

# Memories of Ian Morgan

(Nyasaland Police 1953 - 1963)

By Ron Morgan

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My brother Ian was born on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 1928, and was therefore four years older than me. Ian was born in Blantyre Hospital, Southern Province, Nyasaland Protectorate. I do not know where Ian did his early schooling, but I believe our mother taught him, and he would probably have gone to Mrs Dally's house near the golf course in Zomba, prior to our going to Scotland on leave in 1937.

At the end of their leave, Wesley and Alice Morgan returned to Nyasaland, leaving Ian in Scotland to attend school at 'George Watson's School' in Edinburgh. Ian boarded with a family in Morningside, Edinburgh. He spent his holidays with Nancy Bowman [later Wood] and her parents Ernest and Jesse Bowman in Aberdeen, Scotland. Nancy was the only daughter of Ernest and Jesse Bowman, Jesse was our mother's first cousin.

Ian came back to Nyasaland in 1940, escorted by Harry Ness' sister, Miss Vivian, who also had under her control her nephew and niece Holford and Willa Ness, Harry's children. Holford Ness, Peter Morgan's Godfather, now a widower, lives in the Blue Mountains, in NSW. Harry Ness was a close family friend, he had a tobacco estate on the Zomba plain



towards Palombe, about four miles from the Zomba aerodrome. Harry's estate was named Likangala, having taken the name from the small river which ran through the estate. The same river ran past the Prison and African Hospital on the outskirts of Zomba on the road to Limbe and Blantyre. Ian and I visited Likangala on a couple of occasions during school holidays, experiencing the thrill of driving around on

Holford's 'trojan' car which had a chain drive which used to come off the sprockets every now and again, so we would run out of power and have to fit the chain again - the car had one forward gear and reverse.

After returning from Scotland, Ian went to St George's College, Salisbury, S. Rhodesia, run by Jesuits in 1941. Sports wise, Ian was a good rugby player [wing] representing St. George's 1st XV; he was also a good tennis player. He later played rugby for Cholo in Nyasaland, when working in that area, on the Tea Plantations.

The school train used to leave Limbe station with about 250 kids en route to Beira in Portuguese East Africa [PEA], where everyone changed to the Rhodesian Railways, and then went on to Salisbury, S. Rhodesia. To control fraternising, the boys were separated from the girls by two dining cars during the hours of darkness.

Ian was also an excellent musician, and when handed as instrument he didn't normally play, he could get a tune out of it very quickly. The instruments he played regularly were the piano accordion, trumpet and mouth organ, but at school he also passed exams for the piano and violin.

When travelling on the school train, Ian was in great demand to play the accordion, and when the train stopped at Inhaminga in PEA he would play for those who wanted to dance on the platform. Ian's musical gift was appreciated by many over the years. In 1948 when he took a holiday to Cape Town he went to a dance, and somehow got involved with the band and was offered a job on the spot by this professional band. However, he decided not to take up the offer, and returned to Nyasaland.

After leaving school, Ian worked for the 'Gotha Tea Estates', he was in charge of the 'Kasembereka Estate' for a couple of years. Gotha had a very large tea factory. He then worked for the Westrops, and next he went to 'Kilbirnie Tea Estates', where he commenced the tea venture for John Crozier in the Cholo district. Ian's last job in the tea industry was for Daisy Woodward, in Mlange. The tea industry was going through a shake up and did not look very viable for a while, so Ian joined the Nyasaland Police Force, with a British Overseas Civil Service. This was about 1953, and at a time when Nyasaland was experiencing political problems with the 'locals' pushing for Independence.



Being a musician, Ian found it very easy to learn Chinyanja and other dialects, which was one of the reasons the 'new age politicians' did not want him in the Police Force. So, whilst on leave in UK, Ian virtually camped on the Colonial Office steps in London and demanded a transfer, and was subsequently sent to the British Solomon Islands without returning to Nyasaland.

In 1963, Ian and his wife and three children, Barry, Shelagh and Peter, moved firstly to Auki, Malaita until 1968, and then after leave in England, he returned to Honiara, on Guadalcanal, British Solomon Islands. Ian retired in 1975, and moved to Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, with his wife, Jackie and youngest son, Peter. Barry and Shelagh were already living in Brisbane.