

Ghana School Aid

November 1999

Dear Friends,

I'm sorry that we have only managed one newsletter this year; only just getting in now before the end of the millennium! However as you will see your Committee have not been idle over the past year and there is much to report. But before turning to these matters, there is sad news, which some of you already know: Brice Bending, our first Chairman, friend and colleague for nearly 50 years, died on 23 October after a long illness. Eric Cunningham, Tom Southern with his daughter Karen, Dennis and Elsie Trussler, Auriol and I attended his funeral at Ottery St.Mary on 4 November. We arranged an orange and yellow floral wreath with the following message:

"Brice - remembered with much affection by all his friends associated with Ghana School Aid".

Some friends at the funeral made donations in Brice's memory and with Gertrud's agreement, these will be donated to the Schools On The Line fund. Further contributions can be sent to me or to John Whittingham.

As some of you know, another old friend has died recently: Jimmy Moxon, in Accra on 24 August. Michael Asiedu sent details from the Daily Graphic of the Lying in State of Nana Kofi Obonyaa, Ankceba of Aburi on 15 October and the Funeral service on 16th, with a long list of Chief Mourners.

The death has also occurred on 1 November of C.T.Eddy at the age of 93. E.D Roberts (Robbie) attended the thanksgiving service in the Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford - the last such occasion, he recalls, being a similar service for K.A.Busia. Chris was a notable educator in Ghana, first with the Methodist Church where he rose to be General Manager of Schools; he then joined the Education Department as Assistant Director for Teacher Training, where he was responsible for the huge expansion in teacher training colleges. His final few years in Ghana were spent as Principal of Winneba College and on return to England he was for a time Vice-Principal of Westminster College.

Sadly, we also have to report the deaths of two other friends: Allen Howe and Kit Peters. We extend our sympathy to Katherine, Eryl and Elizabeth; and to Bill. A personal reminiscence: Allen and Katherine Howe, then newly-wed, were our first dinner guests in the Wesley Girls High School bungalow which Robbie had borrowed for us from Miss Compton; Allen was Government Agent Cape Coast and Katherine (the first woman education not required to resign on marriage) was deputed by Henry Essilfie, the District Education Officer, to instruct me in school inspecting. I recall Bill Peters as an active Hon.Sec. of the "civil slaves", campaigning for "lumpers" - a bit alarming for newly appointed officers!

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Visits to Ghana

As I compose this newsletter, pictures of the Queen's visit to Ghana have been on TV News. There are those, Wilfrid Court among them, who will remember the Queen's last visit in 1961! We had been hoping to arrange another group visit this year to follow those in 1990 and 1995 but there were not enough participants to form a viable group. However, a number of individual trips have been made, by Robert Mares and his daughter, Wilfrid Court, Judith and Jonathan Longhurst, David Aldridge, Helen Doodoo and her family. Some reports on these are given below, as well as reports on visits made by groups of Guides and Scouts. If any of you would like to take part in a group visit please contact Pam Lewis or me; and I'm sure any of this year's visitors would be happy to provide advice to others who may think of making individual visits, which are clearly quite possible. (A quote from a recent "Rough News": "Ada really is a worthy place to spend a night or two. Take a boat from near the Paradise Hotel down the lagoon to the "tourist zone" beach camp ... on the isolated tip where the Volta runs into the sea". Is this the same Ada where I stayed in the rest-house when inspecting schools or where Jack Bannochie went on his fishing trips ?!)

15 DAYS IN GHANA AUGUST 1999

Wilfred Court

Norah Whapham persuaded me to join GSA when I told her how much I would like to revisit Ghana where I had worked as an Architect between 1968 and 1962. When the proposed group visit did not go ahead I was put in touch with "Explore Worldwide" who have started package tours to Ghana and persuaded my friend David Mayer (also ex Caius College, Ghana, Nigeria) to come with me. Explore Worldwide do fairly energetic tours and we were threatened with tents, mosquito nets and living off the land - we 70-year-olds took it in our stride. We had phone numbers of two GSA contacts, but late arrival, bus breakdowns etc left no spare time. We started with a day in Accra and I recognised quite a few of the buildings including Independence Square, built during my time with PWD. I met someone who knew the Chief Engineer (my boss) and I found the great steel bowl of the Flame of African Freedom, lit during Nkrumah's Dawn Broadcast 1961, which I had had to install and ensure that it lit up on cue. I identified where we had left off the fireworks for the Queen's Visit 1961. We stayed two nights in a hotel at New Achimota and then set off in the bus for Volta and Eastern regions, including a boat trip on the Volta, and visits to Wli waterfall and wildlife reserves (TafiAtome & Kyabobo). At last, through dust and potholes via Yendi to Tamale where I had spent about 18 months around 1959. It now has a dual carriageway road [under construction when we were there in 1995! EE]. We had only an overnight stop, staying in the old Catering Resthouse, now called Tohazie Hotel. I found the old Gymkana Club where David Mayer had walked in unexpectedly while I was playing a quiet game of snooker, in 1959 - it is now a Youth Centre. Early in the morning, missing breakfast, I visited the PWD offices and met people who knew people I had known; it is all rather run down now but I think I found my old office. Norah Whapham's hospital is still there but I think being replaced by a new building. Finally, the tour bus drove to my old bungalow (next door to the Residency); very dilapidated and at first sight deserted, but still all there much as I had left it apart from being overgrown. On then to Larabanga and the Mole Game Reserve for two nights; and walked about among the elephants Then we drove south through BrongAhafo to Kumasi, for 3 nights, visiting Kintampo Falls and Owabi wildlife sanctuary en route; from Kumasi we visited Lake Bosumtwi. In the hotel I had the most extraordinary experience: I had switched on the TV to find some news and they had a programme interviewing people in Tamale including a disc jockey, and I realised that I knew the building in the background: it was the Tamale Broadcasting Station which I had designed about 40 years ago! Travelling south again, we spent some time at Obuasi gold mine (no samples!), for 2 nights in a luxury resort at Busua Beach near Dixcove and visited Elmina and Cape Coast. Driving east, we visited Kakum National Park where we traversed the rainforest canopy walkway 40m up in the air. Here the bus finally broke down [shades of the 1995 trip!] and we had to repair to the Hans Cottage Hotel where we lunched next to the crocodiles and weaver birds, to the sound of a honkytonk piano. Late back to Accra and the following day it took 5 hours to get on the plane; back home I got the last train to Peterborough with 10 minutes to spare. We were 14 on the tour plus 2 guides and driver; 5 were old Coasters. The whole tour was a wonderful experience and reminded me how happy I had been working in Ghana. I am now trying to work out how I can get back again with more time to visit other places that I know.

"In the hotel I had the most extraordinary experience: I had switched on the TV to find some news and they had a programme interviewing people in Tamale including a disc jockey, and I realised that I knew the building in the background: it was the Tamale Broadcasting Station which I had designed about 40 years ago!"

GHANA: August 1999 -

Judith and Jonathan Longhurst

Thank you for putting us in touch with Michael Asiedu. He took us to West Africa Secondary School and we thoroughly enjoyed talking with him and Victoria; he is very well-informed and we learnt a great deal from him. WASS was an example of one of those stark contrasts so typical of Africa. On the one hand the accommodation was basic and reached along a laterite road, on the other two laboratories were well equipped with computers. Both sets of computers have been provided by international aid programmes and the latest one links up schools worldwide via their websites on the Internet. The computer provided by GSA was obviously well used by the school office. They also want a photocopier which could be bought via suppliers in Accra. We spent some time talking with the new headmaster Mr. Moses Kwashie Ocloo who seemed very enthusiastic and able. The Encyclopaedia Britannica had arrived in Tema. We did look round the library and wondered how much it was used; however it was holiday time and only vacation courses were taking place. Mr. Ocloo and others emphasised their need for modern textbooks, which could be obtained at the Legon Bookshop (as previously arranged by Kofi Ohene); we visited the bookshop ourselves and it was well stocked with school books. In Kumasi, we were very impressed by the National Health Learning Materials Management Centre and by Mrs. Dennis-Antwi herself. They have their own desktop publishing facilities and produce their own teaching aids for schools and midwives which we were able to see. Mrs. Stella Poku, one of our friends in Kumasi, is a Primary School Head and had experienced the project from the other side. The grant from GSA has financed materials for 10 pilot schools, providing boards, materials, lamination and initial training of one teacher from each school. The boards are finished and the rest will follow when the schools resume after the holiday. We encouraged them to report as and when the initial project is under way and to ask for further funding if required. This seems to be a very worthwhile project to support. Although we visited both Prempeh College and Ahmadiyya Secondary School, after 24 years we have no personal contacts and can't put forward any projects.

So how did we find Ghana after so long? Much changed., with phone booths in the streets, mobile phones, computers in schools and business and all these making a huge impact on life and the pace of change. We also found it very vibrant and seemingly more prosperous than in 1975. Kingsway and UTC may have gone but the markets and small shops are full of all sorts of goods. How many Ghanaians can afford to buy them is another matter. However the people themselves are unchanged. We got a courteous and warm welcome from friends and from strangers. The 3 weeks we spent just reinforced the memories of five happy years spent in Ghana 24 years ago.

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GUIDES' VISIT TO GHANA

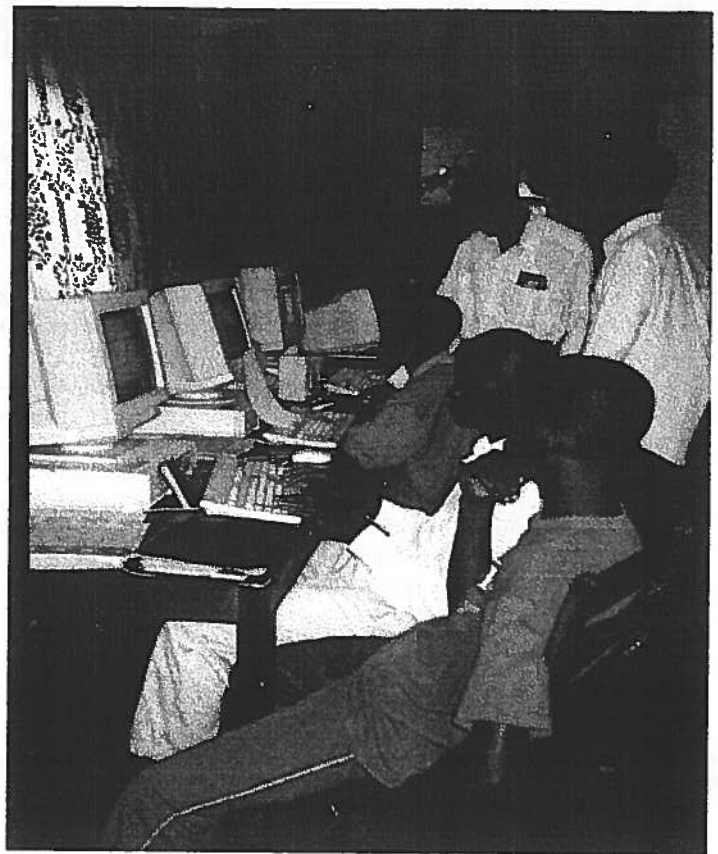
(contributed by Eric Cunningham)

Natalie Home, a student at Chichester College, visited Ghana in July for 3 weeks with a party of guides from various parts of England. She has talked to Eric Cunningham about the experience, which she thoroughly enjoyed. She stayed first in the Guide Training Centre at Achimota, going on to Kumasi and then returning to Accra to spend several days with the family of her Ghanaian host Guide. She is very appreciative of the warm welcome and hospitality she received in Ghana and the care that was taken to show her as much as possible of Ghanaian life and culture in the time available. Her memories include a picnic on Labadi beach, visiting Kumasi market, seeing Kente cloth being woven, having her hair plaited in the Ghanaian manner, learning to play Ampe, tasting palm-nut soup and enjoying the exuberance of Ghanaian singing drumming and dancing. Natalie has found that her visit has widened her horizons greatly and given her much to think about and recall with pleasure. She speaks enthusiastically of wanting to visit Ghana again in two or three years time. Full marks to the Guide Association for arranging this opportunity for young people of Ghana and England to learn about one another.

VENTURE SCOUTS IN GHANA

(details supplied by Rodney Bennett)

David Sanderson, Scout Leader of 17thBarnsley (Penistone) Scout Group has described in Scouting Magazine how he and a colleague planned and led a team of 30 people to do work on the primary school building at Dzolo-Gbogame, Volta Region, after fund-raising to provide £30000 needed for the costs of travel and the project. This was to convert a roofed but wall-less building into 6 fully-furnished classrooms, with the help of around 250 Ghanaian families. This they did and were able to leave funds behind to establish a library and help start a Scout troop. The article describes the process of building, the interaction with local people - "we were surrounded by beautiful children who wanted to talk in a mixture of English and Ewe ... when not working on the building we were drawn into games of cricket, football and volleyball". The official handing-over with Durbar was obviously a great occasion, including the presentation of a goat to the visiting team; as they could not take it home it was presented to the Scout Troop to act as their mascot (how long did this last, I wonder?) Warm messages have been exchanged between the team and Dzolo; for the former it was clearly a most rewarding experience; for the latter, a permanent benefit (2 quotes: (I have learnt more about myself..... that wealth is not a measure of kindness and the smile on the face of a Ghanaian child is one of the most pleasing sights in the world; and: You have given hope to our children and we will never forget what you have done for us. The reports on these two visits by groups of young people are encouraging examples of positive contacts by the next generation, implying much hope for the future.



WASS students get to grips with computers. Photo: J& J Longhurst

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

Dr. David Aldridge, who was an Assistant Registrar at Legon in the 1950s (and took part in the 1995 visit), attended the ceremonies in March to mark 50 years of the University of Ghana, from the founding of the "University College of the Gold Coast" in 1949. He writes: The two main ceremonies occurred on Friday and Saturday 19 and 20 March. The first, in the evening, was Honorary Degree giving in the main Hall at the top of the hill; it was crammed, plus the University choir and a military band. Some 10 degrees were given including the new Chancellor who was then installed. It was quite dark by the time it was over with a great concourse in the lower Courts afterwards - an undeniably impressive setting. Quite how many processed then and the following day when the Head of State came, I am not sure, but perhaps 100 to 150 or even more. The Saturday was even more impressive, a magnificent morning on the main Sports Ground and the whole thing superbly managed, like a Durbar. There may have been 1200 people there housed in two lines of tents with an avenue between them, up which we processed following the Head of State. The Registrar gave me no notice at all in asking me to read the letters of Greetings from London University but I was happy to do it. I am not used to addressing so many with a great array of microphones in front of me! Spectacle, real spectacle, which took up the bulk of the morning, with all the graduates passing the dais. I could not help being impressed by the disciplined way the crowd took part - there was something moving about it.

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OBITUARIES

BRICE BENDING 1926 - 1999

An appreciation by Eric's Cunningham and Earle

Brice's association with Ghana began in October 1951 when as a Cadet Education Officer assigned to the Gold Coast - one of the last permanent pensionable officers to be appointed - he took the PGCE course in the Colonial Department at the Institute of Education, University of London (along with 7 others destined for the Gold Coast in an overall group of some 40 cadets). One of his tutors was John Wilson who had himself been an EO in the Gold Coast -1929-1950 - Provincial Education Officer (known as "Terror of the Western Province") and Training College Principal. Thus Brice and his fellow cadets learned of the life and work ahead of them directly from John Wilson's first-hand experience. Brice's contribution to that post-graduate year included some memorable extra-curricular activity: he was renowned for an extensive knowledge of the London jazz scene, clearly acquired by diligent observation during his undergraduate years at Kings College London where he had read English after leaving Kings School Ottery St.Mary and after military service in India; Brice's love of jazz was to remain with him throughout his life. Mention should also be made of his vigorous participation in the "Rural Survey" which was a feature of the "Colonial" course: 3 weeks in Cumberland attached to a village school. Brice kept in touch with the Head of the village school in Alston for many years.

Together with five fellow Education Officers and one Audit Officer (our present Treasurer) Brice arrived at Takoradi on 26 August 1952 after an entertaining voyage aboard Elder Dempster's mv Accra. He travelled overnight by train to Kumasi, having lunched in Takoradi Club with Dorothy Igoe (Sekondi District Education office), sampled his first Club beer and wondered at the large lizards, whose colourful throats and vigorous press-ups remained a vivid first memory shared with Eric Cunningham also posted to the Ashanti Regional Education Office for training. After his two years in India, Brice took easily to life in the tropics again. Gold Coast politics were then at fever pitch and learning the job involved not only visiting schools and listening to teachers and fellow education officers (who included Edna Moat and the late WG Jones -Jonah) but also reading the newspapers to follow the country's rapid thrust towards Independence. Sam Ocran was a colleague particularly helpful in elucidating the interplay among the political parties. An enjoyable off-duty diversion was learning to dance the high-life in the City Hotel, a task which required frequent practice and liberal refreshment! Brice quickly established himself as an able Education Officer. His first wife Maureen joined him in 1953 when he was posted to Bekwai as District Education Officer (Eric Earle has vivid memories of a visit there, with much time spent in the Club and a trip to Obuasi); their first son Jonathan was born there. A posting to Head Office in Accra followed, and Dominic was born there, close to Independence Day 1957. After promotion to Senior Education Officer, the rest of Brice's career in Ghana was spent in the North at Tamale and Pusiga, where he was Principal of the Training College until he retired from Ghana in 1961.

He then joined the British Council as an English Language Officer and after the requisite EFL course at Edinburgh University he was posted to Nigeria. There, he and his family had an adventurous departure when the Biafran war escalated; this was the stage at which Brice and Maureen adopted Ebere, a small victim of the disaster which had overtaken Eastern Nigeria. A third son Crispin was born and subsequent postings included Egypt, Senegal and Bahrain. After some years as British Council Representative in these postings, Brice retired from the Council, and with Gertrud, his second wife, went back to live in Ottery St.Mary - back to his roots.

At this time, the early eighties, happy memories of Ghana led to Brice becoming involved with Tom Southern and the two Eric's (the Gang of Four) in organising the week-end reunion of former education people and other colleagues which took place in London in 1986 with an attendance of nearly 200. Later that year the tragic death of Tommy Southern led to the setting up of a fund in her memory which developed into the Ghana School Aid Trust and Brice became its first Chairman. He tackled this task with great energy and vision, providing inspiring

leadership for the Committee; for the first few years he did all the work of developing and then maintaining the circulation and membership lists. The big event of the years after the 1986 reunion was planning and organising the first group visit to Ghana which took place in March 1990; this was an exciting experience for all the participants and much of its success was due to Brice's leadership and easy interaction with old friends and senior officials alike (from the Secretary for Education, K.B.Asante, down). The years since the departure from Ghana of most of us in the early sixties rolled back!

Sadly within two years or so of the Visit, his illness developed and he gradually had to withdraw from active involvement with GSA. After some years when he had a great deal of suffering he was able to attend the Annual Lunch again in 1997; but then his illness returned. Throughout this time he had devoted support and help from his wife Gertrud. All his children, two of them living abroad, were able to come and see him before he died peacefully in Ottery St.Mary, close to where he was born. At the funeral, the Methodist church was full with the friends who came to pay their respects: his brother, friends from school, university, Ghana, the British Council, covering all stages of his life.

Brice's strong sense of duty coupled with unfailing courtesy, his unassuming and tolerant nature and his strong sense of humour and capacity for fun, earned him the love and respect of people from all these phases of his life. His children can be proud of him.

We shall long remember him.

JAMES MOXON OBE

an appreciation by Norton Goldie-Scott and Rodney Bennett

Nana Kofi Obonyaa, Ankobea of Aburi and Onyaasehene, alias James Moxon OBE, previously a District Commissioner in the Gold Coast: those who knew Jimmy Moxon will be sad to learn of his death in Accra on 24 August. His funeral, memorial and thanksgiving service took place at Aburi on 16 October and he was buried at Onyaase. A memorial service was held at Ashford Carbonel Church near Ludlow on 10 November. Jimmy served as a District Commissioner in several places, including Accra at the time of the 1948 Disturbances. He then transferred to the Gold Coast Information Service, which brought him into direct contact with most of the top people in the country including Kwame Nkrumah. He became involved with the Volta River dam project and his book Volta, Man's Greatest Lake (1969 & 1984) is the definitive work on the subject. He identified himself more and more with Ghana which became his home. Latterly he only came back to the UK for limited periods each year to visit his mother. This identification culminated in his being elected a chief in the village where he lived, over which he had formerly been in charge as DC. This was no stunt; he entered fully into all the pomp and ceremony involved and there is no doubt that he took this appointment seriously, as did his subjects. We first met in the 1939/40 scrum of St.John's College Cambridge rugby XV. He was in the second row and as a flanker I had a distinct advantage in having to shove against his - even in those days - well-upholstered backside. Jimmy and I did not meet up again until well after I joined the Colonial Service in 1947. In recent years Jimmy encouraged former ex-Gold Coasters to revisit Ghana and took immense trouble over their programmes. He made sure they were able to go to the places they had known, especially in Ashanti and TV/I. and he gave them a wonderful time, including excellent parties at his Onyaase home. [Members of the 1995 Group Visit can endorse that! The whole group were invited by Jimmy to attend a big party, attended by many prominent people, which was being televised for a BBC TV programme. It was a fitting climax for the last day of our visit.] Jimmy was irrepressibly ebullient, an extrovert par excellence. He had a warm heart and was able to develop a rapport with all sorts of people. He was extremely well known and popular in Accra. (Some of us will remember the annual lunch a few years ago when Jimmy spoke and showed a video about his chiefly ceremonies. The VCR would not work at first so Jimmy sent for gin to pour libation; either this or the technician did the trick!)

SCHOOLS ON THE LINE

As supporters who were at the last Lunch already know, the Committee proposes that to celebrate the arrival of the year 2000 we should aim to raise an additional £2000 income to be used to help a number of schools in places on or close to the Greenwich meridian line, which passes through Ghana from Pusiga in the north to Tema. We are calling this project SCHOOLS ON THE LINE. Some of the other places "on the line" are Yendi, Wulensi, Kpandae, KeteKrachi, KroboOdumase and Larteh (these latter two closely linked with Robert Asiedu). Some may be familiar names to readers from overnight stays in rest-houses, assisting with elections, car-break-downs or other episodes!

Supporters of Ghana School Aid are already very generous but the Committee hopes that readers of the newsletter will find Schools on the Line an imaginative concept to mark the millennium positively and be worthy of additional support. The collection made after the presentation following the Lunch and some additional donations since, have started us off towards our target; those who were unable to attend or had to leave early are now asked to consider making a contribution. We have at present some 150 names on our supporters list and if each were to give an additional £10 - a penny for each year of one millennium - we should be well on the way to our target. A form for this purpose is attached.

We are also inviting contributions from other people with Ghana connections and we invite you to approach any friends not already involved with GSA; please tell them about the Schools On The Line project and ask them to consider making a donation (you can assure them that their donations will be devoted directly to help schools in Ghana as we have no paid staff and minimum overheads). Michael Asiedu, the Trust's representative in Ghana, is helping to identify the schools to receive aid and to link the project with Ghana's own millennium celebrations. We also plan to link our project with the On The Line organisation being sponsored by Channel Four and coordinated by Oxfam.

PLEASE HELP US TO REACH THE TARGET OF £2000 for the year 2000.

Millenium Games

Ghana School Aid had a prominent role at the launch of the GUILDFORD MILLENNIUM BOROUGH GAMES at the University of Surrey on 28 June. Representatives of the Ghana High Commission attended and Lynne Symonds, Founder of the Wulugu Project, spoke wearing her Chief's robes. Some consignments of sportswear collected under this scheme have already been sent to northern Ghana through the Wulugu organisation and we are discussing plans for consignments to the south, probably via Winneba. This is an exciting project which should provide much-needed sportsgear for Ghana schools and also spread the word about GSA.

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Reunion Lunch

About 50 members and guests attended the fourteenth annual Lunch on 20 May. We were very pleased to welcome Lady Chalker for her first visit as one of our Patrons and HE the High Commissioner for Ghana for the second year running. Paul Boateng sent a warm message of support. Both Lynda Chalker and Jimmy Aggrey-Orleans spoke and enthusiastically commended the work of Ghana School Aid; we are very pleased to have their support. We were also very glad to welcome Professor Arthur Porter and to welcome back Kofi Ohene, on leave from Ghana to see Floria and his family. (Hearty congratulations to Kofi on his appointment as Registrar of the University of Cape Coast w.e.f. 1 October). After lunch, Bill Peters gave a progress report on the Jubilee 2000 campaign, Steve de Wint from Guildford Borough Council gave a presentation on the Guildford Millennium Games project to send sports equipment to Ghana, Briony Harrison from Oxfam talked about the On The Line scheme, which we hope to link with our own SOTL project (in aid of which a collection produced over £60 - see details above).

NEXT YEAR'S LUNCH will be on **THURSDAY 1 JUNE** - a week later than usual to coincide with half-term, and make possible the attendance of some who have not yet retired. Please note in your year 2000 diaries; details and booking forms will be issued in the spring.

"End of Empire"

Plans for the Commemoration of the formal ending of HM Overseas Civil Service were mentioned in the last newsletter. A number of us were among the large congregation at the Commemoration Service in Westminster Abbey on 25 May and afterwards at the Reception at Marlborough House: Bennetts, Pitchfords, Earles, Roberts, Neales, Bill Peters, Sheila Hooper, Millicent Edelsten, Dinnings, Heaton, among over 70 from GoldCoast/Ghana. I was invited to be a member of a "representative group" outside the west door to be presented to HM the Queen and Prince Philip; those who receive the Overseas Pensioner magazine will have seen the photographs and report - it was a most impressive event, impeccably organized as one might expect. A very successful two-day conference on Administering the Empire was held in the same week in the University of London Senate House; some interesting lectures were given including "The Gold Coast Civil Service in changing times" (ie the run-up to Independence) by Professor Rathbone of SOAS, "The British Experience of Imperial Rule" by Professor Marshall of Kings, London and an entertaining talk on the Colonial Service in the novel by Tony Kirk-Greene (whose history "On Crown Service" some of you will have seen). It was fascinating to observe how much work is currently being carried out by researchers on colonial records. The proceedings of the conference are to be published by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, joint organisers of the conference with the Corona Club.

OTHER AID PROJECTS

We are continuing to support the projects referred to in the last newsletter. Michael Asiedu is pursuing action with the Ghana Publishers Association on the implementation of the books for schools project which we funded last year. We have given another grant of £1200 to the **Child-to-Child project** at Winneba; they have sent us a very favourable report by William Gibbs on the progress of this project which it is good to have. The interesting report by the Longhursts on their August visit has provided valuable feedback on the West Africa Secondary School (to whom we have recently sent a set of Encyclopedia Britannica donated by friends) and on the Kumasi school health exhibition boards project which seems to be making good progress.

NEW PROJECTS

1. At last year's Global Partnership event, John Lawler, a civil engineering student at Newcastle University, made contact with us and as a result we gave a grant of £500 to provide books for Shia secondary school, Volta Region where John had been working (and where, like Lynne Symonds and Professor John Knapton, they had made him a chief: Torgbui Mottey the First). The money was taken to Ghana by John Wogormebu (of Shia) whom we subsequently met at the Ghana Independence Day reception and he confirmed delivery. John Lawler was arranging for 20 Newcastle students to take part in a building project in Ghana this summer.

2. We gave a building grant of £700 to Abdulai Jakalia, a former student of Brice Bending's at Pusiga, now a lecturer at Winneba, to provide roofing for Sing Primary School, his home village in the north.

3. Grants totalling £700 were given to Mount Mary School for disadvantaged children in the Ofankor district of Accra; the founder and headmistress, Elizabeth Ezan, is known to Margaret Turner and she is clearly doing excellent work. Part of the money funded a water-tank for the school and in a recent letter, E.Ezan says she has placed an inscription on the tank "Donated by friends of Mount Mary Schools, Ghana School Aid".

4. In response to a request from the Chairman of Trustees of Sandema Secondary School, Upper East Region, we gave a grant of £100 towards the cost of sending books to the school.

MICHAEL ASIEDU has been indefatigable in providing helpful advice and suggestions for our aid programme and he and Victoria have been very hospitable to GSA-linked visitors. He has even been able to track down Professor Knapton's village which is in the Ekumfi District, Central Region (Winneba - Mankessim road); he visited the village and met the chief and elders. We have been able to set up an arrangement to transmit funds for some of our projects through an external account of Michael's in Accra. We are most grateful to him.

FINANCE - we have now raised approx.£55,000 since the Trust started operating in 1987 and we have disbursed over £40,000 on the various aid projects. Donations for the year to 31 March 1999 totalled £5916 and for the 7 months to 31 October were £2349. Over the same total period, expenditure on aid projects was £9862. Present balance of funds available: approx.£13000. We value your continued support without which we should not be able to do any of the work described in this newsletter. Some 50 of you subscribe by covenant which is especially valuable (Stanley Anthony is putting in a Tax claim of nearly £1200 for the past two years). If you have not contributed recently and would like to do so (preferably by covenant!), please return the form attached. Please return the forms at the back of the newsletter.

JUBILEE 2000 : this campaign, with which Bill Peters has been heavily involved from the start as co-Founder has already achieved a tremendous amount, although not yet its full target to write off the debts owed by the 52 poorest countries and the campaign continues. The most recent step (letter from the Director, Ann Pettifor, 19 October) is to encourage supporters to set up "Jubilee 2000 Millennium Books" locally, containing messages of support for debt cancellation. The campaign address is 1 Rivington St, London EC2A 3DT.

BOOKS a miscellaneous list of recent books which may be of interest (and already familiar to some of you):

1. Anthony Kirk-Greene's *On Crown Service*, a History of HM Colonial and Overseas Civil Services, 1837-1997 (already mentioned).



Mount Mary School group, including Ezan and Michael Asiedu. Photo: M.Asiedu

2. *Beloved Imperialist*, a biography of Sir Gordon Guggisberg by H.B.Goodall.

3. *Long Ago and Faraway: Gold Coast Days 1939-58* by Allen Leeds.

4. *Armadillo*, the latest novel by William Boyd (born Accra 1952) is an excellent read (it features an African music group called Kwame Akinlaye and his Achimota Rhythm Boys who produced an album called Sheer Achimota - Brice would have been entertained).

5. *The Catastrophist* by Ronan Bennett, a novel set in the Congo c.1960, the fall of Lumumba; full of interest for those of us in Ghana then.

6. African Books Collective, Oxford produce very interesting regular catalogues of books from African publishers. In the most recent list is *The Registrar* by Ebow Daniel, until recently Registrar of the University of Ghana: very informative and entertaining, with mention of many familiar names - strongly recommended.

7. Based on a book, *Oroonoko* by Aphra Behn (1687), a marvellous production by RSC (Barbican, December-March; set on coast of "Coromantien" - see it if you can.

For your chocolate supplies, why not buy **DIVINE**, produced in Ghana by a cooperative, marketed by Fairtrade, sold by Tesco and Iceland - recently advertised on TV by Ben Elton!

And Finally...

I must not omit to thank our friend Jimmy Aggrey-Orleans, HE the High Commissioner, for his support including invitations to Committee members and others to the annual Ghana Independence Day reception. And I should like particularly to mention Kobby Yebo-Okrah for his regular hospitality to us in allowing the Committee to hold its meetings in the Ghana Universities Office; he and his staff always make us extremely welcome.

Finally, a mention of our Patron, Paul Boateng, Minister of State at the Home Office : a headline in the Independent on 13 November reads - Boateng tells pupils: "You're lucky - we did homework by light of street lamps". The report says that the Minister was pointing out to black pupils at Willesden High School that they were lucky in comparison with the problems that school children in Ghana have in gaining a good education - something which deserves wide recognition and it is good that Paul (a highly successful and able man who received his early education in Accra) has drawn attention to it. It is the aim of Ghana School Aid to help to redress the imbalance of resources in our own small way.

I hope you like the new lay-out of the newsletter. For this I am much indebted to my son Roderic (born in Accra) who can do things with a computer that I can only dream of! Best wishes for Christmas and for the year 2000; and hope to see you at John Adams Hall on 1 June.

Eric Earle on behalf of the Committee

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