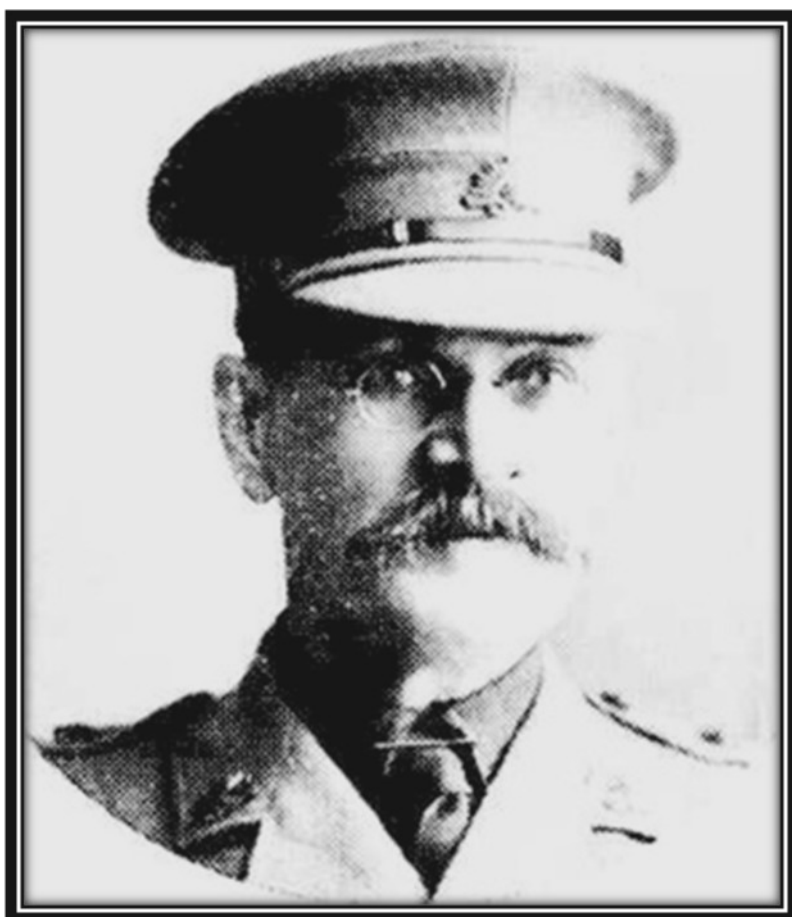


# Stories from the Honour Boards

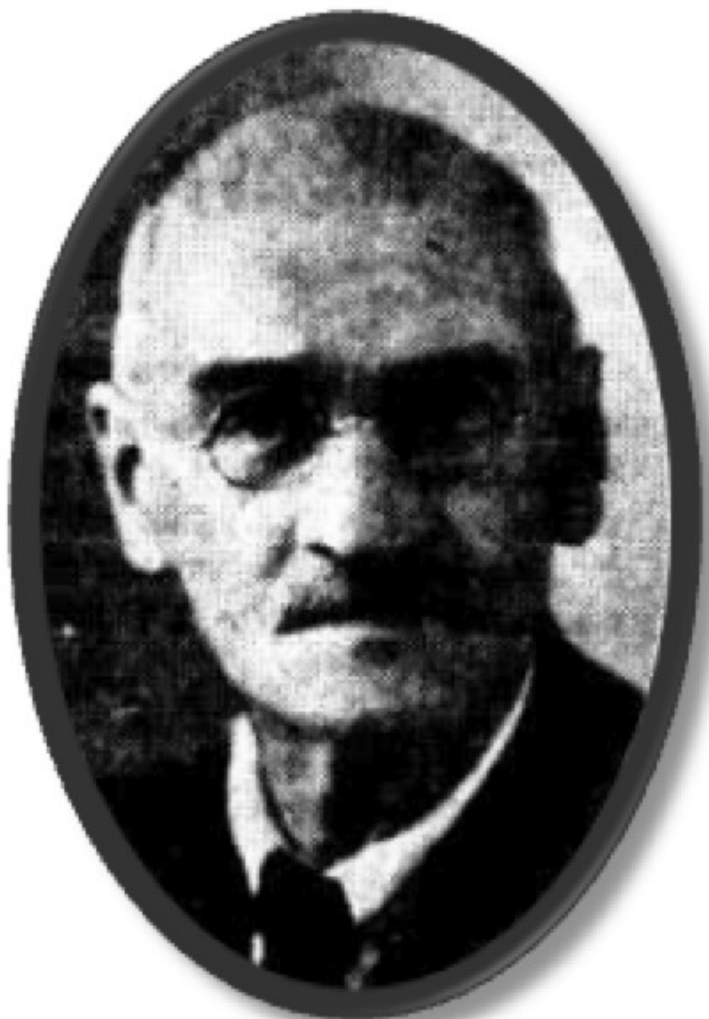
Stories of those who served and are remembered on the Honour Boards in the Merrington Anzac Memorial Peace Chapel at Saint Andrew's Uniting Church

Booklet Number 49

## **ARCHIBALD BIRT BROCKWAY 1862 - 1943**



This booklet remains the property of Saint Andrew's Uniting Church.  
Please see a Guide if you would like a copy.



*Dr Brockway in retirement*



*The Colonial Auxiliary Forces Officer's Decoration (VD).*

*This medal was a long service decoration of the British Empire established in 1899. It was awarded to officers for twenty years of efficient and capable service.*

*Dr Brockway was awarded this medal.*

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Corner Ann and Creek Streets  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
2015

## **Lieutenant Colonel Dr Archibald Birt Brockway VD**

Archibald Birt Brockway was born in Peelson, South Africa on 1 November 1862. He was the son of Thomas Brockway and Hannah (nee Kerry) Brockway. Thomas, his father, was a missionary with the London Missionary Society, a non-denominational society formed in England in 1795 by evangelical Anglicans and Nonconformists, largely Congregationalist in outlook, with missions in the islands of the South Pacific and Africa.

He was educated at the Missionary School, 46 Lee Road, West Keal, Kent, England and the UK Census of 1871 records him as being aged 8 years and living at the school along with 62 other boys. Also attending the school, were Thomas Frederick Mitchell Brockway (6 years) and William George Brockway (9 years), possibly his brothers, though this needs further verification.

In the England Census of 1881, Archibald Birt Brockway, 18 years, is shown as living as a boarder with Mr Henry G Johnston and Mrs Johnston, their family and servants in Tolland, Somerset. His occupation was described as “Tutor - Professor”.

After attending St Thomas’ Hospital<sup>1</sup> in London for his medical training, his degree was conferred in 1887 and he was registered as a Medical Practitioner<sup>2</sup> on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1889 with the qualifications of MRCS Eng. (Member Royal College of Surgeons, 1887) and LRCP (Diploma of Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians, 1889) in London. After practising in South Africa and the West Indies he came to Australia.

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<sup>1</sup> Information on location of medical training and South African & West Indies practice obtained from Q.A.S.A. *Queensland Swimming in the Beginning* – Early Presidents.

<sup>2</sup> Queensland Government Gazette of 5<sup>th</sup> January 1910. List of legally qualified Medical Practitioners registered in the State of Queensland.

In 1889 he married Ellen Maria Dennis at Hackney, London and they travelled to Australia in the same year. He took up a position as a Permanent Staff Doctor at Muttaborra Hospital from November 1889 to December 1890. From 1890 he was a staff doctor at Southport Hospital and had a Medical



*Muttaborra Hospital - Men's Ward and Outpatients*  
(Muttaborra History website)

Practice in Southport, Queensland until accepting a position at the Brisbane Hospital. In January 1894 he was acting medical superintendent of the Brisbane General Hospital but tendered his resignation as Resident Medical Officer (RMO) at the hospital on 17 July 1894 to return to his practice in Southport.

His first daughter, Dorothy Mary “Dodo”<sup>1</sup> was born in Muttaborra on 6 July 1890 and his younger daughter, Amy Jean “Biddy”<sup>2</sup> was born on 17 March 1896 at Southport. In 1899 he was appointed Honorary Medical Officer for outpatients at the Brisbane Hospital (now Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital). His position changed to Senior Honorary Physician to outpatients until 1901 when he was promoted to Acting Honorary Visiting Physician. Dr Espie Dods<sup>3</sup> took over his position as Senior Honorary Physician to out-patients during this time.<sup>4</sup>

His residence in Brisbane was at Thrums 51 Wickham Terrace from 1900 until around 1922 and his elder daughter, Dorothy, had a small indoor gymnasium and swimming pool behind the house where she taught swimming and physical culture.

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<sup>1</sup>. Nicknames for daughters (and wife) from his dedication in his book *The Locust and The Ladybird* (Library of University of California, Los Angeles) confirmed by wedding notice of daughter Amy as “Biddy” 23 October 1920 (*The Brisbane Courier*).

<sup>2</sup>. *Stories from the Honour Boards*, Booklet No 50

<sup>3</sup>. *Stories from the Honour Boards*, Booklet No 7

<sup>4</sup>. *The Telegraph - Report of Committee of Brisbane Hosp.* 3 April 1902

Dr. A. Stott (on).  
 Dr. O. H. Hopkins. Dr. A. B. Brockway. Dr. W. B. Webb. Dr. A. B. Carroon. Mr. D. B. Eden. Dr. B. W. Crooke.



Dr. E. Haschfeld. Hon. Dr. C. F. Marks, M.L.C. Dr. J. Thomson. Hon. Dr. W. F. Taylor, M.L.C. Dr. F. G. Connolly. Dr. E. Sandford-Jackson.  
 HONORARY MEDICAL STAFF, BRISBANE HOSPITAL.

*Brisbane Hospital Honorary Medical Staff. Dr A. B. Brockway - 2nd from left back row.*

Brisbane Courier (Qld. : 1864 - 1933) (about) ◀ Monday 29 March 1915 ▶ ◀ Page

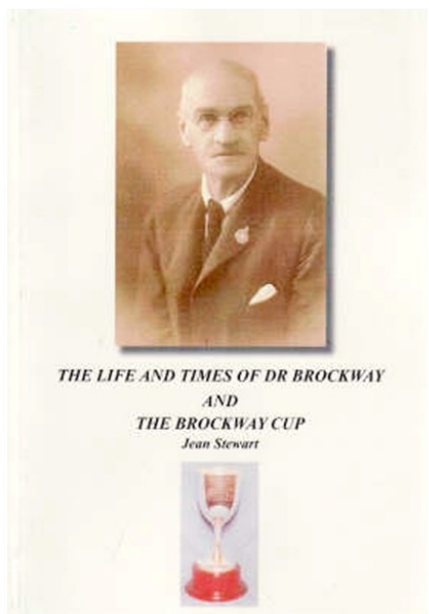
**THRUMS Private Gymnasium.** Miss Brockway will resume physical culture classes on Tuesday, April 20th, for girls, children, and ladies. Mr. A. W. Owens has been engaged for tuition in fencing, also boxing and gymnastics, for men and boys. Tel. 676. pJ

An advertisement for Dorothy Brockway's swimming lessons. The Courier Mail 29 March 1915 - Trove

He enlisted in the Queensland Royal Australian Naval Reserve in 1900 and was found in the UK Navy List, "Colonial Navies" Queensland section as a "Surgeon". He continued this volunteer service and was promoted in 1908 to "Staff Surgeon" in the State Division. He retired with the rank of surgeon-commander and was awarded a VD (Volunteer Officer's Decoration) for his service. (See Page 2)

For the next 14 years until the war broke out, Dr Brockway was actively involved in all amateur sport. He was the first Chairman of the Council for the Queensland Amateur Swimming Association established in 1898 until he retired in 1900.

He was elected President of the Club in 1901 and continued in that role for six years.<sup>1</sup> He was active in promoting the first ladies swimming club (The Brisbane Ladies Swimming Club) in 1903 and later the Queensland Ladies' Amateur Swimming Association. He was much in demand as a referee by swimming clubs and was a referee for the Australasian Swimming Championships when in Brisbane in 1903. He was a strong advocate for the introduction of regular swimming lessons in Queensland schools.



In 1904 he donated the Brockway Cup for the Annual Brockway Swimming Challenge for competition by any recognised girls' secondary school in Queensland. Competitors must be under 18 years of age and the distance was for not more than 200 yards and not less than 100 yards. The first competition in March 1904 was between Girls Grammar and Somerville House Schools.

Such was his involvement, that in 2007 Jean Stewart of Kenmore Queensland published a book entitled *The Life and Times of Dr Brockway and the Brockway Cup*

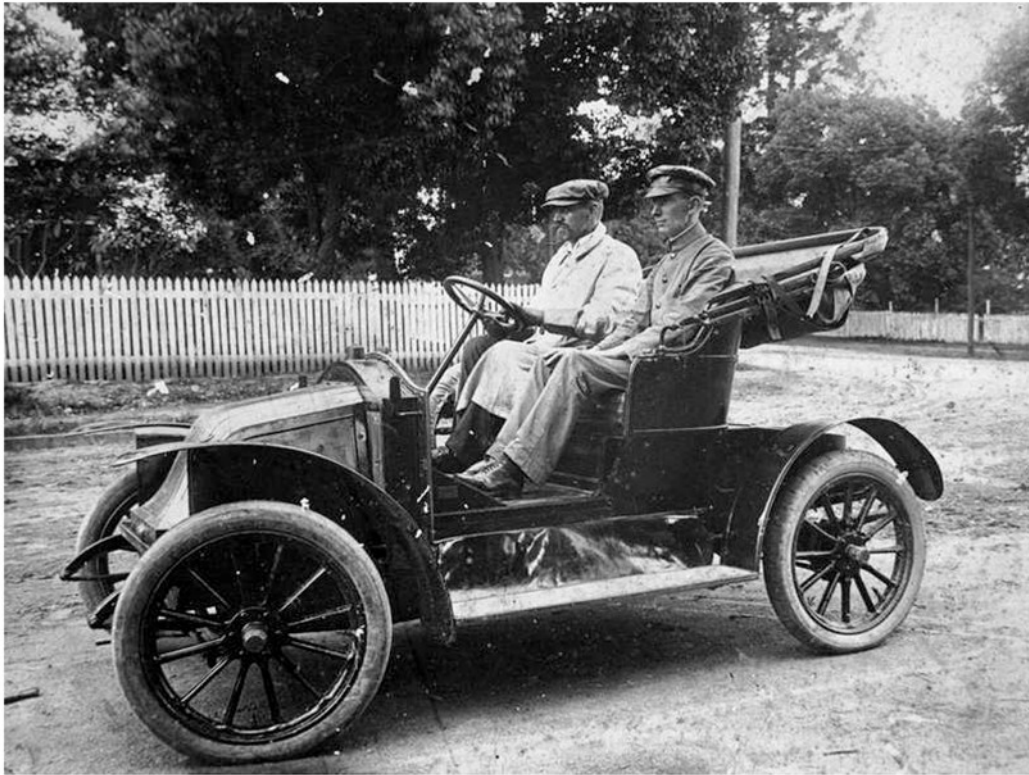
In 1929, Mrs A B Brockway presented the Junior Brockway Cup for girls under 15 years of age. The Brockway Cups are still competed for annually by girls from Queensland secondary schools.

Dr Brockway was Vice-President of the Queensland Rugby Union, the Queensland Amateur Athletic Association and the Kennel Club.

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<sup>1</sup>. From: *Queensland Swimming in the Beginning*- John Oxley Library.





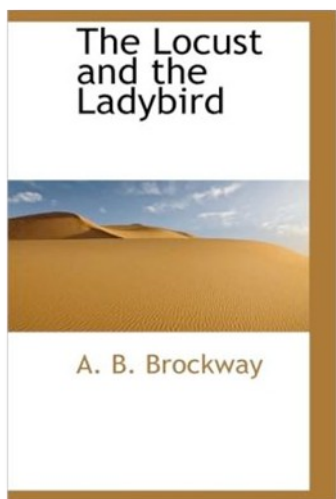
Dr. A. Brockway former Redcliffe doctor. Car definitely a Renault. Roadster body without lights or windscreen, Model AX, produced after 1908.

. His wide interests also involved him with the Trinity College of Music and the Apollo Club. He was a founding member of the Queensland Automobile Club (now RACQ) and was the first honorary secretary for the club. In his medical capacity, Dr Brockway was, for some time, Secretary of the Queensland branch of the British Medical Association, of which he eventually became President.

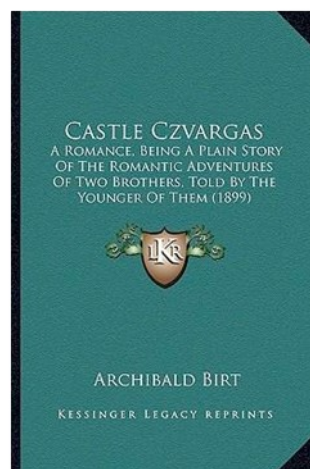
He was a committee member for the Brisbane School of Arts and was the author of two novels, *Castle Czvargas* (1899) and *The Locust and the Ladybird* (1911) and a number of short stories and plays. The novels are still being sold online as antiquarian books or as reprints. He often used the pseudonym “Archibald Birt” in a number of his works. *The Locust and the ladybird – the open road and no speed limit.* is about road travel by car from Tweed Heads to Sydney in the early 1900s.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Full text of the book available on line from Library of University of California, Los Angeles from the Internet Archive - <http://archive.org>



This book is dedicated “To my three girls: Nell, Dodo, Biddy”, the nicknames for his wife Ellen, and two daughters, Dorothy and Amy.



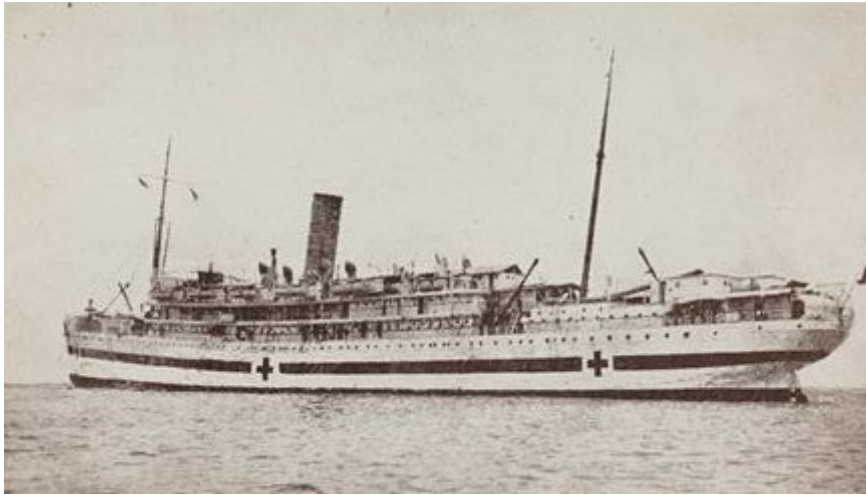
Some of his other work included: *The Tragedy of Kedron Vale* (1930), *Uncle Jacob's Will* (1921), and *The Plaint of a Marechal Niel Rose* (1897).

On 14 June 1915, Dr Brockway applied for a Commission in the AMC, AIF. At the time, he was a volunteer in the RANR (Royal Australian Naval Reserve) as a “Fleet Surgeon”. He was granted the rank of Lieutenant Colonel on 28 June and posted as commanding officer to the No. 2 Hospital Ship, HMAT *Kanowna*. At the age of 52, Dr Brockway left Brisbane for Melbourne and then embarked on the HMAT A68 *Orsova* for the journey to England with his team of doctors, nurses and domestics arriving at the end of August 1915. The Matron in charge of nursing staff was Ethel Strickland; both Dr Brockway and Ethel Strickland completed eight voyages to and from the front until mid-1918.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>. Excerpts from “A ship's life; the KANOWNA Story – SS; HMAR A61; D14; No. 2 Australian Hospital Ship.” From National Archives of Australia, Discovering Anzacs.



While the ship was docked at Garden Island for three weeks, prior to his second voyage, a controversy broke out.



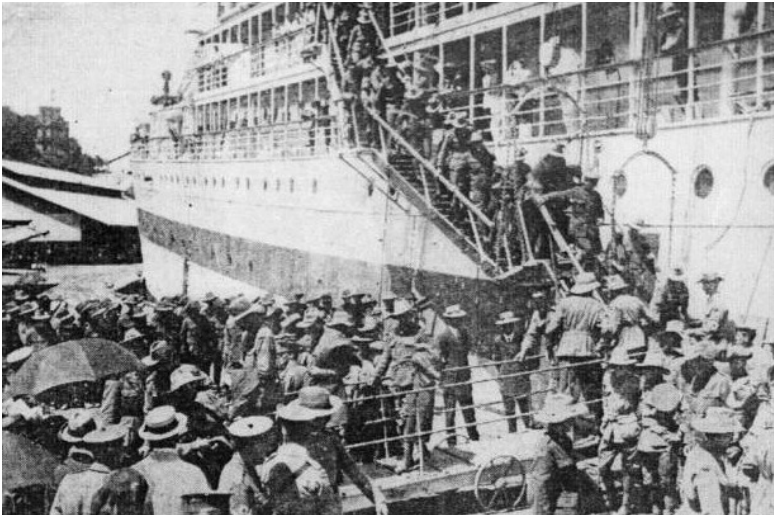
*HM Australian Hospital ship Kanowna.*

Fourteen staff, including Lt Col Brockway's daughter, Amy, had enlisted as "Domestics" and unfortunately were given nurses uniforms and often referred to as "probationary nurses". A misunderstanding with the commander and the ATNA (Australian Trained Nurses Association) ensued. The ATNA argued that there were many trained nurses waiting to fulfil roles in overseas service and that using untrained women was a danger to sick and wounded men.

Regardless of the controversy, Lt Col Brockway and his team, including the 14 female domestic staff, departed from Sydney on 22 December 1915. During the voyage from Australia to Egypt and back again, these women quite capably carried out duties that had little to do with nursing. Although a few did have some nursing training, most had come from previous occupations as "domestics" and their skills were utilised in similar "housework" on board the ship.

Unfortunately, the pressure from the ATNA prevailed, and after disembarkation in Sydney in April 1916, all 14 women were discharged and left there. Many of the troops on this journey were convalescent patients compared to the previous trip and there were no deaths.

Lt Col Archibald Birt Brockway, the medical staff and Matron Strickland highly praised the women who were discharged, to the extent that the matron supplied each with a letter of appreciation for their work. Perhaps Lt Col Brockway could be forgiven for not standing up to the pressure from the ATNA, when it's considered that his daughter was one of those discharged, and he may have faced an accusation of nepotism.



1915. Wounded soldiers leaving the Kanowna

On his 4<sup>th</sup> Voyage on the No 2 Hospital Ship *Kanowna* in 1916, Lt Col Brockway states: *"The trip was as smooth as a river from Southampton to Colombo, but the heat in the Red Sea was unspeakable."*

*The devotion of the nurses under these trying circumstances was wonderful, for the slightest effort was sufficient to make one feel as if one were in a Turkish bath, but the nurses never flinched from duty throughout. They are women to be proud of. Stormy weather was experienced from Colombo to Cocos Islands, but the Kanowna is a fine sea boat, and little discomfort was felt, even among the patients... On the order of the High Commissioner in London a professional musician accompanied us during the voyage, and arranged three concerts each week, either in the wards or on deck. These entertainments were hugely appreciated by all on board, and I might add that the gratitude of us all is due to the stewards, who in every instance materially assisted in the concerts."* ...

After his eighth voyage as commander of the hospital ship, Lt Col Brockway was transferred to the AMC (Australian Medical Corps). His appointment was terminated on 26 June 1918 and he returned to civilian life. He was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

*Dr Brockway was married (for the second time) in St Mark's at Woody Point on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1923. The bride was Mrs Mabel Frances Walker (nee Hannam) of Woody Point. Her son gave her away, and her daughter and the bridegroom's daughter stood by her. Brother medico CF Marks was best man and they spent their honeymoon in Stanthorpe.*<sup>1</sup> Soon after the marriage, Dr Brockway retired from Wickham Terrace to Margate Beach, Redcliffe to live. It appears he once again named his residence Thrums where they entertained numerous people over the years. In 1930 he was still writing and performing plays, one of which was advertised in the Brisbane Courier on 7 May 1930. He was a member of the Brisbane School of Arts for 23 years. Dr Archibald Birt Brockway died 14 October 1943 at Redcliffe aged 80 years. He was listed in the Royal Australian Naval Reserves, Queensland as a Retired Officer with the rank of Surgeon Commander until his death.

<sup>1</sup> From rootsweb.ancestry.com.

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*Lest we forget*