Rediscovering Kabwe

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for an MA in Journalism and Media Studies in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Witwatersrand.

15 March 2018

Abstract

This long-form journalism piece consists of three interwoven themes. On the one hand it is a memoir, which is by definition a factual account of one's life and personal experience, but in reality is open to contestation and subjective interpretation. An exploration of my first six years in the mining town that was once called Broken Hill in then Northern Rhodesia, the piece also takes the form of a travelogue, recounting my observations on a subsequent trip back, 54 years later. Today the town is called Kabwe and is the capital of Central Province in Zambia. My project is an attempt to 'fill in the gaps' in my memory, as I was very young when I lived there, and my memories are flimsy. In addition, expatriates often live a life cut off from other communities, and I sought to find out more about the experience of these communities from the time of the town's establishment until the present day. I have also intended my piece to be something of a sociopolitical treatise; returning to the town in February 2018, I was able to revisit places I remembered, and, building on research I had done previously, place my memories and the town as it is today in a sociopolitical context. Speaking to people in the town and drawing on accounts from family members helped me 'rediscover' Kabwe for myself. It helped me to round out my knowledge of the town and our life there, as well as the reasons that made my parents decide to leave on the eve of independence.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Journalism and Media Studies in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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Acknowledgements

My thanks go to my mother, Teresa Fontyn, and to my brother, David Fontyn, for their patient and generous support. Thanks also to my late father, Bill Fontyn and my brother, Leonard; may they rest in peace. Thanks to those who got me there: my sister, Veronica Fontyn-Pieterse, Jenny and Derek Clegg, Aubrey, Precious, Thoko, Pam and Dagmar; and those who helped me in Kabwe, especially Burkard Will and Chrispian Mumbi. Also to my supervisor, Lesley Cowling, who was a pillar, and Kevin Davie, for his inspirational courses. Thanks to Arja Salafranca for the idea, to Felicity Levine for walks in the park, and to my friends and colleagues for their unceasing encouragement. A special thank you to Denene Erasmus and Paul Sulter for their kindness to a relative stranger.

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1 Theoretical Introduction

1.1 Aim

My aim in writing this project, 'Rediscovering Kabwe', is to tell the story of growing up in the mining town of Broken Hill, now called Kabwe, in Zambia, during the 1950s and early 1960s, but also to tell a bigger story – to fill in the gaps in the story. Gaps that are there for many reasons -- because my recollections are incomplete as we left the country, then still called Northern Rhodesia and part of the British Federation with Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, when I was six. This was in 1963, the year before the independent Republic of Zambia was proclaimed.

My project will partly take the form of a memoir, obviously strongly affected by the subjective and limited view a child has of the world, but also by the fact that we lived in an expatriate community that was separated from much of Broken Hill life and the local people who lived in the town.

I was born in 1957, and the period from about 1955 to 1964, the year of independence, was a time of political turmoil in Northern Rhodesia/Zambia. Writing the assignment has enabled me to fill in the gaps in my own mind as well as present a fuller picture through research. Some of my information was based on my family's recollections, but I also drew on material on the history of Zambia – from the first recorded history through the colonial era to the growth of nationalism and independence, as well as the current day. Mining, long an important part of Kabwe history, features strongly.

I have woven into this basic structure my reflections as I travelled around Kabwe, visiting places I remembered from my childhood and speaking to people living there now.

This picture was also informed by the written accounts of other expatriates who have lived in various African countries colonised by Britain. My aim is to create a long-form journalistic narrative about a country that is not well represented in either fiction or non-fiction. It is not a historical guide or purely autobiographical piece but also contains segments of social, economic, political and historical information.

While writing the memoir I realised that I understood Broken Hill/Kabwe through the narrative of the expat community I lived in, and from what my family members spoke about

after we had left. I wanted to understand more about all the communities, and all the stakeholders in the political developments which later brought about independence, but also emigration for some people.

1.2 Rationale

The whole question of foreign settlement in Africa is contentious, and the legacy of colonialism is hotly debated. The issues around this are brought down to the personal level in expatriate memoir, a genre with which I have become intrigued through researching this topic. There are few examples that do not romanticise the continent or the specific country where the expats were based, mainly Kenya and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

There is a dearth of literature about expat life in Zambia, however. The only author I have come across so far is Alexandra Fuller, whose tongue-in-cheek style and tendency to embellishment may ultimately detract from making realistic or definitive conclusions about the country, or the region on the Zambezi where her parents established their fish farm. Fuller's accounts concentrate on the perceived or actual eccentricity of her family and their circumstances. So I hope mine will be a useful contribution to the material available on Zambia, which appears to be the least romantic of the trio favoured for expat settlement. I believe this is an important story to tell and hope my account will paint a fuller picture of Broken Hill/Kabwe, taking in the personal as well as the public in the telling.

In addition, I tackle the question of the reliability of memoir, about which much has been written. This is highlighted by the fact that different family members and other participants may recall incidents differently, and the different versions are not always verifiable. There has been a burgeoning of memoir, raising the status of the form somewhat, since Mary Karr published her searingly honest *The Liars' Club*, followed by guides to writing memoir that unsettled the existing approaches.

Obviously, because I was very young when I lived in Kabwe, my memories are scant and blurry, though in some cases crystal clear. Still, I can't be sure they are accurate recollections because time has intervened, because I was so young and because my perception of experience was limited to that of a child: I did not have all the information, the 'big picture'. Over the years I have heard various stories from my family members, especially my parents and older brother, David. As an adult, now, I can see that their perceptions are coloured by

their political outlook and also because the expatriate lifestyle is in itself, to a smaller or larger extent, exclusive rather than embracing of local life. In some cases, my recollections differ from those of my family members and this raises questions about the subjectivity of experience and recall, and each individual's idea of 'the truth'.

In addition, my essay will deal with social, political and economic issues that are of universal significance, and especially pertaining to postcolonial societies. These include colonisation (Northern Rhodesia was a British protectorate and later part of a federation with Nyasaland, today Malawi, and Southern Rhodesia, today Zimbabwe); the nature of expatriate society; the growth of nationalism and subsequent independence; the negative effects of intensive mining on communities in these areas; racism and injustice; and distorted depictions of Africa, a continent that is often romanticised in the expat memoir genre.

My rationale is also based on my discovery in later life that the town has significant political, historical and economic importance.

The area was known as Kabwe-ka-Mukuba – which means 'ore smelting' – before the advent of white settlement (Musambachime, 2016). The local people valued it as a place for mining copper, which was highly prized in these societies as currency and for decoration, especially for people of high social standing, such as chiefs and their wives. (*Chalochatu.org*)

After a British miner found rich lead, zinc and vanadium deposits in 1906, a town was established called Broken Hill after its Australian namesake (Mufinda, p3).

David Livingstone explored the region north of the Zambezi extensively and in 1867 passed through Kabwe-ka-Mukuba, reporting on the copper mining and iron smelting done by the locals. Folklore says the explorer rested under a big fig tree in the town square, and my brother David recollects that there was a memorial at the site, but it is not there today and I could not confirm the legend of Livingstone visiting Kabwe by speaking to people or in the literature. It was just 12km away, in the village of the chief Chitambo that Livingstone died of malaria (Jeal, p 164).

It was copper that sparked the interest of Cecil John Rhodes, prompting him to apply for the area known as trans-Zambezia to be extended the protection of the British Crown, along with Matabeleland (Rotberg, 1965, pp13, 14). Rhodes undertook to build railway lines and the first one in the present-day Zambia reached Broken Hill, from Cape Town and via Livingstone, in 1906. British traders and missionaries were relieved when Central Africa came under the protection of the Crown as it deterred the Portuguese, who were extending

their operations from Mozambique and were not opposed to the slave trade. According to Robert (1965, p27), the people of Central Africa initially greeted foreigners uncritically, except when they interfered with established practice, such as polygamy and the slave trade.

This area is of historic significance also because, in 1921, a Swiss miner found an important fossilised skull – 'Kabwe man'– in an old mine. The Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History's website says though the skull was initially assigned to a new species, *Homo rhodesiensis*, most scientists now assign Kabwe to *Homo heidelbergensis*. Estimated at between 125 000 and 300 000 years old, the skull is significant because it shows features similar to *Homo erectus*, such as large brow ridges, but also resembles modern humans, as it has a flatter face and larger brain (1300cm^3). Kabwe Man is also one of the oldest fossils with tooth cavities – in 10 of the upper teeth. He may have died from an infection due to dental disease or a chronic ear infection, the site says.

The skull is now kept in the British Natural History Museum and though Zambia formally asked for it back in a presentation to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) in 2016, and again this year, it remains there.

The site where the skull was discovered is close to the Sable lead and zinc mine, and to where my parents and two brothers first lived when they came to Kabwe, in C Avenue. Though I had heard that in the past the area was fenced off, I discovered when I visited that the place where the remains were found is under groundwater near the old mine. And though I had read there was a commemorative stone at the town's municipal offices, I could not see one and staff there did not know of it.

According to a manager at the Sable lead and zinc mine, Alan McInnes, the Zambian government's ministry responsible for heritage preservation has inspected the site and plans to erect a memorial. A chunk of limestone was being kept for the occasion.

Another important site in the town is the Mulungushi Rock of Authority, presently on the campus of the Mulungushi University. This domed rock has much political significance as it was here that Kenneth Kaunda, the founder of the Zambian African National Congress, held an important independence rally on October 26, 1958. *Zambiatourism.com* says Kabwe "has a claim to being the birthplace of Zambian politics as it was an important political centre during the colonial period", partly due to its central location and railway union base. Later, when the United National Independent Party (Unip) was established, they used the rock for their party conferences and major speeches. In 1972, Kaunda, then president of an

independent Zambia, made his Kabwe Declaration: ‘A nation of equals’ to Unip’s National Council in Kabwe’s Hindu Hall.

Northern Rhodesia was created in 1911, with Livingstone as its capital. Though the new protectorate attracted many settlers after the South African War ended, Broken Hill attracted both Africans and foreigners after lead and zinc began to be mined intensively. But today this has left an unfortunate legacy in that the town is rated among the world’s most polluted. The soil and water sources are saturated with high levels of minerals, causing disease among the inhabitants. In an article *for The Guardian*, environmental editor Damian Carrington describes the effects of this toxicity, where people’s brains and organs are being poisoned, dooming them to a life of illness and underachievement. (https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/may/28/the-worlds-most-toxic-town-the-terrible-legacy-of-zambias-lead-mines)

Prof Jack Caravanos, an environmental health expert at New York University, told *The Guardian*: “Having been to probably 20 toxic hotspots throughout the world, and seeing mercury, chromium and many contaminated lead sites, [I can say] the scale in Kabwe is unprecedented.” Caravanos is director of research at Pure Earth, a non-profit organisation that works to clean up pollution in the world’s poorest areas. He documented his trip to Kabwe at https://www.pureearth.org/blog/notes-field-jack-caravanos-kabwe-guardian/

In 2003, the World Bank approved a $15 million grant and loan to clean up Kabwe as part of the larger Zambian Copperbelt Environment Project. In a December 2016 news release, the World Bank confirmed that a further US$65.6 million International Development Association (IDA) credit had been approved.

Amid the extensive mining operations and huge flow of profits, communities such as Kabwe have been exploited for their labour and then abandoned. When the large companies involved are mentioned in the media, it is usually with relation to their profit and share price. Little is reported when they leave behind environmental damage, with no project in place to rehabilitate the land for the people living there. As a journalist, it is important to report on all sides of the story and to highlight abuses and exploitation. This is not just because Kabwe is my hometown but because this is a worldwide problem and many people at the lower end of the equation – workers and the residents of these towns – are disempowered and as media we should speak up for them.

When I visited Kabwe, these toxic mine dumps were freely accessible to *zama zamas* – informal miners – who collect the gravel to sell for mineral extraction and to make building material. I had, however, been warned off by the mine manager not to speak to anyone about the activities at the mine, now owned by Glencore, or to write anything without getting approval from head office.

1.3 Literature review

Memoir as a form is by definition a factual account of one's personal experience. By its nature, however, memoir can never be said to be factual or true in all senses; it depends on one person's perceptions and conclusions, and is coloured by their experience. For the memoir parts of this project I have relied on my own early memories as a child growing up in colonial Northern Rhodesia; my experiences when I went back in February 2018; the stories I grew up with, told by my father; my mother's accounts of living in Broken Hill; and my older brother David's memories, as well as his maps, drawn from memory. It was interesting to me that their accounts at times differed from my own recollections, which proved the point to me that memoir is subjective, limited and at times unreliable.

Mary Karr, in her book, *The Art of Memoir*, emphasises the particularity and the importance of voice: "Each voice is cleverly fashioned to highlight a writer's individual talent or way of viewing the world" (Karr, 2015 p36). Voice is selected, "fashioned", it is not incidental, whether the writer is aware of the process or not.

Each voice brings with it certain embedded traits and presumptions on the part of the reader; for example, referring to Harry Crews' 1995 memoir, *Childhood: The Biography of a Place*, Karr, a teacher at Syracuse University, makes the point that academia is not interested in the blue-collar experience. I believe this is a trend that is changing, and in South Africa, black workers' poetry and prose have for some decades now been represented in English literature syllabi. Neither of my parents finished high school; my father said he left school because there was no money for him to continue, or to study to be a doctor, which was his dream. He went to train in the post office. His father was a plumber and my mother's father a barber – a genuine Cockney, as it happens, born within the sound of Bow Bells. Neither of my grandmothers had a profession; they were 'housewives' and mothers. Though less literate

people can be great storytellers, their class do not usually write their memoirs. I hope to add to the body of blue-collar literature as I believe these stories should be heard more.

A large part of my research centred on a form I have dubbed 'expat memoir', though in some cases the authors were born in the country in question. Most of it is written by achievers, people who did incredible feats, such as carving a farm out of the primeval bush, and came from the upper social castes. My family is unremarkable, apart from being South Africans, Durbanites who went to live thousands of miles away from friends and family in a Zambian mining town. Comparison is not the point, however; it is more about finding points of similarity and broadening my knowledge.

Each memoirist must find their own way of telling the story of themselves and their family. Often it is sensitive information, and using some distance is one way of approaching the task. Alexandra Fuller uses the device of writing at some remove, possibly to find a way to communicate sensitive material, possibly to protect people. *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness* is about her mother – "Nicola Huntingford of Central Africa!" – and she tells of travelling to a grim manor on the Isle of Wight to trace her strange, inbred relatives. Nicola comes across as larger than life and there have been accusations that the character in the book was partly fictionalised – that aspects of her gung-ho personality and excessive behaviour were fabricated for readers' entertainment. While it makes for racy reading, one has the sense the family may not be happy with the rendering. This in itself is a comment on Fuller's sense of herself in the family structure and as a writer.

Harry Crews commented that he began to write his life story because "I have never been certain of who *I* am." I relate very much to this statement, and believe one can achieve more clarity through writing about memoir. It seems it is also partly what drives Alexandra Fuller in her books about her family. Like many people born in the former colonies from mixed ancestry, Fuller is preoccupied with finding her origins. I also have this obsession and have been doing genealogical research for some time. My own roots are Cockney, Boer, Irish and German and going way back, French. Though I take comfort in identifying simply as South African, questions of identity arise and I found some clarity and elucidation while researching this topic and visiting my old hometown.

Fuller's journeys to Zimbabwe and Zambia, and to Scotland in search of long-lost relatives, inspired me to go to Zambia in search of clues to my birthplace and my identity. I have learnt much from her writing style, too. Clipped and fast, it continually invites disbelief and

laughter. Her honesty is as engaging and impressive as her gift for seeing the ludicrous in a situation. She also inspires me because her family experience so many calamities and survive. She reminds me that life is full of losses and there is no shame in looking at them head on. In the small towns I grew up in, people were always hiding their failures but without experiencing and acknowledging failure, our full experience of being human is compromised. Still, Fuller makes the lifestyle seem enviable and despite the many tragedies they experience she describes the love they feel for the land and the way of life.

My mother, who contributed much to my 'filling in the gaps', said she enjoyed living in Broken Hill and was sorry to leave. The expat lifestyle, with interesting friends from all over the world, and a generally peaceful and pleasant existence, suited her and my father well.

Place comes into the equation strongly: a former British colony with a singular history – according to Rotberg, (1965, p 26) the whites of Northern Rhodesia were vociferous about entrenching supremacist rights and did not safeguard African rights – Zambia was formative in my childhood and different from growing up in South Africa. Also, a small town is different from a city; and being part of an expat community is different from being citizens. In this island of British culture, I spent my early years surrounded by Scottish, English and Irish people, adopting aspects of their culture. We celebrated Guy Fawkes and listened to Scottish pipe music; my parents went to the club to socialise. In some ways I am an anglophile, finding much in the British culture to appreciate and relate to.

Though at times her books revolve around the small unit of her immediate family, Fuller also takes in the political change that is going on around her, and that to a certain extent determines what the family do. They leave Zimbabwe and move to Zambia, for example, because of the civil war. She travels from her home in the US and goes on a road trip in South Africa specifically to be able to hold long conversations with her parents about their lives. I have lost my father and my brother, Leonard, but have asked my mother to write down all her recollections of their life in Northern Rhodesia, before and after my birth. She was at first not very interested, she apparently felt it was intrusive and felt suspicious about what I would do with the information, but later became much more forthcoming. My older brother, David, 68, wrote down all his memories and drew some maps of the town he remembered, and these were hugely useful as I made my way around Kabwe, able to find some of the places he indicated, and able to note where certain sites either no longer existed or had changed.

Like Fuller's family, there is some chagrin attached to my parents' wild, free and privileged expat life: the abundance of servants and the careless way they were treated, the emphasis on drinking and sometimes not too vigorous supervision of children. Fuller's sister drowns in a shallow pool when she has been placed in charge of her and this poisons her relationship with her mother, and pushes her mother to the brink of madness. My own childhood was less eventful but there were many evenings when the adults drank under the trees while we children ran around until late. Fuller describes an incident where their neighbour sexually abused the sisters; I experienced the same on a few occasions but never told anyone. This is a delicate area to write about and I have decided not to include these experiences. Every piece of writing has a register and as mine is partly a journalistic piece, these private recollections, with the potential to upset family members, may not be appropriate.

In what she calls her autobiography but what could well pass for memoir, as it is an intensely personal story, Doris Lessing writes in a more serious and stripped down but nonetheless dramatic way about childhood. In *Under My Skin*, she tells of the misunderstandings between children and parents, which can lead to parents being seen as uncaring or cruel. She emphasises the isolation of their Rhodesian farm, and the complications that arise from this.

Lessing appears to have a powerful memory, because she is able to recall sights and smells from her earliest childhood. Her writing is a reminder to work at drawing out the faintest memories, and include sensory experience. In addition, she does not shy away from recalling the negative and unpleasant aspects of life and the people around her in crystal-clear detail.

Peter Godwin – who wrote a trilogy about Zimbabwe: *Mukiwa*, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, and *The Fear* – has rich material to draw on as his mother was a community doctor in rural Rhodesia and he found out only in his thirties that his father, who had always passed for an upper-crust English army man – was a Polish Jew who had escaped the Holocaust.

With *Mukiwa*, Godwin helps me fill in the details that are vague in my memory, as it is his account of his childhood years in Rhodesia. As he travels around with his mother, he notices the tacit hierarchy among the whites, where one man is called "Mr", one "Oom" and another "Sir". Godwin jolts my memories of shopping at the Indian shops, which carried everything from food to toys and shoes – in our case, DH Patel's – but also provides details I didn't have access to but which must have been similar in our Northern Rhodesian town. He is an acute observer – and clearly was as a child – as well as a great storyteller and changes his register

from Peter the child to Peter the adult, the father and journalist making sense later of what he witnessed. He segues from one role to the other and I have learnt much from his example.

Like Fuller, he makes use of creative non-fiction to make his telling come alive. Sensory experiences are described so closely one suspects it is not purely from memory – in some cases these authors use the tools of fiction to relate their autobiographical tale. One sometimes imagines there was a certain smell or sight, but sometimes it is just the imagination and the need to remember, as well as to bring the event to life for the reader, that shapes the way the memory is related.

He tells of going with his mother to assist in vaccinating children against polio at rural clinics and it reminds me of our domestic worker, Angus Phiri, taking me on his bicycle to have my vaccination. I remember the sugar lump on my tongue and Godwin confirms the memory – that is the way it was done.

Godwin was in an unusual situation, where he accompanied his mother to the clinics and even on post mortems, and once, a deathbed vigil, so he was exposed to more than most children. My own childhood was more insular, and I envied my two brothers who could go off into the bush on their bikes with a pellet gun. Girl children are routinely more sheltered and perhaps even more so in those pioneer societies, and in the 1950s and 60s.

Godwin is not over-cautious about political correctness and repeats the insulting parlance some of the local whites used when he needs to make a point. Times have changed – even from 1996, when *Mukiwa* was published – and I will not follow suit. I don't believe those words or expressions should be read or heard but will find a way to indicate when people used pejorative slang.

Karen Blixen's lack of political sensitivity is for a different reason: she lived in Kenya during the 1920s and 1930s, when there was a bigger divide between rural black people and white settler farmers, and some of her observations are today considered to be racial generalisations. Her exploits on a Kenyan coffee farm are well known, though the film *Out of Africa*, in my estimation, bears scant resemblance to the book she wrote.

Though she often does romanticise the landscape, Blixen's immersion in Africa was deep. An extraordinarily strong and independent person – who never draws attention to this fact – she worked hands-on with her staff on the farm and the youths and men she called her 'houseboys' were friends and confidants to her. Her tone is always respectful and though she sees their differences, she marvels in the way of an anthropologist rather than as a

supremacist, and finds much to emulate. She finds comfort, for example in living “in the African way, on friendly terms with destiny”. She notes, too that “the lack of prejudice in the Natives is a striking thing… It is due, I believe to their acquaintance with a variety of races and tribes, and to the lively human intercourse that was brought upon East Africa… As far as receptivity of ideas goes the Native is more a man of the world than the suburban or provincial settler or missionary, who has grown up in a uniform community and with a stable set of ideas.” (p 53) Much of the misunderstanding between the two arises from this fact, she adds.

Blixen’s tale represents something of an ideal life for a white farmer in Africa; she lived there when her kind were able to assert themselves without too much resistance, when the Kikuyu were prepared to work on the farms, though the proud Masai never did. *Out of Africa f*or me stands for a dream-like Africa, where a small privileged group formed a close network, standing by each other and sharing their European culture amid the wide plains of wild Africa.

Another woman who dreamt of Africa and then went there to live was Kuki Gallman, from the Venetian aristocracy, who joined her husband, a safari operator in Kenya.

Gallman today runs a conservation foundation in Kenya but during her early days she lived a step removed from the country – in the way of many expatriates. In *I Dreamed of Africa*, she tells of visiting other Italian families who live in ‘villas’ with Italian names, where anonymous ‘house servants’ tiptoe around seeing to the needs of the family and their friends. Her extreme love for Africa appears hard to comprehend as it is such an edited, selective view, concentrated on her husband and children. She tragically loses her husband in a car accident and her son to one of the many snakes he keeps, against his mother’s wishes. When the son dies of a puff adder bite she has him buried in an elaborate ceremony, to which she invites the whole valley, and has the offending snake buried alive in the grave. This churlish, selfish act of vengeance on a creature does nothing to improve my impression of Gallman, who consistently comes across as oblivious to much of the Africa she insists she feels passionate about.

Her book was sparked by the tragedy she experienced in Kenya, whereas I remember our life to have been fairly pleasant and uneventful. Snakes were always top of mind, however, and a story I have heard my mother tell is about my brother Leonard, who, while still a toddler, was found gently prodding a puff adder in the rockery. And David, slightly older, appeared on the

front page of the *Broken Hill Times* for killing a king cobra – Africa's largest venomous snake – and bringing it home slung over his bicycle crossbar. He said that he later regretted killing the beautiful animal.

The likes of Fuller, Godwin, Blixen and Gallman have stories laden with tragedy and tension, and maybe these are what drove them to write books. I am writing for elucidation, to fill in the gaps, and to tell my humble story about a family living in a place that had so many stories apart from their own. And because the meeting between white settlers and colonised peoples has always fascinated me.

Historians talk of different kinds of settlers or colonials: those who embraced the culture, learnt the languages, integrated and maybe intermarried. In India they were called Orientalists so perhaps in Africa you could call them Africanists. To a certain extent, perhaps, David Livingstone was an Africanist because as a raw-boned Scotsman, after he arrived in Africa, he spent six months just learning about the Tswana people he met near Kuruman, and mastering their language so communication would not be compromised. He recounts in his journals how the chief Sechele became his closest friend and though he took a stab at converting the local people – he was, after all a missionary – he spent most of his time doing agricultural work, building and hunting. His unquenchable desire for knowledge about Africa drove him northwards to present-day Zambia and Malawi.

Livingstone, an exception for his time, easily relinquished his Eurocentric worldview, depending entirely on his new companions to lead him through the continent. When he died, his two devoted helpers, Susi and Chuma, buried his heart under a tree, as he had requested, and carried his embalmed body to the east coast, where it was placed on a steamer headed for Britain, and burial in Westminster Abbey (Jeal, 1973, pp 368-369).

However, Livingstone's relationship with his wife, Mary née Moffat, has come under the spotlight in books such as *Looking for Mrs Livingstone* by Julie Davidson (2012) and *David Livingstone, Africa's Greatest Explorer: The Man, the Missionary and the Myth* by Paul Bayly, and articles such as 'Searching for Mrs Livingstone', written for BBC News by Petroc Trelawny. These publications reveal the harsh circumstances of her life as she accompanied her husband around sub-Saharan Africa, bearing five children en route and losing one of them soon after birth. When Livingstone sent her and the children back to England, he failed to support them financially and they suffered immense hardship. Mary Moffat Livingstone

returned to Africa and died at a mission station in what is today Mozambique, where she is revered by the local people for her courage.

Mary's story is in some ways emblematic of the stories of the many women who followed their husbands to far-flung places in Africa, where they had to cope with difficult living conditions. In these harsh and unfamiliar environments, black employees have always made the way easier for the white settler families.

While some settlers came to escape their homeland, most came for profit. As Robert Rotberg notes in *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa – The Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964*, Northern Rhodesia was declared a British protectorate after Cecil John Rhodes rightly suspected there was copper (Rotberg 1965, pp13-14). People settling for such reasons are likely to be set on their own pursuits and to remain remote, indifferent to the local culture and rigidly retaining the role of master. In India, as described so eloquently by Paul Scott in *The Raj Quartet*, the sahibs were there to administer the empire, and on the whole the memsahibs did their best to run a home and deal with servants in a maddeningly hot climate. Their refuge was the club, where cricket was played and a decent gin and tonic could be had, and the dinner and tea parties where one could enjoy a small piece of England.

In The *Raj Quartet*, two people, an Indian man and a white British woman, attempt to defy the status quo and the man pays a heavy price.

Scott served in the army in India and travelled widely through the region so it must be assumed that parts of his four novels were inspired by personal knowledge and experience. The techniques of fiction, however, give him a large amount of freedom with which to explore the prevailing mores and legal framework of the Raj, and its subsequent decline. His novels are noteworthy because they present the events from the point of view of English, Muslim and Hindu characters. (www.britannica.com/biography/Paul-Scott)

As EM Forster does in *A Passage to India*, Scott in *The Raj Quartet* turns a more realistic, objective lens on India; we do not see the idealisation of expat life that we encounter in the African memoirs. There is sharp and critical probing of the expat community and colonial experience. There is also an exploration of class in *The Raj Quartet* – the missionaries and teachers were looked down on, as well as the policemen, those who were not army officers.

My father experienced the colonial caste system when he first came to Northern Rhodesia, and his work as a miner dictated our social standing in Broken Hill. He said he was asked to present his card at the club, and he did not have such a thing. Besides, he had no aspirations

to get on at the club – he was a loner, more interested in his vegetable garden than bridge or polo cross. Though he did play rugby for the local side and we went to watch during the season. Like many South African men, he idolised rugby.

Many of my early conclusions about Northern Rhodesia, subsequently Zambia, were shaped by my father, who came to work there first as a postmaster and then joined the lead and zinc mine on a fairly low rung. He did shift work, going to work in an overall and going underground with the other unskilled men because he had no formal training. He willingly gave up a safe, pen-pushing job for what he saw as the thrill of mining. When he retired he had worked his way up to becoming the equivalent of a metallurgist and worked regular hours in a laboratory. Unfortunately, he is not alive today to read my story, but his stories over the years about Northern Rhodesia – a place he regarded as paradise – formed the foundation for my writing.

My father was not happy about leaving Northern Rhodesia and was derisive in later years as the country went through difficult political and economic times. Its march to independence was shorter and much less bloody than South Africa's, or Kenya's. Rotberg describes the formation of the Northern Rhodesian African National Congress, with ties to South Africa's liberation movement, the African National Congress (ANC), with Kenneth Kaunda becoming the general secretary in 1953 (Rotberg 1965, p 129). Kaunda's Zambian African National Congress played a big role in attaining independence from Britain. Political rallies had for some time been held near our home and my brother David remembers those held by the ANC, which was active in Northern Rhodesia and later made Lusaka its headquarters. Meetings for the 1962 general elections were also held near the railway line, and David says he could hear the speakers and the cheering from our house, but I don't remember that or any discussions about these events.

Many of the political parties morphed out of welfare organisations and church groups; Rotberg says British imperialism brought with it the seeds of democracy and its own undoing: inherent in the tenets of the Christianity that the missionaries taught is equality. When government officials and settlers did not practise it, their behaviour added to the growth of indigenous discontent and the rise of African nationalism (Rotberg 1965, p 1).

Like many African countries, Northern Rhodesia was a British creation. The area between the Zambezi and Lake Tanganyika had for centuries been inhabited by several African tribes, paramount among these the Barotse, who lived in what is now the Western Province of

Zambia. The Kololo moved up from the south during the 19th century, according to the *History World* website, coming into conflict with the Barotse and, under Sebetwane, conquering them. After Sebetwane's death the Barotse recovered control of their territory and it was their chief, Lewanika, who in 1890 negotiated with Rhodes for British protection. Lewanika was impressed with the British protection Bechuanaland had acquired and wanted the same for his people (http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ad27).

The region was first divided into North-western and North-eastern Rhodesia and administered by Rhodes's British South Africa Company (BSAC). In 1911 they were merged into Northern Rhodesia, with Livingstone as its capital. The website says there were 1500 "Europeans" living there at this stage; perhaps they mean whites.

If he had not died in 1902, Rhodes would have acquired the mineral wealth he craved in Northern Rhodesia: lead and zinc were found that year in Broken Hill and vast mineral wealth was later found on the border with Belgian Congo. In 1924 the BSAC handed over the administration to the British government, retaining the mineral rights. Efforts to begin farming were not very successful but the Copper Belt brought white settlement to the area. Local people had been mining the 'red gold' for centuries but in the 1920s the operations were increased with the aid of British technology. At this stage there were about 4000 'Europeans' and by 1950 there were about 40 000. (Rotberg, 1965)

Many of the whites believed Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia would merge to form a single independent country but Africans, in the 1950s beginning to express themselves politically, resisted this. In addition, Northern Rhodesia's Africans feared being overshadowed by Southern Rhodesia's European culture.

A degree of self-government was attained in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1953, with Northern Rhodesia's legislative council reserving two seats for African members. But as colonies elsewhere in Africa, such as Ghana, won independence, political resistance grew and there was pressure to break up the federation. In March 1963 all three colonies in the federation were demanding independence and Britain conceded.

The federation was formally dissolved on December 31 1963 and an independent Zambia was born on October 24 1964, with Kenneth Kaunda as president.

My brother David, the keeper of the family history, says we left Northern Rhodesia on December 11, 1963, arriving in Durban on December 13. We stayed with relatives while Dad

waited to hear about a job he had applied for at some industries in the Orange Free State. As a six-year-old I gained the impression from the adults' conversation that Kenneth Kaunda was a bad man, that he could not be trusted.

Kaunda had a chequered career as the first president of independent Zambia; on the one hand he was the best man to inculcate national pride but on the other, his policy of nationalising the mines spelt economic disaster. Zambia's mineral wealth has been a blessing, bringing it huge wealth, but also a curse. Like many resource-rich countries, Zambia had a disproportionate dependence on mining, but when the copper price dropped, mining was severely affected. Multinationals have had a troubled relationship with the country due to tax evasion and dodgy business dealings, enabled by corrupt government officials.

The second president of Zambia, Frederick Chiluba (1991-1996), opted to reprivatise the mines but was forced to leave his post under a cloud after massive corruption was exposed. Zambia still suffers the consequences of his term today as multinationals, established in their business in Zambia, dig the minerals out of the ground and sell them on at a large profit. Their host country receives a small share, according to the documentary, *Stealing Africa,* by Christopher Guldbrandsen. The film focuses on mining multinational Glencore, owned by South African Ivan Glasenberg, who makes his home in Switzerland.

The final stage of my research involved going to Kabwe. Burkard Will, who owns and manages the Luangwa Safari Lodge, was helpful in introducing me to people in the town who could give me information. A Kabwe resident, Chrispian Mumbi, sometimes drives Will's guests, and became invaluable as a guide. Mumbi, as he is known, also introduced me to a fellow Seventh-Day Adventist congregant, Ignatius Chifita. Through Will I met Alan McInnes, an engineer at the Sable mine, now involved in reclaiming minerals; Rheinhold and Emily Will, farmers and business people; a group of Belgian teachers who came to complete their internships in the town; and two government officials who visited the lodge.

Unfortunately we have no friends or relatives remaining in Kabwe, and as it is now 54 years ago that we left, I did not find anyone who had known my family in those days. However, I visited my old home and met the new owner, a young law student, who was happy to show me around.

1.4 Methodology

I began, in a writing class some years ago, to write a memoir about my early years in Zambia; it consisted of all my recollections, clear memories and half-memories, as well as some insights into these events as an adult. This writing led me into my subject. Other parts of my material were informed by the oral history of my family, told to me over the years. But recently I asked my mother and older brother to write notes about all they could remember so that I could use them for my project. My brother David also helped tremendously by providing detailed maps he recalled from memory, so I was able to locate important sites such as where the *Homo rhodesiensis/heidelbergensis* fossils were found, where the general dealer DH Patel had been, and where the club was, for example.

Photographs and objects also hold information and stories. My mother has pictures of my brothers taken by a photographer who had a home studio nearby, and one of me aged one, sitting on a blanket on the lawn. There are several of my sister, born when I was five, and I have a grainy picture of when the Queen Mother visited the town. My parents brought their favourite long-playing records with them to South Africa, and held on to them for a long while, so I remember them well.

The sources of expat memoir mentioned in the above literature review were more for my own understanding but I used some of that information, as comparisons with my own experience and that of my family, and as background. These examples of African expatriate memoir provided additional material on history, politics, the prevailing Zeitgeist, the expat culture, the local people and the environment.

I travelled to Zambia in February 2018 and was fetched from the airport by Chrispian Mumbi, who became an indispensable navigator and guide. He does some driving for Burkard Will, a German expatriate and owner of the Luangwa Safari Lodge, where I stayed for four days. Mr Will put me in touch with some helpful local people, and I also gleaned information from visitors to the lodge, as well as staff.

My project is therefore a personal account of my experiences in Broken Hill/Kabwe, while also taking into account the fate of Kabwe as a region and town. Occupied by white settlers due to her mineral riches in the early 1900s, the town then became a rallying point for Zambian nationalism but was then later virtually abandoned as its lifeblood, the mines, collapsed. Kabwe itself is an important character in my essay.

My experience in visiting Kabwe was the launchpad for my story, and affected the structure of the telling. Though I had intended to start by recalling my earliest memories, the problems in locating our family home seemed to be a good place to start, as a metaphor really for the elusiveness of my memories, and the changed places I would encounter.

The scope of my paper is intended to be wider than the average expat memoir in that I am focusing as much on our family's history as on the history of Broken Hill/Kabwe, looking at the period of colonisation, independence and the present day. My own knowledge of the place was limited and the research, visit and conversations with family and residents of Kabwe have fleshed out my knowledge of the town substantially.

My information-gathering also took the form of interviews, both at Luangwa Safari Lodge and at the premises of interviewees, such as Alan McInnes, at the mine; Rheinhold and Emily Will at their business premises; with Ignatius Chifita, at his place of work, and long conversations with Mumbi as we drove around.

I spoke to as many people as possible in Kabwe, in an informal setting, to get a feel for how life is there and how it might have changed. I went to where the mine was; there is a company there now that does recycling and reclamation, and there are many informal miners gathering gravel for mineral extraction.

Also on my list of places to see was the Mulungushi Rock of Authority, where many important political rallies took place in the run-up to the general elections, and independence.

I hope through anecdotal accounts and historical research to provide a picture of Kabwe that is at once vibrant and alive, as well as grounded in fact.

1.5 Ethics

Lodge owner Burkard Will helped me to identify people in Zambia who were willing to be interviewed. This gave me a good platform of familiarity and trust from which to proceed.

I ensured that all the interviewees were happy to be quoted in my research report as well in any possible later publications. Where subjects preferred to speak anonymously I have respected that and ensured confidentiality was preserved.

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2 Long-form journalism piece:

Rediscovering Kabwe

Peering through the gate at the white-painted house, I can see the outlines of my childhood but they are hazy. I remember a brick house with a long, gauzed-in veranda, a mass of banana trees at the back, and a rockery in the front where Mom once found Leonard stroking a puff adder with a stick. I remember Dad arriving from work in dusty overalls, tea and date biscuits on the veranda with Mom, and our helper, Angus, taking me to the clinic on the back of his bicycle.

Now I am looking at a white-painted house that has been renovated, and the trees have gone. It has been 54 years, so it is not unexpected – the world has moved on. I am here in Kabwe, Zambia, so many years later, to fill in the gaps in my understanding of the first six years of my life, of the town that was then called Broken Hill and the country we knew as Northern Rhodesia. Since 1963, when we left, and 1964, when the independent Republic of Zambia was born, the country has been through a radical change of identity – just like me, perhaps. Today I am a journalist, more of a copy editor, not the type who chase after fire engines or investigate crooks, and live in Johannesburg in a South Africa that achieved its own freedom in 1994.

When our family of five lived there, Northern Rhodesia was part of a federation with Nyasaland, now Malawi, and Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. Since its first president, Kenneth Kaunda, in office for twenty-six years, and through various leaders until today's Edward Lungu, its fortunes have risen and waned. Again, much like mine. For most of my working life I have considered emigrating to the United Kingdom as South Africa went through its states of emergency in the 1980s and later, under the African National Congress (ANC), its Zuma era which brought the economy to its knees and dashed the people's hope.

Chrispian Mumbi and I are driving around the Luangwa suburb of Kabwe, where the streets follow alphabetically and are named after flowers: Acacia, Begonia, Daisy, Erica, Godetia, Holly, Iris, Jasmine, Kochia, Lobelia, Mimosa, Narina...

It's taking Mumbi, who is a taxi driver and knows the town well, some time to locate number 18 Kochia Street, where I lived as a child. As we drive, I google 'kochia' on my cellphone. A website called Gardening Knowhow has some details on the plant, a specimen of which I can't recall seeing. "Kochia scoparia grass (*Kochia scoparia*) is an attractive ornamental plant or a troublesome invasive species, depending on a number of factors, including your geographic location and your purpose for growing the plant…" It's also known as 'fireweed' or 'burning bush' due to the flaming red colour the plant takes on in autumn. "The second reason for the fiery references is not so benign – when the kochia grass dries and turns into a tumbleweed, it is extremely flammable. Kochia burning bush was introduced to the United States by European immigrants who hoped to bring a touch of home into their new environment. Unfortunately, like many non-native species, kochia soon escaped its boundaries and became highly invasive. Kochia puts down roots in poor, rocky soil…"

If kochia was brought to the US by European immigrants, perhaps it found its way to Africa the same way? By some well-meaning gardener, or maybe the seeds came across in bags of grain or other seeds. It's a symbol, somehow, this kochia burning bush, of the settlement of Africa, of the presence of Europeans in the rocky soil of Africa, cutting down the bush, making tarred streets and calling them after European flowers and plants.

It's a muggy, hot February morning in Luangwa; the previous night's rain has left big puddles. We have been cruising up and down the pot-holed street, which is shaded by heavy flamboyant trees leaning over. As far as I can tell, my directions are right: the house I remember leaving when I was six years old is on the right hand side of the road if you stand in front of the school. But that house, painted white, with two chimneys and just one banana tree in the back garden, has a big gate held closed with a lock and chain that bears a sign saying '17'. I am perplexed; it should be my old home, this memory is so clear.

Mumbi is deep in thought. "Oh," he says after a while, "they have changed the numbers. Yes, this is 18, the old 18." And it all falls into place. At my back is Jasmine Primary, on the right is number 18 and across the road, number 17, where Jimmy Dawes, the naughtiest boy in Broken Hill lived. That house is still numbered 17; the residents no doubt have an arrangement that avoids confusion.

I lived at 18 Kochia Street in Luangwa from 1960 to 1963, when we left for South Africa. My last memory of the place is of Angus looking bereft and saying a tearful goodbye, and Mom giving him her sewing machine.

Later I find out from my older brother, David, that Angus's surname was Phiri, and that he had a wife, called Fatness, and two children. I had the impression, as a child, that I was the centre of Angus's world; he took me to the clinic on his bicycle for my vaccinations, and carried me on his back when he was working. That I knew little about Angus's life outside of our home seems to me symptomatic now of our expatriate existence, which excluded so much of the town's life. The people who worked in our homes, the black people, lived in the compound and we never went there.

Mining was Broken Hill's raison d'etre – the discovery of zinc and lead in the early 1900s brought an influx of white settlers and black workers to the town. In 1939 a researcher of urban anthropology, Godfrey Wilson, reported 1600 whites and 15000 Africans in Broken Hill. At the 2010 census, the population was 202 914, the majority Bemba, the main language group in the country.

My memories of Broken Hill in the late 1950s and early 1960s are crystal clear, though few. Aspects of the house that stick in my mind, such as the front veranda behind gauze, the rockery in the front garden, the fruit trees, Dad's rows of vegetables and the chicken run, are no longer there. These absences give me some gauge of the changes that have taken place since I was a youngster running around in this yard, playing tea parties with my mom on the veranda. But the majestic flamboyant trees, with their thick trunks, are still there, all along Kochia Street and the surrounding streets.

The flamboyant trees (*Delonix regia*), with their vivid orangey-red blooms, fine fern-like leaves and long, slim pods that drop when they turn brown... I playing hide 'n seek in and around them until late with the children in the neighbourhood. Quite often the adults would be sitting under the trees in our garden, having sundowners that stretched to much later in the evening. I recall chewing on the pods, the dry texture and malty taste of them. I have waited a long time to taste the pods again, to identify the trees I remember. Today, in February 2018, all the pods are green. As people peddle by on their bicycles and pedestrians hurry by – the women dressed in the distinctive Zambian print, the men in neat white shirts and trousers – I reach up and snatch at a couple of pods but they are hanging too high up for me to reach. The brown ones on the ground are covered in mud or, when I turn them over, crawling with insects. I can't taste one! I bring a very long half of a pod home to show my mother.

Inevitably there will be some sense of loss involved in coming back. It is the veranda with its wraparound gauze that I miss most; they were a lovely feature of those old mine houses, a

practical addition, because you could enjoy the morning without being bothered by flies or the evenings without being attacked by mosquitoes. My mother and I had a game we played: Mrs Evans and Mrs Jones. She would make cups of tea for us and we would sit on the veranda, sipping our tea, sitting on the cane chairs with our legs crossed at the knee, talking like ladies. I had to be Mrs Evans; I liked the smooth sound of the V and the Z at the end. So she could be plain old Mrs Jones. With Dad at work and the two older boys, David and Leonard, at school, this was one of our favourite games. Mom being only 29 when I was born, I have the feeling she didn't mind too much entering my childish world.

With just us at home, with Angus and John the gardener, she could give me the attention I craved. Mornings always started with my breakfast of choice: two bantam eggs and fried tomato. With Dad's chicken run being well stocked, the small eggs were always available. Sometimes at tea-time we would have the square biscuits you broke off a perforated oblong – date biscuits -- or zoo biscuits. The designs were beautifully formed in pastel colours, so you could easily make out the shape of the animal. I remember other foods: bananas and guavas from our trees, the spinach I hated but was sometimes made to eat. I would sit at the table miserably – it was usually a Sunday – as the food got cold and congealed, too queasy to eat it. My parents tried to instil in us an appreciation of food, among other things; we got the stories about the starving children in China and one I particularly dreaded, about a little girl who wouldn't eat and was so thin the wind blew her away.

Later, David, eight years older than me, told me that the family had had some extremely lean years after they first came to Northern Rhodesia, before I was born. Dad had come from Durban to be postmaster at Broken Hill Post Office, and the British federal administration at the time had neglected to pay him. My father, who died in 2011, was a diffident man, polite to a fault, and he could not bring himself to report the error. He quietly waited but no money arrived. So he took his rifle into the bush and shot game for the pot. My mother cooked it up and the family survived on that until he finally reported the matter and his pay arrived. That story speaks volumes about my father: his patience, his forbearance, his humility that meant he would rather die than draw attention to himself. He had the patience of the gardener and wherever we lived, he created a large vegetable garden so that even when there was the spinach I loathed for dinner, there were also fresh green beans, pumpkins, tomatoes, spring onions. Lots of delicious fruit, and once even a grape vine that inspired him to make his own wine.

Like many men who venture off into the frontier, my father had a pioneering spirit and a dream to farm. His garden at the back was precisely laid out, a miniature farm. Zambia has a long rainy season – from November to April – and everything grows with ease. I remember flooding at times in the back garden, so heavily did the rain pour down. And a jungle of banana and guava trees, the vegetable rows, the chicken run and the bantams. Our Sunday lunch chicken always came from our own run but thankfully I never saw the deed and as a child, did not make the connection between the live animal and the drumstick on my plate. Also, an aviary with the beautiful, long-tailed paradise whydah among the birds. I once came upon Dad dissecting a bird in his small sanctuary, the garden; he was doing it with the pen-knife he carried all the time, and inside the bird's belly was an egg. I had the feeling he didn't want to be disturbed, and didn't welcome this two-foot tall intruder with her continuous supply of questions. He told me later in life that his dream had been to become a doctor but his father didn't have the money to send him to university. He had to leave school in standard nine and find a job. Joining the post office in Durban led him to Broken Hill – he came as postmaster – and there he heard the call of the mines. It was a calling he followed until he became a metallurgist later in life.

Countries like Zambia have always attracted adventurers, oddballs. Perhaps the most famous oddball of them all was David Livingstone, revered in his lifetime but in recent research emerging as a deeply flawed man. Livingstone died just 13km from Kabwe, in Chief Chitambo's village, severely weakened by malaria and internal bleeding. There is a legend that the great man rested under the Big Tree, a massive fig with a wide umbrella of branches that is still a landmark in Kabwe's centre. Going through Livingstone's journals I didn't come across anything that confirmed Livingstone had been to the area the local people called Kabwe-ka-Mukuba – 'ore smelting' – but my brother David says he remembers a monument, shaped like a lectern, with a plaque, under the tree, which was near the bicycle shop. He said it was a known fact among Broken Hill residents that Livingstone had stopped there on his travels. But there was no plaque when I visited and no one I spoke to in the town could remember one.

So, whether Livingstone sat under the tree on his first foray into Trans-Zambezia, or during what became his last days, or at all, is not known. The details are lost in time.

What is known, of course, is that the Scottish missionary and explorer was obsessed with tracing the Zambezi from source to estuary and proving the great river was navigable, and travelled extensively throughout sub-Saharan Africa. He has been criticised recently for insisting that his wife, Mary, the daughter of the missionary Robert Moffat, accompany him, despite entreaties from her parents. Mary gave birth to five of their six children on the road, amazing when one considers the couple were living out of an ox wagon. In 1850, Mary gave birth to a child seven days after their 1940-kilometre journey back from the interior to the mission station at Kolobeng in what is today Botswana. The child, a daughter, died six weeks later and the remaining Livingstone children were laid low by an epidemic sweeping the resident Bakwena. Livingstone proved not to be the most sympathetic doctor, often making light of his family's suffering; perhaps his own childhood in the gruelling cotton mills of Scotland and a grim Calvinist home had not prepared him adequately for his career.

Explorers of that time tended to compare their progress with that of others – Richard Burton and John Speke were further north at the same time, trying to find the source of the Nile – and Livingstone, becoming frustrated at his own slow progress, sent his wife and children back to Britain. However, he did not make sure they had enough money to live on and, faced by indifference from friends and relatives, they languished in terrible poverty for four years. Her husband reportedly sent messages of courage and fortitude but little money. Mary's story is recounted in Tim Jeal's seminal work, *Livingstone*, first published in 1973, as well as Paul Bayly's *David Livingstone, Africa's Greatest Explorer: The Man, the Missionary and the Myth*, published in 2017, and in many print articles, such as Petroc Trelawny's 'Searching for Mrs Livingstone', which appeared in the BBC News magazine in July 2015. Trelawny, on assignment in Mozambique, where Mary died, writes: "By early afternoon we had reached the mission at Chupanga where Mary Livingstone is buried. A rusty metal sign on the road pointed us to the '*Tumulo da esposa Dr David Livingstone*' – the grave of the wife of Dr Livingstone. In death, Mary still overshadowed by her domineering husband.

"The rain started to pour down. We took shelter under a tree, and I read more about Mary's miserable life as the neglected wife of one of the world's most famous travellers. I had brought a small bunch of paper flowers with me. We lay them on the tomb, the red and purple and green of the dye bleeding in the rain, and leaving a delicate stain on the white grave." Writer Julie Davidson gave Mary Moffat Livingstone just recognition in a book dedicated to her and published in 2012. In *Mary Livingstone: in the footsteps of the other explorer*, Davidson tells how Mary gave lessons at the remote Kolobeng mission, and was the first

white woman to cross the Kalahari or reach the Chobe River. “[David] Livingstone has any number of African landmarks honouring his name, and a hero’s tomb in Westminster Abbey,” she writes. “Mary has a lonely, neglected grave in the crumbling cemetery of a Catholic mission that was destroyed during the Mozambican civil war. Yet without her influence, experience and family connections, his early expeditions in the lands that are now South Africa, Botswana and Zambia, might have faltered.”

Historian Hetta Hager, curator of the modest Mary Moffat Museum in Griquatown, tells Davidson: “Livingstone’s wife is always called Mary Moffat in these parts. We know her worth; her courage, her stoicism, her value to her husband.”

These conclusions are made in a time that realises that countless women have been left out of history, and that their full contribution will never be known or acknowledged. During Livingstone’s time, a woman was expected to be a helpmate, not the star of the show. My impression is that this was the case when my parents lived in Broken Hill, and is still the case in the former colonies today. It is a tough life, a man’s world; though many women found themselves in it through following a man, only an extraordinary woman takes on its challenges without the protection offered by a man.

Looking at a black and white photograph of my mother and my brother Leonard sitting outside what looks like a big rondavel, brings the fact home: this basic structure in the veld was her new home in an unknown land, and she must make it comfortable and ensure her family thrives; that her husband gets off to work with a generous lunchbox and returns to a hot meal, that her children are safe and contented.

There are many stories in our family about Leonard and his love of animals, preferably wild ones. He was just a toddler when Mom came upon him gently prodding at something in the rockery with a stick. When she had a closer look, she saw it was a puff adder. Horrified, she carefully coaxed the child away and luckily, for once, he obeyed and the snake slithered off. The puff adder is one of Africa’s most venomous snakes, and accounts for most snakebite fatalities.

Mothers in pioneering communities have unusual problems to deal with. Mine was at home that day because she did what most women in Broken Hill did in the 1950s: she stayed at home to look after the children. Yet it must have been a strange place for her. My mother, 89 this year, loves a stylish shoe and a well-cut dress. After leaving school she had worked at the

jewellery counter at Stuttafords in the Durban city centre. Whenever she spoke about it her eyes lit up; she loved the prestige of the jewellery counter, serving the men who came in to buy beautiful objects for the women in their lives. She loved dressing up in smart dresses and what she called “costumes” with high platform shoes to go to work, she loved her sisters and best girlfriend. On the walls of her cottage today she has photographs taken in those days, of her and her happy-go-lucky shop-girl friends.

But when the call came from my father – who was already in Northern Rhodesia, living in the mine’s single quarters – she had to pack up and go. Now that I have been back to Kabwe I can visualise what she found when she arrived there: the bush, a few streets with houses, the mine, the club.

My brother, David Fontyn, now 68, and I spent some time reminiscing about the idiosyncratic people we met while we were children in Broken Hill: Tommy Grewar, who lived in nearby Jasmine Street but then bought a farm three miles from town on the Kitwe road. I remember visiting with my dad and, as the two men chatted, watching the monkey he kept chained to a small thatched cage on a pole. That wasn’t an unusual sight during my childhood; that and the gorgeous, enormous parrots in cages. I felt no pity for the monkey; perhaps some fear, and I kept my distance as it followed me with its beady eyes. Today I abhor seeing any creature shackled or caged.

David tells me that Uncle Tommy, as we called him, was a dog breeder and liked to experiment with fox terriers of the Bosman breed. “We got Buster-Patchie from him; he was a thoroughbred foxie.” David called him Buster and Leonard insisted on Patchie, and so the dog got his double-barrel name. Another time he was visiting with my dad as Tommy was about to drown some puppies: “He’d crossed a foxie with a bull terrier and then back into foxie again. It was not to their expectations.” Dad took one of the pups and so we came to give the mongrel Butch a home.

We always had fox terriers, more as watchdogs than companions. I don’t remember any of them coming inside and jumping on a chair; Dad made them kennels and they stayed outside. Spotty, a long-haired, short-legged one I remember, and Jockey, a short-haired, long-legged one. Spotty once bravely took on the next-door dog and when Dad separated the savagely fighting dogs, he came away with a tooth stuck in his hand.

The men who came to visit were miners, like my dad. I remember the names – Hance, Hutchinson, McCormack, and one man who always seemed to have a long, complaining story to tell and liked a glass of whisky and milk. He would smack his lips when my dad brought it, and say how comforting it was. Dad sat by indulgently, listening to him, giving him a shoulder to cry on. To us, Dad was strict and strong, but I often caught sight of this soft side. Perhaps my earliest memory is of him softly singing as he pottered in his garden; it seemed he was singing to me – maybe I was in a pram, or just playing quietly by myself nearby. "He sat by her window and played a guitar, played a guitar, played a guitar," he sang. "She sat down beside him and smoked a cigar, smoked a cigar, smoked a cigar-ha- ha-ha…"

Writing this fills me with sadness because as a family we were often against Dad because he demanded to always be in control, he was impatient and he expected what felt like instant obedience. Later, when I was a student at the University of Natal and came home for the holidays with liberal-bordering-on-radical political ideas, he and I began an adversarial relationship that spilled over into arguments and sulking. I would flagrantly utter the words that for him were anathema: ANC, Nelson Mandela, revolution. When you are young you know everything. There were things about his experience in Northern Rhodesia that informed his scepticism but I wouldn't have had the patience to listen. Instead, we shouted at each other.

Putting together the pieces so many years later, I realise we left what was still Northern Rhodesia at the end of the year that Britain dissolved the federation, and a year before the independent Republic of Zambia came into being, with Kenneth Kaunda as its first president. As a six-year-old it seemed to me it was him, Kaunda, we were fleeing from. I heard his name mentioned among the friends we were staying with in Durban.

We left in a rush: there was little discussion, it seemed to me, before we packed up the house at 18 Kochia and left, with Angus standing ruefully by.

Years later, Mom says Angus told her, after "black people started changing in their attitudes to us", that the time was coming when he would be the boss and she would work for him. I can't believe it, I don't want to believe it about dear Angus but I have to -- and I can't blame him. He had no doubt been a part of the resistance, had heard the talk about freedom, but hadn't said anything in our home, of course; he needed his job. For many years, since Britain first began to administrate the area, the need to pay tax had driven the local people to work for the white settlers.

Resistance intensified in the 1950s but it wasn't a new thing; black Africans had been resisting white settler domination in Central Africa since the early 1900s, and the white leaders had not listened. Under pressure from self-serving whites in Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Britain had gone ahead and created a federation against the wishes of the African social and political movements that had arisen. Though their leaders assured black Africans there would be a 'partnership' and no amalgamation with Southern Rhodesia – which the blacks despised and feared due to its extreme white supremacism -- they imposed the federation on the populace so that they could protect the privileges of the white minority.

It was especially reading Robert I. Rotberg's book, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa – The Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964*, that helped me start to fill in the gaps in the years of my childhood: the events of which I was not aware because I was so young and because of the intense separation between whites and blacks in Northern Rhodesia. The two races hardly ever met as equals: the first and second leaders of the federation, Godfrey Huggins and Roy Welensky, ensured that practices like the ones that prevailed in apartheid South Africa applied in terms of using public facilities and shops. Queues were strictly segregated and many shop owners served their black customers through a hatch. Blacks lived in Broken Hill in a certain context: as workers on the mines and in people's homes.

I believe that, from the start, the whites and blacks in Northern Rhodesia were set up against each other: Rotberg says much of the early interracial conflict began in the mines, where the white miners were in fact supervisors and the black miners performed the hard labour. Many of the white miners who came to work in Northern Rhodesia's mines were Afrikaners who had worked in the gold and diamond mines of South Africa. Black workers complained of being regarded as dogs and "less than human", though they did the same work and spent their money in the shops.

As the black miners gained experience they began to ask for higher wages but met with resistance from the mining companies, which were mainly British, South African and American. After rioting and a strike by black miners in 1940 at the Kitwe and Mufulira mines, the colonial secretary initiated a commission of inquiry. However, its strongest recommendation – that the advancement of black miners should be encouraged as a matter of urgency – was ignored by a governor under pressure from the mining companies.

Broken Hill was named by TG Davey, the man who first formally mined lead in that area, after the Australian mining town. There are some hills outside of Broken Hill – whose name was changed in 1966 to Kabwe – that look as if they are broken up, so it was a doubly appropriate name. While many think Broken Hill was its first name, the area had in fact been known to the local people as Kabwe-ka-Mukuba, 'ore smelting'. Indigenous people had for some time mined copper there, which was used to make elaborate adornments for high-ranking members of the group, such as the chief's wives. So, in renaming Broken Hill Kabwe, the Zambian government reclaimed some of the nation's heritage.

The mine put Broken Hill, Northern Rhodesia, on the map. With Britain in desperate need of lead and zinc during the first and second world wars, mining flourished and workers poured in from South Africa and European countries, but even from as far away as China.

My father, who ended his career as a mining chemicals specialist in South Africa, fell in love with mining in Northern Rhodesia. Eschewing the many benefits of being an employee of the federation civil service by working in the post office, he began a new career at the Broken Hill lead and zinc mine, owned by the Rhodesia Broken Hill Development Company. Every day he put on his khaki overalls to go underground, and he did shift work. When he was on day shift and came home in the afternoon, I would run up to him and he would pick me up. I have a memory that one day, as he came walking up the driveway, I ran up and he did not pick me up, he brushed me aside. Was that about the time he was deciding we should leave Broken Hill, leave Northern Rhodesia? I wonder whether he had things on his mind, whether he was angry or preoccupied, or even whether the memory is true. My mother says he received two notes saying: "We know where you live", and "We know you work shifts and your women is alone at home." He had a suspicion about who had written them and this spurred him to action.

We packed up in a short time and in December 1963, began the three-day journey back to Durban, where they had lived before. Vivid in my mind is the feeling of car-sickness, my parents puffing at their Springbok cigarettes, and stopping at a bush lodge late at night. As the manager showed us to a room that had a cot for the new arrival -- Veronica, a year old -- I noticed that most of the walls had mounted animal heads on them. Next day we left early – knowing Dad it would be four in the morning, to miss the heat – for the long long road to the South Coast. En route, in the middle of the hot savannah, there was a road block where officers sprayed the car for some or other disease. Foot-and-mouth, maybe, or tsetse fly.

Durban was just stopover for us. From there we went to Sasolburg, in the Orange Free State. No doubt Dad's experience on the Broken Hill mine qualified him to get the job at the Sasolburg industries. He was happy at the Synthetic Rubber Company – later called Karbochem – for many years and retired with honour, a valued staff member who had worked his way up from being one of hundreds of operators – from third operator to second operator to first operator to supervisor – to being a mining chemicals specialist in the company's laboratory.

My father loved his job, and his colleagues spoke well of "Oom Bill". But we -- my mother and siblings – hated Sasolburg. The Afrikaner Nationalist culture of church and home was a daily affront to us and we were more or less in a state of constant rebellion. We wanted to be back in Broken Hill, or in Durban, where our cousins lived. In Sasolburg, there were no drama classes for David, and he and Leonard were denied the wonders of exploring the African bush that had been so close by in Broken Hill. My father resisted our complaints, convinced he was giving us a better life in the Orange Free State. Durban didn't have the industries that Sasolburg had. Maybe he thought he would not get a good job in Durban, and dreaded a return to something like the post office.

My brothers did apprenticeships – David became a fitter and turner at Sasol and Leonard left for Johannesburg to qualify in electronics. He used to visit quite often and one day came home and announced he had joined the Hell's Angels. Both he and David bought Triumphs. Leonard was riding to a Hell's Angels meeting one night in 2002, when he was fifty, and had a fatal accident.

There are no words to describe the feeling when you get a phone call to say your brother has died. Mom, broken-hearted, gave me the news and I went to meet the family at Dove's funeral parlour – the first time I had been to such a place. The next day there was a wake at the Hells Angels clubhouse in Yeoville, Johannesburg, and a procession of about 100 motorbikes through the city centre to the crematorium in Braamfontein. Club members came from Europe and the United States; we learnt Leonard had been something of a legend, a long-serving member who was known as 'The Pope' because of his mystical and philosophical bent.

How much of his questioning nature, his need to look beyond the surface, his contempt for 'the establishment' and desire to always tread the unbeaten path had he picked up in the bush in Northern Rhodesia, among the lizards and frogs, and the other creatures he loved?

During the memorial service, as the club leaders gave their speeches, I took Mom's hand and we got through it.

In Broken Hill, the houses we lived in were close to the bush, where the boys spent their free time. The first houses the family lived in, though, in 'C' Avenue, were on the mine's doorstep. That may have been convenient for the workers but these days would not pass muster on the health and safety front.

My father went to work in Broken Hill twice: first as the postmaster, but leaving to work on the mine, in 1951. They left that time because he contracted lead poisoning and was dangerously ill. He needed treatment in South Africa, and later in life, had two bouts of cancer. Cancer is one of the many diseases that can follow lead poisoning.

They came back, when I was three, and Dad went back to work at the Broken Hill mine.

Depending which study you read, Kabwe is the most polluted or second-most polluted town in the world. The lead, zinc and vanadium mining for the past century, until the mine closed in 1994, has resulted in dangerously high levels of poisoning in the soil and water, with the local people suffering a variety of health complications, from stunted physical and mental growth to stomach complaints. There have been World Health Organisation programmes approved to clean up the pollution in Kabwe but I saw no evidence of them there and certainly no one mentioned them when I visited the mine, now called Sable and owned by Glencore.

There is no mining activity taking place now at this mine that was once the lifeblood of the Broken Hill/Kabwe economy; the sheave wheel in the old headgear is still and the buildings delapidated, with just the odd person walking about. As we arrive at what looks like the main gate, a security guard points us to another entrance about a kilometre away.

We have the name of the mine manager and this overrides all the 'Strictly No Entry' signs and opens the gate. Inside a run-down prefab building, some men are gathered at a workbench. I am shown to Alan McInnes, an engineer who began working at the mine in the 1950s. The only operations now are ore reclamation from the existing slagheaps, he tells me. We reminisce about the town and set up a time for tea at his home, which feels to me like a very colonial thing to do. As I am about to leave he hands me an old, much-fingered photostat of a document called 'Bone Tools from Broken Hill (Kabwe) Cave, Zambia'. It refers to a significant archaeological find at the mine in the 1920s, something I have read

about and am keen to discuss with a local person. But when Mumbi drives me to McInnes's home, some way out of town on the Lusaka road, his son says he isn't in; a friend in Kabwe urgently needed his help with some household emergency. We drive away, the dogs barking us down the driveway, and I reflect that in the city we call a plumber or an electrician; in places like Kabwe you still call a neighbour, even if he is miles away.

Some days later, I go back to the mine, to have a look at the nearby premises of Environmental Processing Limited, a recycling works, and see if I can speak to the owner. But it is Friday lunchtime and the bosses leave early, the security guard says. Managing to avoid the attention of the security personnel dotted around, I take some photographs of the mine's sheave wheel and we leave.

The area around the mine is not cordoned off and informal miners – called *zama zamas* in South Africa -- crawl around the dumps, collecting buckets of gravel, from which the remaining ore is extracted, and stones for building. A nearby German expat makes blocks for building, sourcing his material from the mine dumps. There appears to be no regulation.

About the second time my parents came to Northern Rhodesia, David says: "We arrived back in Broken Hill sometime in 1960. Angus came back to work for us. We stayed at 82 C Avenue. I went to Parker Primary Standard 3 and Len to Standard 1. Some time later we moved to Kochia Street and Len and I went to Jasmine Primary." Apparently at that time it was rare to own a car, but Dad had been ahead of that trend for a while. "Dad had sold his Austin in Durban so we came by train. Eventually, he bought the Opel Car-A-Van." It was a station wagon and Mom made light blue curtains for the back windows.

During their two periods in Northern Rhodesia, my Dad moved the family around quite a lot, going where the mine provided housing, and I never heard Mom say she was reluctant to move. But when I was in Kabwe and looked at the houses close to the mine in C Avenue, where they first lived, I can't imagine how she felt. When I visited, in the rainy season, C Avenue, riven with potholes, lay under a layer of mud. The home we lived in has been renovated now as well to turn it into a white tube, but the houses in that area all follow the mine-house design, with a sloped tin roof, veranda and windows facing the street.

I can imagine, my mother, when she arrived in Broken Hill in the 1950s, was too busy sewing, making and cooking to think about anything. She made all the curtains and our clothes, and cooked the meals. Angus cleaned the house and John Lungu was our gardener at

Kochia Street. I never received any warmth from John; he wasn't like Angus. My father once said he didn't trust John; he suspected he was "political".

David and Leonard had a good relationship with John, who lived in what we called a *kaia* – the Zulu word for home -- at the back of the garden. They often sat at the back with him and his friends in the evenings, sharing his meal of *putu* (mealie-meal porridge). I was envious of my brothers, their freedom to roam the bush, their self-contained unit of two that shut me out, their easy friendship with the local black people. One night I sat watching them as they sat happily chatting with John around the flickering fire. He was making the *putu* which they would soon scoop up with their fingers, roll into ball and dip into a rich tomato and onion gravy, when John reached over and grasped something, which he threw into one of the pots. It was a nestful of baby birds, chattering and screeching as they were dropped into the pot. I felt myself riveted to the ground as I watched. It's an upsetting memory and did nothing to endear me to John.

When I went back recently I spent some time looking at John's *kaia*. It somehow wasn't in the spot I had remembered it to be, but maybe that is because so much else had changed and the backyard didn't look at all the same. Then his home would have been obscured by fruit trees, which have now gone. Most of the backyard is under concrete now and the rest is mealies. My chance to go inside the yard came easily: as Mumbi and I loitered outside what was then number 18, we saw two young men come out with a kitten following them. Chatting to them revealed that one of the men was Felix Mphanda, a law student aged 21, the owner of the house. He had inherited it a short time ago from his grandmother and it was standing empty, ready to be let out.

I told him I had lived in the house many moons before. "Oh, you want to see inside," he said right away, which made things easy. Mumbi, the two young men, the cat and I all traipsed inside. "It belongs to the previous tenant," said Felix, picking the kitten up by the scruff. "It loves people!" I'm a soppy cat lover – I keep two rescue cats in some style at home -- and I grimaced a little and asked him to be gentle with it. I had to curb the impulse to correct the youngster.

What had I expected to see? What were the chances anything would be the same 54 years later? Still, that feeling of something lost – the character, the feel of my old home. No doubt for security, the previous owners had bricked up the back door and created a side door – the only entrance to the house. These renovations they painted white, and the new walls stand out

clearly from the old, unchanged part of the house, which is red face brick. It was cool inside due to the lack of windows but also because the floor had been laid with marble tiles. I recognised the entrance to the lounge – an archway – recalling an evening when some friends had come around and their daughter sang the Doris Day song “Que sera, sera” for us. The teenager looked a little wistful and today I have the feeling that there was something about the young woman that said her future was uncertain; she was wondering what would happen. But maybe it was our future that was uncertain, together with the future of many whites who were in December 1963 leaving Northern Rhodesia, soon to be independent under a black government.

Walking into the next room, the kitten curling itself around the corners of the walls, Felix and the other two patiently waiting, I stood and looked around a room I imagined was once my bedroom, where I had often lain in bed with my legs extended and my feet against the wall. The recent owners had built two bathrooms en-suite as well as an extra kitchen area, perhaps so as to rent out the maximum rooms. The old pantry was there, its walls and shelves thick with layers of shiny cream-coloured paint. No bells were ringing in my head, though; I could not place Angus, or Mom, or bantam eggs and tomatoes, in this context.

Felix posed for some pictures and then Mumbi and I walked towards the Toyota to go back to the lodge I was staying in, a mere three roads away. New images were beginning to overlay the old ones -- I felt I needed to quickly pin down my childhood memories, make sure I had captured them all in my journal and in my mind or they would be changed, or even disappear forever.

Two people I spoke to after my trip said they regretted going back to where they had grown up. The places had changed; my hairdresser said she had gone back to her childhood home in Benoni and the unfriendly high walls with electric fencing seemed to belie the safe, free time she had experienced. Going back just upset her because it interfered with her idyllic memories of a carefree childhood.

Fanie de Villiers, a writer and work colleague, said the smallholding on the East Rand where he grew up with close family, had two homes, various farm animals, a dam and a windmill. A journalist, interviewing Fanie about his novel, published in 2017, asked to take him back there to place him in situ, as it were. Fanie said he felt quite upset to see the dam and windmill had gone, as well as any trace of farm animals, and in their place was some

industrial buildings and huge trucks. “I wish I’d never gone,” he said. “That unpleasant image has destroyed my childhood memories.”

I temper my disappointment with reality. Fifty-four years is a long time, enough time for three generations to have passed. Still, I make an effort to hold on to my childhood memories, the hazy snatches that flit through my mind of the people, the games we played, the toys, the tea parties with Mom, my secret hiding place in the heart of the banana tree, my fervent belief that inside each pine-cone seedling was a fairy ...

School, an easy three minutes down the road. I was five years old and I don’t remember my first day, so it can’t have been traumatic. I always enjoyed school – Mom said I went off happily, the same as I always went to the dentist. She couldn’t understand it. Nonetheless, I would have had on the gingham dress the other girls wore coming into Reception – the pre-school class. We had a choice of dresses – orange, yellow or green and white checks – which is nothing like the schools I attended subsequently in South Africa, where we had pinafores in sensible colours like maroon and dark blue, with white blouses underneath, and regular uniform inspections.

Mumbi and I bump along Jasmine Street’s potholes to the gates of the school. There is a statue of a boy and Jasmine Street School is now, implausibly to my six-year-old self, a secondary school for boys. Mumbi pronounces it “jazz-mine”. He drives his car down the path and into the schoolgrounds, parking beside my old classroom, as ever patiently indulging the strange *umlungu* woman and waiting as I go off to potter around.

On the left-hand side is the main building – the staffroom and other classrooms, with neat cement pathways joining it to classrooms on the right. There is a cement mixer and some coils of wire lying around so I assume there is some renovation going on. There must be because when I peer into my Reception classroom, it looks decrepit and not fit for teaching in. Ancient desks are still in jumbled rows but there is nothing on the walls with their peeling paint – not a single picture. There is nothing on the teacher’s desk, there are no books. This part of the school is strangely deserted, the doors swinging open on their hinges. The main building is in better shape, and some teenagers are playing an exuberant game of soccer on the field, the girls on the sidelines yelling and jumping up and down hysterically. Soccer is big in Zambia. As I write this, South Africa’s Bafana Bafana are preparing to play Zambia’s Chipolopolo (Copper Bullets) at the National Heroes Stadium in the capital, Lusaka.

As I wandered around Kabwe, I couldn't help noticing the profusion of cellphone shops, even in the quiet Luangwa suburb. This aspect of modernity is thriving in Kabwe, but some things are the same. In a country like Zambia, which to a large extent keeps to the old ways, many things are retained for as long as they are useful. Like the roof on the house of our old neighbours, the Crook family. The tin is layered with decades of rust but it is standing firm and the reddish brown is a perfect mate to the brick façade of the old mine house, built in the 1920s.

Memories. I try and summon them but they are scant. Fleeting images of being in the classroom but I can't place my first teacher. At break-time, as the children run around the playground shouting, I sit on the classroom step and eat my sandwiches with lemon curd on them. No other memories about school come to mind. I was at Jasmine Primary for a year -- I remember Jockey and Spotty and Sheena Crook, my friend before school, I remember pointy white shoes and a doll called Jennifer, the fowl run and the banana tree – why don't I remember school? It's only the lemon curd and the gingham dresses I remember.

There is one other memory. "You see that room next to the classroom?" I ask Mumbi. "Yes." "It's the boys' toilets, right?" How would he know? But Mumbi nods his head. "Once, when I was in the pre-school class, some boys told me to close my eyes and they carried me in there and left me there." The stinging humiliation, the reek of urine in my nostrils, the distress and sense of betrayal I can summon readily. Mumbi is sympathetic. "Auw…" I had grown up with Mom, with Mrs Evans and Mrs Jones -- maybe I wasn't ready for the rough and tumble of school, of boys and making friends.

Still, I think the British system set me up well: I went to school early, at five, when my young brain was ready to begin to soak up learning, and I learnt good reading fundamentals which enabled me to one day follow wherever English led me: studies, writing, editing, teaching. And England. I was born with a deep affinity and love for the "mother country". It wasn't just being surrounded by British expats that did it, it was living in a country that considered itself British and going into a British school system. But I realise that idea of British is not real; it belongs in the world of the British colony, now gone forever.

David remembers British royalty visiting Broken Hill in July 1957, four months before I was born, in fact: "When we lived in Kochia Street, the Queen Mother came to town. We were all given little flags – Union Jacks -- and bussed off to the town hall. She gave a long speech and spoke awfully well about us and Mother England." I think he wrote this with his tongue

firmly in his cheek because many of us did believe, in those innocent days, that everything English was the best there was, and we wanted to belong to the motherland.

My parents' Scottish friends would bring their recordings of bagpipe music when they came to visit. They would sit under the trees and drink until late, "Scottish Soldier" skirling in the background, while we children ran around, playing hide 'n seek and cowboys and Indians. There were lots of places to hide, in among the banana and guava trees, or the flamboyant trees.

Stan Hance worked in the mine with Dad. His wife, Betty, was one of my favourite people: gentle and generous, she once gave me one of her handbags, a black leather sling. I filled the side pocket with crisps and could taste the salt for months afterwards. Once, when she came to visit, she mistook the mealie meal for flour and made a very odd toad-in-the-hole. David says her husband Stan was English, and I can't contradict him; I wouldn't know, but I do remember he was kind as well. He was a young bachelor when Betty, who had lost her husband, met him, says Mom. The town had no shortage of single men who had gravitated to the mine. "Occasionally, Dad and I would go to Boon's Bar with friends to go dancing, or to the club. You would see these groups of men standing there, with no girlfriends or wives, just hanging around."

It's a sad fact that of many mining and industrial towns that there is a shortage of eligible women, and that this can lead to social problems. Away from the metropolis, family life is all the more important.

When I visited Kabwe in 2018, I met expat men, German this time. They had the same air about them: a kind of can-do approach, a passion for Africa and a commitment to living on the continent, but sadly, also a patronising and mercenary attitude towards black people.

Reinhold Will came from Bavaria, Germany, to work in the Broken Hill mine in the 1970s and began farming the stretch of land behind his home. "There was miles of open land," he told me. "Nobody stopped me."

Today Reinhold has a large estate outside of Kabwe, where he farms pigs, chickens and soya beans to supply the nearby oil processing factory. His Zambian wife, Emily, is a businesswoman in the town. I sat and reminisced with them in their business premises, called Pot Luck, where Emily today mainly administers the couple's property development across the road. Business is slow, she says; it's hard to get anything done. Still, they expect the

block of offices and shops they are building to be fully occupied as soon as it is finished: already a hairdresser has applied and there have been other applications.

As I wander through Kabwe it strikes me that what it needs is a shopping centre; the shops are in ageing, crumbling buildings or jerry-built stalls along the roads, which are now, in the rainy season, covered in large puddles. There is copious mud along the roads and sidewalks, and some of the vendors who haven't got stalls, have arranged their wares – mainly vegetables, the butternuts and tomatoes in season – on the few dry patches in between the puddles.

We go into the cool, dark food market, where a female vendor immediately tells me off for trying to photograph her. She is presiding over heaps of spices and tiny dried fish, which are attracting swarms of flies. We wander in further, where another vendor agrees to being photographed. "They don't like you taking pictures," says Mumbi. "They say the tourists come in here and look and take photographs, but they don't buy."

There isn't much for me to buy; I have all the food I need at my lodge. But I buy two huge avocados at five kwacha each (about R5) and we leave.

Mumbi drives slowly and cautiously as the roads are perilously potholed. These roads haven't been maintained in decades. Emily had told me she felt disgruntled that a project to build a new road through the town centre had stalled. She suspects the contractors have gone off with the down payment. The only road that has been tarred is the one leading to the president's guest lodge, Reinhold's brother, Burkard, tells me.

Burkard Will, who owns the Luangwa Safari Lodge I stayed at, tells me the Zambian government in November 2017 had its own cleanout of street traders, similar to the ones former president Robert Mugabe ordered in Harare. Their stalls were confiscated and the areas were cleared but the traders are back, all women, displaying their meagre wares on the only patches of dry ground available. What else can they do, I wonder, and begin this conversation with Burkard, but he has the battle-worn defences of the long-time expat: he doesn't want to comment or get involved.

"Surely you can't take their tables and their goods without giving them something else to do, somewhere else to do business?" But Burkard is shtum.

There are ghosts, shadows everywhere of the sleepy town I remember as Broken Hill, covered in large tracts of bush, with the vital railway line dissecting it. The outlay of suburbs is still interrupted by wild outgrowths of green bush and grass, especially now the rains have

come. When I tell my story to Oliver, the barman at the Luangwa Safari Lodge, he says: "And do you remember the big fig tree in the centre of town?" I tell him I don't. "Didn't your father take you there?" he asks. "No, I don't remember it." "Ah, I'm sure he took you there, you just can't remember." Oliver is probably right. If there is anything I should remember about Broken Hill it is the massive, sprawling fig tree in the town centre, the main landmark, a place where people still gather and the place where in the early colonial times, pack animals were kept to transport goods from the railway. Broken Hill was a transport hub, placed as it is between Lusaka and the Copper Belt. The first railway in Northern Rhodesia, operated by Rhodesian Railways, reached Broken Hill from Livingstone in 1906.

Mumbi and I arrive at the Big Tree on a mild, drizzly day. There is a family of three sitting on the bench under the tree, the mother unwrapping the cloth that holds their lunch. As it is so cool they don't need the shade of the tree, but it is a convivial meeting spot, a special place under its impossibly wide spreading umbrella of branches. We tramp around in the mud, searching all around the tree, but I don't see the memorial my brother spoke of. There is a big square marble tablet standing in the ground, which describes the tree's function as an inspanning place for donkeys and a gathering place for the townspeople. When I check with Burkard, who has lived in Kabwe for the past seventeen years, he says he can't remember such a monument.

As we drive around the town, I'm looking for a landmark that meant a lot to me as a child: DH Patel, General Dealers. It was there that my parents bought me the things I loved the most: a pair of Bata sandals with different-coloured straps and a closed heel; a gorgeous pair of white pumps with an elegant thin strap that could go over the instep or round the back of the shoe. My enthusiasm for shoes started young and never left me – they still excite me today but that is a sentiment shared by many women. And dolls. I seem to remember my very first Barbie-type doll, which I called a teenage doll, came from Patel's.

But DH Patel is no longer. Emily remembers the store but says it closed some years before. I wonder what the story was; did the owner die, or simply go out of business? No one knows.

I loved my dolls from Patel's but my most fervent dream was to one day get a bride doll. I dropped many a hint but this was one present I never found under the Christmas tree. There was a most exciting picnic set in a basket with checked napkins and a thermos flask one memorable Christmas, when David and Leonard pretended to be Santa by moving a light around the garden.

Ever mindful of being older as well as genetically superior as boys, they liked to play jokes on their gullible younger sister, and told me a structure near our house in Kochia Street – probably a municipal electricity box or something of that ilk – contained a bride doll. Why it was there, holed up and concealed did not occur to me; I was simply riveted by the idea and dreamt of having that doll in its white dress and veil. How did that same girl become a feminist later in life, a woman who could not imagine herself in a white satin wedding gown? The roots even of that lie in Broken Hill, a place where women were very much the second sex, because it was the men's work that drove the families there. The men worked and the families adjusted.

And yet, the mine provided more than just work: in many mining towns, the infrastructure, schools and recreational facilities were and still are provided by the mine. And from what David describes, he and Leonard had a full and marvellous childhood. I will let David tell the story: "Jasmine Street School started a choir. Well, we were quite good as some sang in their church choirs from all over. There was no apartheid as far as choirs were concerned. Then we were invited to take part in the 'big' Eistedfodd in Lusaka. It was between Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland [which at that time formed the federation].

"We sang and sang for three days and on the last day, we were given third place. Guess who did the solo, 'Hushaby'. All was well and home we went."

David also described his short career in theatre. "There was a drama school run between the Methodist Church and the schools. I joined like a shot (much to Dad's dismay – the boy should be boxing or playing rugby and not prancing about on a stage). We did 'Peter and the Wolf' – the story was in the Broken Hill Observer – and other mini plays, and every year a pantomime at Christmas. What with cricket, soccer, the choir and drama and still school, I was a busy chap."

David's voice again: "When we lived in C Avenue [the oldest district, very near the mine], we heard Sir Roy Welensky [the second federal prime minister] was visiting Broken Hill, so Dad and I went to the aerodrome to see the plane. On the way, Sir Roy's black limo passed us heading for town, flags flying. They waved to us from the back windows and Dad waved back. I thought, 'Dad knows him.'

"We got to the plane, a de Havilland Dove, and the pilot said I could look inside. I went in and suddenly had this feeling of being closed in. I got out feeling lousy and have never been back." He has a life-long aversion to flying.

It is interesting what the mind remembers and what it suppresses or simply lets drift away. I clearly remember number 17 Kochia Street as the home of Trevor Dawes, “the naughtiest boy in Broken Hill”, according to the neighbourhood. I’ll admit, he was mischievous; his only use for a metal toy rocket he had received as a gift was to throw it into the red-hot ashes of the boiler. Maybe he didn’t like the person who gave it to him; I was mystified as to why he was so proud of the sorry thing lying there in the ashes, its paint burnt off.

Every house had a boiler at the back, to heat the water. Today they have been bricked up, though at the Luangwa Safari Lodge, Burkard had turned his into a pizza oven. His cheerful marketing of Friday night pizza night brings the locals to his guesthouse for his pizzas, cooked in an open woodfire.

Over the past seven or so years, Burkard has transformed an original Broken Hill mine house, one of the first to be built in the 1920s, into a comfortable thatched lodge with 10 rooms. He charges between US$50 and $60 a night depending on the room, and business is ticking over nicely. He had a Scottish government minister with his group the week before, he tells me, and the Tuesday after I have left, would welcome a German delegation. The first group were donors and the Germans are coming on business to do with installing solar power. The country, whose fortunes have dipped and risen since independence in 1964, receives substantial external assistance. More recently, Chinese investment has added to its coffers. This is evident from the many Chinese billboards one sees driving through Lusaka – such as the ones advertising the Golden Peacock Hotel – and the many Chinese-owned businesses along the Lusaka to Kabwe road.

On the Friday night I was at the Luangwa Safari Lodge, there were three female Belgian teachers in their twenties who had come to do three months of voluntary internship. Two fine art teachers and one physical training (PT) instructor, they were all qualified for the lower grades. The fine art teachers said they found the instruction methods very teacher-orientated and authoritarian; this was quite jolting for them but their more pupil-centred methods were working well, the children were responding. The PT instructor complained that she had made some kind of mistake when applying for her visa and only been given a month’s stay. Now she had to reapply, while the other two had each been given a year. There was some hidden code she was unaware of, when applying, she said.

Her complaints recalled for me the old trope of First World versus Third World: there is no logic to the systems, one has to speak the right word, grease the right palm to get on. When

my family lived there – my father as a miner, my mother a stay-at-home mum – things were simpler: white skins took priority. The Northern Rhodesian whites were as vociferous in their demands for racial segregation and white supremacy as the later apartheid government in South Africa. In his book, Rotberg outlines a desperate campaign on the part of the white leaders such as Welensky to ensure the continued privilege of their constituency over the native population.

The federal government introduced some measures to grant blacks the semblance of representation but these did not give them real decision-making power, says Rotberg. An example was the regional councils, which consisted of chiefs and urban dwellers, but these were purely advisory and black people remained under-represented in government.

The similarities in the past of Zambia and South Africa interest me, as well as the differences. Britain relinquished her protectorate, Northern Rhodesia, after a relatively short period of resistance – just over ten years – whereas the situation in South Africa was much more prolonged and ultimately complicated, although with a miraculous reconciliation at the end.

The defiance campaign in Northern Rhodesia started with voluntary organisations, such as the Federation of African Societies, and churches, especially the Watchtower movement. The Seventh Day Adventist mission station was opened before 1910 and is still going strong. Mumbi is a member of this church, and requested the day off on Saturday. He introduced me to Ignatius Chifita, who holds the position of literature evangelist in one of the branches of the Kabwe church. Chifita said his job was to deliver church literature and Bibles to people whom requested them. He said he lived “by the church and for the church”: everything he did was for his lord and his congregation, and God provided everything for his people, he said.

It was another muggy, rainy morning when I met the soft-spoken Chifita, as he is known, and after I had fired questions at him for half an hour – I wanted to know if he remembered anything about politics in the 1950s but it turned out he was born in 1964 – he quietly asked: “Sorry ma’m but what is your mission?” I had failed journalism 101, not explaining to my interviewee the reason for my questions. I filled Chifita in and then as we walked outside to join Mumbi, he asked to be photographed with me. We came across him the next day, walking on the other side of Kabwe, no doubt delivering a Bible to someone in need.

Looking at the potholed roads in Kabwe, the many flooded areas after the rains, and the obvious poverty and hardship of most of the people, I found it sadly ironic that, as their political leaders take the fat for themselves, they turn to religion for succour. And I wondered

whether organising themselves politically and holding their corrupt government to account would not be a better idea. But I am from “South”, as the locals call it. Down here we are aggressive, we fight. In Zambia, life is quiet, peaceful.

After the formation of the federation in 1953, the voluntary organisations became more organised, which led to the establishment of the Northern Rhodesian African Congress. “By the end of 1948, African nationalists had discovered their voice,” Rotberg writes (p 212). They began to demand a wide range of social and political rights. These organisations grew into the Northern Rhodesian branch of the African National Congress, the United National Independence Party (Unip) and Welensky’s United Federal Party, which contested the 1962 general elections.

David says he, Leonard and Mom sometimes walked to the railway line, where they sat listening to the political rallies. Kaunda, who was later to lead Unip, often called gatherings at the Mulungushi Rock of Authority, some kilometres out of town on the Ndola road. A natural dome-shaped outcrop, it is a natural meeting place, and Kaunda delivered some landmark speeches there, always beginning with his rallying cry: “One Zambia, one nation.”

Mumbi took me to the rock, which is located on the campus of Mulungushi University. A covering has been erected over it to shield the people gathered there from the elements.

While on the campus, and when walking the streets of Kabwe, I found the demeanour of the people somewhat different from the casual, even jocular relationship between the races in my hometown, Johannesburg, and other places I have travelled to in South Africa. There is a reserve, which feels like unfriendliness. When I mentioned it to Burkard, he snapped: “It is respect!”

“So, rather than unfriendliness or distrust, it is distance, formality?” I asked, searching for words to express my unease.

“Yes. For them, a white person is someone to be looked up to.”

As I walk along the Luangwa Road, on one of my forays, I notice that the pedestrians, the women dressed in their traditional dresses, the men in light cotton trousers and shirts -- and more likely to be on bicycles -- do not greet me or look my way. They appear not in the least curious at the sight of a 60-year-old woman walking around their streets with a daypack on her back, taking pictures.

When I ask if I can take a picture of them, they often say no. Approaching a weathered wooden sign saying “Jasmine Street”, I came across an elderly man sitting on the corner, carving a piece of wood. “Can I take a picture, would you mind?” I asked from a couple of metres away. He quickly moved out of the frame, shaking his head, “No no.” I took a picture of the sign, which was next to one of the huge old trees with massive trunks and gnarled roots that are everywhere in Kabwe – a relic of the British putting down roots.

My remaining family have been cast back into the past as I uproot the place we knew as Broken Hill. For six months or so I have been discussing it with them, especially my mother and David. David has incredibly vivid and detailed memories, considering 54 years have passed, and when I visit him one day in Benoni, he hands me three maps, drawn from memory. Carefully he has mapped out the lay of the land in Luangwa: the A-Z street names, the railway line, and the Lusaka road.

I show Burkard the map showing the mine dump where an important skull – *Homo rhodesiensis,* later named *heidelbergensis,* and estimated to have lived between 125 000 and 300 000 years ago – was found in 1921. He turns the piece of foolscap this way round, then that and says, “I don’t know where this is… This map is completely wrong.” My heart sinks a little, but I reason it is to be expected. David is 68; he left Broken Hill when he was thirteen and never clapped eyes on it again. But then Burkard turns the map around so it is in line with Godetia Street, holding it upside down. “Oh,” he says. “I see… this is the railway track here, and the mine dumps. Oh and here is the Mine Club and the Vista Bioscope.” Soon he can see exactly what David was seeing from his mind’s eye when he drew the map, and says he can give the taxi driver precise directions.

As Mumbi has the day off and I decide I deserve a day of holiday, I spend the afternoon at the pool, reading under the *lapa*. As I’m dangling my feet in the icy-cold and crystal-clear pool, with a Mosi lager in my hand, two men arrived noisily at the lapa, waving their drinks and eager to make conversation. Njangwe said he was a government official in charge of markets in Kabwe. When he and his friend Chris heard I was from South Africa they wanted to discuss the recent momentous development in my country: Jacob Zuma stepping down.

“Now you have a new president, Cyril Ramaphosa,” said Njangwe. “No elections, just like that.” “Just like that,” I concurred. It would never happen in Zambia, they said; there would have to be a lengthy process of elections. “I suppose our system is different, because I don’t

think it was unconstitutional," I said. In the euphemistic, general terms strangers use when discussing politics, they said they hoped it would be a fresh and positive era for South Africa.

Njangwe said he felt positive about the future of Zambia, though there were "some things to sort out". I nod but don't say anything. My impression so far of President Edgar Lungu is that he is less than democratic; he imprisoned the leader of the oppositional United Party for National Development, Haikande Hichilema, and had his airport officials stop the leader of South Africa's Democratic Alliance, Mmusi Maimane, from attending his trial. He has appointed cronies in the Robert Mugabe and Jacob Zuma mould and from conditions I observe on the road from Lusaka and in and around Kabwe, the millions of dollars the government receives annually in taxes and donor aid is not reaching the people who need it.

The next day, a Sunday and my last in Kabwe, Burkard is up early restocking the bar. It has been depleted by the Saturday crowd, which I could hear carousing until fairly late. Burkard tells me he has decided he will take me to see the places on the third map and after he has done his compulsory 20 lengths in the pool and had his breakfast, we can be off.

As I wait for him I fervently wish I had declined his offer and let Mumbi fetch me at 10am as arranged, because Burkard not only has to swim but he must organise his staff and see a former staffer who has arrive to try and get the money he owes her. He also has to pack because it appears he will spend the night in Lusaka after dropping me at the airport at 2pm.

We get into his silver BMW station wagon, a rarity in Zambia, and begin our exploration. Burkard has become a tourist in his own sleepy town and he is clearly enthusiastic, even though it has now begun to pour with rain. "There goes my photography," I silently curse.

David's maps are a source of invaluable information – they help me orientate myself with regard to the railway line and the road to Lusaka, for instance – but also of nostalgia and amusement. He has marked the spot where he once played hookie from school and at the mine dumps outside the town there is a tag: "Here Mom didn't learn to drive. She crashed the Prefect into a mine dump."

Burkard fills up the BMW with petrol and heads for the club and the Vista bioscope. There is a guest house now where the club was, where my parents used to go to socialise, and it is looking smart, its manicured gardens clipped to perfection. Burkard has become an enthusiastic guide and we walk around the place, looking in at the hall, with its stage and proscenium arch, where David performed in Peter and the Wolf. The bioscope is a church

now, with a pub attached. A good combination, we agree. “There are many pubs in Kabwe,” says Burkard. “It is big business.” The swimming pool doesn’t seem to be in operation.

We spend some time finding C Avenue, looking at the old mine houses, all built in the same shape, with their angled tin roof. The avenues are flowing with water as the rain turns from a drizzle to a steady downpour. He heads the car towards the mine dumps, to the site where *Homo rhodesiensis* was found, and I scramble out in the rain to have a look. The site is freely accessible and a youth taking shelter under a tree points to the spot, which is surrounded by mine dumps and appears to be a lake with greeny-blue water as it is deep under groundwater. It is not marked and we would not know this was it were it not for David’s map. He told me at home that he recalled it was fenced when we lived there. As I am running back to the car to escape the wet, the youth asks me for money and lingers by the car window.

“Are we safe here?” I ask Burkard, who is studying the map and in no hurry to go.

“Of course,” he snaps.

Zambia is considered one of the safest places to travel in worldwide.

This area is of historic significance also because, in 1921, a Swiss miner found an important fossilised skull – ‘Kabwe man’– in an old mine. The Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History’s website says though the skull was initially assigned to a new species, *Homo rhodesiensis*, most scientists now assign Kabwe to *Homo heidelbergensis*. Estimated at between 125 000 and 300 000 years old, the skull is significant because it shows features similar to *Homo erectus*, such as large brow ridges, but also resembles modern humans, as it has a flatter face and larger brain (1300cm^3). Kabwe Man is also one of the oldest fossils with tooth cavities – in 10 of the upper teeth. He may have died from an infection due to dental disease or a chronic ear infection, the site says.

The skull is now kept in the British Natural History Museum and though Zambia formally asked for it back in a presentation to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) in 2016, and again this year, it remains there.

The site where the skull was discovered is close to the Sable lead and zinc mine, and to where my parents and two brothers first lived when they came to Kabwe, in C Avenue. Though I had heard that in the past the area was fenced off, I discovered when I visited that the place where the remains were found is under groundwater near the old mine. And though I had read there was a commemorative stone at the town’s municipal offices, I could not see one and staff there did not know of it.

Alan McInnes, the mining engineer, had told me the government heritage authorities in Lusaka had been out to inspect the site where the fossils were discovered, planning to erect a monument. There was a big piece of limestone the Sable mine was prepared to donate to mark the place, he said.

Then Burkard and I leave for the airport, which is soon to open a big, impressive new terminal being built by the China Jianxi company. The story is getting lots of coverage in the *Lusaka Times*, with President Lungu making regular announcements about the progress of the project and inviting the media out for walkabouts.

As Kabwe disappears in the distance, my impressions of it jangle around in my mind, past conflicting and merging with the present. The place still holds a fascination for me, central as it was to the whole Northern Rhodesian story, and a microcosm of Africa's experience of colonialism. While rediscovering Kabwe for myself, I had rediscovered Yvonne, and our family, too.

Foremost in my mind, though, is that Kabwe is a forgotten town, a place marooned in the past and with little in the way of a future. On one of our trips, Mumbi told me about his despair; he had to hand over 75 percent of his earnings to his boss, a local businessman who owned the Toyota. He felt trapped in a cycle of poverty, despite having completed tertiary studies, and could not afford the deposit on a car of his own.

His is the old story of inequality, of an elite that heedlessly exploits the vulnerable. When this kind of predatory leadership is entrenched, it takes decades, sometimes centuries to dislodge it. The mine manager I met, British by birth, told me he had "no interest in politics". As a result, he had lived contentedly in Zambia for 30 years.

Having seen, during the past decade in South Africa, the damage done by cronyism, and the powerlessness of the ordinary person to change anything, I am less quick to judge that sort of statement. And I have to be honest with myself. If I was coming to Kabwe now, in 2018, what would I do? Perhaps I too would simply do my work, plant my garden and tend my chickens. In the evenings, I would invite some friends over for a gin and tonic. I have yet to meet Mumbi's wife, Christina, and his daughter, Prudence. I hope I would have a veranda we could have tea on, and from which to enjoy the African sunset. And some flamboyant trees to look at.