

Lionel Atherton and the First British Osteopathic Hospital – Supplement

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This first supplement (Article 12-1) to Article 12 contains additional details of the early life of Lionel Atherton, founder of the Osteopathic Hospital in Effingham in the 1930s, and provides more insights into the Brotherhood of the Essenes established and led by him. The lives of other key members of the Brotherhood are also examined here.

Introduction

Lionel Atherton (whose registered name when born in 1885 was Ernest Edwin William Green) became an osteopath, among other things, and founded a short-lived osteopathic hospital in Effingham in about 1934. Article 12 charts the complex life he led and explores his many unorthodox beliefs and activities, including astrology and his role in the Brotherhood of the Essenes.

Although that primary article relates much about Atherton's life from the Thirties onwards it does not have a great deal to say about him in earlier years, owing to the sparsity of relevant source material. Now, however, a little more is known about his activities in the 1920s thanks to some new findings brought to our attention by Rupert White, for which Effingham Local History Group is most grateful.

New findings

The first of the new findings comes from *Hartmann's Who's Who in Occult, Psychic and Spiritual Realms*, compiled by William C Hartmann and 'issued under the auspices of the Occult Brotherhood'

[publ The Occult Press, New York, 1925] and is shown in Figure 1. It advertises The Brotherhood of the Essenes and indicates that they held, or inhabited, a property named 'Aqua Regia' in Portishead, about twelve miles from Bristol. Its last line names Atherton as the organisation's 'Western Initiate'. We cannot be sure whether this organisation existed in some concrete sense or was just another aspirational fantasy concocted in the ever-fertile mind of Atherton. What we can be sure of is that, at the present time, no reference to it other than in *Hartmann's Who's Who* can be found in the British Newspaper Archive or in that part of the internet surveyed by Google.

The second finding is shown in Figure 2 and comes from the same publication. It is Atherton's entry for his 'Aquarian College of Metaphysics' in Clifton where he had set up some kind of facility in Royal York Crescent including a hydro (a clinic providing hydrotherapy treatment). The entry contains some fascinating detail complementing what was already known when the primary article was written. Firstly, it confirms that in 1925 Atherton was already involved both in the ancient Essenes and in astrology. His association with astrology had first become known to us from the court proceedings of 1928 in which he had been accused of committing adultery with one of his devotees.

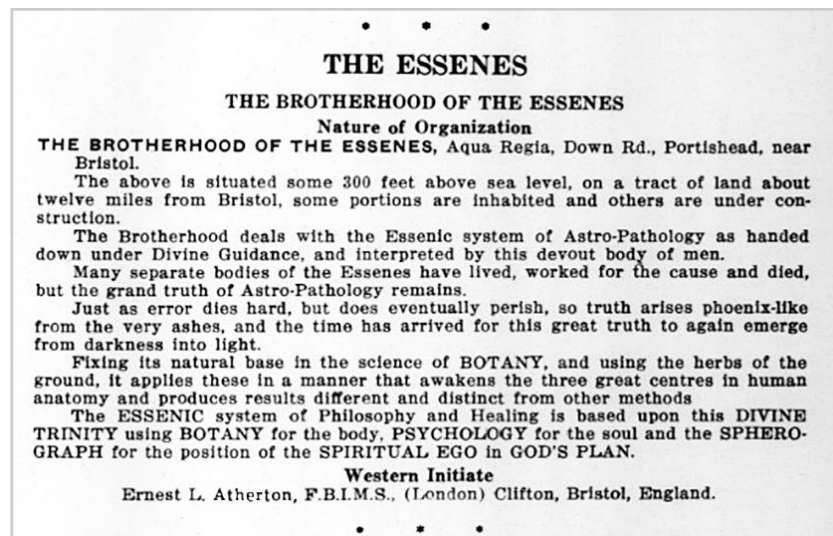


Figure 1 The Brotherhood listed in *Hartmann's Who's Who*, 1925.

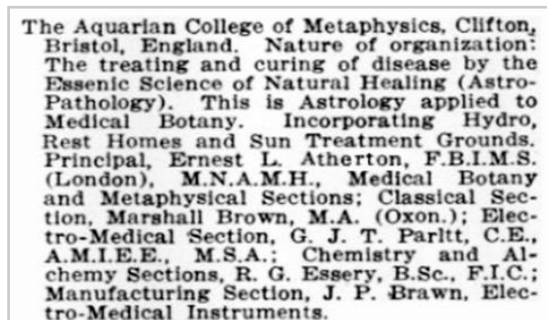


Figure 2 Atherton's facility also listed in *Hartmann's Who's Who*, 1925.

Secondly it mentions Marshall Ernest Brown who was Atherton's co-accused in that case; Brown's role in the 'Classical Section' of the Aquarian College doubtless reflected his being a schoolteacher specialising in Classics. Thirdly, and perhaps of most fascination, it mentions John Player Brawn as being responsible for the College's 'Electro-Medical Instruments'. We had first learned about Brawn – then working as a ladder maker – in an account of his being examined by the Bristol Bankruptcy Court in 1932, where he been accused of using his wife's money to fund Atherton's business ventures. We had been amazed to discover that in 1939 Brawn had been a resident in Atherton's osteopathic hospital in Effingham. Apparently he had remained a loyal disciple of Atherton despite having bankrupted himself by supporting him.

The 1927 edition of *Hartmann's Who's Who* contains a much shorter advertisement describing Atherton as the Aquarian College's 'Principal', as seen in Figure 3.

The third of Rupert's findings is a newspaper article from 1954 (Figure 4). This is of particular interest as it reveals something about Atherton that was hitherto unknown, namely that besides leading the Brotherhood of the Essenes up Glastonbury Tor at their annual convocations, he was also a member of a Druid Order named 'The British Circle of the Universal Bond' and given to attending rituals with them at Stonehenge. The article, in *The Salisbury Times and South Wilts Gazette* of 25 June 1954, reports that the members of this Druid Order were at Stonehenge at sunrise on 21 June – they 'were in regalia and carried through the ancient ritual', although we are not told what that ritual consisted of. The members were named and included 'Dr Lionel Atherton' in his capacity as 'the Mainarch and chairman of the London Lodge B'. He was then aged 69.

Rupert's fourth finding is especially illuminating in exposing the significance to the Brotherhood of the animal kingdom, particularly its dogs. For animals they maintained a powerful reverence which they integrated within their rituals and formalised in their framework of Essenic beliefs. Insights into this are provided in a video, lasting nearly 17 minutes, uploaded on the *WyrdCorners* channel of *YouTube* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmVyRzmuGrE> and concerning the ceremonial funeral of a Samoyed dog – a 'King Dog' – conducted in 1969 in a valley near St Agnes, Cornwall. It is prefaced by the following text:

In 1969, a quiet coastal village in Cornwall became host to a bizarre folklore after a secretive occult group known as the Brotherhood of the Essenes was filmed performing a weird funeral deep in the woods of nearby Jericho Valley.

Rumours of creepy rituals, evil curses, and mystical forces took hold as locals talked of strange happenings at the burial site. But who were the Brotherhood, and why did they believe a dog – Gengha – was worth burying with such fanfare?

Decades later, the legend continues to grow, as visitors to the grave site report strange experiences. Is it all just rumours run amok, or is there something to the myths surrounding Jericho Valley?

ATHERTON, Ernest L., F.B., I.M.S. (London), Western Initiate, "The Brotherhood of Essenes" (England); Principal, The Aquarian College of Metaphysics (Bristol, England)—Clifton, Bristol, England.

Figure 3 Atherton listed in *Hartmann's Who's Who*, 1927.

STONEHENGE CEREMONY

CLOUD PREVENTS SUNRISE SPECTACLE

There was a lovely sunrise on Monday morning for the longest day of the year but a bank of cloud kept the sun obscured until two minutes past five, and when it was seen at Stonehenge it was too high in the sky, and too far round to the west, to provide the rare spectacle of it appearing immediately above the Hele Stone and throwing its rays on to the altar stone.

A crowd estimated at 800 was present, some people having waited all night. The Wiltshire Morris Dancers helped to while away the waiting time.

At noon on Sunday the Druid Order (An Druidh Uileach Braitreachas) the British Circle of the Universal Bond celebrated the Summer Solstice Ceremony of High Noon within the enclosure.

At sunrise on Monday there was the Summer Solstice of the Golden Dawn when the members were in regalia and carried through the ancient ritual. The crowd watched respectfully.

Amongst those present were the Grand Druid of Brittany, Bro. P. L. Oisel; the Mainarch and Presider of the Delegate Council of Direction, Dr. Leigh Vaughan Henry; the Mainarch of the Albion Lodge of Wessex, Bro. Reginald Millard; the Mainarch and chairman of the London Lodge "B" Dr. Lionel Atherton; Bro. T. L. Maughan, representing the Mother Lodge "G" and the supreme grand council; the Chief Druid of the Welsh Circle of the Bond, Bro. David Llewellyn Carrellio-Morgan; the Mainarch of the Druid Circle of the Isle of Man, Dr. G. B. Gardner; the Chosen Chief of the Bond, Mr. R. Macgregor Reid (Ariovistos), together with the delegates of the Order and other societies in friendly alliance with the Mother Lodge "G."

Figure 4 Atherton and the Druids in 1954.

The Brotherhood was concerned fundamentally with preparation for the Second Coming (of Christ) which they considered to be imminent. They believed they had the power of prophecy, partly manifested through a psychic medium who was one of their members. She was the owner of the dog Gengha mentioned above.

The role of dogs in the Brotherhood's mysticism during the years when Atherton was their leader (that is, up to his death in 1957) was not known to us when our primary article in Volume 2 was written, although that article did observe the Brotherhood's reverence for dogs in later years. In that later period the leadership had passed to a man named in the article as 'Joseph Benito', his name being spelt this way in a newspaper article we had found describing his role. However, from subsequent research we now know that his correct name was Herbert Jose Bennetto, whilst the group's medium was Annie ('Anna Maria') (née Williamson) Thornton-Parry. These are the two seen in the primary article's Figure 61 which shows them, in 1966, wearing their ritual garb and leading the Brotherhood in procession to take packets of dog food to the Battersea Dogs' Home.

It is an open question as to whether Atherton had been as much involved in the dog worshipping business as had Bennetto and Thornton-Parry, because in scouring numerous accounts of Atherton's lectures, advertisements, rituals, business ventures, brochures, court cases and so on we have not yet found a single mention of dogs or animals being within his range of interests, nor of any explicit association between him and Bennetto or Thornton-Parry. However, on 30 June 1977 an interesting letter written by 'Octogenarian' of Glastonbury was published in *The Cheddar Valley Gazette* :

'When I came to Glastonbury in 1948, Brother Rex (Dr Atherton, as osteopath from London) used to give the address in the Town Hall, and I still have a cutting from the Daily Mirror, dated 23.6.51 headed "The Mystics seek success as town sleeps", describing how we took a cripple on a stretcher for healing. Some of the brothers carried her up, but she walked down. In the service we called upon the Angelic forces to cure her. She had not walked for three years.

In those days Brother Jose Bennetto lived at The House of the Holy Grail, now St Louis Convent, where he practised as an osteopath, and drove each week to Wolverhampton, where he also practised. He represented the Essenes at the re-planting of the Holy Thorn on Wearyhall [sic – Wearyall] Hill as part of the Festival of Britain celebrations in 1951. All denominations were represented at the service.

The group was certainly called into being by professional men with two osteopaths at its head, but I am sure that Bro. Rex would never have claimed the divinity of the animal kingdom.'

It sounds as though the writer may have been quite familiar with the Brothers but does not admit to having been one of them. If Bennetto did indeed represent them on Wearyall Hill in 1951 then he and Atherton must have been on intimate terms, even if Atherton did not necessarily subscribe fully (or at all) to the notion of dogs being spiritual beings. It can be no coincidence that Bennetto named the second of his six children Christopher Rex David.

Another view of the Bennetto-Atherton relationship is offered by Cornish freelance writer Elizabeth Dale in her online blog <https://cornishbirdblog.com> where, in an article entitled *The Dog King and the Truth about the Cult of Jericho Valley, St Agnes* she writes:

'Sometime in the late 1940s/early 1950s Bennetto had joined a sect in Glastonbury, where he is said to have been one of the brothers of 'The House of the Holy Grail'. His teacher appears to have been a man known as Brother Rex and when he passed away Jose took over as leader of the group.'

We will tell more of Bennetto presently.

Anna Maria Thornton-Parry

Meanwhile, what of the psychic medium Anna Maria – had she also been an associate of Atherton? Determining her identity was at first especially difficult owing to the fact that almost all sources we have found which mention her in relation to the Essenes give only her forenames. One newspaper article adds the detail that she lived in Potters Bar. By the merest chance a single clue to her surname was found in a report of the funeral of the ladder maker John Player Brawn, of whom we will also tell more presently. In that report the list of mourners included an 'A M Thornton-Parry' and further delving eventually confirmed that this was indeed Anna Maria.

She was born in Shetland on 14 November 1914 to parents John Stove Williamson, a Captain in the Merchant Navy, and his second wife Jemima (née Clark) [National Records of Scotland, Lerwick, Ref: 005/1, Entry 115 (1914)]. She was registered at birth as simply 'Annie Williamson'.

On 19 January 1939 she married Geoffrey Herbert Thornton Parry, a ship's hairdresser, at a Register Office standing between the Great West Road and Glenhurst Road in Brentford, Hounslow [Brentford 3a

351, 1939 (Q1)]. Geoffrey had been born on 18 April 1913 as the only son of Herbert Charles Parry and his wife Mabel Helen (née Thornton). The 1939 National Register finds Annie as the sole occupant of 7a, Ashburnham Close in Southampton, described as born on 14 November 1914 and performing 'unpaid domestic duties'. Her name was first entered in this register as 'Anne Parry' but was later annotated as 'Thornton-Parry, Anna Maria', the latter forenames clearly being just her preferred elaboration. Geoffrey was not present with her at this time and it is presumed that he had departed for war-related service. He served with the Merchant Navy, with Discharge No R74853 [*The National Archives*, BT 395/1/75570].

In 1950 the Electoral Register shows her and Geoffrey residing at 131, East End Road in Finchley N2. In that same year a four-page brochure was published by 'The House of the Holy Grail, London'. Its front cover (Figure 5) bears the words 'The Brotherhood of the Essenes asks you all "Are You Aware?"', framed around a photograph of a white Samoyed dog, the same breed as owned by Anna Maria. Some time ago a copy of this brochure was advertised on the *AbeBooks* website at a price of £50 but without displaying or describing the contents of its inner pages. The brochure's photograph had been taken in 1934 by photographer Walter Guiver and shows a dog named Peter of Kobe. It is not known whether Anna Maria was already acquainted with the Brotherhood at the time they produced this brochure.

In 1953 she and Geoffrey were living in Mutton Lane, Potters Bar and in that year she was featured in a photograph (Figure 6) taken on 3 April for *The Daily Mirror* (issue unknown) with her Samoyeds and the garments she had made from their fur. Soon after this she and Geoffrey moved to 24, Osborne Road in Potters Bar, a house they later named St Michael's Cottage, no doubt in homage to St Michael's Tower at the top of Glastonbury Tor where the Brotherhood performed its midnight ceremonies.

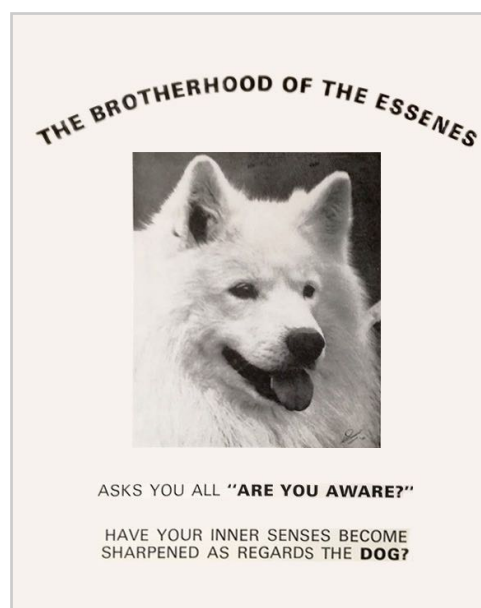


Figure 5 The Brotherhood's brochure, 1950.



Figure 6 Anna Maria at home in Potters Bar with her Samoyeds King Vydor and Snowball, 1953.



Figure 7 Anna Maria clipping the fur from King Vydor and Snowball, photographed on 1 November 1958.

The article shown in Figure 7 appeared in *The Singapore Free Press* on 17 November 1958. Its text reads as follows:

'A 'Shaggy' Dog Story

Two Siberian Husky dogs, kept as pets by a hairdresser, provide enough wool from their shaggy coats to make a winter coat every year for their mistress.

Mrs Thornton-Parry of Potters Bar, Middlesex, regularly trims her two pets – King Vydor and Snowball – and by the autumn has two sacks full of wool to send away for spinning and weaving.

It comes back as balls of wool or a length of cloth. Both Mrs Parry and her husband have made dog-toothed tweed obtained in this way, while wool has been knitted into six jumpers and a soft car rug. The dogs help to earn their keep by posing for advertising.

Below Mrs Parry trims "King Vydor" while Snowball looks on. The large pile of wool shorn from the two huskies will be sent for spinning.

On the right, Mrs Parry, wearing her overcoat made from the clippings of her dogs, takes two pets for a walk.'

The above portrayals in the Press of Anna Maria make no mention of her membership of the Brotherhood or of the fact that the dogs were worshipped by them as divine beings, details which we assume were not disclosed to the photographers or reporters. The Brotherhood attached particular significance to the fact that 'dog' spelt backwards is 'god' which must beg some questions about their grasp of etymology.

A family member recalls that Anna Maria's involvement with the Essenes was said to have begun when she was approached in a High Street by a complete stranger who told her that she was the one they had been looking for to serve as their High Priestess, to which she agreed. If this were the case then one might wonder whether in the subsequent Brotherhood ceremonies her role as their psychic centre was entirely a matter of pretence for her, or whether she came to believe genuinely what the other members were telling her about her purported powers and significance. As for the 'complete stranger' – might this have been Atherton who is known to have had strong associations with Cockfosters, just three miles from Potters

Bar, since the 1940s (and perhaps even earlier)? Had she been picked out in the street because she had her Samoyeds with her? We might be able to infer or guess more about this if we knew whether she owned such dogs prior to the Brotherhood making their brochure in 1950; but we do not.



Figure 8 Anna Maria with Samoyeds and several white kittens, undated but probably 1950s.

Anna Maria and Geoffrey remained at St Michael's Cottage until at least 1980. They are understood to have lived somewhat separate lives owing to Anna Maria's heavy involvement with the Brotherhood. In addition, Geoffrey ran a gents hairdressing business named 'Thornton Parry' at 221, Woodhouse in Friern Barnet.

Anna Maria died in a car accident on 16 September 1980. Her death certificate [Barnet 11 199, 1980 (Q4)] confirms that she was born in Shetland on 14 November 1914. The cause of death was recorded as '1a. Multiple Injuries Accidental'; an inquest was held on 23 October by D M Paul, Coroner for North London. She was taken to Barnet General Hospital but 'was found to be dead on arrival'. She was buried on 29 September at the Trent Park Cemetery, Cockfosters [Grave No CA 1179]. The North London Coroner's Service in Barnet has confirmed that the files from her inquest have not survived.

There are unusual features in her Will and in its execution. She made the Will on 15 October 1964, when her age was just a month short of 50. As her Executors and Trustees she appointed chartered accountant Cyril Henry Appleby (of whom more will be told presently) and solicitor Hedley George Morgan, but not her husband Geoffrey. The Will began by bequeathing five items of jewellery to Appleby, but if he did not survive her by 30 days then these items were to go instead to fellow Essene Marshall Ernest Brown. She also bequeathed to Appleby her gold-plated solid silver ceremonial coronet encrusted with gems, but if he did not survive her by 30 days then this was to go instead to Atherton's close friend the ballet dancer Kathleen MacVitie, but if she also did not survive Anna Maria by 30 days then the coronet was to go to Brown. She also gave to Appleby the freehold house he was living in, Melyenek House in 83, Uphill Road, Mill Hill (a suburb of Barnet), but if he did not survive her for 30 days then that house and its contents were to go upon trust to her husband Geoffrey for his lifetime use and enjoyment, after which they would revert to her residuary estate. She also left to Geoffrey her cash and personal effects in their home if he survived her for 30 days but otherwise they were to go to Appleby. She gave her animals to Geoffrey and Appleby desiring that they 'be put to sleep painlessly immediately by a qualified veterinary surgeon'. All other elements of her estate were left to her Trustees to sell, the proceeds remaining after paying for her funeral etc to enter her residuary estate, the income from which the Trustees would pay to Geoffrey if he survived her by 30 days but otherwise to Appleby, after whose lifetime the remainder was to be distributed in equal shares to three specified animal welfare societies.

One of the jewellery items bequeathed to Appleby was a white gold eternity ring engraved with leaves and, on its inside, the date 9.10.1960. We do not know the significance to her of that date, but possibilities include: the date she first met Appleby; the date when King Vydor or Snowball died; the date when King Gengha was born.

Her Executor Hedley George Morgan died in November 1970 but clearly she did not update her Will accordingly. As it happened Appleby did not survive her either – he had been in the car with her when they had their accident. He too was taken to Barnet General Hospital but died there. His death certificate gives the cause as ‘1a. Transection of spinal cord due to fracture of cervical column’. He was buried close to Anna Maria on 29 September at the Trent Park Cemetery, Cockfosters [Grave No CA 1186]; their entries are consecutive in the burial register. An inquest was held on the same day as Anna Maria's, perhaps conducted conjointly. The files from this inquest have not survived.

The Probate Court now had to appoint new Executors to deal with Anna Maria's estate. It appears that this was a rather long-drawn-out process, as it was not until nearly a year later, on 1 September 1981, that probate was granted to three Executors – Geoffrey, Richard Course and Major-General James Alexander Rowland Robertson CB, CBE, DSO, DL. Her estate was then valued (net) as £115,864.

Geoffrey's business ‘Thornton Parry’ continued operating in Friern Barnet until his death in 1987 but whether he was himself working on site there in the 1980s we do not know.

John Player Brawn

The Brotherhood's dog funeral in 1969 took place in a wooded area near the head (the southern end) of Jericho Valley, more properly named Trevellas Coombe. The valley has steep scrubby flanks at the bottom of which a stream winds its way past the Blue Hills Tin Mine to reach the coast at Trevellas Porth. At the head of the valley this stream passes beneath the B3285 road; about half a mile east of this point is the village of Mithian whilst slightly further to the west of it is the town of St Agnes.

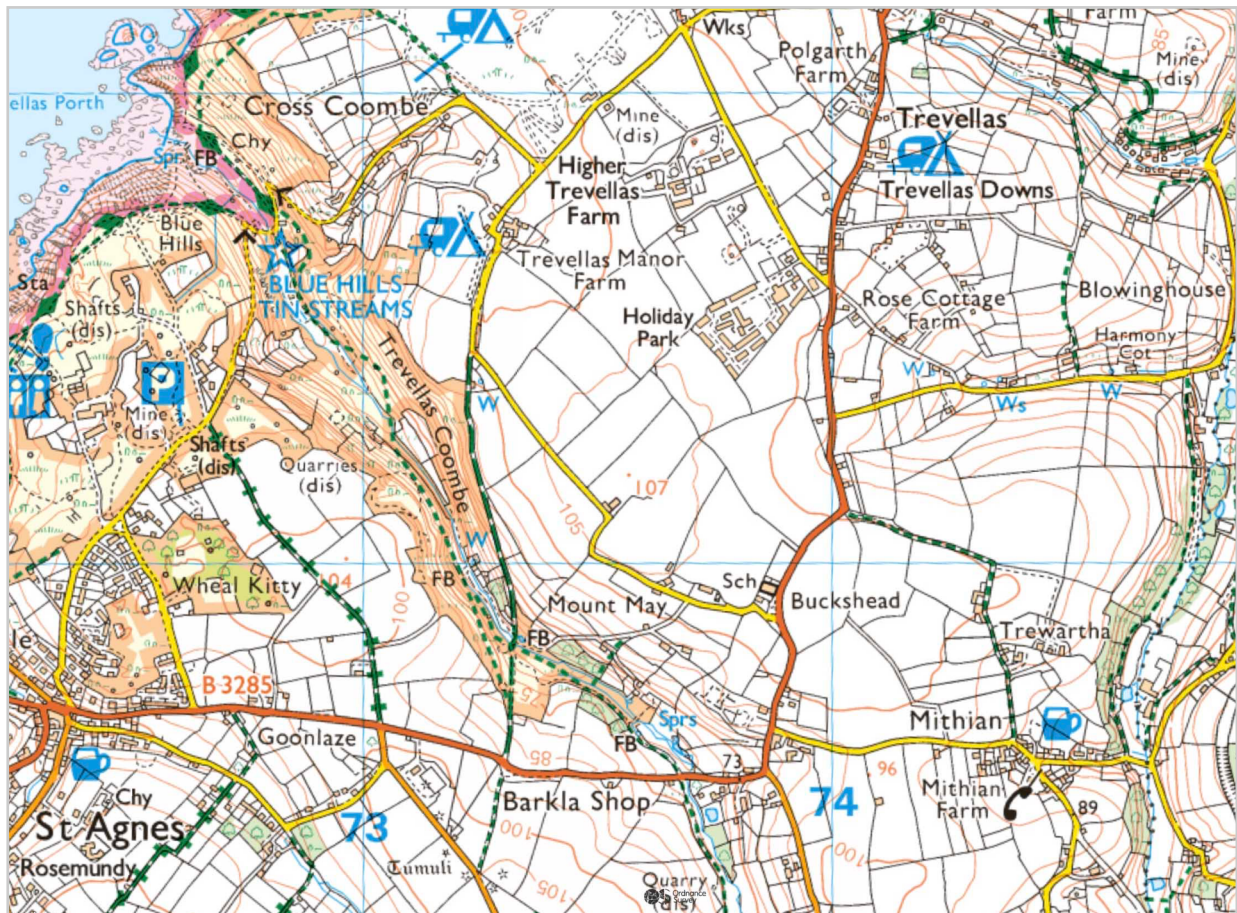


Figure 9a St Agnes, Trevallas Coombe (Jericho Valley) and Mithian in Cornwall.

Less than half a mile north-west of Mithian the B3285 passes through the hamlet of Buckshead from which a narrow single-lane road branches off westwards above Mount May. A yet narrower track branches off this in turn and leads down the hillside. The second turning to the left from this track leads directly to the house

The Brawns remained at Beit Hamal Achim until becoming patients at Barncoose Hospital, Redruth in 1976. There they died, within three days of each other – John on 5 November and Elizabeth on 8 November. Their joint funeral took place at St Agnes Parish Church and their interment in St Agnes Cemetery, being reported as follows [*The West Briton and Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 18 November 1976]:

J P Brawn Mrs E C Brawn St Agnes

Mr John Player Brawn and his wife, Mrs Elizabeth Compton Brawn, both aged 88, of Jericho Valley, St Agnes, who had been in Barncoose Hospital for some time, died there within three days of each other. For many years they lived at St Agnes. There are no children.

The double funeral of Mr and Mrs Brawn took place in St Agnes Parish Church, the Vicar, the Rev A M Williamson officiating. Mr W G Stevens was organist; internment was in St Agnes Cemetery.

Mr and Mrs Brawn were members of a religious order known as the Brotherhood of the Essenes and representatives who attended from London were Mrs A M Thornton-Parry and Messrs C H [Cyril Henry] Appleby, T Capindale and M C [sic – E?] Brown.

Other mourners were Mr and Mrs W W Vincent, nephew and niece, Mr W P Vincent, great-nephew, Mesdames R Greenbank, F K Branfield, N Hornett, C Nicholls, Miss C L Clark, Messrs A M and G Mitchell, H A Dark, ... A Usher, D F Porteous, C R [Christopher Rex?] and J R [sic] Bennetto.'

There appears to be no gravestone for them.

Probate of John's estate, valued at £14,483, was granted on 11 January 1977 as also was probate over Elizabeth's, valued at just £873. The Executor of John's Will was Cyril Henry Appleby (one of those who had attended his funeral). In the Will John bequeathed the house and the land and all his other possessions to Elizabeth during her lifetime, but after her death (or if she predeceased him) it was all to go to Anna Maria. In the event, as John died first the estate passed transiently to Elizabeth and thence to Anna Maria.

Cyril Henry Appleby

As noted above, Cyril Henry Appleby attended the Brawns' funeral in 1976. His involvement in the Brotherhood is interesting for his early association with Effingham. He was born in 1904 [Lambeth 1d 442, 1904 (Q3)] to parents Robert Appleby, a nurseryman florist of Brixton Hill, and his wife Anna Maria (née Bruno) who had married at St Luke, Paddington on 26 January 1893. The 1911 Census finds the family living at 264, Brixton Hill, whilst the 1921 Census finds them at 'Heathcote' in Charlton Road, Shepperton, Cyril being employed as a clerk with the accountancy firm Messrs Gerard Van der Linde & Son of 4, Fenchurch Avenue, London EC3.

Cyril married in 1935 to Betty Constance (née) Freeman and by 1938 they were living at 'Brioni' in High Park Avenue, East Horsley, near the northern end of Effingham Common. The 1939 National Register finds them there, giving his date of birth as 21 June 1904 and hers as 26 November 1912. Alongside her name is written 'British Red Cross' and some other words that are illegible, whilst alongside his name is written, in the same hand, 'Effingham Section, Surrey', probably referring to some organisation concerned with wartime precautions. He was now a chartered accountant, working in London at Aldwych House, WC2. At this time Atherton and his family, as well as the Brawns, were living in Effingham at Dunley Hill and it seems plausible that Cyril was drawn into the Brotherhood through becoming somehow acquainted with them while he was living in East Horsley.

Cyril and Betty had evidently separated or divorced by 1945, as in that year Betty was no longer listed with Cyril at 'Brioni' in the Electoral Register; moreover, in January 1945 her solicitors had announced in *The London Gazette* [Number 36906, Page 542] that after the first week of February she wished her surname to be known as Upton instead of Appleby]. In 1947 she remarried to Kenneth Wilfred Upton Hunn [Hampstead 3c 2126, 1947 (Q4)]. Nothing more is known of them except that she seems to have died in southern Australia in 2010.

Cyril appears not to have remarried and after 1951 lived in the London area until his death in Barnet on 16 September 1980. His Will named three Executors including Anna Maria. He left everything to her if she survived him, but otherwise all was to go to animal charities. As noted, she did not survive him.

No clue has yet been found as to why he had been living in a house owned by Anna Maria. Its unusual name 'Menyelek' is presumed to have chimed in some way with the outlook of the Brotherhood: legend has it that Menyelek was the son born to the Queen of Sheba and fathered by King Solomon who was reputed to have held a high respect for animals' sentience.

Marshall Ernest Brown

Marshall, in the guise of Brother Mark, was one of the earliest members of the Brotherhood founded by Atherton and he makes several appearances in our primary article. More has since been discovered about him. He was born at West Bergholt in Essex in 1896 to parents Ernest George Brown and his wife Kate (née Bruce) who had married in Essex in 1886. By 1911 the family was living at Brighton Villa, Stoneygate Road in Leicester where Ernest was employed by Leicestershire County Council as a manual instructor; Marshall was attending school. The 1921 Census finds Marshall living at a boarding school in Church House, Chigwell and employed as an assistant schoolmaster. He claimed to have been awarded an MA from Oxford University and so may have undertaken a bachelor degree there in the preceding decade (there are no online sources for checking this).

In 1923 he was appointed to the teaching staff of Kingston Grammar School, where he would specialise in classics and history. This would have been a quite prestigious position to be offered and suggests that his claim to an Oxford degree would have been verified.



Figure 10 Marshall Ernest Brown outside Kingston Grammar School, 1930s.

The school has an online archive (<http://archive.legs.org.uk>) holding scans of its magazine *The Kingstonian* and this contains many references to Marshall during the 38 years he taught there. The first of these occurs in the December 1923 issue [Vol III, No 4] which observes his arrival as follows: 'We extend a warm welcome to Mr M E Brown ... [and others] ... who have all joined the staff this term'. Marshall quickly became a prominent figure in the school's Gibbon Society, named after its alumnus pupil, the eminent historian Edward Gibbon. In 1924, for example, he was noted in the magazine [Vol IV, No 1] as performing as a judge in a mock trial staged by the Society.

The school's website also features seven photographs from about the 1930s submitted by a former pupil. One of these (Figure 10) shows Marshall in his gown standing outside the school.

He appears to have been an active member of the Putney Literary Debating Society, as a newspaper article [*South Western Star*, 22 February 1952] reported his chairing a forum convened by the Society in which the headmaster of Kingston Grammar School participated, debating the role of intelligence tests for schoolchildren.

In 1959 he was elected an Honorary fellow of the Gibbon Society. In 1961 he retired, his departure being noted in the September issue of *The Kingstonian* [Vol XII, No 5] as shown in Figure 11.

Since about 1937 Marshall and his wife Clara Isabel (née Wallis) had lived for two decades in Putney, at Flat 5 in No 4, Chartfield Road, where they are listed in the 1956 Electoral Register. During 1957-61, however, they were listed at 'Polruan' in Fordbridge Road, Sunbury. It appears that upon his retiring they moved to Cornwall, probably to be close to Jericho Valley and its Essenic activities, given that Clara's address when she died in 1967 was 'Pol Major' in the road named Polperro West on the outskirts of St Agnes. Like the Brawns she died at the Barncoose Hospital in Redruth. Marshall seems then to have moved back to London where he died in the Haringey district in 1978, registered as 'Mark Marshall E Brown'. He left no Will and there were no children from the marriage.

Marshall's involvement in the Brotherhood, with its astrology, triunism, dog worshipping and all the rest is made the more curious in his case if he had indeed undergone the rigours of an Oxford degree followed by a long scholarly career in classics and history, with all that that required in the rational evaluation of evidence and valid historical appraisal, especially in an era when science had already made great strides in developing a consistent view of the universe and its workings.

Herbert Jose Bennetto

Bennetto, who would take over the leadership of the Brotherhood after Atherton's death, was born in Exeter on 29 September 1907 to parents Edward Bennetto, a grocer, and his wife Clara Eliza (née Miller) who had married in Devon in 1894. He believed himself to have descended from a Spaniard brought to the Cornish shores by the Spanish Armada. In 1911 the family were living at 92, Tiverton Road in Exeter and were still there in 1921.

In 1930 Bennetto married to Bertha Minnie (née) Holloway. She had been born in Pimlico to parents George Holloway, a letter sorter with the Post Office, and his wife Minnie Holyer (née Smith) who had married at St James, Enfield on 22 February 1897. Bennetto and Bertha married in Staffordshire but why they were in that county is unknown.

It appears that they settled in Tettenhall, a village in the north-western outskirts of Wolverhampton, where Jose practised as an osteopath. In 1932 their unusually-named child Naffer Jose Bennetto was born [Wolverhampton 6b 794, 1932 (Q2)]. The 1939 National Register lists them there (but with Naffer's entry redacted), together with Bertha's parents, in a house named 'Cintra' in Wergs Road. Bennetto was described as a doctor of osteopathy and physio-medicine. Against his name, in the same handwriting, is a note

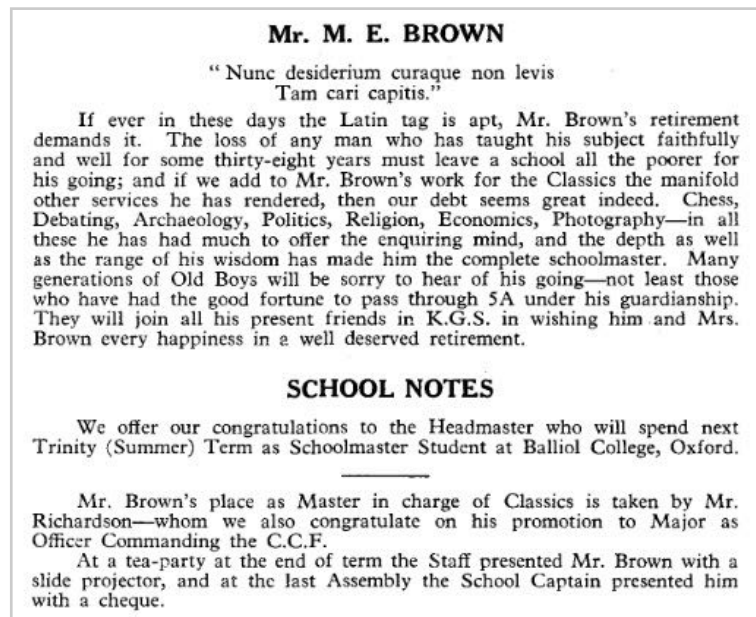


Figure 11 Marshall's retirement, 1961.

'Services accepted by Tettenhall, offered Sunhaven Hospital, Surrey'. The interpretation of this is uncertain, but it may be that Bennetto was suggesting that working in 'Sunhaven Hospital' could exempt him from military service. This is curious, given that at this time Atherton was in the middle of his bankruptcy hearings at which it was confirmed that his Sunhaven medical facility had ceased operating in 1937, even

OSTEOPATH'S PROTEST AT CALL-UP

That his action was taken as a protest was told to the Willenhall magistrates today by Jose Herbert Bennetto (34), of Cintra, Wergs-road, Tettenhall, when charged with failing to report for military service on July 16th.

Superintendent J. H. Davison said that following information that Bennetto had not reported at Aldershot, he saw him at Tettenhall this morning, when Bennetto said, "I do not intend to go, only under arrest."

"I consider that I am not under military law inasmuch as my profession under the National Service Acts has been granted no consideration whatever," Bennetto told the bench.

"We are not acknowledged in civil or military law, and in consequence men like myself, trained in the art and science of osteopathy and naturopathic healing, are not used to the best of their ability. Therefore we should be exempt from military service, in order that we may continue to do the work of healing among the civilian population."

Bennetto was remanded to await an escort.

Osteopathy is a system of treatment of any disease of bones.

though he was still living there. By 1942 the authorities were intent upon Bennetto joining up for military service. A newspaper article [*Express and Star (Wolverhampton)*, 27 July 1942] reported that he had been brought in front of magistrates for failing to report at Aldershot (Figure 12). He argued that if he were to join the military his healing capabilities would be wasted. He stated 'I do not intend to go, only under arrest'. He was then 'remanded to await an escort'. By September, however, he was evidently still in Tettenhall as he must surely have been the author of the letter of protest [*Stafford Newsletter*, 12 September 1942] shown in Figure 13. He may have largely avoided active military service, although in an obituary for him (Figure 16) his second child Christopher Rex stated that he had served in the 'medical corps'.

CORRESPONDENCE

Unregistered Practitioners.

To the Editor of the "*Stafford Newsletter*."

Sir—May I draw your attention to a serious injustice? I refer to the legislation which refuses to exempt Osteopaths from military service, and which refuses to employ their great talents when they are called-up.

Highly skilled practitioners in Natural Methods of Healing are being called from their practices and their profound knowledge and experience is wasted on the grounds that they are not *registered* practitioners. The man in whose hands I trust my life is not being used to restore health in the Services.

Health is a precious gift, and in a free country one should be able to choose the method of healing one knows from experience to be most beneficial. It is more than time that prejudice and ignorance was swept aside and our legislation adjusted to give due recognition to this branch of Medical Science.

Yours, etc.,

JEHU.

Tettenhall, Wolverhampton.

Figure 12 Bennetto remanded, July 1942.

Figure 13 Letter of protest, September 1942.

After the war he was still in Wolverhampton. In 1946 he chaired a public health lecture at the Town Hall there [*Express and Star (Wolverhampton)*, 9 December 1946]. In 1950 he was criticised at an inquest into the death of a woman named Gertrude Susan Bishop [*Daily Express*, 1 September 1950]. She had died from haemorrhage and heart strain. Bennetto had been treating her with his 'naturopathic' potions, including plantain, geums, tincture of myrrh, witch hazel and raspberry leaves, all of which were deemed by a Home Office pathologist (called as a witness) to be wholly ineffective for her condition. Bennetto said that he had advised her to go to hospital but she and her husband had been satisfied with his treatment of her. The pathologist said she would not have died had she received proper treatment. The jury concluded that Bennetto had been very unwise in continuing to treat her after telling her to go to hospital.

Bennetto had been treating patients in Glastonbury as well as in Wolverhampton, travelling several times each week between the two towns. Up to 1952 his Glastonbury practice had been based in Somerset

House, Magdalene Street but in October he moved this to the house 'Wyrall' in Northover, a village in the outskirts of Glastonbury [*The Central Somerset Gazette*, 7 November 1952].

In 1955 Bertha divorced Bennetto on the grounds of his admitted adultery with his much younger unmarried receptionist Ursula Fanny (née) Chidlow [*Express and Star (Wolverhampton)*, 4 March 1955]. Ursula had been born on 22 May 1922 [Mt Drayton 6a 1151, 1922 (Q3)] notwithstanding that the latter newspaper article gave her age as '28'. Bennetto and Bertha had produced only one child, Naffer, during their 25 years of marriage, whilst he and Ursula had already produced one, Christopher Rex David Bennetto [Wolverhampton 9b 1164, 1955 (Q1)]. In the GRO birth index this latter entry gives Christopher's mother's maiden name as Bennetto but bears a handwritten amendment indicating a re-registration performed in 1973 correcting the mother's maiden name to Chidlow [Wolverhampton 9b 3350, 1973 (Q3)]. Later in 1955 Bennetto and Ursula married [Kidderminster 9d 433, 1955 (Q3)]. They produced a further four children: Benjamin J, Grace Elizabeth, Jonathan D and Priscilla Davina.

Like Atherton, Bennetto gave some of his time to making presentations to various bodies, such as the Walsall Rotarians [*Walsall Observer*, 15 August 1959] and the Lichfield Rotary Club [*The Mercury*, 12 August 1960]. These talks were concerned with osteopathic matters such as spinal health and posture.

His role in the Brotherhood came to public attention in 1967 through an interview he gave following their annual convocation at Glastonbury [*Central Somerset Gazette*, 30 June 1967] in which he confirmed that he was the leader. He expressed his certainty that the second Advent of Christ was imminent and that Glastonbury was the divinely appointed place for its occurrence. He claimed that angelic forces 'were funneled to the Tor through natural ground formations and there was nowhere else in the world with the same attributes'. He also said of the Brotherhood that 'most of them know who they were in a previous life "but we keep it quiet" because the only person who benefited was the person himself by trying to do better in the second life than he did in the first'. He had found commuting three times a week between Glastonbury and Wolverhampton too much and was now concentrating his work on his much larger practice in Wolverhampton.

Two years later the funeral, which he led, of Anna Maria's Gengha the 'King Dog' at Beit Hamal Achim hit the headlines, as detailed further in the next section.

The annual convocation in 1971 was described very fully in the Press [*Central Somerset Gazette*, 25 June 1971] but does not name the attending members of the Brotherhood. Quite a lot was written about Anna Maria whilst not naming her:

'The "Divine Message" came from a powerful woman medium who said that the advent, or second coming of Christ, would take place with an animal beside him. Animals, she said, were voluntary beings on this earth. They came without the power of tongues in order to test mankind. She said that we now stood at the fringe of the advent and the message was: Mankind must alter and completely embrace all animal creation. She revealed that at the time Christ was born the animals present in the manger spoke, Their tongues were released.

The 100 people present [in the Town Hall] were invited to gaze intently at two paintings of a dog when the proceedings were over for the evening.'

After these doings in the Town Hall the Essenes performed their ceremony on the Tor, filmed by *Westward Television*. Bennetto was not mentioned.

In the following year Bennetto was named in an article about the convocation at which the Brotherhood prepared a 'love feast' in the Town Hall for more than a hundred hippies. 'We welcome everybody', he said [*Evening Post*, 22 June 1972]. A different article reports Anna Maria (but without naming her) as follows [*Central Somerset Gazette*, 30 June 1972]:

'The mystic Centre of the Brotherhood, a small dark-haired petite woman, said in her recorded talk that when man's soul became pure and humble he will be able to tune into the wavelength of animal creation. She also said that at the time of the Second Coming mortals alive on earth and living divine law would be lifted up into the atmosphere. The secret of the resurrection was change, thus returning the world to the state of the Garden of Eden. As for the special position of the animal kingdom, the Centre said there was an indication of the place of the dog when dog was spelt backwards.'

Later in 1972 a High Court case involving the Brotherhood drew to its conclusion when nineteen of them, including Bennetto and Ursula, were awarded damages for libel against *The News of the World* newspaper, which had run an article headed 'Cult crazy Britain – a little dog is sacrificed to the Angels', claiming that the Brotherhood had sacrificially killed a dog as part of their ritual on the Tor [*Express and Star*

(*Wolverhampton*), 8 November 1972; *Wells Journal*, 17 November 1972]. The amounts awarded were not stated.

In 1973 a second dog funeral was conducted by the Brotherhood at Beit Hamal Achim, as reported at length in the article shown in Figure 14 [*The Sunday Express*, 2 September 1973]. This dog, whose name was not given, was 14 years old and so had apparently been born at about the same time as Gengha, that is, in about 1959. In what way, if any, these two had been related to the dogs King Vydor and Snowball photographed with Anna Maria in 1958 is unknown, but they were possibly their offspring. The dog buried in 1973 may also have been, in the minds of the Brotherhood, a 'King Dog', that is, a successor in that role to Gengha. However this may be, it was evidently given an even more elaborate and expensive funeral which was attended by about seventeen members of the Brotherhood.

White goddess has a £2,000 Harrods funeral—for a dog

by HENRY MACRORY

THE FUNERAL cortege was impressive. The 17 mourners arrived in five chauffeur-driven black Daimlers after a 260-mile journey. The women wore cloaks of velvet and satin, the men wore smart black suits.

No expense was spared. The overall cost was more than £2,000. But the mourners were not there to pay their last respects to a dearly loved friend or relative. The object of their devotions was a 14-year-old Samoyed dog.

The funeral was arranged by the Brotherhood of the Essenes, a small sect made up of carefully chosen professional people who believe the animal kingdom plays a vital part in Christianity.

The white Samoyed was to them a divine creature.

His death two weeks ago was a major event, for it indicated to the Essenes that the Day of Judgment is near. And that meant making hurried arrangements to ensure that the Samoyed got the best possible funeral.

The leader of the brotherhood, osteopath Dr. Jose Bennetto, of Penn Road, Wolverhampton, said: "It was a very important ceremony, but that is all I am prepared to tell you at present."

The burial was organised by a branch of funeral directors J. H. Kenyon at Harrods department store in Knightsbridge, London. They provided the five Daimlers as well as a hearse to carry the dog's silver-handled white coffin.

Magnetism

The mourners gathered in London and were driven to Truro, Cornwall. After spending the night at hotels they were taken on to the nearby village of Mithian for the funeral.

The service was held in the grounds of a house in the village called Beit Hamal Achim. Arabic for "Place of the Angels." The sect believes that the area is the centre of spiritual magnetism.

Mrs. Dora Bailey, owner of the Brookdale Hotel, Truro, where most of the mourners stayed the night, said: "They were the most unusual guests we have ever had. They even brought photographers with them to film the occasion."

"In four of the Daimlers there were four mourners each. In the fifth one there was a woman whom I believe was their 'goddess'. She was dressed all in white and had a black mark on her forehead. The other ladies were in black velvet capes with large stiff collars and satin lining. All the men wore black ties and dark suits."

"Fourteen of the mourners stayed with us, including the goddess. I did not speak to any of them myself, although I met Dr. Bennetto a week before when he came down to make the arrangements."

Ordered out

"The morning of the funeral they all had breakfast in bed. Then the goddess came down and ordered some of the mourners out of the hotel because, she said, they were spoiling the vibrations. It was all very theatrical."

"I was told by one of the men that the funeral directors' fees alone were £2,000, but there would have been other costs on top of that. My own charges for instance, came to £68. We had them here once before, several years ago. Then they buried another Samoyed dog but the funeral was nothing like as big."

At Mithian the dog was interred in a special tomb with a hand-carved interior. Owner of the land is 85-year-old Mr. John Brawn, another member of the brotherhood. But Mr. Brawn, like the rest of the sect, would not talk about details of the ceremony.

The Essenes take their name from a Jewish sect active at the time of Christ and who are said to have written the Dead Sea Scrolls. The movement was restarted in this country about 50 years ago.

Figure 14 The second King Dog funeral at Beit Hamal Achim, 1973.

Their numbers appear to have been about thirty, six of them in Wolverhampton, in 1976 when a brief article (Figure 15) was published about Bennetto and Anna Maria [*Express and Star (Wolverhampton)*, 9 July 1976]. He was still the leader and she was 'Her Supreme Highness', visiting Wolverhampton to advocate caring for animals.



Figure 15 Anna Maria visits Wolverhampton, 1976.

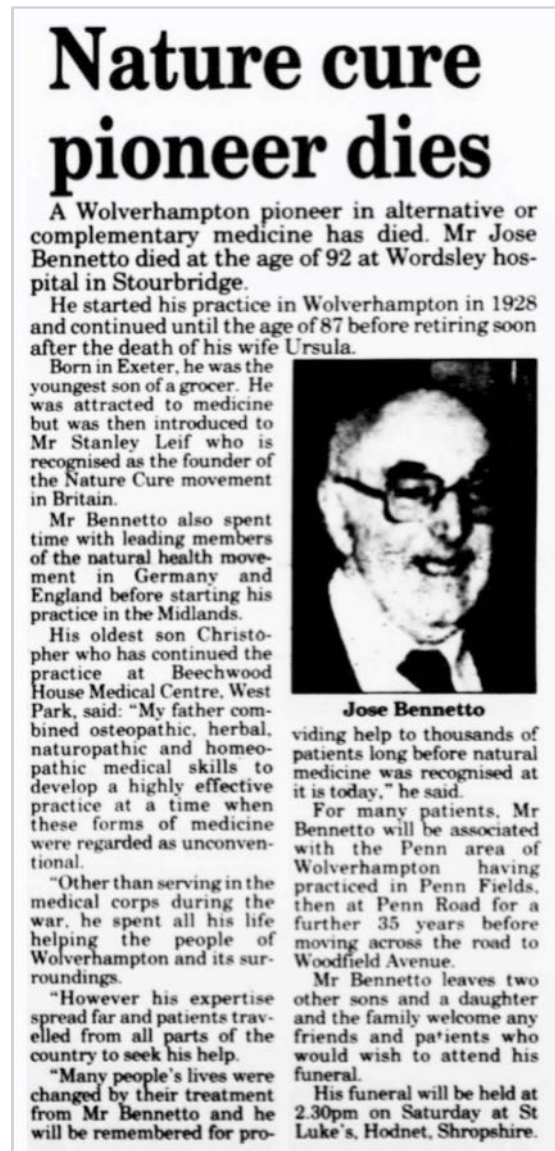


Figure 16 Obituary for Jose Bennetto, 2000.

By the end of 1980 several leading players in the Brotherhood had departed from this earth: the Brawns, the Browns, Cyril Henry Appleby and Anna Maria Thornton-Parry had all gone. We can find no mention after this date of Bennetto engaged in Essenic activities. His first wife Bertha Minnie, who had not remarried, had moved to the outskirts of Manchester where she died, in the town of Blackrod, on 30 August 1987; her estate was valued as not exceeding £70,000.

Christopher Rex became an osteopath and medical herbalist working alongside his father in Woodfield Avenue, Penn in the south-western outskirts of Wolverhampton. In about 1989 he contracted a virus that seriously damaged his heart and in August 1991 he was given a year to live without a heart transplant. Shortly afterwards he was able to have such a transplant, affording him a further decade of life [*Express and Star (Wolverhampton)*, 26 November 1991].

In 1999 Bennetto's youngest child Priscilla ('Cilla') Davina, who had married Darren P Mitchell and produced a son, died aged only 36 'after an illness bravely borne' [*Express and Star (Wolverhampton)*, 4 June 1999].

A year later, on 1 April, Bennetto died, in a hospital at Stourbridge, aged 92 [*Express and Star (Wolverhampton)*, 13 April 2000] as seen in Figure 16. He was interred with Ursula, their grave (Figure 17) presumed to be in the churchyard of St Luke in Hodnet, Shropshire (as that is where his funeral took place).

One year after this, on 15 January, his son Christopher Rex died suddenly from heart failure, aged just 46. He had undergone a kidney transplant three years previously. An article paying warm tribute to him was subsequently published [*Express and Star (Wolverhampton)*, 20 January 2001].



Figure 17 The grave of Herbert Jose and Ursula Bennetto.

The funeral of King Gengha in 1969

The funeral of King Gengha at Beit Hamal Achim in 1969 appears not to have hit the headlines in the Press to the same extent as did the funeral of the second dog – claimed to be Gengha's sibling – in 1973. On the other hand, whilst there appears to be no public exposure of the filming undertaken by the Brotherhood at the 1973 event, we do have the benefit of some clips from the 1969 filming available on *YouTube*, as noted earlier. We have not been able so far to ascertain how those clips on the *Wyrd Corners* website had been obtained, nor whether the producer of them had been able to view the entire original film. Where that film is currently located we have no idea.

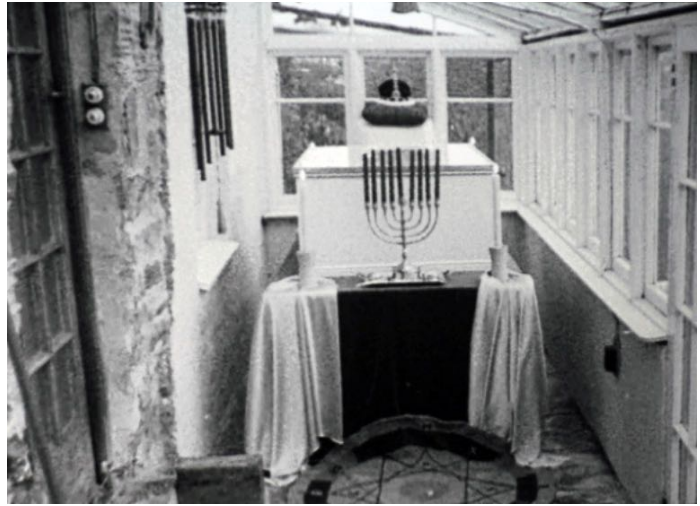


Figure 18 Gengha lying in state at Beit Hamal Achim.

From the clips we see that Gengha had lain in state overnight in the rather ramshackle conservatory running along the south side of the house (Beit Hamal Achim), his immaculate glossy white coffin with gold ornamentation mounted on a table with candles and items of regalia. On the top of the coffin was an image of a crown above the words

GENGHA
THE INTERMEDIATE KING DOG
OF THE ANIMAL PLANES IN
THE KINGDOM OF GOD

His grave had been prepared, at the direction of the Brotherhood, by a local band player Bill Johnson, according to a letter shown by film maker Samuel Bestwick in his project 'King Dog?' at https://www.artcornwall.org/exhibitions/Miners_Institute/King_Dog.htm, in which he presents a small number of slides about the event. Bill said:

‘They looked like well-to-do people. They parked their big cars with “up-country” number plates, in Barkla Shop. I had to prepare the grave and then disappear while the interment took place but I couldn't resist having a peek. I didn't see much and after the service I had to backfill the grave and tidy up the site.’



Figure 19 Beit Hamal Achim in 1969.

Further clips from the *Wyrd Corners* film show the members of the Brotherhood emerging from the house and carrying the coffin, as well as regalia on cushions, down to the grave site, followed by highlights from the ritual performed there.



Figure 20 Jose Bennetto (at right) leads the coffin-bearing procession from the house to the burial site.



Figure 21 A closer view of the coffin.



Figure 22 This is the crown image on the top of the coffin, visible in Figure 21 as the dark patch behind the front-most bearer.



Figure 23 Jose Bennetto with his crozier and other regalia.



Figure 24 More members, some carrying regalia, led by the Supreme Goddess Anna Maria.



Figure 25 This could well be Marshall Ernest Brown, one of the most senior members, bearing the crown that had stood upon the coffin overnight.



Figure 26 Bearing the gold-plated, solid silver, gem-studded coronet for the Supreme Goddess.



Figure 27 More ladies in the procession, bearing a chalice, censer and other regalia.



Figure 28 The crown bearer; on his chest is the Star of David, seen on Atherton in Article 12, Fig. 59.



Figure 29 The ladies, other than Anna Maria, assemble on one side of the grave and coffin.



Figure 30 The gentlemen assemble on the other side, with Anna Maria standing apart, her coronet lying ready on the cushion beside her; Bennetto recites prayers from his text.



Figure 31 Anna Maria, wearing her coronet and holding the white rose chalice, utters incantations.



Figure 32 The ceremonial staffs are joined above the coffin.



Figure 33 The Brotherhood encircles the grave at the conclusion of the ceremony.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures 1, 2: from Bahai Library Online (<https://bahai-library.com>)

Figure 3: from the Hathi Trust (<https://babel.hathitrust.org>)

Figures 4, 12, 15, 16: from the British Newspaper Library courtesy of the British Library Board

Figure 5: from AbeBooks (<https://www.abebooks.com>) (but no longer listed)

Figure 6: from the internet, unattributed

Figure 7: from *Singapore Free Press* online (<https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers>)

Figures 8, 18-33: from the *Wyrd Corners* film on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmVjRzmuGrE>)

Figure 9: from the Ordnance Survey

Figures 10, 11: from *The Kingstonian* (<http://archive.kgs.org.uk>)

Figures 13, 14: from kind permission of Reach plc / *Mirrorpix*

Figure 17: from *Ancestry*, contributed by Lillie Bennetto in December 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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