADIA'S SON-IN-LAW

Bedřich Valner was born in May 1918 in Brno, the capital of Moravia, to Sigmund Wallner (1879-1931) and **Elisabeth (Elsa) Wallner nee Dubová** (1891-1944). Elsa ran the family's textile business in Vír (north-west of Brno) after her husband died, but as Jewish property it was confiscated by the Nazis in 1939. *On 22 May 1942 Elsa was deported to Třebíč via Aw-581 to Terezín (Theresienstadt) and then on 23 October 1944 by Transport Et-1236 to Auschwitz where she died in the gas chamber, as did Josef Rotter, the business partner of the Valners. Elsa's mother died of pneumonia in Terezín in 1942.*

Bedřich (*known as Fricek, later anglicised to Frederick or Freddy*) was studying law at the Masaryk University in Brno at the outbreak of war. He fled via a tortuous route to France where he joined the Czechoslovak Army at Marseilles in April 1940. His biography, with links to those of his parents, is on the Brno website https://encyklopedie.brna.cz/home-mmb/?acc=profil_osobnosti&load=4102

After the fall of France Bedřich was evacuated to Great Britain where he joined the Royal Air Force and changed his surname to Valner. He trained as a wireless operator and joined 311 Squadron, one of 3 Czechoslovak squadrons in the RAF and the only Czechoslovak bomber squadron. His rank was sergeant. He was captured in October 1941 after surviving for many hours clinging to the wreckage of his Wellington bomber which had made an emergency landing onto a sandbank off the Dutch coast returning from an operational flight to Bremen. He experienced 5 different Prisoner of War camps including in Silesia, Pomerania, Lithuania and Ukraine. In April 1945 he escaped from one of the death marches *by disappearing into woods and swimming across the River Aller*. He was liberated by the British army and flew back to Great Britain.

After the war he completed his studies at Masaryk University, married Nadenka in Prague and became a diplomat for Czechoslovakia's embassy in Egypt. After the February 1948

communist coup in Czechoslovakia *he refused the order to return to Prague and settled in Great Britain. The young family were taken in by Winifred Cooper (a good artist and mother of playwright Giles Cooper) who was renting 'Five Oaks' in Farley Green next door to Smugglers Way. Winifred Cooper then gave them a house 'Little Orchard' at Wanborough, Surrey, and later helped them with the purchase of 'Whitethorne', the house they were living in when Bedřich became a British citizen in February 1950:*

Valner, Bedrich (known as Frederick Valner formerly Bedrich Wallner); Czechoslovakia; Textile Buyer; "Whitethorne," Wanborough, near Guildford, Surrey. 23 February, 1950.

Frederick Valner was soon employed by John Lewis Partners (as was his brother, who ran textile mills in Huddersfield) and rose to Director of Procurement. He later worked for the Export Council. He was made an Honorary Colonel by President Havel after Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution. He died in December 1991 in the south-west Surrey area. His grave is in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, along with other heroes of the Czechoslovak forces who served in Britain during the Second World War. His name is also on the Winged Lion Memorial in Prague.

NADIA'S DEATH

In 1983 Nadia Evatt moved to Elmbridge Retirement Village, Cranleigh, Surrey and died on 23 September 1985 at Mount Alvernia Hospital, Guildford, where she had given birth to her son Humphry 41 years earlier.

Sylvia Daintrey

May 2022, revised October 2022 and January 2023

APPENDIX 1 – UNSTEAD COTTAGE

My grandparents Karl and Johanna Löwit who had arrived at Surrey Hills refugee camp in late 1938 from the so-called Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia, lived at Unstead Cottage, Mill Lane, Peasmarsh for 3 months from June to August 1940, the same Unstead Cottage where Major Evatt lived before he built Smugglers Way.

APPENDIX 2 – VERNON BARTLETT MP

- Charles Vernon Oldfield Bartlett CBE (1894 – 1983) was appointed director of the London office of the League of Nations in 1922 and witnessed first-hand the effects of the rise of fascism across Europe. In 1933, he joined the Liberal-Progressive paper 'News Chronicle' and was its diplomatic correspondent for 20 years.
- He served as a Member of Parliament from November 1938 to February 1950: first as an Independent Progressive opposing the Munich Agreement that had abandoned Czechoslovakia to Hitler's Germany, then for the socialist Common Wealth Party, and then again as an Independent Progressive.
- After his retirement from the 'News Chronicle' in 1954 he moved to Singapore as *Editor of The Straits Times*, and in 1961 to *San Ginese di Compito, near Lucca, Tuscany*. He stayed in touch with the Evatts for the rest of his life.

APPENDIX 3 - MAJOR EVATT'S FRIEND: HAROLD MOWBRAY

- Harold R Mowbray was born in about 1890.
- The National Archives hold his World War I medal card, recording that he served as Serjeant (sic) with the Lancashire Fusiliers (the same regiment as James W Evatt).
- In the 1921 census Harold Ravensdale Mowbray is recorded (like Major Evatt) as serving with the Army/Armed Forces Overseas.
- Harold's daughter Emmy Dorothea was born in 1923 in Cologne, Germany according to Army records. So there is a possibility that Harold had married in Germany and that his wife Adela Selina was in fact German.
- When Emmy married Rev. Nigel W Scott (1905-1959) in 1941, Harold and Adela were living at Addington House near Bletchley. According to Wikipedia "During the Second World War from 1940 to 1945 Addington House was the residence or safe-house of the Moravec, Strankmüller and Tauer families of the Czechoslovak Military Intelligence staff, who had their headquarters in London. It was Colonel František Moravec who planned the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich." (Heydrich was the Deputy/Acting Reich-Protector of Bohemia-Moravia.) See the Wikipedia page "Addington, Buckinghamshire" and follow the external link to "Czechoslovak Government in Exile Research Society" -> UK places of Interest -> Addington House.
- The London Gazette reported in January 1946 that Harold Ravensdale Mowbray Esq. was employed in a Department of the Foreign Office.
- Adela Mowbray died in 1951. There is a headstone in Haselor churchyard, near Alcester, Warwickshire with the inscription: "In memory of Adela, beloved wife of Harold Ravensdale Mowbray, who died on the July 25th 1951 aged 52."
- Harold continued to visit the Evatts in Smugglers Way from his home in Alcester but his last address before he died was Minehead in Somerset. He was buried in Haselor churchyard in April 1965.
- Harold's son-in-law Rev Nigel W Scott had died in 1959 when living at the Vicarage in Dulverton, Somerset. Harold's daughter Emmy died in 2006 in Essex.

APPENDIX 4 - POSTSCRIPT ON MAJOR EVATT'S FATHER: REV. ROBERT BAYLY EVATT

- In 1895 Robert Evatt was on the passenger list of the Britannic as a US citizen sailing from Liverpool to New York. Maybe he had been to England to see his young son there, *although his dead wife's siblings were bringing up James on condition that Robert had no involvement.*
- In the 1910 United States census, Robert was living at De Soto, Missouri with his new wife Lottie (née Lottie May Borden, born 1873 in Minnesota), 2 sons and 2 daughters. He was a minister at Trinity Parish Church.
- By the 1920 census the family had moved to Fort Atkinson in Wisconsin. In 1920 Robert was on the passenger list of the Celtic sailing from Liverpool to New York. It would be nice to think he had visited his war-decorated son. *James's half-sister Grace, who used to send food parcels for Humphry during and after the war, told Humphry that James had never known his father. She wrote to James to inform him of his father's death.*

- In the 1930 census, Robert was living on his own as a retired minister in Dayton, Pennsylvania. He died at Armstrong, Penn. in 1937, the year that his son James met Nadia Port in Austria.