

**From Butcher to Professor to Professor**  
**Journeys from Papile to Bloemfontein to Johannesburg to Ughill**  
By Emeritus Professor Colin Bertram Brown FRCP



Shlomo Broin (later known as Solomon Brown), was born in Papile, Lithuania, in 1872. He was the son of Rabbi Moshe Broin. He was a butcher by trade. In the 1890s, he made his way on a Baltic steamer to the Port of London, and then on to Cape Town on one of the Union Castles liners. His name was probably changed to Brown by the immigration authorities. Like many other Jews, he was leaving his country of birth, and that of his forebears, as a result of Russian antisemitic pogroms (Lithuania was then, and had been for many years, part of the Russian Empire).

There were, in the 19th century, some 250,000 Jews in Lithuania. Russian pogroms forced many to emigrate. Hundreds of thousands were subsequently annihilated by the Nazi German regime aided and abetted by many Lithuanians, wiping out any historical recognition of their presence. In Papile, the Jewish cemetery gravestones were removed and used as part of the river embankment. Only recently has the Lithuanian government acknowledged these atrocities and established a holocaust museum.

Tickets on Baltic steamships took the emigrants to the Port of London in the East End where they were housed at the expense of the shipping company until such time as the forward ship took them on to South Africa or America. Many in fact stayed on and formed a large Jewish community in the East End. Indeed, many immigrants made their homes here for many years - not only Jews, but also Germans, Italians and West Indians.

Solomon Brown made his way to the predominantly Afrikaans-speaking small town of Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State to which some of his friends had already immigrated. Having been a butcher in Papile, he took up this trade again. He had, however, left a fiancée, Rachel Behrman, from Kursenai (Korshan), behind in Lithuania and returned to marry her.

On the 12th of December 1902 my father, Leslie Julius Brown was born in Kursenai. Two years later, they emigrated for the last time to Bloemfontein. Speaking mainly Yiddish and Russian, they had to learn what everybody else spoke in Bloemfontein, Afrikaans. They became part of a growing Jewish community. Four more children were born soon after. Grandfather Solomon Brown's business prospered, and he bought some land to breed cattle which he used in his butchery business.

Rachel Behrman's mother, Bailie Behrman, was born in 1852 in Salantai, Lithuania. She married Wolf Imber who was born in 1853 in Kursenai. They emigrated in about 1906, initially to Palestine thinking to live there, but then decided to join their daughter in Bloemfontein. I have a photo of the Imber house in Kursenai in 1903.

Other members of the Behrman family, many of whom were Rabbis, also emigrated to Palestine and lived there until they died. Indeed, a number of them are buried on The Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, which I have visited and have photos of their gravestones written in Hebrew. It was Judy Cohen, (who married my cousin Raymond Brown), who put me in contact with Irma Franklin, both school friends at King David High School in Johannesburg. Irma helped me, through a friend of hers, to locate these gravestones. One of the Behrman descendants in Israel, Yitzchak Behrman, became the 7th Speaker of Israel's Knesset. He died aged 100, in 2013. I have details of the Behrman family going back to Gutman Berman born in Salant in 1729, grandfather of Chatzel (Chaim) Berman 1775-1850, also from Salant.

Other members of the Behrman family emigrated to America. One of them started a family publishing company that exists to this day in New Jersey, highly successfully providing books on all aspects of Jewish-related subjects for synagogues, schools, yeshivas and aspects of Jewish literature. I was given a copy of *The Traditional Prayer Book for Sabbath and Festivals* in Hebrew and English signed by Louis Behrman, the founder, on a visit to America in 1961.

My father went to Grey College in Bloemfontein, and when he matriculated wanted to be a farmer. My grandfather said that this was not a good idea and advised him to get a profession, so that if he ever had to flee South Africa because of antisemitism, he would have something he could take with him to earn a living. And so my father was apprenticed to the local dentist as a dental mechanic for two years with a view to going to dental school in England to study, there being no dental school in South Africa at that time. The dentist was an Afrikaner with rather anti-semitic feelings and said he would never become a dentist. What a spur this was to his future career to prove him and

others wrong. He applied to Guy's Hospital Dental School and was accepted. In 1920 and at the age of 18, he arrived in London, without knowing a soul, to start his studies.

His mother Rachel, aged 38, and her father Wolf Imber, died in 1918 from the Spanish flu that killed tens of millions worldwide. Grandmother Bailie brought the rest of the family up and supported Solomon Brown until she died in 1935 in Bloemfontein speaking only Yiddish all her life. They are all buried in the Jewish part of Memorial Cemetery in Bloemfontein. I have photographs of the headstones in Hebrew, and in English.

My father had digs in Hampstead, next door to 129 Goldhurst Terrace, the home of his future wife Dolfanna Rose. He related that it was so cold that winter that he stuffed the bottom of the door of his room and the cracks in the window with newspapers. After blowing out the gas light in his room one night, he went off to sleep. But he was awakened by a hissing sound, which he could not understand until he realised that he had not switched off the gas!! He switched it off thinking that had he died from gas poisoning, people would have concluded that he had committed suicide because he was so homesick. His grandmother, Baillie, insisted that my father write to her regularly. However, as mentioned, she spoke and read only Yiddish, so before leaving home he learnt to write a letter in Yiddish. He posted it home, by sea - the same letter every month - to assure her that he was alive!

He qualified in 1925 and did his first six months of house posts at Guys. To the surprise of many, he was offered a second six months which was very unusual. This reflected his hard work and determination to do well. This second six months was under William, later Sir William Kelsey- Fry, father of the speciality of maxillofacial surgery.

My father was very keen to pursue that speciality but realised he would have to become duly qualified in both medicine and dentistry. He went into practice with Daniel Rose (Rosenschein). Daniel was a dentist who'd emigrated from Romania and changed his name to Rose. He built a successful dental practice in Kilburn High Road in London and took in a partner in the late 1920s.

In 1927, my father married Daniel's daughter, my mother, Adolfina Anna (aka Dolfanna) Rose. His wife was Willhelmina Kottlar who came from a very musical family in Czernowitz. Indeed, her sister Beatrice Sutter-Kottlar became an internationally famous opera singer during the early part of the 20th century, performing in Vienna in front of Emperor Franz Joseph, and in Berlin, Paris, London and New York.

The depression came in the 1930s. My father's dental practice, in those days all private, declined rapidly, and he decided he could not make a decent living in England. He returned to Bloemfontein with his English-speaking wife, a graduate of the London School of Music, who couldn't speak a word of Afrikaans or Yiddish and was unable to speak to my father's grandmother who was still alive.

My parents had a daughter, Rochella, in 1933. They subsequently moved to Johannesburg. My father studied anatomy and physiology in the evenings for the requirements to return to Guy's so that he could do medicine and go on to become a maxillofacial surgeon.

But the war came, and this idea was scotched. He joined the South African Medical Corps, and with a colleague, Jack Penn, who was a plastic surgeon, started a maxillofacial and plastic surgical unit at Brenthurst, the home of the founder and chairman of Anglo-American, Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, in Lower Houghton, Johannesburg.

And so my father became a maxillofacial surgeon as a result of the war injuries suffered by soldiers in the North African campaign who were shipped down to Johannesburg for treatment.

After the war, but still in uniform and with the rank of major, he travelled to Europe, England and North America to learn the new techniques in his acquired specialty. He returned to South Africa where he set up his own practice as well as joining the Dental School at the University of Witwatersrand.

Against considerable opposition he fought to get Maxillo-facial and Oral Surgery recognised as a specialty. In 1950 after persistent correspondence The South African Medical and Dental Council agreed to recognise this speciality and he was the first on this register in South Africa. He thus became the only specialist in South Africa and over the years trained many surgeons in this field.

His international eminence was subsequently recognized by the Faculty of Dental Surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons of England which elected him to its Fellowship, FDS. He was the recipient of the R.V. Bird Gold Medal, the highest award of the Dental Association of South Africa and was made an Honorary Life Member. He was President of the Ontological Society of South Africa and was elected to the Fellowship of that Society. He was a founding member and President of the Society of Maxillo-Facial and Oral Surgeons and was elected to Honorary Life Membership of the Society. The society instituted an annual lecture which bears his name. He had become the only specialised maxillofacial surgeon in South Africa, becoming the founder and head of the Department of Maxillofacial Surgery at the Dental School of Witwatersrand and was awarded the title of

Professor and on retirement Emeritus Professor. He trained many in this speciality in South Africa. He died in 1981 in Johannesburg.

I was born on the 24th of May 1942 at The Queen Victoria Hospital in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. We lived in Greenside next door to the Johannesburg Zoo, where I could hear the lions roaring, the elephants trumpeting and the various apes howling at night - terrifying. We moved to 44 Hendon Street, next door to the water tower in Yeoville. I attended Yeoville Boys Primary School. As I was third wicket down in our cricket team, I can't remember ever going in to bat because the captain and opener was a boy called Ali Bacher, born on the same day and year as myself. He went on to become a doctor and test cricket captain of South Africa and subsequently chairman of the South African cricket board. No wonder I didn't bat!

My father, whilst a student in London, like many of his generation after the First World War, developed left-wing political views and built a substantial library of left-wing books during the 1920s and 30s from the Red Book Club run by the publisher Victor Gallanz. I still have many of these books in my library. Their spines had been ripped off during the 1950s when these books were banned in apartheid South Africa and having them could result in imprisonment. Although not a political activist himself, he welcomed and entertained coloured and black students in our house in Johannesburg. My mother and her sister-in-law, Joyce Brown joined the Black Sash movement and the politics of the apartheid system was often discussed in our family. We read the left-wing, rice papered New Statesman and Nation air mail editions which were delivered weekly to our home.

I left Yeoville Boys Primary School after two or three years and went on to King David Primary School in Linksfield and subsequently to the high school. My parents had divorced and my mother then lived at 48 Club Street in Linksfield, a bike ride to school. My mother, whose musical ambitions were frustrated when she left England in the 1930s, now took an interest in the theatre and became a producer of plays, starting a reputable company in the Library Theatre in Johannesburg and became quite well known as a producer of avant-garde and left-wing productions. She also continued playing the piano at a very high level.

My father was also interested in music and so our house was always filled with the sound of our 78 gramophone-record player, platter after platter dropping and providing the sounds of Beethoven, Brahms, Bach, Bartok and many others. These sounds continue to this day with my large collection of classical LP's. I learnt to play the piano and violin but this all ceased when I went to London to read medicine.

My sister, Rochella became a professional musician, taking a degree in music at Cape Town university. She went on to study with the very famous music teacher Nadia Boulanger at the Conservatoire in Paris. With the flute as her instrument, she went on to become first flautist in the Israeli symphony orchestra. Subsequently, when she moved on with her husband to Houston, Texas, she played in the Houston Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Sir John Barbirolli, (who was also the conductor of *The Halle Orchestra* in Manchester, England. She has indefatigable energy and has had ten-year cycles of interests in which she has achieved widespread recognition. Taking over the double garage at her home, she bought a large weaving loom and made pieces which she exhibited regularly at the Venice 'Biennale. She had a very large piece commissioned by the Exxon Mobile oil company in Houston to hang in their large entrance hall. She then started a sailing school 'Women at the Helm'. She subsequently became the CEO of the Houston Festival, all while continuing to sing in the Houston Choir and travelling abroad. Recently she took up paddle racquets, competing in and winning national championships in her 70s and 80s. She still plays the piano semi-professionally as an accompanist.

I was very happy at King David High School. The headmaster, Norman Sandler brought the necessary discipline to a rather rowdy and rather spoilt bunch of Jewish children. Colours were given for both sporting and academic prowess, and the school was divided into houses along the lines of an English public school which made for inter-house competition. I loved wearing my 'boater' at an angle, a rather ridiculous idea which did not last very long, but was great fun at the time. The cost of repeated replacement became untenable.

The teacher that stands out and affected the rest of my life, forming an abiding interest in history, was our history master, Mr Isidore Kahanovitz. He was also our cricket master, and during the summer season he would come into the classroom with a ball and a bat, throwing the ball up and hitting it towards someone with a question in history, expecting the ball to be caught and the correct answers to be given. Unforgettable.

Neither my father, despite being brought up in a religious home, nor mother were at all religious. Only his sister Aunt Ann held religious festivals for the rest of the family. All my school colleagues had their bar mitzvahs in orthodox synagogues. On my own initiative, I, however, different from all of them, attended a reform synagogue in Hillbrow where I had my bar mitzvah, which was slightly frowned upon by my orthodox school friends. I learned my bible portion at the reform synagogue's cheder and read it from a traditional scroll. All of them being orthodox, none of my school friends came to my bar

mitzvah. Their disapproval never bothered me. I have always remembered this line from Rabbi Wiener's homily that day, 'Never let thy possessions possess you'.

I never had any Zionist feelings although the school did encourage a desire for 'aliya' that is, 'ascent' to Israel, and many of my class subsequently did so and they remain there still. I have visited there three times and have travelled extensively around Israel from Jerusalem and Beersheba to Masada, Qumran and Jericho, north to the Golan heights, then west along the border with Lebanon to Metula and Rosh HaNikra in the far north and back to Tel Aviv via Haifa and the Bahai temple. Near Metula, I stayed with a Druze family whom I chanced to meet. They gave me another insight into the history of this country and their preference (at that time), to be under Syrian, rather than Israeli. Fascinating. I visited Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious sites using the bible as a travel guide. Along the way, I gave lifts to Palestinians, both Christians and Muslim, and Israeli Jews, listening to their stories and political views. This was a fascinating education in the history of this human habitation which has more than 4,000 years of recorded history. However, I have never desired to live in Israel as I strongly disapprove of the treatment of the Palestinians by successive governments. As for the building of Jewish settlements in the occupied zone, I feel that is disgraceful, particularly in the light of the Jews' own history of oppression.

Professor Philip Tobias, head of the Department of Anatomy at Wits was a colleague of my father. By the mid-50s, he was an internationally known anthropologist. He had taken over the department from his mentor Professor Raymond Dart, who discovered *Australopithecus africanus*, an early hominid, in the 1920's in the Sterkfontein caves in the Northern Transvaal. In my school holidays, I used to go there with Tobias and his team of medical students. Here, another interest of mine was formulated. Later, I went on expeditions to the Kalahari with him to study the San Bushmen People and an interest in rock paintings and engravings resulted. On camping trips with my father all over Southern Africa for the next 10 years, I photographed these artefacts. I subsequently turned the photographs into a privately published book. I published a second book of photographs which I took of the San people hunting, food gathering, sitting, dancing and singing around the fire in their little encampments and of the tools they used. The latter are from a collection in a museum started by Prof Tobias in Johannesburg - The Institute for the Study of Man in Africa.

I scraped through my matriculation examinations with a second-class pass with the exception of an 'A' in history. This was not enough to get me into medical school. That required a first-class pass. My father asked me whether I would like to go to Guy's to

study medicine. I filled out a very simple application form and was interviewed by a colleague of my father who was a physician ex Guys. He shook my hand and said 'I'm sure you'll be very happy at Guy's' - and I was in!

So, aged 18, off I went to London - a repeat of my father's experience. I did a B.Sc in anatomy and anthropology and an elective in Uganda during my clinical years working on paediatric malnutrition at the MRC Unit at Makerere University in Kampala run by Prof McCance of WW11 fame who had set the standards for adequate nutrition during the war with Widdowson - the 'bible' publication in this field. I then spent a month at a hospital in Mbarara, a small village in the southern kingdom of Ankole. I camped on the banks of the Kagere river which forms the border between Tanzania and Uganda and flows into the south of Lake Victoria. I then went on to the remote Queen Elizabeth National Park bordering the Congo at the base of the Rwenzori Mountains, 'The Mountains of the Moon'. Following in the footsteps of Speke, Burton, and Livingstone, I read the accounts of the great European explorers in Africa who were searching for the source of the Nile. I published my first two papers in *Guy's Hospital Reports* on this work on paediatric malnutrition and ways to prevent this in rural Africa.

I drove all over Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania in a beat-up Volkswagen Beetle beginning my education in African history and anthropology. I camped on the banks of the Victoria Nile at Murchison Falls as it drops into Lake Albert to then goes on to form the White Nile flowing northwards and then eventually into the Mediterranean in Egypt. I took a ferry from Dar es Salaam to Zanzibar soon after the uprising against the Omani Muslim Sultans who had ruled the islands for over 300 years and had been exporters of cloves and other spices as well and had been involved in the large Arab slave and ivory trade. I visited Louis Leakey at Olduvai Gorge where he had discovered *Homo habilis* (early man) described in the anthropological literature by Prof Phillip Tobias, who had made the introduction. The term *habilis* was used as the anatomical description of the bones of the hand and indicated that this early hominid was able to oppose his thumb with his fingers and thus was able to make tools. This was a breakthrough discovery in the evolution of *Homo sapiens*. When Phillip visited London soon afterwards, I picked him up at the airport where he was clutching a small bag. He asked to be taken to Coutts Bank in upper Regent Street. When he came out without the bag he gave a huge sigh of relief explaining to me that the bag contained the bones of *Homo habilis*!!

Back at London House in my digs, surrounded by post grads on scholarships, including Rhodes scholars, my general education in physics, maths, law and politics continued. Hollis Lynch from Trinidad, the first in a family of eight to get to university doing a Ph.D



in African history, became a long-standing friend whose multitude of books I read voraciously. My interest in African history and politics has continued ever since. Hollis went on to become the first Professor of African History at Cornell University in New York.

With my political background, I became deeply involved in the anti-apartheid movement in England. Much to my father's consternation, when I returned to South Africa one summer holiday, I was summoned to BOSS headquarters for questioning about my activities of which they had detailed knowledge, reflecting how much the service kept tabs on those involved in the movement. It was a frightening experience and my father was livid with me. In London I had met Leonard ('Rusty') Bernstein at an anti-apartheid meeting. He was an architect and member of the banned South African Communist Party. He had been arrested with Nelson Mandela and others in Rivonia, Johannesburg to face the famous treason trial of 1963 but had escaped with his wife Hilda. My mother assisted them using her skills in make-up to disguise them. They managed to race to the Botswana border undiscovered. Percy Yutar was the Attorney General and chief prosecutor at this trial. His Jewish parents came from Lithuania. His wife had been my music teacher. Bram (Abraham) Fischer, the defending counsel, had been at school with my father at Grey College in Bloemfontein. He remained a long-standing friend until he died of cancer in 1975. After the trial, he too was put on trial for being a member of the Communist Party and sentenced to life-imprisonment. Bram, surprisingly, considering his political beliefs, came from a prominent Afrikaner family. His father had been Judge President of the Orange Free State and his grandfather the Prime Minister of the Orange River Colony who later served as a minister in the first cabinet of the Union of South Africa in 1910.

While I was a medical student, I met Barbara Fink on a summer holiday to South Africa. We fell in love and got married the following Christmas. Barbara came to London three months later and we soon had two sons, Nicholas and Jason. Unfortunately, both of us were young and immature and failed to make a go of the marriage. Eventually, sadly, we got divorced.

I qualified in 1968, MBBS and LRCP, MRCS. I did my house physician post at Guy's, my house surgical job at the Birmingham Accident Hospital and the MRC Burns Unit as I was interested in fluid balance and renal function in these patients. I published a paper on nutrition in traumatic injuries.

And so I started my specialty career in renal medicine with a SHO post at St. Bartholomew's hospital in London. I published a paper in the *Lancet* on radiologic appearances in acute renal failure. My fellow author was none other than Ian Kelsy-Fry,

the son of Sir William Kelsy-Fry. Both he, on being told that my dad had been his dad's houseman, and my father were astounded by the co-incidence. I returned to Guy's hospital as a registrar and senior registrar in the renal unit under Prof Stewart Cameron and Dr Chisholm Ogg who taught me my clinical skills. I obtained my MRCP two years after graduating from medical school. I was then awarded a scholarship to Harvard University for two years and did research into renal circulation in acute renal failure which resulted in three publications in the *American Journal of Physiology*.

I was by now re-married to Jacquelyne (Jacquie) Baldwin, SRN SCM (State Certified Midwife), senior sister in the renal unit. She had been to Cape Town before I knew her and had worked at Groote Schuur Hospital in the cardiac surgical unit run by Christian Barnard (the first surgeon to do a human heart transplant) and the renal unit run by Brian Myers who subsequently took the post I was offered in Stanford University in the US. Jacquie travelled all over South Africa and the Rhodesias (now Zimbabwe and Zambia).

It was the music and sailing in and out of Boston most evenings and weekends that were among the reasons why I chose Harvard and not Stanford to do postgraduate research. The main reason was that the head of the Department of Renal Medicine was Prof. John Merrill who was the first to develop haemodialysis during the Korean War in the early 1950's and was the physician instrumental in the first live donor renal transplant in 1953 in Boston.

Sailing out of Boston to Martha's Vineyard, Hyannis Port and a cruiser race to Bermuda, filled our weekends. A few years later, I sailed across the Atlantic with the same chums, from Maine to Falmouth.

During the summer, we regularly attended the Boston Pops, under the baton of the eccentric Arthur Fiedler, who was a fire engine enthusiast, in Boston Park opposite the Charles River. The Boston Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Seiji Ozawa, ran a famous music festival on the estate of a very wealthy man at Tanglewood in western Massachusetts. It was at one of these that we had the most extraordinary experience of listening to Rostropovich, the famous cellist, playing Shostakovitch's cello concerto on the day the composer had died. We only learned of this later. I was fortunate enough to take a photo of them on a bench in the garden of Tanglewood

To end our stay in the US, we camped for a month with a two-person pup tent and a Primus stove, across to Wyoming, riding in the Grand Tetons, into Yellowstone and down the Colorado rafting with a Mormon family. Then on to the north rim of the Grand Canyon, reading Powell's diaries of the 1860s exploring the Colorado. Two days hiking down 6,000 ft to the river and two days out camping.

Bob Chira, a New York lawyer friend from London House days, had joined us and taught me all about the Constitution of the United States as we hiked out of the gorge. Another large filler of books stands on my shelves on American history and politics to this day. Bob came from a family of six in Brooklyn, New York. He was the only one to go onto university and then, with a Rhodes' Scholarship, to London University. He wrote a book about his Jewish parents who emigrated from Aleppo in Syria to America, via Cuba, entering illegally through Mexico. His father abandoned them and his mother, speaking no English, joined a Syrian community in Brooklyn taking in washing and mending clothes. When, in her 70s, she applied for a state pension she was informed that she was an illegal immigrant and could be sent back to Syria. Bob, being a lawyer, sorted the problem out. He eventually received a presidential pardon for his mother, allowing her to receive citizenship and to remain in the country.

We then drove to the pueblo cave dwellings in the Four Corners and Shiprock, New Mexico to the annual Navajo pow wow coming away with two hand woven traditional rugs, a Teecnospos and a Two Grey Hills. Then on to see my sister in Houston, Texas and to be present at her second son's bar mitzvah in a room, not a synagogue, surrounded by the dark paintings of Rothko. I did not like the Rothkos. I did my honour on the bimah. We then pressed on via New Orleans and the Blue Ridge Mountain range and flew back to London. We had lots of very unusual experiences and I have always loved my many subsequent professional trips to the US.

I was now back at the renal unit at Guy's, applying to a variety of university hospitals in England for a consultant post. These were hard to come by as only a few were available. I looked at a number of positions in the United States, including an offer at Stanford, but my English wife, while enjoying America when we'd lived there, didn't want to spend the rest of her life there.

To supplement my salary, I did locums and teaching stints in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman and in Libya where I was presented with a signed copy of the Koran and Hadiths by Gaddahfi. In Iraq, then still under Saddam Hussein, I attended a concert in a magnificently restored Roman amphitheatre with the Moscow State Symphony orchestra performing. Over the

proscenium was a huge banner '*From Nebuchadnezzar to Saddam Hussein*'.

Desperate to find a consultant post, I applied for a job in Abu Dhabi to start a dialysis unit but decided not to take it. A few months later, I was contacted by the office of the ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan, requesting me to come to look after his brother who was on haemodialysis and to help set up the medical departments in the civil and military hospitals, which were then in their infancy. This was 1978 when I had no money after divorcing my first wife, Barbara and with two young sons to educate, the tax-free salary was irresistible.

I got unpaid leave and was helped by my boss and friend Chris Ogg. Off we went on an adventure and experienced one of the most fascinating two years of my life. I learned to speak "gulf" Arabic, and immersed myself in Middle Eastern history. We were initially based in the ancient oasis of Al Ain on the border with Oman. We met Col. Sir Hugh Boustead in his 70s, who had a grace and favour position from Sheikh Zayed in charge of the Royal stables. He had been the British ambassador to the UAE. Born in Ceylon, he was the son of a Lipton Estates tea planter. He boxed against Robert Graves, was awarded a MC in WW1, fought with the White Russians against the Red Army, took part in the 1923 Everest expedition, did colonial service as District Commissioner in Dharfur province in Western Sudan, and in WWII, with Wilfred Thesiger, brought Haile Selassie back to his throne in Ethiopia with ten thousand camels across the desert. He was ambassador in Aden and finally Abu Dhabi. He was a remarkable character with whom we rode out most evenings into the desert ending with a large whisky and dinner in his corrugated tin-roofed DC type house in the desert. (I have a signed copy of his autobiography *Wind in the Morning*). Through Hugh, at one of his dinner parties, we met Wilfred Thesiger, the famous explorer of the Empty Quarter of southern Arabia described in his book *The Arabian Sands* of which I have a signed first edition, and copies of all his books and biographies.

Jacque and I camped all over the Emirates up to the Massandam Peninsula overlooking the Straits of Hormus. Dubai then was a small village on the creek with dhows trading goods from afar as India and Ceylon lining the port side. Sadly, Sheikh Khalid bin Sultan, my patient, died in his sleep on a rug in the desert in front of his palace three months after our arrival in Abu Dhabi. I continued developing the civil and military hospitals for the next eighteen months before returning to London with our financial situation secure.

In 1979, I was appointed to Sheffield University Medical School Hospitals as Consultant in Renal Disease and Transplantation and I was elected FRCP.

The renal unit was run by Dr Margaret Platts the first female medical student in Sheffield in 1941 and subsequently trained as Respiratory Physician. In the early 1960's haemodialysis for renal failure was introduced into the NHS. As she had done an MD in the renal excretion of acid in respiratory acidosis so was put in charge of starting a dialysis unit. When I joined her, Sheffield had the largest home dialysis program in the UK. Together we started a peritoneal dialysis and in three years had the largest program in the UK. Dr Platts retired in 1983 and I became the senior renal physician. I had already recruited Dr John Shortland from the pathology department to develop his interest in interpreting the large number of renal biopsies that I started doing. This work formed the basis of my clinical research interests and numerous publications. Like my father I battled against colleagues and the administration to expand service in dialysis and transplantation and eventually appointed a full-time transplant surgeon and a physician to start our basic research section. We introduced novel techniques and therapies and conducted a number of national clinical trials.

I was made a Professor of Clinical Nephrology until retiring in 2005 as Emeritus Professor with over 200 publications, chapters and books to my credit. I travelled widely, lecturing and teaching. I established the Sheffield Kidney Institute as a national and international unit of excellence in trials of new treatments and innovation. I was a member of the Renal Association of Great Britain Council as well as the European Renal Association, Chairman of the Publications Committee of the International Society of Peritoneal Dialysis and the co-founder of the computerised UK Renal Registry which drove widespread improvements in dialysis standards and outcome - one of the first in the world. In my later professional life, I joined a company as Medical Director where we developed new therapies in dialysis and a novel product to prevent adhesions after abdominal surgery, which, after a successful trial in the US, gained FDA approval and licence.

In 1998, I returned to South Africa for the first time since leaving and was so caught by the sights and smells of the country that I soon bought 400 acres of bush outside Stanford, near Hermanus, overlooking Walker Bay where southern right whales have their breeding grounds. We built a thatched house after clearing 40 acres of bush and so 'Reiersvlei Farm' came into being ( [www. Reiersvlei Farm](http://www.ReiersvleiFarm.com)) from which we camped and explored all over South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe for the next 10 years until the distance and getting older made us decide to sell very sadly in 2016.

We have lived since my appointment to Sheffield in 1979, in a 14th century stone farmhouse to the west of Sheffield in the Peak National Park surrounded by farms, 20 minutes from the teaching hospitals.

Platts Farm, our home, was originally in the ownership of a Knight Hospitaller of St John of Jerusalem. This hospice was built to provide succour to pilgrims to the Holy Land. St John's is still a hospital - a specialist Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. In Sheffield, I once looked after the matron of this hospital.

The Knights Hospitallers, unlike the Knights Templars, a military order, were both a medical and less military order. They eventually became the modern St. John's Ambulance, having the same white four-pointed star emblem. I have many books describing the history of these two orders and have also visited some of the crusader castles and Roman ruins in Israel. In fact, I played golf at that time, at Israel's only course adjacent to the ruins of Caesarea!

After the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII, of which the holding of Platts Farm was part, the farm passed into the hands of Lord Shrewsbury, the husband of Bess of Hardwick, who inherited when her husband died, and it came into the hands of the Cavendish family of which she was the chatelaine of Chatsworth, which she built. She sold it to the Duke of Norfolk in 1609, the history of which I have details from the archives as well as the deed of sale. The Duke of Norfolk sold it to a local farmer in the 1900s from whose family we bought in 1979. Ughill comes from the Saxon name of Uggers Hill, and is recorded in the Domesday Book, I have a copy of this history in my archives.

Over the years, we have restored the house to its original condition with Derbyshire gritstone roof slates and a refurbishment of the whole of the large barn adjacent to it. My ex-boss Chisholm Ogg's wife, made eight beautiful stained-glass windows depicting the history of the house, which fill the mullioned windows of the original house. There are some 15 acres, part of the farm, on which we have kept sheep and subsequently competition horses for our two daughters, Kate and Hannah, who reached national and international level in both dressage and cross country.

Following the Norman conquest in 1066, this part of England became part of the 'harrowing of the North', an ethnic cleansing of the local population to prevent any form of insurrection against the invaders. And so I became immersed in another area of historical interest, and that is the development of representative democracy and the British constitution of this remarkable, civilised country in which we have the privilege to live. Britain has not been a military dictatorship since Oliver Cromwell in the 17th century, unlike most of the rest of Europe, which have had one within the last hundred years. This history provides another section on our bookshelves.

I am now retired, but have much to keep me occupied; maintaining our unique home in beautiful, stunning countryside, with mountains in the distance covered in pink heather in the early summer; fields to be chain-harrowed, dry stone wall gaps to repair, ménage to be raked by tractor, lawns and garden to attend to, our yellow Labrador to exercise on my bicycle, golf to play at a local course in the hills, five grandchildren to delight and the joy of seeing them grow up. I have also joined *Help for Heroes*, a military charity to support soldiers, wounded both physical and mentally. In my 70th year I took part on one of their Big Battlefield Bike Rides, five days and 500 km through the beautifully kept Commonwealth graveyards of thousands and the main battlefields of WW1, finally arriving in Ypres in Belgium at the Menin Gate War Memorial. This has 54,896 names of men and women who have no known graves after the five engagements around Ypres which had over a million casualties. Every evening since 1928, there has been a Last Post Ceremony for these fallen. Our bike ride group attended this ceremony and laid a wreath. I was given the huge honour of reading the Exhortation in front of the usual large number of visitors. It was my birthday, the 24th of May! The Exhortation is taken from Laurence Binyon's poem "For the Fallen Dead" (fourth verse).

Standing under the arch of the Hall of Memory the person says:

*"They shall not grow old, as we who are left grow old  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them"*

The full poem was first published in *The Times* newspaper 21 September 1914.

Lt.Col. John McCrae, a Canadian military surgeon at the Ypres battles, witnessed the awful carnage and wrote this very famous poem in memory of a friend killed in the battle in 1915. The Royal British Legion, a military charity raises millions every year on 'Poppy Day' which was stimulated by this poem.

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from falling hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.*

This most moving five days and the unique honour brings tears to my eyes every time I think of it or tell anyone of it.

The millions of dead in this bloodiest of wars was supposed 'to end all wars' but its very peace sowed the seeds for Hitler to start another war in which millions more were murdered.

Jacque and I have two daughters, Kate Victoria, born 1978 at Guy's and Hannah Camilla Lester, born in 1982 in Sheffield. My father's restored Series 1 88" 1957 Land Rover on which I learned to drive, (and used for camping, fishing and snorkelling on Inhaca Island off Lourenço Marques, as it then was, now Maputo), provided the vehicle for Kate's wedding.

Kate obtained a 6th form scholarship at high school from the army and went up to Oxford to read medicine. She is a graduate of Oxford Medical School. She joined the RAMC as a second lieutenant in her clinical years. Later she became a Colonel. She is a Trauma and Specialist Hand Surgeon, and has served in Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan and with the UN peacekeeping forces in Mali.

Hannah went up to Oxford and read biology followed by a M.Sc. at Cranfield business college. She then joined the international accountancy company KPMG and became a Chartered Accountant. She worked at Sky Sports for 10 years where she was involved in negotiating sports rights and business development. Following two years in New York in a



sports media company, she returned to the UK having been offered a post as Chief of Staff of a Formula E motor racing company. She also started a women's football streaming company called '*Ata Football*' with a former professional football player. The name was taken from the Greek mythological heroine *Atalanta* 'whom no man could outrun except by cheating, and whose javelin killed a terrible monster.' She was then head-hunted as CEO of a sports media company DAZN, a major sports streaming company owned by billionaire Sir Leonard Blavatnik, a Ukrainian Jew.

My son, Nicholas Daniel, graduated as an architect from the Bartlett School at London University.

Jason Peter has a PhD from Cambridge in drug development.

## EPILOGUE

1. I find it necessary to dwell briefly on my religious position..My parents did not keep a religious home nor attended synagogue after their marriage in 1927 in London. At King David High School I 'laid tefilim' with all the other boys from the time of my bar mitzvah. After leaving South Africa in 1960 aged 18, the only other times I have had any further connection with the Jewish religion were my marriage to Barbara Fink which was administered by a rabbi in my father's house, and the 'bris' of my two sons Nicholas and Jason. Neither of them are practising Jews.

My second wife Jacquelynne is a practising Anglican Christian. We were married at the Chelsea Registry Office in London. Kate was christened in the chapel in Guy's Hospital, and married in St. Nicholas Church, High Bradfield, Sheffield. Hannah was christened at the same St. Nicholas Church.

The church was built in the 1400's on the site of a 9th century Saxon church. It is a beautiful Grade 1-listed building and overlooks the hills and mountains of the Peaks. I frequently accompany Jacquie when she goes to church and take part in some of the more ecumenical portions of the service, including The Lord's Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer.

In my youth, hostelling around Britain and Europe, I made a point of visiting many churches and cathedrals and their graveyards as part of my interest in the history of religion influencing the development of cultures.

To me the anthropomorphised personage of 'God' represents all the laws, known and unknown, of the physical and biological world - Creator of All - from the time of the Big Bang billions of years ago. But there is grafted onto this, a spiritual cloak that reflects the uniqueness of *Homo sapiens* having consciousness and being a sentient mammal with language.

I have visited the synagogue at Capernaum on Lake Tiberius where Yehoshua - Joshua - Jesus taught as a rabbi, and to the Mount of the Beatitudes where he gave his famous sermon. He was, to my thinking, a rebel, like Martin Luther with the Catholic Church, against the corrupt bureaucratic power of the Sanhedrin in the Second Temple. He returned to the basic principles of nearly all beliefs 'to love thy neighbour'.

And so I go to church to try and remember this teaching and repeat the Lord's Prayer.

2. We who were brought up in South Africa have much to be thankful for. We were given a good education and a very high standard of living, something that the majority of the country never had and still doesn't.

Our immigrant parents and grandparents, in the main, had very little to start their lives with but worked hard to give us that which they didn't have and instilled in us these attributes and the importance of education.

Whilst there was anti-semitism, most Jews did very well and many became highly successful in business and the professions, often reaching the pinnacles in their careers. I've always considered South Africa, not Israel, to be my home, although I would certainly do my utmost to help the latter to survive despite my dislike of its politics and its policies over many years.

3. Jacquie and I have supported two girls with their education through school and university in Uganda.

We have also supported a primary school in Chisuma, a village near Victoria Falls and the Zambezi in Zimbabwe, for a number of years. We have visited the school a few times and donated towards classrooms and materials as well as the Chisuma Foundation which supports developments in the village.

4. All these travels and interests are reflected in the books, articles and archives that I have collected since I was a teenager, as well as many that have been given to me. My Leica M3 camera, a present from my father in 1962, has taken most of the photos of these trips and family and form the basis of over forty volumes of A4 files and printed archives.

5. References I have

Behrman Family Tree

Brown Family Tree

CBB's mother's ( Dolfanna Rose ) family tree

40 odd A4 volumes of photos of family and trips in Africa, America and misc. archives

Middle East histories,explorers

African histories and politics and explorers

American history and political systems

British political systems and history

Bushman ( Khosian ) people paintings,engravings, photos and anthropology

Platts Farm historical documents and books, early photos, photos of refurbishment

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## **The Memoir of Colin Bertram Brown**

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