



Papua New Guinea Church Partnership Easter 2017 Newsletter

PNGCP is the UK-based mission agency dedicated to raising awareness and support for the Anglican Church in PNG

BUSY DIOCESAN SECRETARY!

In 2016, the PNGCP Committee agreed to provide travel funding, hospitality and spending money for an occasional UK-based study-trip or developmental opportunity for key ACPNG personnel, where there was a clearly defined purpose or benefit to their present role or future career. In agreement with his Archbishop and Bishop, Simon Kamong from NGI Diocese, ACPNG's longest-serving Diocesan Secretary, was the first beneficiary and spent the month of February 2017 with us.

Simon is from the Solong clan on the West New Britain island of Kumbun (pop. c. 500). On leaving school, his father (Kumbun's first centenarian, now 102) stopped him taking up government training to be a Business Development Officer, so he worked in the family trade-store and studied for a Business Studies qualification by distance-learning. On graduation, he formed a small construction company specifically to look after Anglican Health Service properties. He was appointed Diocesan Secretary in 2000.

PNGCP Committee members, Janet Wells and Martin Gardham, put together a packed programme based around Simon's requested priorities. As the following synopsis shows, visits to Southern England and South-East Scotland provided a rich mix of developmental opportunities; meetings with past ACPNG mission volunteers; sightseeing and UK cultural exposure.

As a gentle introduction after 36-hours of flights in Simon's first trip outside PNG, Janet and he spent three days enjoying simple community living at Hillfield, SSF's house near Dorchester. There, he met PNGCP supporters living in the region and, through time with Br Giles and Br Hugh, gained insight into the community and estate,



Simon at Anglican Communion Office for gender equality discussion

including the Society's Sustainable Living Project awarded a Gold Medal from Eco Church. Between there and London, Simon met PNGCP supporters in a number of rural settings providing glimpses of villages, farming and countryside far different to his own.

The London programme provided a number of valuable meetings, including three experts with NGI field experience at Kew, to discuss; oil-palm cultivation; New Guinea palms; and the medicinal properties of local plants, especially in the treatment of tropical ulcers. They were enthusiastic about Simon's idea of creating a 'conservation park' on the block of land adjacent to his diocese's income-generating oil-palm plantation, suggesting on-going contact to develop this and other ideas. In Kennington, Simon appreciated a visit to 'Roots and Shoots', a local horticultural project providing training for young people with special needs. Other visits



Simon with some of PNGCP Committee members



Simon and Janet with Lucien Tapiedi's prayer-book at Westminster Abbey library

provided insights into youth club management; charity work with refugees and asylum seekers; and how Water Aid projects were chosen, supported and monitored. In an Anglican Communion Office day, Simon had a computer session with PNGCP Committee member, David Robin, and an afternoon talking about Gender Equality with Rev Terrie Robinson, before supper in a local pub.

Janet ensured Simon was also treated to a feast of capital 'culture' including: ENO's production of 'Rigoletto'; a Royal Festival Hall concert; steel-drums in a local primary school; the British- and Science Museums; National Gallery; boat-trip on the Thames; and visits to St Paul's and Southwark Cathedrals. An ecumenical Westminster day included the Abbey (seeing Lucien Tapiedi's prayer book in the library); RC Cathedral and Methodist Central Hall, together with visits to the Houses of Parliament and MU HQ, Mary Sumner House.

In Canterbury, Simon stayed with Martin and Aileen Gardham, enjoying a similarly packed and mixed programme. Their local church, St Stephen's, provided informative meetings with the priest-in-charge and parish treasurer, involvement with a Cursillo group and a MU branch meeting. Another day, Simon shared communion with the SSF brothers at Greyfriars chapel and was excited when, after an evening talk by the PNGCP President, Dr Rowan Williams, the two met and talked together. A fruitful visit to the Diocesan House included time with the Diocesan Secretary, senior finance and accounting staff, with Simon particularly interested to sit in on a meeting for new diocesan clergy regarding Authorised Lay Ministries, organised by the Diocesan Local Ministries and Growth Adviser.

Such work apart, there was also time for relaxation, shopping, sightseeing and time with local folk with PNG connections. The programme included a tour round a number of East Kent villages; Whitstable, with the local fishing industry of obvious interest; a Roman museum and dig; an organ concert, and Evensong in Canterbury Cathedral.



With curly-coated pigs – an income-generation winner for the PNG Highlands?

En route to Scotland to stay with John and Della Rea, Simon attended the quarterly PNGCP Committee meeting in London, providing enthusiastic feedback about his visit and information about ACPNG and life in NGI diocese. The Scottish episode was meant to provide a period of relaxation and reflection for Simon at the end of a full programme. Nevertheless, his interest in the development and growth of St Anne's, Dunbar led to exploration of fundraising ideas; the diverse roles of the laity; and community use of the church. He contributed to a Vestry meeting where members were visibly humbled by the challenges being faced in Simon's diocese and the concept of Small Faith Communities. He also met the Edinburgh Diocesan Secretary.

Local sightseeing took in the coastal scenery, harbours, castles and farmland between Berwick and Dunbar, with close encounters with curly-coated pigs, sheep and lambs, Highland cattle, lobster fishing, surfers, wind-turbines and freshly-fallen snow! During a whistle-stop tour of Edinburgh, including family shopping, Simon was visibly delighted with two experiences in the Royal Scottish Museum mirroring the 'Stone Age to Space Age' span oft attributed to his generation's experience of change in PNG. The first was the discovery of a fighting-shield from Simon's own Arowe tribe prominently displayed in the museum's Pacific collection; the second, the opportunity to wear a real space-suit.

Simon was a delightful guest, determined to make the most of his UK visit, to see and understand as much as possible and to record all his experiences soon after they happened – even if that meant not going to bed until 2 am! His interest, energy and enthusiasm were unflagging throughout. Those who met him will not forget Simon's smile, practical interest and the grace and thoughtfulness of this charming ambassador for his country, Church and tribe.



Discovery of Arowe shield in Royal Scottish Museum

FRONTLINE FRANCISCAN MINISTRY IN KOKI

Here, Margaret Poynton, a CMS (New Zealand) mission volunteer working as Archbishop Clyde's Executive Assistant and herself a member of St Francis, Koki, interviews her Franciscan parish priest, Fr Oswald Dumbari. Originally from Katuna, Northern Province, Br Oswald joined the Franciscans in Popondetta in 1989. After graduating from Newton Theological College, he was ordained to the priesthood in 2010. He subsequently completed his ADipTheol and was inducted into Koki Parish to support Brothers Lawrence, Lester, Samuel and Rhoy living in the Mission House.

How did the Franciscans come to PNG? The Franciscan Brothers were first invited to PNG by Bishop Philip Strong, when he was seeking help to build up the Diocese of New Guinea after the ravages of WWII. St Francis was established as an outstation of Port Moresby's St John's Cathedral, to reach the increasing number of mostly single men from the Northern and Milne Bay Provinces, living in the Koki-Badilli area. The first Franciscan Mission House opened in 1953. Br Geoffrey from England arrived in 1959 to set up a house and community of five at Koki. From here the brothers set about fulfilling the Bishop's invitation for the SSF to establish their life and work throughout PNG.

In 1976, the Franciscan household at Koki was closed and the Brothers moved to Popondetta where their headquarters remains today. In 1996, Brothers Clifton Henry, Gilson Kiria and Peter Kevin were invited to return to Koki to resume the work of assisting those coming to Port Moresby in search of education and employment.

So, if the beginning of the PNG Franciscans was here in Koki, how did it start? When St Francis church was built, the need for children's education was seen and a school was started under the Mission House. As the years went by, the brothers built more classrooms. It was not only education the brothers provided, but also help finding work and writing applications for local people seeking employment. The brothers' ministry was also pastoral, with Br Andrew (PNG's first psychiatric doctor) looking after the mental hospital at Laloki and visiting and praying with the sick at the General Hospital. I became part of this ministry history when I came to Koki as parish priest in 2010.

Koki isn't exactly the safest place in Port Moresby... It was unsafe at first. There were five other brothers and



Koko parish-priest, Fr Oswald Dumbari SSF

three boys living with us. Over the years, a lot of boys have come to the brothers for

assistance in moving from the village to the city. Adjusting to an entirely new life in the city can be difficult. We provide them with spiritual and practical guidance and give them shelter so that they will find their way. So, our ministry continues, helping with education, employment and learning life-skills.

What are some of the most exciting things that have happened in the last six years?

- Seeing the old, rundown, unsanitary classrooms come down, along with the Mission House, to make way for 12 new classrooms for 700 students, grades three to eight.
- Watching the buildings going up and being completed and the children using them.
- Knowing that a new ablution block, two more double classrooms and accommodation for the teachers - no excuses for them being late then! - and the priest will be built
- Being filled with joy to see this ministry of educating the future leaders of PNG continue.
- The Friday Chapel Service.
- I'm proud that the parish looks different.

What happened to the community that lived in the Mission House 4 years ago? Well, the building was demolished but the heart and mind of our small group certainly wasn't. We are all living together under the church in an old classroom but we are still very much a community. You might think that in Port Moresby we would have all the conveniences of the western world, but not here. I have a mattress in the vestry but when I have a guest I sleep in the Church. We cook over the fire outside, just as our parents and grandparents did. Most of the boys say cooking meals this way is faster and tastes better.

Hospitality is very important in our culture. We see people just popping up when the bell is rung for dinner. Whether we like it or not, they are always welcome to share what we have. Jesus spent time eating with people, people who were outcasts, prostitutes, those who were not Jews – Jesus did that. So, I have boys who are here, most are unemployed, some are schooling. You see those big boys who are turning up for meals when



St Francis School with former Friary on right

they don't work or even contribute, but they are welcomed. Everyone takes turns to wash from the drum of water behind the Church. That's what we do.

Music is one of the ministries that bring the young people together. They are all talented. Sometimes they just play for enjoyment. Many play guitar or keyboard as their own private devotion. They are always around, whether it's helping with school, Chapel Services, Mothers Union events or funerals. On Sundays, the young people provide the music, share in the readings and serve at the altar.

Some of the young people seem to consider this as their home... Well, that's what they think and feel, but I discourage that idea because they have their home, their family and a place to live. While staying with me, I have to help them to see the reality of the city life and their life as a person. I try to help them so that they will grow into mature adults.

It's a bit like being a parent then? Yes, many of them have never said their prayers, never been to the church. They don't know how to cook, do laundry and wash the dishes. When they come here, I tell them, "Do this. Do



Sunday service at St Francis church

that" Most of them respond positively saying: "We haven't done this before"; "We used to rely on our mothers and our sisters"; "Now we are doing things ourselves, we are cooking, doing laundry and looking after ourselves". It is good when they develop new skills and mature. Young people have their own weaknesses, peer groups and influences which make it difficult. I try to do my part to help them understand, do the right thing and make good decisions for their lives.

PNG, ACPNG & PNGCP NEWS:

- Martin Gardham has resigned after more than a decade of service on the PNGCP Committee, as Aileen and he make final preparations to emigrate to Australia
- Dennis Kabekabe, previously Anglican Education Secretary, returned in January from living and working in the Solomon Islands to serve as General Secretary working in the Anglican National Office. James Raurela has joined him as Finance Director, after sterling work over the past two years bringing many of the ACPNG accounts up to date
- Port Moresby Bishop Denny Guka was unable to attend the February 2017 training event for new bishops at Canterbury because the PNG machine printing new passports broke down



Martin and Aileen with Simon in their Canterbury garden

With sadness, we record the passing of a number of ACPNG's past mission volunteers...

- Jean Rookes – who, as part of a 25-year professional partnership at home and abroad with husband, Peter, spent eight years as Joint Anglican Health Secretary in PNG. At her wish, funeral donations went to support ACPNG's health services
- Dr Pene Kay – worked in health for 10 years at Erero, Movi, Dogura and Mt Hagen, before moving on to Cambodia and, later, championing malaria eradication and advising the British government on its overseas aid programme. Her book, 'Pushing the Boundaries' is a record of her life in God's service

...and in Australia

- Canon Lyall Turley – previously Rector of Lae and Rabaul
- Canon Ron Morris – an outstanding Head of Martyrs School who subsequently worked as a PNG government Education Department Inspector

With grateful thanks to the following for their contributions and help in compiling this Newsletter: Margaret Poynton; Fr Oswald Dumbari; Rev Terrie Robinson; Simon Kamong; Martin & Aileen Gardham; Janet Wells; Peter Milburn; Jasper Rea. Any comments, queries or ideas to the Editor, John Rea johndellarea@yahoo.co.uk



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