

\*\*\*\*\* GHANA SCHOOL AID NEWSLETTER \*\*\*\*\*

October 1997

Dear Friend / Supporter,

As you will have noticed, these newsletters appear at irregular intervals: two last year in January and November. However the gap of nearly a year does not indicate inactivity on our part; some of you will recall an enjoyable reunion week-end in April, the Committee has met regularly and we are pursuing a number of new projects (details below).

As most of you will know, our senior Patron, Lord Listowel, died last March. He had been very supportive from the start of the Trust over 10 years ago and regularly attended the annual reunions. As the obituaries showed, he had a long and distinguished career, not the least important episode being his Governor-Generalship of Ghana after Independence. He will be greatly missed. I am very glad to report that Lady Chalker, the distinguished Minister for Overseas Development in the last government, has accepted our invitation to become a Patron; it will be a great asset to have the support of someone of her distinction and wide experience. I wrote to congratulate Paul Boateng on his being appointed a Minister in the new Government in May and I hope he may be able to come to our next lunch. We shall also look forward to welcoming the new High Commissioner, Mr. James Aggrey-Orleans, who is of course a Patron ex officio, though he may not know it yet as he has only just arrived !

I regret to have to report another sad event, the death last May of our dear friend Robert Asiedu. He had been seriously ill for some time but his death was a great shock; certainly none of us who saw him during the Ghana visit in 1995 could have had any idea that we should lose him so soon. He did a tremendous lot for us, not only in all the local arrangements for the two visits in 1990 and 1995, but in handling the funds for various projects and following them through with his customary quiet efficiency. All his old education officer friends in particular mourn him. Through the good offices of Ted Mayne, we were able to send a wreath for the funeral and I have had a letter of thanks from Evelyn (who supported Robert in his GSA work and handled it when he was ill). I am glad to report that Michael Asiedu, another old education officer friend known to many of us (including Brice Bending, and Madge Claxton from her British Council days in Accra) has agreed to take over the role of local liaison.

Following her splendid work for us in Ghana last year, we invited Helen Dodoo to join the Committee. As well as bringing down our average age (!) she has already made a valuable contribution based on her recent experience in Ghana. She has suggested as a project the production of a booklet about one of our schools which could be used for fund-raising and/or form the basis for a school link. If anyone would like to help with this please let me know.

RECENT AID PROJECTS include : 1. Providing photo-copiers for the schools at Abokobi and Asokere. On a visit to Accra in January, Ted Mayne was able to arrange the local purchase of these machines and, accompanied by Evelyn Asiedu, delivered the one to Abokobi where it was formally presented. A photo of the one at Asokere has been received by Kofi Ohene and we shall show it at the next lunch. 2. The allocation of £2250 to Adisadel towards the cost of a new electric kiln to get the school ceramic workshop going

again; this was at the request of Adisadel, in place of the computer previously proposed. A plaque will be fixed to the kiln in memory of Peter Thomson from whose bequest this grant was made. 3. The Morel Trust gave us a grant of £2000 towards a project discussed with James Gibbs, their Chairman, to purchase childrens books from Ghanaian publishers and distribute them to schools. We allocated £1000 to the project to total £3000 and I have consulted the Africa Book Centre Oxford about book selection; I have also talked to Richard Crabbe, the Chairman of the Ghanaian Publishers association about the preparation of lists of books for primary, JSS and senior secondary schools. A nice touch is that it may be possible, through a family connection, to arrange distribution to the schools by Kumasi Brewery lorries on their rounds ! I hope that this project will develop in coming months and will report in more detail next year. 4. We have continued to support Child-to-Child projects in a number of primary schools. These health education projects are very practical, well planned and carefully supervised which means that our limited funds are used to maximum effect. On his recent Accra visit, Ted Mayne conveyed a further grant of £600 for the Winneba project ("starter-kits" for another 3 schools) and we have allocated £1200 for books for schools in Nima and the Afram plains.

**FUNDS** Accounts for the year to 31 March 1997, as submitted to the Charity Commission, are enclosed. As you see, we allocated approx £12500 for equipment (computers, photocopiers, kiln), books and in small grants during the year. Our overall income to date has now risen to over £38000; apart from the grants from Morel Trust & Reuter Foundation and the Thomson bequest, this is made up from your donations and covenants for which we are most grateful. Recently, I wrote to a number of people on the address list who seemed to have overlooked the "contribution" aspect and have been pleased by the very positive response. If any of you in this situation have not yet taken action, all contributions will be gratefully received by the Treasurer ! If any of you have suggestions about particular schools or projects which might be helped, please come forward with them.

**WARREN SHAW MEMORIAL** The British Council put on a very interesting exhibition in April: "Rising Black Star" - Ghana and Britain, 40 years of Independence. At the opening, I met Colin Stevenson, the Director in Accra, and was able to discuss the form of the memorial about which we had corresponded. It has now been agreed to provide a wooden seat (to be made locally) in the Council garden, with a plaque commemorating Warren; together with a complete set of the works of George Bernard Shaw (a cousin!) for the Council library. The plan is to present this gift during the proposed visit next year.

**REUNIONS** Just under 60 attended the week-end reunion in April, the majority for the day only on Saturday, but we felt that the small residential element, as well as being good fun for those chatting late into the evenings, provided a framework for an extended day. There was a large audience after lunch for the talks by Helen Dodoo, Lynne Symonds and Dawn Hillier about their recent activities in Ghana, all of them most interesting and worth hearing, giving us a picture of present conditions. Kofi Ohene had borrowed some interesting videos from the High Commission so all in all there was plenty of entertainment (one of our number commented "The best reunion yet" - so, come next year!). Next year: the date for the lunch is Thursday 21 May at John Adams Hall. We hope that all three of our Patrons will be able to attend. Please note date in your 1998 diaries; details and booking form will be circulated early(ish) in the new year.

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FAIR Friday 12 to Sunday 14 December. The Fair is being held this year at OLYMPIA instead of the Barbican. When booking was opened in January there were no small agency stands available, so we are sharing Stand 123 with another Ghana charity, AFICIA. For a fee of £25 the selling of goods is permitted. The committee wondered if members had any Ghanaian items which they no longer wanted, such as NT smocks, leather goods or carvings in a saleable condition, which could be sold on the stall to raise money. Please ring Pamela Lewis on 0181 693 1803. Even if we make no money, our presence at Global Partnership results in many useful and interesting contacts (that was how we first met Helen Dodoo, 2 years ago!). Also, the market stalls are a very good source of Christmas presents and cards. COME AND VISIT US !

VISIT TO GHANA 1998: Those who attended the April reunion will recall that details were provided by Africa Travel Centre of possible itineraries for a visit next year and a number of people had written or signed up to say they were interested. This seemed to provide a basis for continued planning and firm plans have now been drawn up for a visit in June, as shown in the enclosed details. If you are seriously interested, please return the form to Pamela Lewis a.s.a.p. - PLEASE NOTE the date, 8 November (and please look carefully at the options).

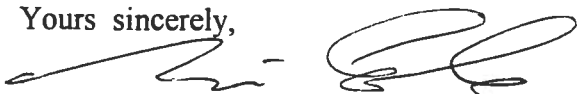
JUBILEE 2000 Many of you will have heard of this campaign, in which Bill Peters is heavily involved. Its basic purpose is to celebrate the new millenium by cancelling the unpayable debts of the poorest countries in the world. This must obviously be of great interest to us in Ghana School Aid. If you would like to support this cause, details can be obtained from Jubilee 2000, P.O.Box 100, London SE1 7RT (if you would like to contact Bill Peters about this and have not got his address, let me know).

A final comment : as Daily Telegraph readers will have seen, Ghana now has another English traditional chief to add to James Moxon and Lynne Symonds. Professor John Knapton of Newcastle University has recently been enstooled as a chief in Ekumfi-Atakwa, in appreciation of his help to the village in providing some of the new clockwork radios, and providing an extension for the school building. I hope to make contact with him soon.

We shall hope to see some of you at the Global Partnership stand in December - tell your friends ! All offers of help will be gratefully received. And, next year, hope to see you at the Lunch in May, and maybe on the Visit in June?

Meanwhile, very best wishes well in advance, for Christmas 1997 and the New Year 1998.

Yours sincerely,



Eric Earle, on behalf of the Committee

1 Western Down, Guildown Road, Guildford, GU2 5EW. Tel/Fax 01483 562690