

The papers of Stanley Browne: leprologist and medical missionary (1907-1986)

O acervo de Stanley Browne: leprologista e médico-missionário (1907-86)

Jo Robertson

Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine
Oxford
45 Banbury Road,
Oxford,
OX 2 6 PE
jo.robertson@wuhmo.ox.ac.uk

ROBERTSON, J.: 'The papers of Stanley Browne: leprologist and medical missionary (1907-1986)'. *História, Ciências, Saúde — Manguinhos*, vol. 10 (supplement 1): 427-33, 2003.

This article elaborates a significant archival acquisition that supplement the collection documents related to the life and work of Stanley George Browne held at the Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine in London, specifically his work in the Belgian Congo (from 1936 to 1959), at Uzuakoli in Nigeria (1959 to 1966), in London with the Leprosy Study Centre (1966-1980), and also in his international capacity as leprosy consultant. It also briefly refers to an endangered collection of documents, photographs, files and correspondence held in a small museum in Culion Sanatorium, The Philippines. This research is part of the International Leprosy Association Global Project on the History of Leprosy. Its results can be accessed at the site <http://www.leprosyhistory.org>

KEYWORDS: Stanley Browne, leprosy, leprologist, Belgium Congo, Uzuakoli, Leprosy Study Centre, Culion Sanatorium, archives.

ROBERTSON, J.: 'O acervo de Stanley Browne: leprologista e médico-missionário (1907-19)'. *História, Ciências, Saúde — Manguinhos*, vol. 10 (suplemento 1): 427-33, 2003.

Esse texto trata de significativa aquisição de documentos que complementam o acervo da Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine de Londres no que diz respeito à vida e obra de Stanley George Browne, especificamente suas atividades internacionais como consultor e seu trabalho no Congo Belga (de 1936 a 1959), em Uzuakoli, na Nigéria (1959 a 1966), e ainda em Londres, com o Leprosy Study Centre (1966-1980). O artigo também se refere a um acervo de documentos, fotos e correspondência, que corre o risco de se perder, e que se encontra em um pequeno museu do Sanatório de Culion, nas Filipinas. Essa pesquisa é parte das atividades do Leprosy Association Global Project on the History of Leprosy (Projeto Global da História da Lepra da Leprosy Association). Seus resultados podem ser conferidos no site <http://www.leprosyhistory.org>.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Stanley Browne, lepra, leprologista, Congo Belga, Uzuakoli, Leprosy Study Centre, Culion Sanatorium, arquivos.

While a significant collection of documents relating to the life and work of Stanley George Browne is held at the Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine in London, an equally significant collection of material has also recently been acquired. This new collection sheds additional light on the life and work of Dr Stanley Browne (Member of the Royal College of Physicians, London and Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England), specifically his work in the Belgian Congo (from 1936 to 1959), at Uzuakoli in Nigeria (1959 to 1966), in London with the Leprosy Study Centre (1966-1980), and also in his international capacity as leprosy consultant.

Browne's meticulous personality and single-minded dedication to his career as a medical missionary is apparent from the earliest diaries and correspondence in this collection. The early records reveal how Browne set about preparing himself for the future. Much of this preparation took place within the context of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) as indicated from missionary sketches written by Browne such as the 'Missionary dialogue' titled 'Krishna Pal in three acts: Showing how William Casey made his first convert in India.' Evidence of the thoroughness which consistently characterises everything he turned his hand to is available in the notes of interview, typed after his application to the London County Council for a Non-Vocational Scholarship, 1926. Browne studied medicine at King's College Hospital, London, graduating in 1933, and this collection contains letters of congratulation on his success in his exams at King's.

There is correspondence from Dr. R. Fletcher Moorshead of the Baptist Missionary Society regarding Browne's acceptance to go to Belgium Congo in May 1934. Then in June 1934, there is a letter from Clement Chestermann, who was then the BMS doctor at Yakusu in the Congo, welcoming him. After being accepted, Browne studied French and tropical medicine at the Institute de Médecine Tropicale, Prince Léopold, Antwerp, obtaining the Diploma in Tropical Medicine in 1936. This collection contains letters that he wrote to his father to announce that he had passed his preparatory language exams.

The first indications in this collection that he had commenced work in the Belgian Congo are from a 'Prayer letter', dated June 28, 1936 from the 'Hôpital de Yakusu: BMS: Haut Congo Belge'. Some of Browne's experiences in the Congo are recorded in a scrapbook on Yakusu, but the real prize in this early part of the collection is a continuous stream of correspondence to his family, extending from May 1936-1954. While Browne was in Yakusu, the leprosarium across the river at Yalisombo was established. Building on Chestermann's work there, he developed pioneering rural surveys that would come to serve as a model in Africa for the control of endemic diseases. These covered an area of 10,000 square miles, and the map used by Browne for this work is included in this

collection. There is also a photographic record of Yalisombo, Yakusu, and the Belgian Congo.

Medical and missionary activities were tirelessly conducted simultaneously. An instance of this combination of activities is a 1937 inspirational manuscript regarding Yakusu, titled 'A medical service in the heart of Africa.' Indications that Browne's interest was becoming increasingly focussed on leprosy is apparent from documents from 1938. In the 'Rapport annuel 1938 for the zone medicale de le BMS Yakusu', he writes that 'Le problème de la lèpre continue à nous donner des grandes difficultés. L'énormité de cette question est de montrer par le grand nombre de cas dépisté pendant les recensements'. The total cases for Yakusu, Isangi, and Yalomba is here estimated as 1637. Even though he considered that leprosy colonies were insufficient to stem this disease, he announced the beginnings of a cooperative endeavour with the government: "Quand même, avec la collaboration du Service Territorial nous avons construit deux colonies agricoles qui viennent d'être terminé au cours de la dernière semaine de l'année 1938".

Counterpointing the work conducted in the field, Browne kept a continuous narrative of the work conducted within a spiritual context; for example, in his 'Story of the call to the foreign field' and in circular letters written to "Dear friends" from Yakusa, December 1938. "Circular" or "prayer letters" were written as an act of stewardship, for the purpose of informing the financially-supporting church community of the work being carried out in order to elicit prayer support and to encourage further financial support. Browne seems to have worked from the premise that to publish his work in the field was to publicise the work of God.

His work in medical education is apparent from an edited copy of a medical handbook *Vocabulaire medical à l'usage des élèves-infirmiers. Rédigé par les médecins de l'école pour infirmiers, Hôpital de la BMS, Yakusu, 1942*. This handbook provides a detailed medical vocabulary for the indigenous infirmiers who were trained at Yakusu. There is also a collection of correspondence exchanged with individual infirmiers between 1938 and 1944.

Browne's break with the BMS and the acrimony associated with it can be traced in a published pamphlet that provides his version of events. This painful period is counter balanced with three documents. The first is a prayer letter from 1957 indicating the success of Browne's work in the eyes of Ken Searle, the senior specialist to the Nigerian Government in Uzuakoli. Here Searle describes his visit to Yakusu and provides his assessment of Browne's research, referring to him as a pioneer in the missionary method, drawing attention to the importance of the rural work he is conducting, and noting the importance of the infirmiers. This letter shows the connection with Nigeria and Uzuakoli, and can be seen as quite accidentally alluding to the work that Browne

will undertake in the future. The second document, from 1958, is 'A memorial service of thanksgiving', the guide to the Thanksgiving ceremony celebrated in Yakasu on the discharge of people who were cured of leprosy. This ceremony was referred to as the 'Grateful Samaritan service.' (This copy of the service is from the ceremony attended by Audrey Hepburn when she was at Yakasu during the production of the *Nun's story*, which was shot at Yakasu. The third document is a letter regarding Browne's appointment to Uzuakoli, as a successor to Frank Davey,¹ dated July 10, 1959.

After leaving the BMS, Browne increasingly focussed his energies on leprosy work, as is evident in his continuing correspondence with Robert G Cochrane² from 1958-1964. These letters show his development as a leprologist. In April 1958, he was writing to Cochrane about biopsies, and sending photos of lesions from Yakasu. In August of the same year, he was proposing a study on depigmentation with respect to leprosy, onchocerciasis, yaws, symmetrical macular hypochromia, hypopigmentation, and other diseases; in August 1962, Cochrane was writing to him about a chapter on differential diagnosis; in March 1963, he was writing to Cochrane about B663; and in the same month and year he was addressing him as "Bob" and writing from the Leprosy Service Research Unit, Uzuakoli.

From 1959 to 1966, Browne was Director of the Leprosy Research Unit, Uzuakoli, Eastern Nigeria. Just as the time in the Congo is recorded in family correspondence, the time at Uzuakoli in Nigeria is documented in 'Daddy's letters: Nigeria, 1960-1969'. These are letters that Browne wrote weekly to his children when they were attending school in England. The collection also includes published reports of the research work conducted at Uzuakoli.

Browne's return to England to take charge of the Leprosy Study Centre in London is first documented in this collection in correspondence from James Ross Innes³ dated May 7, 1963. He became Director of the Leprosy Study Centre from 1966-1980. Documentation on the Leprosy Study Centre and correspondence to do with Browne's position as Leprosy Advisor to the Minister are part of this period. There are four typed pages on the *Leprosy Study Centre*; a copy of Robert G Cochrane's memo on the history of the centre, including a statement of proposed objectives and the cost of the 'Research programme of the Leprosy Research Fund conducted in collaboration with the Department of Pathology of the Royal Free Hospital'. There is also a memorandum setting out the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association's research project in East Africa (May 1952), and a 'Summary of the activities of the Leprosy Research Unit from its foundation on 12 September, 1952 until May 1964'. There is a report of the work of the Leprosy Study Centre, from June 1963 to August 1965; a report on the work involved in

establishing the beginning of a registry of histopathology and a reference laboratory at 11a Weymouth Street during the year 1959-1960, dated August 18, 1960; and six typed pages publicising the Leprosy Research Fund: its formation and activities from November 1953 to December 1954.'

In 1966, Browne was writing to James Ross Innes about his multiple roles as Director of the Leprosy Study Centre; Consultant Advisor to the Department of Health and Social Security, 1966-1979; Medical Consultant to the Leprosy Mission 1966-1978; and Medical Secretary of LEPRO 1968-1973, and Vice-President, 1984-1986. He was also the International Leprosy Association Secretary-Treasurer, 1966-1984, and Honorary Vice-President, 1984-1986.

Browne kept handwritten tour diaries of his work as a leprosy consultant in an international capacity. 1963 saw him undertake a WHO tour of Leprosy Research Centres in India and the East. In 1968, the travel diaries document tours to Rhodesia and South Africa. In 1969, he went to Nepal, the Far East, and Australasia. In 1970, he travelled to East Central State, Nigeria, Lambarene, and Libya. (This visit is accompanied by on-the-spot notes, and a lengthy, typed report on the visit to the Dr. Albert Schweitzer Hospital, Lambarene). In 1972, there is a *Round world trip diary* including Africa (Cairo, Pretoria, Nairobi, Addis Ababa and Paris), Canada and the USA, Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and India, as well as Fiji and New Zealand. In 1974, he visited India, Canada, the South Pacific, Singapore, Bangkok, Central and South America, the South Pacific, Sydney, Singapore, and South Africa. In 1975, he visited Zaire, Athens, Libya, Indonesia and Thailand. In 1976, he visited East Africa, Thailand, Dakar, Teheran, South Africa, Colombia, Caracas, and Mexico City. His 1977 travels included Mexico, Thailand, Philippines, Dakar, Libya, Belgium, India, and Zaire, and in 1978, he went to Dakar, Egypt, Addis, Seoul, Mexico, Lesotho, Tanzania, and Zambia. All of these trips are recorded in minute detail, in handwritten diaries.

A folder from 1985 contains 'Personal letters and contacts all round the world,' a collection of letters written to Browne in that period asking him for advice and acting as a representative sample of the network of connections that converged on him towards the end of his career.

He died on 29 January 1986, and letters of condolence from the Congo, The Leprosy Mission, the BMS, friends, family, the medical fraternity, and the Christian Missionary Fellowship are kept.

The collection also contains a copy of the Munk's Roll entry on Browne and a letter from the Princess of Wales, presented to his wife Ethel Marion Williamson, known as Mali.

These papers will be added to the already substantial collection of Stanley Browne's papers that the Wellcome Library already holds.

An endangered collection: Culion, the Philippines

A remarkable collection of documents, photographs, files and correspondence is held in a small museum in Culion Sanatorium, Culion Palawan, the Philippines.

The sanatorium was the first of its kind in the Philippines and is the original site of the Leonard Wood Memorial for Leprosy Research before it was transferred to its present location in Cebu. There is a rich library of materials on leprosy compiled by Damien Dutton Recipient and first Editor-in Chief of the *International Journal of Leprosy*, Dr. Windsor Wade. There are also laboratory notes, correspondence from key people such as Paul Brand,⁴ and patient details, including photographs. In addition to the many people with leprosy who spent the greater part of their lives at Culion, hundreds or even thousands of children were taken from parents with leprosy and were either held in orphanages or were adopted out. The photographs reveal some of the records of these children.

These are only two of the varied selection of archival collections so far identified by the Global Project on the History of Leprosy.

¹ Dr. Frank Davey worked as a Methodist Medical Missionary, at Uzuakoli, from 1936. In 1937, he undertook a survey in the Ahoada Division and found five hundred people with the disease out of a population of 16,000. He set up treatment centres manned under strict supervision by semi-trained patients. He started large-scale research in 1948. Davey used SU 1906 which he reported in July 1956 to be effective against leprosy and cases resistant to dapsone. He also trialled and used Etisul. From 1968 to 1973, he worked as a clinical leprologist at the Dichpalli Leprosy Hospital.

² In 1924, R. G. Cochrane was appointed Medical Secretary to the Mission to Lepers and established himself at the leper Asylum at Purulia, Bengal. He also visited all the leper Institutions in India and Burma, acting as Adviser to The Mission to Lepers. On 24 June 1929 he took over from Frank Oldrieve as Medical Secretary of BELRA. As Director for the Leprosy Campaign for the Madras State, he was responsible for the treatment of the disease at the Lady Willingdon Leprosarium in Chingleput (1935-44) and in the General Hospital, Madras, as well as Vellore. He worked as consultant medical technician to the American Leprosy Mission. Later he acted as consultant leprologist to the Ministry of Health, London (1951-64). He was vice-president and president of the International Leprosy Association and director of the Leprosy Research Unit in London. He received the Damien-Dutton Award in 1964.

³ Ross Innes was born in Australia in 1903. He was medical secretary of LEPRA from 1957 to 1966. He became a member of the International Leprosy Association (ILA) in 1931 and its honorary secretary-treasurer in 1957-1965. He was elected a life Fellow of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in 1934 and honorary member of the Indian Association of Leprologists. He served as a leprologist for ten years under the East African High Commission where he advised on leprosy campaigns and published numerous articles on his epidemiologic and therapeutic research work. In Africa he helped to set up the Leprosy Research Center at Alupe in Kenya. In 1957 he was appointed medical secretary of BELRA (now LEPRA) and became editor of *Leprosy Review*. He guided the medical policies of LEPRA and was responsible for the implementation of the Medical Committee's proposals for the Leprosy Control and Eradication Project in Malawi. He died in 1968.

⁴ Dr. Paul Brand was a world-renowned orthopaedic specialist and leprosy surgeon. Together with his wife Margaret, Paul Brand taught surgery at the Christian Medical College and Hospital in Vellore, India from 1946, where they first came across deformities caused by leprosy. In the late 1940s, he became the first surgeon in the world to use reconstructive surgery to correct the deformities of leprosy in the hands and feet. In 1953 the Brands joined the staff of The Leprosy Mission, and continued to develop their research and training work at Vellore and at the nearby Schieffelin Leprosy Research and Training Centre, Karigiri, newly founded and funded jointly by The Leprosy Mission and American Leprosy Missions. In 1964 after over 17 years in India, Paul Brand was appointed as The Leprosy Mission's Director of Surgery and Rehabilitation. Two years later they were seconded to the United States Public Health Service Hospital in Carville, Louisiana. Here he was Director of the Rehabilitation Branch until his retirement in 1986 and continued to act as Medical Consultant to The Leprosy Mission. From 1993 to 1999, Dr. Brand was President of The Leprosy Mission International. In retirement Dr. Brand continued to contribute to leprosy work through his advisory role to The Leprosy Mission and to the World Health Organisation. Dr. Paul Brand died at the age of 89 years, from complications related to a subdural hematoma, on 8 July 2003 at Swedish Hospital, Seattle, Washington, USA.

