

# Ron Morris

## Anglican priest and educator

Monday April 10 2017

# From Sydney to Papua New Guinea

His life spanned ten decades from the late 1920s to the late 2010s and his career in the Church and education took him from Sydney to Canberra and Papua New Guinea

**A**lfred Ronald Morris Anglican priest and educator, grew up during the depression and the second world war, studied to be a teacher and was ordained into the Anglican Church of Australia. He worked for many years as priest, chaplain and teacher in the Canberra region before travelling to New Guinea to take up a role as teacher. He was appointed headmaster and inspector of schools in New Guinea, before returning to Australia in the 1990s for retirement.

Born in Eastwood NSW in 1928, son of Stanley and Gladys, Ron grew up in and around Sydney. He was the eldest of three having two younger sisters, Barbara born 1932 and Margaret born 1937. His great sense of fun, humour and games emerged at an early age and never left him.

He attended Eastwood Public School, Newtown Intermediate High School and Fort Street Boys in Sydney during the Depression and World War II, after which he took a job at Amalgamated Wireless in 1946. He obtained a Department of Education Scholarship and then went on to Sydney University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1950 before going on to complete a Diploma of Education in 1951. While at University he joined the Student Christian Movement and later the Anglican Church.

After University Ron went on to teach at Gunning Central in 1951 and while there he came under the influence of Bishop Burgmann of Canberra - Goulburn Diocese. He was ordained as a deacon in the diocese of Canberra Goulburn at St Saviour's Cathedral in February 1953 and in December of the same year as priest. He worked at St. John the Bap-



Ron at Eccleston Square Garden while visiting London as part of a longer trip in 2012

tist, Canberra as Assistant Curate in 1953-54 and then joined the staff of Canberra Grammar School as Economics teacher and assistant chaplain in 1954.

From 1954 to 1964 Ron worked at Canberra Grammar School, starting in the Junior School, becoming Master-in-Charge of the Junior School in 1956 and teaching Economics in the Senior School.

He took leave to study at St. Augustine's College, Canterbury (UK) in 1957. During this time he also worked at St. John the Evangelist, East Dulwich on the corner of Goose Green in London, and took advantage of his proximity to Europe to travel to Paris.

In July 1958, Ron returned to Canberra Grammar and took up the position of Chaplain and to teach English, History and Geography. He was also Housemaster, Intermediate

House, from 1955-56 and 1958-1961. During his time as Chaplain of Canberra Grammar School he took up the challenge of funding and building the Chapel of Christ the King which was dedicated in 1965.

Over the Christmas break 1963-64 Ron took a group of students to New Guinea and from then on took a keen interest in missionary work in Papua New Guinea and became a teacher in Martyrs' School in Popondetta, Papua New Guinea in 1965 returning for the dedication of the Chapel at Canberra Grammar in August that year. In 1967 he became the Headmaster of the Martyrs' School and remained in this position until 1977.

He then took up a role as Inspector of Schools in the Papua New Guinea Department of Education starting in Port Moresby from 1977 - 1978 and then in Goroka 1979 to

1983 in the Western Highlands Province. He worked in Rabaul from 1984 to 1987, Manus Island in 1988 then Wewak in 1989-92 before returning to Port Moresby in 1992-93 then retiring to Australia in 1993. During his time in Papua New Guinea he was also assistant priest in the various towns he lived in at the time. In 1993 he was made Canon of the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea and Canon Emeritus from 1994.

On his retirement he moved to Australia's Sunshine Coast living in Maroochydhore and had permission to officiate in the Diocese of Brisbane. He returned to Sydney in 1997 to St John's Retirement Village in Glebe, and was Honorary Assistant Priest at St Luke's Enmore and St. John's Balmain.

He died at St Vincent's Hospital on 2 April 2017.

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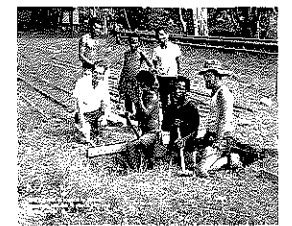
Mr Morris returns from England to start new role

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# Ordination Ceremony At St. Saviour's

Gladys Morris,  
Ron Morris and  
Bishop  
Burgmann

Canberra Times Friday 6 Feb 1953

Bishop Burgmann, of Canberra and Goulburn will preside at a special ordination ceremony in St. Saviour's Cathedral on Sunday, February 15.

Bishop Burgmann will advance the Rev. Colin Sheumack and the Rev. L. C. R. Smith to the priesthood and admit Messrs. S. B. Ford, R. A. Morris, and E. J. Rolfe to the diaconate.

The ordination ceremony will commence at 10 a.m. Headmaster of the Canberra Grammar School, the Rev. Canon D. A. Garnsey, will give a special address at the ceremony.

Rev. Canon Garnsey was formerly attached to the Cathedral staff at Goulburn and was minister in charge of the West Goulburn area before it was established as a separate parish. The service will open with the

singing of the Litany and will then proceed to the ordination proper. It will conclude with the celebration of Holy Communion.

The ceremony will be attended by representatives of the clergy from all parts of the dioceses.

The ordinands will take part in an ordinating retreat at Bishopthorpe before the ceremony. The retreat will commence on Friday 13.

The only Goulburn representative among the ordinands is the Rev. L. C. R. Smith who has been attached to the Cathedral staff for a considerable period.

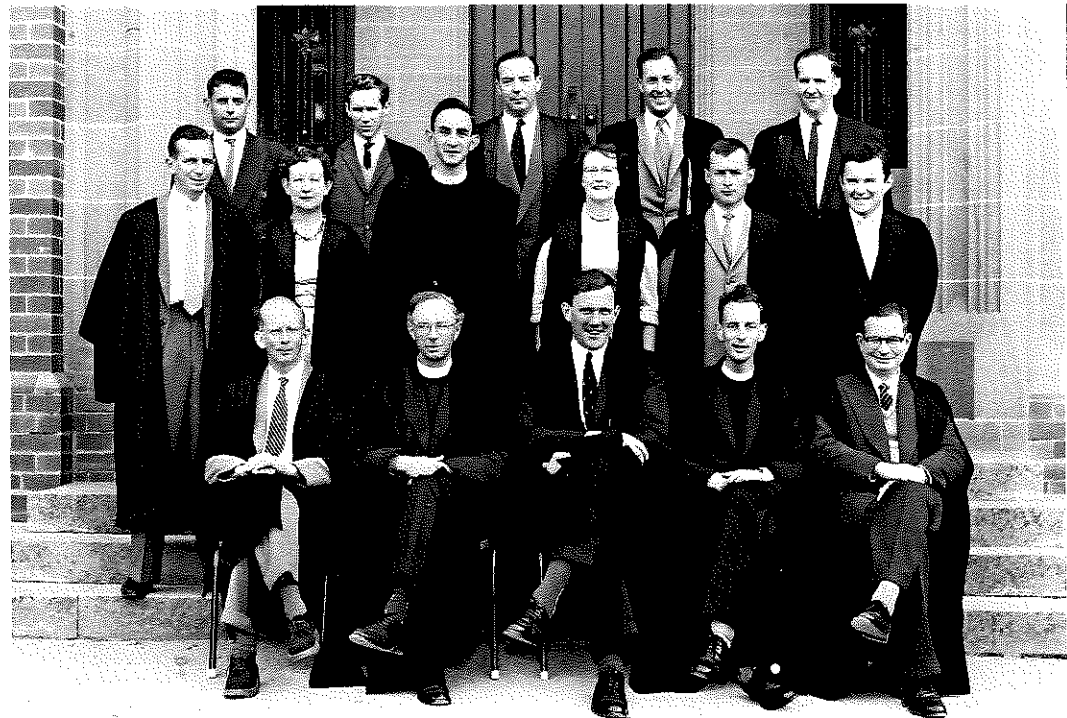
The Rev. Sheumack is serving on the staff of St. John's, Canberra and Mr. Morris is also a Canberra resident. Mr. Rolfe is at present living at Young and Mr. Ford at Hurstville.

The Rev. Sheumack and the Rev. Smith will both continue in their present positions after their ordination. Mr. Morris will be attached to the parish of St. John, the Baptist at Canberra; Mr. Ford will be assistant in the parish of Temora; and Mr. Rolfe in the parish of St. Paul, Canberra.



# School Chaplain makes his mark at CGS

From the *Canberran* 1964  
*The Rev. A. R. Morris*



Mr Morris came to us in 1954 from St. John's Parish. Previous to his ordination he had been a school teacher in N.S.W. and was an experienced teacher. During his time here, he had ample opportunity to display the versatility which is so important to members of the staff in this type of school. At one time he taught in the Junior School, was

seconded at short notice to the Senior School to cope with a sudden crisis in Leaving Economics and eventually settled down to devote most of his time to English and Divinity.

It is in his position of chaplain that he will be best remembered. He viewed the chaplaincy as an essential part of the church Universal and brought to his work a much wider conception than is

often found in church schools. This involved an acute awareness of the needs of the parishes, the missionary field and the welfare of the less fortunate. In the weekly collection and the accompanying information he linked the school with the work of the church overseas and with humanitarian societies closer to hand. In his frequent visits to diocesan parishes, often accompanied by the choir or serv-

Staff of Canberra Grammar School in 1960 - CGS Archive

ers, he made us aware of our part in the parochial pattern. Yet the individual need of boys, staff and domestics was never neglected. He was quick to learn of need and was never sparing of his time in visiting the sick or bringing comfort to the bereaved. His name will for long be remembered with gratitude.

# New headmaster for Papua

*Canberra Times, 21st December 1968*  
 The Rev Ron Morris of the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn will take up an appointment as acting headmaster of the Martyrs' Memorial School in Papua early in the new year.  
 Mr Morris, who was ordained in 1953, served at the Canberra Grammar School from 1953-57 and from 1958-65. During the latter period he was school chaplain. He has been teaching in New Guinea since 1965.

The Martyrs' School, named in honour of missionaries executed by the Japanese during World War II, is the principal Anglican secondary school in the Territory. It has made a significant contribution to educational advancement in the years since the war.



"Have the salt of friendship among yourselves and live in peace with one another" (Mark 9:58)  
 — Australian Board of Missions Calendar 1968. Ron Morris (left), Arthur Shepherd (right)

# Martyrs' Memorial School Headmaster leaves to become Inspector



*From Martyrs' Memorial School Magazine, 1977*

## The Rev. A. R. Morris

Fr. Morris came to M.M.S at the beginning of 1965 after ten years experience at Canberra Grammar School. He became Headmaster of Martyrs' in 1967 in succession to the Ven. B. W. Roberts.

During his time as Headmaster there have been many developments. For instance, at the beginning of Fr. Morris's time, even in Form I students were often as old as 20. They were used to Mission life and to boarding away from home. There was very little contact with Popondetta. Now some of our boys have had little religious training when they come and Popondetta is very accessible perhaps too much so. Buildings were still largely of bush materials. Now the vast majority are permanent. Staff were entirely expatriate. Now well over 50% are indigenous.

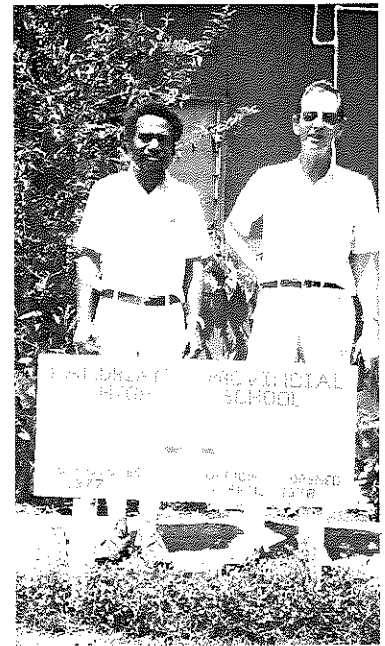
Fr. Morris has been keen to preserve the valuable features of the "Old" Martyrs', especially the self-help system. Without it the original

students would have had neither food nor shelter. But he is and has always been adamant about maintaining high standards of academic knowledge; though not at the expense of eliminating ample opportunities for fostering the traditional cultures, crafts and languages which are the students' heritage.

Those who have worked under him can have no doubt about the drive, enterprise, vision and faith of the Headmaster during the past ten years. A recent example, should one be required, has been the development of the School Plantation at Awala, which has grown from almost nothing in the past twelve months. It was Fr Morris who first discerned the vast potentialities of this acquisition and foresaw the opportunity of providing students with relevant training in a village environment, while still not sacrificing sound scholarship which will be needed by future responsible citizens of a developing country.

At one time it was quite normal for the Headmaster of a Secondary School to remain in office for twenty years or more. But for some time Fr. Morris has felt that a new approach was needed

to the development of Martyrs' - which has clearly reached a new stage in its history. Next year will see its thirtieth birthday. Fr Morris believes that the Christian foundation on which the School was built is still of the utmost importance because it alone enables a boy to develop every aspect of his being. But he himself is moving on to new work - that of Inspecting. His experience should now be available to a wider section of the country's educational workers. We wish him God Speed and good success.



Below and Right - visit to West New Britain (Kandrian) while at Rabaul, 1984





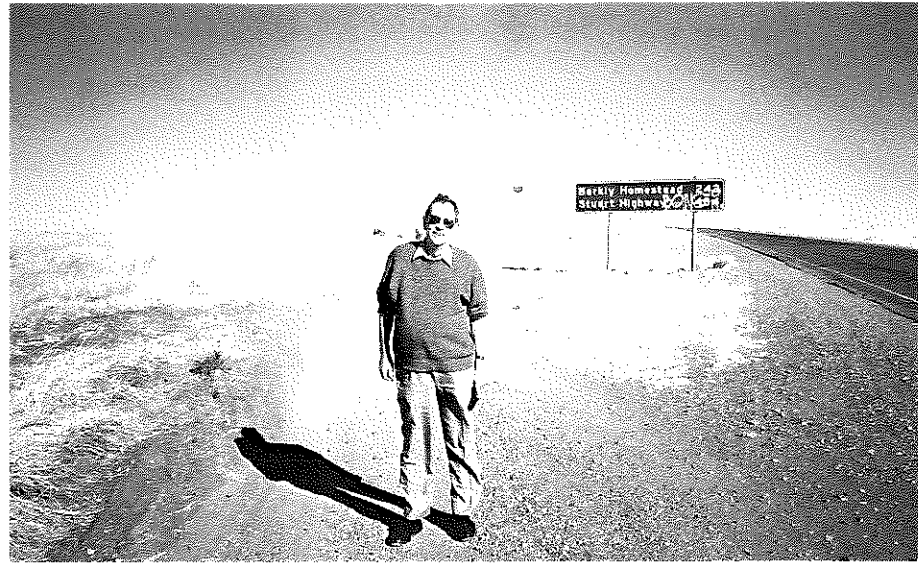
# Returning to Oz... again and again!

Ron retired from his work as Inspector of Schools for the Papua New Guinea Education Department in 1993 and returned to Australia. He lived in Maroochydore, Queensland until 1997 then from 1997 at St John's Anglican Retirement Village.

While he was working Ron travelled as often as he could, to Australia visiting friends and family, around Southern and Eastern Asia and also back to the UK. His passion for travel only increased in retirement.

His trips are too numerous to recount but include the UK, where he had a regular locum at Mitford, in the North East of England, France, Italy, Spain, Holland, Greece, Madeira, Hawaii, Gibraltar, Morocco (where he had a locum in Tangier), South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana, Namibia, Egypt, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Philippines, Singapore, India (Delhi), China (Beijing), Taiwan, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and even some in Australia!

Ron often visited his family and spent a lot of time with friends. His gift for telling a joke or a story with perfect timing will not be forgotten, nor his love of backgammon, scrab-



Left: Back in Australia going to the Northern Territory

ble, crosswords (particularly cryptic), card games of various types, and even golf! He had a home in Australia at Lemon Tree Passage on Port Stephens on the NSW north coast in the 1970s and 1980s, then at Tuross Head on the south coast in the 1980s and 1990s and would visit when time permitted.

He attended St Luke's in Enmore and was honorary assistant priest there and at Balmain. He was the president of the computer society at St John's Village.

In 2000 he received a Recognition Award from the Governor General of Papua New Guinea for his contribution to services in development of Papua New Guinea.



Below: at the Temple of Hatshepsut in the Valley of the Kings near Luxor, Egypt



## Recognition Award

commemorating 25 years of Independence  
Papua New Guinea

awarded to:

*Mr A R Morris*

For contribution in services to the development  
of Papua New Guinea

*16<sup>th</sup> September, 2000.*

Date

Sir Silas Atopare GCMG KStJ  
Governor-General