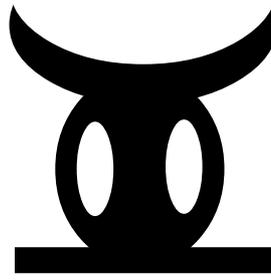


Ghana School Aid



April 2003

Dear Friends of GSA

Hello again - amazingly, annual newsletter-time has come round again. Belated New Year (now aging fast) wishes to you all. Your committee has had quite a busy year and we hope that you will find some items of interest in the reports and contributions which follow (and for which we are much indebted to the various authors). For those of us whose active time in Ghana was 40 or more years ago, the accounts of current projects (eg at Otaakrom) and recent visits (Yendi, Cape Coast) will I hope be of particular interest and help to keep us in touch with Ghana in the new century. They provide useful feed-back on the use to which the funds generously provided by you have been put. Of which, more below (see p 3): if you are a subscriber, preferably via Gift Aid, many thanks; if you have not recently contributed and wish to remain in touch / receive the newsletter, please join the subscribers forthwith!

In these introductory remarks, pride of place must be given to the exciting news that Michael Asiedu, our former colleague and hard-working Representative in Ghana will visit the UK this summer at our invitation and be our guest at the **Annual Lunch and AGM** which is to be held on **Thursday 29 May** (details below). Michael will be in the country from 24 May to 21 June and plans are in hand for him to visit York, Guildford, Chichester, Bath and Bristol, Exmouth, Cheltenham, Leamington Spa and Norwich - he will be a busy man! For details of his proposed itinerary, see p. 10. I hope that many of you will be able to meet him either at the Lunch or on his travels around the country.

Contents

Page 2

Reunions

Page 3

Gift Aid

Page 4

Projects

Page 5

Impressions of Yendi

Page 6

Education and
employment

Page 7

Memories

Page 8

Obituaries

Page 11

Travels of Nana

Page 12

Book Reviews

2002 Reunion

Last year's Reunion on 6 June was attended by about 45 members and guests, about half that number being at the AGM, held for the second time after being inaugurated in 2001; the minutes are attached (and a warm thank you to Pam Lewis for agreeing to do this after stepping down as Secretary). We were delighted to welcome at the Lunch the Hon. Isaac Osei, the recently-appointed High Commissioner, and his charming wife. Mr. Osei addressed the gathering in very warm and friendly terms and we hope we may see him again this year. Our other two Patrons were unable to be present: Lady Chalker kindly sent a donation; Paul Boateng, who had hoped to be present, was overtaken by his new Cabinet duties as Chief Secretary to the Treasury, on which we conveyed our congratulations. After lunch, Bill Peters gave us an up-date on the Third World Debt campaign in which he has been a prime mover and we then repaired upstairs for the afternoon programme of talks and presentations: Lynne Symonds gave an up-date on the impressive Wulugu Project activities; Sue Hewlett spoke about her recent teaching at a school in Yendi (and see her article on p 5); Richard Alandu gave a progress report on the Sandema Project which we support; John Kibble spoke about his work for the MoDega community which we also support. The talk by Robert Palmer about his recent work as a volunteer at the vocational centre at Otaakrom (see his article on pp 5/6) was followed by the presentation to him of a cheque for £1000 which the Committee had approved in aid of this excellent project. The afternoon concluded with a trip down memory lane when Wilfrid Court showed a video of some 8mm cine film of scenes in Tamale and elsewhere in 1958 and 1960. (I have subsequently received from James Page a video of cine footage by his father Tony in Tamale (mainly) in the 1950s; it includes scenes from amateur dramatics featuring the late Tom and Tommy Southern). We are very grateful to Judith Smith who took over the organisation of the lunch with great efficiency, following in the footsteps of Pam Lewis and Madge Claxton; Pam, and Margaret Turner, helped on the day when, unfortunately, Judith herself was not able to be present.

2003 Reunion

As previously mentioned, this year's Annual Reunion Lunch will be held at John Adams Hall on **Thursday 29 May** (a week earlier than last year, in the hope of catching half-term for working members). Details and booking form enclosed - **please return asap**. Book early to make sure of meeting Nana (Michael Asiedu)!

While on the subject of the Annual Lunch, we shall not be able to use our regular venue next year (2004 "if we're spared"!) because John Adams Hall will be closed for renovation. It has been suggested that we might hold it in Bristol, based at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum in its splendid premises in the Brunel building at Temple Meads station - very convenient for rail access. James Gibbs, who has already offered to arrange a guided tour of the Museum (which could be incorporated in the programme) has offered to help with arrangements. Please let me have your comments on this idea; and we shall discuss it at the AGM.

The Hon. Treasurer is a treasure!

Close readers of the AGM minutes will note that John Whittingham has expressed the wish to step down as Treasurer and Stanley Anthony has agreed to take on that role in addition to his existing duties as Gift Aid Administrator; the change will be implemented after the end of the financial year, 31 March. John has been Treasurer since GSA was first established in 1986 and was one of the original Trustees. He has seen the Trust's funds build up from the original few hundred pounds donated in memory of Tommy Southern (who died tragically young so soon after the first reunion which she helped to organise) to the latest total figure of £73,000+ - moving on towards six figures. In recent years, he has built up useful knowledge on the arrangements for transmitting funds to Ghana. We are much in his debt - if such a term does not offend John! He will remain on the Committee where his advice will continue to be valued.

FINANCE :

Up to 31 December 2002, we had raised, since 1987, a total of £64,337 in donations (including tax refunds) and a number of grants (eg from the Morel Trust); adding to this the net surplus on annual Lunches and deposit interest, total income becomes £73,230. We have allocated approx. £61,000 for books, school supplies / educational materials, computers and building grants. A further £4000 has recently been set aside for a new "longitude" project (see Alan Mayhew's note on Aid Projects) to follow the millennium Meridian project. Over the whole period, "operating costs", ie cost & postage of newsletters, shipping charges, bank charges for money transfers, etc have cost a total of £3260, so we have kept these overhead costs to an absolute minimum. Stanley Anthony's note on Gift Aid below deserves your attention (especially those of you who do not as yet use this device!).

The Benefits of Giving by Gift Aid

You will be pleased to know that the Gift Aid Scheme is working well as a means of claiming back the income tax paid by our donors on their gifts. It is certainly a much simpler process for the donors and for me! Donors, once they have made a declaration that their gifts are within the Gift Aid scheme, have nothing else to do (except keep making donations, of course).

The old Covenants scheme required donors to sign a form every time I put in a claim for the tax refund, a form that I had had to send out to each one of them. I reduced the burden of this by claiming only on a two yearly basis. Also the Covenants lasted only for four years, but under Gift Aid donors can give on a regular basis by banker's order if they wish and for as long a period as they wish, and many choose to put no time limit on their order. Alternativley the giving can be as variable and as irregular as donors wish.

A regular donation each year is a help for our forward planning, but equally a single donation can yield us its tax - whereas it did not count for the Covenant scheme. Provided the amount of the gfit and the identity of the donor are easily identitifiable (giving by cheque is the obvious winner here) I am able to claim the appropriate income tax.

Therefore, I am finding that claiming each year after the end of the tax year on 5th April is perfectly reasonable. During the Covenant years we received about £600 per year (when tax rates were higher). The year 2000-2001 yielded £641.67 as the tax refund from 44 donors, and 2001-2002 yielded £1115 from 53 donors. What 2002-2003 will yield I shall not know until we have all the information in from our bank statements.

The Committee would like to encourage you not only to help schools in Ghana by making donations, but also to get the 28% extra from the Inland Revenue by signing the Gift Aid Declaration in our favour. Once it is done it counts for as long as you want it to - provided of course you pay income tax. Please contact me if you wish to join the Gift Aid scheme.

Stanley Anthony, 8 Campion Terrace, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 4SX, Tel: 01926 424702

It will be noted that last year there were 53 donors who contributed by this route and we could reclaim valuable tax. The new address list of members compiled by Pam Lewis (see her note on p 9 and the list enclosed) contains 76 names; some of these may have given donations not via covenant or Gift Aid. The overall list of supporters/ members who receive the newsletter contains over 150 names; most of these will have made a donation at some time, but perhaps not for some years. If you fall into this latter category, would you please consider making an annual donation, preferably by Gift Aid ? It is good to have your interest and moral support but it would be even better if you supported this goodwill with hard cash! GEORGE ALAGIAH is now of course a very familiar face every evening at 6 pm on BBC 1. In last year's newsletter, I mentioned his newly-published book "A Passage to Africa" and asked for a volunteer to review it; I was delighted when David Bradshaw responded and his review follows below (p 11) The book is now in paperback and I cannot recommend it too highly for its insights on Africa and, in particular, his account of being a schoolboy in Accra in the 1960s. I had the pleasure of meeting George when he gave a lecture in Guildford for Amnesty International and he was most interested in the work of GSA. The Committee agreed to invite him to become another of our Patrons; he has in fact declined because he would not be able to give us the time and

commitment required (quite understandable) but said he would be pleased to help with a specific event - something which we shall follow up in due course.

I hope you will enjoy this newsletter, containing as it does diverse contributions from some of our members: to whom, many thanks from your "Editor";

Eric Earle



The Headmaster and Assistant Headmistress of West Africa Secondary School, Accra, are presented with a photocopier by Nana Michael Asiedu on behalf of GSA, 17 June 2002

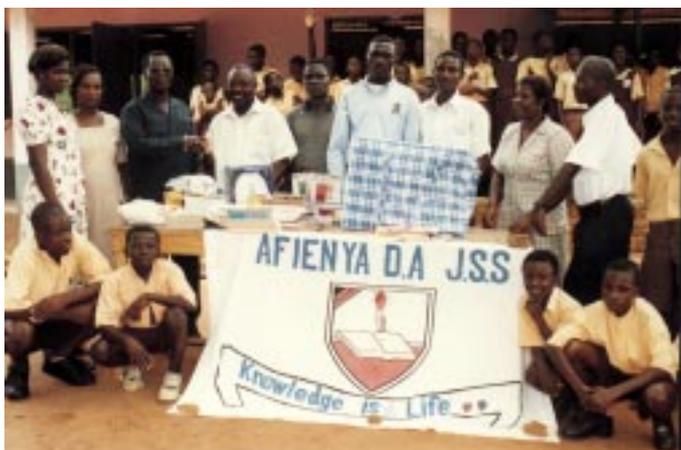
Ghana School Aid Projects 1987 - 2002

Ever since taking over as Secretary I have been curious to try to thread together a list of all the projects funded by GSA from its inception in 1986. Some wet Autumn days and a short period of feeling 'under the weather' provided a good opportunity to begin searching through files and minutes to build-up a profile of the charity's work. By the end of 2002, GSA has promoted an impressive 162 projects, an average of 16 a year. This represents support for just over 100 schools as a number of them have received more than one grant.

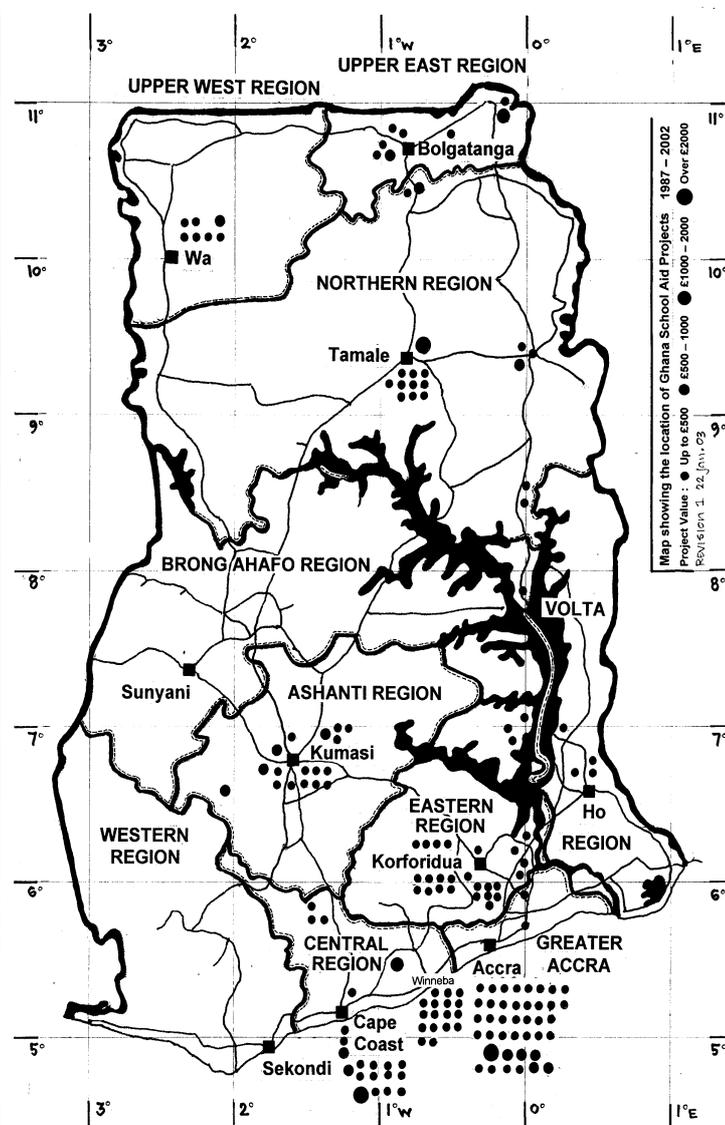
The main characteristic feature is that 139 of them - about 85% of the total- are projects that have been awarded grants up to the value of £500. Virtually all of them are grants to support commodities such as the purchase of books, charts, teaching aids, exercise books and writing materials, tools and equipment, the basic ingredients needed in any classroom.

At the other end of the scale a few projects have topped the £2-3000 level but these have been made possible through legacies and special grants. The legacy from Peter Thomson enabled the West African Secondary School, Legon, to purchase computer equipment and software; and Adisadel School at Cape Coast was able to acquire a kiln. The Tamale Secondary School benefited from a special grant from the Reuter Foundation to provide science books, teaching aids, and computer equipment. Some continuous programmes have accumulated support to this level over a number of years such as the Child-to-Child Health project at Winneba whose promotional work reaches many schools in the area. The Ghana Book Publishers' Association is another example, this has also been supported by a generous grant from the Morel Trust.

Over the past decade grants have been allocated to 2 or 3 projects each year up to the value £2000 and these have invariably been granted to support building works, usually for the purchase of building materials for new



Presentation of educational & sports material, Afiencya J.S.S. July 2002.



classrooms under self help programmes where the value of grants are maximised through nil labour costs. More recently grants have been awarded for the purchase of local photocopiers (with back-up maintenance facilities), as for example to the Pusiga Training College in the Upper Eastern Region.

The detailed map illustrates where in Ghana GSA grants have reached. It is readily apparent that the SE zone of the country has benefited hugely from GSA support. There is perhaps a certain inevitability about this; the population is much denser here and more contacts are known, and of course the Asiedu family -whose immense industry and support help to implement projects- live in Accra. By coincidence this analysis of GSA projects emerged at the same time as the Executive Committee were reviewing development strategy, by exploring a pro-active approach to funding as well as continuing to respond to direct requests which the Committee receive all the time. Everyone agrees that the pro-active policy of identifying Schools-on-the Line with support for the Millennium project has been a great success. Aid has reached schools who had probably never encountered GSA before and who have no-one to articulate their needs. The illustrated map reveals all

too sharply that there are some startling gaps in project support in the western and northern parts of Ghana. The Executive Committee have now launched an outreach programme to identify and support schools on or near the 2 degrees north-south longitude line which passes through five 'unsupported regions' -except Ashanti- to try to 'redress the balance' of aid projects throughout the country. This will entail a lot of work by a lot of people over several years but the challenge and prospects are exciting and the unknown element about it turns it into something of an adventure. A sum of £4000 has initially been set aside to fund this programme.

Alan Mayhew

Impressions of Yendi

I went to Yendi in June 2001 on an educational exchange visit to Balogu primary School. My trip was supported by the Central Bureau for Reciprocal Visits, a section of the British Council. My host was Alhassan Adam who had spent five weeks at my school, Stutton Primary, and had made a big impression there.

Having been both thrilled and shocked by many of the sights and sounds of Accra and Tamale and by the experience of 400 miles in an STS bus, I reached Yendi with one simple idea in mind -to get to know the children and teachers at Balogu School.

My first impression of the children was of their energy and bubble. Clearly, strict discipline was used; canes were visible; however the children seemed far from intimidated or inhibited. They were desperate to know me, to sing and dance for me and did so at every opportunity. I saw a lot of good teaching at every level though it has to be said that the lack of resources and

the class sizes continue to make life very difficult. In fact, I estimated that in most classes, only about one third of children were actively involved in lessons and had a real chance of getting right through the system I had not expected this and feel saddened by it. The consequences of the failing

system can be most clearly seen among Yendi's young men for whom there is little prospect of good employment. Many of them are disgruntled, bored and restless and it's hard to see how things will improve. There seems to be rather more hope for young women, a significant number of whom are receiving training in small sewing or shea butter enterprises.

I am extremely grateful to Ghana School Aid for giving Nulu Islam School in Yendi £1000 to build 2 classrooms which, unlike the existing ones, will at least be weatherproof. I understand that a video of the work is planned so that subscribers can see what the money has meant to the parents and teachers.

Since returning to Suffolk, I have kept in close contact with Yendi friends, though they have had major troubles; their chief was assassinated in March and the village is still under curfew. My friend, Ian Heywood, who was due to visit in July to learn and bring back drumming rhythms and songs, is not going following advice from the British Council. This is sad but convinces me that the link we have is a lifeline for the children in Yendi. It is also a rich educational resource for British children. Finally, I would like to say a big thank you to John and Diana Alton of Brantham, Suffolk, who gave me lots of support before my trip to Ghana and who introduced me to the work of Ghana School Aid. Thanks too for the welcome to the AGM in June.

Sue Hewlett. Suffolk Teacher

Linking Education to (Self-) Employment,

By Rob Palmer, a volunteer in Ashanti Region 2001-2002, now a postgraduate at Edinburgh University.

Like so many other African countries, Ghana has a youthful population, with 45% of it's 19 million people under the age of 15. These youth have few opportunities either for formal training, further education or formal employment. Statistically only 1/3 of Junior Secondary School (JSS) graduates make it to some kind of formal Senior Secondary education each year, leaving c.170,000, or c.2/3 of those leaving the JSS system annually with no further official training. Post JSS, many opt for the so-called informal sector traditional apprenticeship training offered by master-craftsmen, while many others turn to the cities for a better life. Anyone that has been to Accra, Kumasi or other big towns in Ghana is witness to the country's growing population of street-children, largely from rural areas. They walk the streets to hawk goods, serve as 'porters'

or 'tap-tap' on their shoe-shine box to attract custom. They hover outside the Post-Office next to an old set of weighing scales, touting "check your weight" to passer's by. They dodge taxis, *trotros* (mammy wagons) and STC buses in the middle of busy roads to sell *Fan-ice* (ice cream), PK (chewing gum), plantain chips or ice water to their mobile market. Now, more than ever, a growing number have also completed JSS (or higher) but have found that, on leaving school, there are simply not enough waged-jobs in formal employment to go around. In fact about 70% of Ghana's population operate within this 'informal economy'. Ghana's Government, like other African Governments, is now faced with the reality that 'Education for All' (the 'Education for All', EFA, Conference in Jomtein, Thailand, March 1990) does not translate into (waged) 'employment for all'. In March 2001, the new NPP Government released the interim budget, stating the desire to create more job opportunities for Ghana's youth. With this in mind it



*Otaakrom
classroom/
workshop under
construction*

has increased its support to the 'non-formal' or vocational training schools that it hopes will help to 'plug the gap' between education and self-employment. For 14 months during 2001 and 2002 I worked as a volunteer in one of these vocational schools in Ashanti Region (Atwima District), in a small village called Otaakrom between Nkawie (in Ashanti) and Bibiani (in Western Region). Otaakrom village is like so many other villages in rural Ghana. It is isolated, lacks services and amenities and has a big problem with the youth drifting to the cities in search of work. Otaakrom has no running water or electricity. All but a few of the buildings are made of mud-blocks. The vast majority of the community are predominantly cocoa farmers who manage to get just enough to live on each year. I worked for the village 'Integrated Community Centre for Employable Skills' (ICCES) non-formal vocational training school. Otaakrom ICCES provides a mix of 'on-the-job' training (such as carpentry, dressmaking or masonry) with classroom based lessons such as English and basic entrepreneurship skills (such as book-keeping, costing, marketing) in an attempt to provide a link between the JSS system and the world of (predominantly) self-employment. Graduates can also use the NVTI certificates to continue to further education (if their family can afford it). While aimed predominantly at JSS leavers, Otaakrom ICCES, unlike formal vocational schools, is open to all unemployed youth, school drop-outs, illiterates and older displaced people wishing to retrain. Despite the increased support to the ICCES non-formal programme, the Ministry for Manpower, Development and Employment, under

which ICCES falls, can only afford to cover the costs of the instructors salaries, but not the small day-to-day costs or costs for improved infrastructure. It was therefore decided by the School Board that Otaakrom ICCES had to utilise income-generating activities to contribute to the costs of teaching and training activities. In other words some of the products that the students made in class times were sold locally to contribute to the day-to-day costs. The carpentry students for example found there was a high demand for coffins within the local economy, while the dress-makers produced school uniforms or 'Christmas' dresses for the local people. On the request of the Otaakrom ICCES Projects Committee, through myself, Ghana School Aid (GSA) made a grant of £1000 towards the construction of an open-plan multi-purpose classroom/work-shop in June 2002. Since Otaakrom ICCES is a non-formal vocational school, with the students undertaking practical on-the-job training for about 60% of the school week, they were more than capable of building the workshop themselves. By using the GSA grant solely for materials and doing all their own construction work (with the help of village communal labour as their in-kind contribution), Otaakrom ICCES was able to make the GSA grant go a long way. All materials were purchased from local small enterprises in neighbouring towns, thereby supporting the local economy. With so many of Ghana's youth struggling to find productive employment and ending up on the cities' streets, educational strategies that aim to link formal education with (self-) employment, such as the ICCES, should be actively encouraged.

Memories old and new...

At the end of October 2002 our elder son realised a long-held dream -to return to Ghana so that he could "make real" the place of his birth and "put in context" the photos and stories of his early years. These were spent at Adisadel College in Cape Coast where my husband was on the staff from 1954 to 1959.

Unfortunately Bert's health prevented him from travelling with us, but we were joined by John's wife, Adele, whose curiosity was roused as our plans developed. Arrangements were made through Ghana Travel Ltd. and, in view of my advancing years(!), we opted for the comfortable accommodation now available -at a price. To give some reality and substance to what might otherwise be purely a tourist trip, I made some contacts in the Cape Coast area with the help of Ghana School Aid and our local Anglican parishes, who, by happy coincidence, are linked with the Cape Coast Diocese. Our first two nights were spent in a very up-market complex at Labadi, right on the shore, with every possible 'mod. con.'. Plans for the day around Accra were frustrated by Sunday opening hours and a downpour of rain. We soon realised that the 'small' rains were still very much in evidence and the clear sunny days I had led them to expect would not be the norm. Accra was very busy and noisy, even on a Sunday, too full of people and cars with all the problems that brings, including massive traffic jams. We needed the services of the driver who came with the hire car.

The next stage was a 5-night stay just west of Elmina village, at another beach resort, the 'Coconut Grove', superbly, even idyllically, set right by the sea. The staff were friendly and helpful, the rooms simple but roomy and comfortable, and the local food included freshly caught fish. As we ate our meals in the open-air restaurant we could watch people walking along the sandy beach only yards away or, at night, the lights of the fishing boats dipping up and down on the invisible, but not inaudible, Atlantic waves.

During this time we accomplished the real reason for this journey -revisiting Adisadel and also Mfantshipim, where many of our 'ex-pat' friends had lived; identifying and photographing the bungalows we had occupied; and even finding the hospital in Takoradi where John was born. 'Adisco' was busy. Students, smart in their black and white uniforms, filled every available space, including the chapel. A list of exam results showed success for a small group in ceramics, and good use of the kiln presented by GSA in memory of Peter Thompson. At Takoradi District Hospital, as it is now called, we received an especially warm welcome from the nurses (resplendent in their crisp

white uniforms). The maternity unit still cares for mothers and their babies. It was all made worthwhile by the satisfied grin on John's face and by the delighted greetings from the people we met as the reason for our visits dawned on them. We were concerned, though, to see empty beds, even wards, in the hospital -the result of a 'cash-and-carry' system and trained staff being tempted to work in richer countries?

Consciences were also disturbed by visits to the castles at Cape Coast and Elmina. both World Heritage sites, complete with displays, videos, leaflets, guides and gift shops. The stories and the slave dungeons have lost none of their horror. We spent some time with two of the now rare breed of 'ex-pats', Alan and Pam Harvey, Methodist Mission Partners, and we called on the Anglican Archdeacon and his family at Saltpond, where we were warmly received. The Methodist bookstore still exists in the centre of Cape Coast. The upper floor now houses a very interesting Women's Project: training young women in dyeing and sewing cloth and providing a retail outlet for their goods. It was simple, straightforward and very practical -all good points in my view.

Cape Coast, like Accra, has grown in size and population. On our way from the town to our hotel we would pass the modern university campus, a simple village of mud-walled thatched huts, and a varied collection of homes, hotels and bars along the coast, before threading our way through overcrowded Elmina. The range of lifestyles is huge; tourism and the exchange rate cannot but emphasise it. At c.12,000 cedis to the £1, local goods were very cheap to us, even when prices were 'adjusted' for non.Ghanaians.

Our last day in the Cape Coast area started us on the tourist trail with a visit to the Canopy Walk in an area of preserved forest 20 miles inland. It was a hot, tiring but fascinating experience. On balance, we were not too sure whether the couple of days in Kumasi were worth two days driving along pot-holed roads, first from Cape Coast and then (the longer one) to Accra, the latter in appalling weather along a road that is obviously busy and dangerous, judging by the immobile and wrecked vehicles along the way. However we did spend an interesting day by and on Lake Bosomtwe and Adele returned home with a splendid professional drum from the Kumasi Craft Centre. Once again some places of interest were closed, this time because of a death in the Asantehene's family but I was glad we saw Kumasi with its huge and impressive market. Visits to the Cultural Centre and an historic shrine gave John and Adele a glimpse of African tradition and they realised it is still significant today.

We left Ghana after another grey and damp day spent at Aburi and arrived at heathrow on a bright clear sunny morning.

A couple of days later, crossing the car park on my way to our local shops, I was overwhelmed by the quiet around me - no tooting horns, no competitive calls, no lively chatter, no revving engines. I was back in Britain again.

Joyce Perry

A visit to Ghana

One of our members very thoughtfully sent in details of a trip to Ghana organised by the British Museum, which will take place from 1 -11 November 2003, at a cost of £2250. The itinerary includes stays at Accra, Cape Coast and Kumasi, with visits to Obuasi and Lake Bosumtwi, Keta and a cruise on Lake Volta. Although initially attractive, committee members felt that there would be very limited opportunity to visit any of "our" schools and no opportunity to travel to the north.

The committee wondered if GSA should arrange to make, for a third time, its own visit. There were very successful trips in 1990 and 1995, but on two occasions since then there has been insufficient support to make a visit financially viable. One additional difficulty is that Africa Travel which previously helped with transport and hotels has now gone out of business.

This prompted me to get in touch with Explore Worldwide. This travel firm is running eleven trips to Ghana this year, with small groups of 12 -16 people. Each visit lasts for 15 days and, starting from Accra, goes to Ada, Nkwanta, Tamale, the Mole Game Reserve, Kumasi, Cape Coast and back to Accra. I spoke to one of the tour directors who said that if we were a group of about 16 then a separate tour would be run for us, upgrading some of the accommodation. [Two nights are spent at camp sites, at one of which we would have to pitch our own tents!] Although we would probably have to follow their usual route there could be some flexibility about stopping places. The cost of their standard tour varies from £1145 -£1195, plus a local tax of US\$ 215 [approx. £140]. Insurance is £69 and we would have to pay for 13 lunches and 11 evening meals. I'm sure this matter will come up for discussion at the AGM but I have been sent some detailed itineraries and if you would like one in advance please 'phone me, Pamela Lewis, at 01591 610479.

Thanks to Ted Mayne for arranging the printing of the newsletter and enclosures, and special thanks to Rod Earle for design and layout of the newsletter

Institute of Education Centenary Reunion

by Dr. Lyn Skinner

(Note: at last year's Lunch which was held in Golden Jubilee week, I mentioned that another "golden jubilee" was involved: 50 years since Eric Cunningham, Brice Bending, Guy Jackson, John Glover, John Whittingham and I arrived at Takoradi. Subsequently, some of us, former students of the Institute of Education, attended its Centenary Reunion, which also celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the (then) Colonial Department where we had trained. Lyn's note which follows describes this event.E.E)

Several supporters of GSA were students at the Institute of Education in London after the War and in the early 1950s before being posted overseas. Last November the Institute celebrated its centenary with a week-end of activities. Old students came from all over the world. At most reunions you are lucky to meet even one old friend from the past. At the I of E reunion no less than five of us had worked in Ghana and easily outnumbered the contingents from other countries who contributed their memories of the former Colonial Department. In our group were Eric Earle, Eric Cunningham, Richard Graves, 'Robbie' Roberts, and Lyn Skinner. As you know, Eric Earle worked at the Institute after leaving Ghana, as Assistant/Deputy Secretary and as Secretary from 1974 to 1988. His personal contacts at the Institute with Ghanaian students (eg Kofi Ohene), his liaison with the Ghana High Commission and his and Auriol's hospitality to Ghanaians at their home in Guildford have been of tremendous benefit to the work of Ghana School Aid.

OBITUARIES

R.G.S. (Guy) Jackson.

All who knew Guy will have been saddened to learn of his death, which occurred in March 2002. After graduating in History at Leicester University, Guy went to the Gold Coast in August 1952, one of six Education Officers arriving (after a year's course at the Institute of Education) to help implement the new Accelerated Development Plan for Education (1951). It was a time of rapid change, with the introduction of free primary education and the enlargement of the secondary school and teacher training sectors, following the political change of internal self-government under Kwame Nkrumah. Guy was posted initially to Koforidua District and subsequently to Accra, Kumasi and TV/T (Volta Region), engaged in helping to implement the enormous expansion programme and responding to the stimulus of rapid moves to full independence. He left Ghana in 1959 and returned to Leicester where he taught History in two secondary schools, in the second of which he

was Deputy Head for some 18 years. He is remembered by former pupils for his enthusiastic and inspirational teaching. The early death of his wife Ruth who had shared his life in Ghana was a devastating blow. Guy devoted himself to bringing up their son, Guy junior, who was only 10 when his mother died, and took pride in his successful career, currently at Loughborough University. Later in life Guy married again and he and Kath took part in the second Ghana Visit in 1995. He was delighted to visit some of his former postings, notably in identifying his former bungalow in Kpandu (in a day's trip which included the Volta Dam and Amedzofe); and thus to share his memories with Kath who, though new to Ghana, threw herself into the visit and enjoyed it enormously. Subsequently she has been very supportive of GSA.

Sadly, in 1999, Guy learned he had myeloma but bore both the news and the often unpleasant treatment with fortitude. In his last few months in particular he suffered much pain which he accepted stoically. Guy is remembered by his friends for the sharpness of his mind, his generosity of spirit, and a strong but subtle sense of humour. He will be missed by many. Our deep sympathies go to Kath and his son.

Eric Cunningham

A.F. (Tony) Neale.

Tony arrived in the Gold Coast in 1947 (1948?) in the group of education officers who followed the first post-war group of Jack Bannochie, Robbie, Tom Buchanan, et al; and included A.G.Jones (Jonah) and Geoffrey Winter. He served in various Districts/Regions, including Ho where he succeeded JMB (I recall as newly-joined 'P schedule' officer in the Regional Office in Cape Coast, having problems with his notorious handwriting in confidential reports - I realise this is a pot/kettle question! and Cape Coast where he acted as regional Assistant Director. After he took early retirement from the Education Department (Ministry) he had a spell as Secretary of the West African Cocoa Research Institute at Tafo. When he returned to England he worked for the Foreign Compensation Commission, a quasi-legal branch of the Foreign Office, where he met his wife Brenda (who accompanied him to the first Ghana Reunion in 1986 and some of the subsequent annual lunches).

He then worked for a number of years as a senior administrator at the Institute of Education, where he and I were close colleagues and where he made many friends. In retirement he did work for the Church Records and he and Brenda travelled, and spent happy times at their cottage in Somerset. We shall miss Tony and we extend our sympathy to his widow, Brenda.

Eric Earle

Membership list

The list has now been compiled by Pamela Lewis, for which very many thanks for all the work involved. A copy is enclosed as an attachment to this newsletter. Pam has provided the following note about it: Half our members requested that their names be included in a membership list. All the information sent in the forms was reproduced, though sometimes abbreviated and rearranged to fit in with the general layout. Names, dates and locations in Ghana were typed in bold print so that members would find it quick and easy to scan the list for familiar names and places. Unfortunately, this led to the need for a second list, since there came a moment when my rather ancient word processor refused to accept any more "character attributes" into the first document. I could have inserted the last few replies but without being able to use bold type and I thought this might cause confusion. The existence of a second list will also make it easier to add names if more members wish to be included in any future list.

Pamela Lewis.

Science award

A recent item in the TES reads: "*Ghana wins award. A teacher from Ghana has won the first-ever Alexander Award for women science teachers. Mary Gyang, President of the Ghana Association for Science Teachers, received the award which is for women teachers who have made a significant contribution to science education in situations of scarce resources*". Lynne Symonds reports that this award was established by Mary Harris, a mathematics educator, in honour of her late father, Sir Norman Alexander, sometime Professor of Physics at Ibadan and first Vice-Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University. Mary Gyang is noted for her tireless work in the scientific education of girls in Ghana.

School links

A feature of the past year has been the establishment of a number of links between schools in the UK and Ghana. Examples are: the Powerstock (Bridport, Dorset)/Gbullung(NR) Community Partnership, which Catherine Batten described at the Lunch two years ago; the York/Fanteakwa Link with which John Hampshire is much involved; the Polesworth (Warwicks)/Pampawie Link (they contacted us via the Charity Commission). Undoubtedly there are many more; and many potential links too. Dennis Trussler has volunteered to build up and coordinate information in this field and Wendy Spratling has also offered to help. So we may anticipate more news on this topic in future newsletters.

Fair Trade Chocolate

Some of you may have watched the Panorama programme on 9 March about unfair tariffs, with Ghana as one of the examples in relation to tomatoes. If you buy Divine chocolate, available in some supermarkets as well as Oxfam shops you will be helping to support the Kuapa Kokoo cooperative and ensure that Ghanaian growers get a guaranteed price for their beans - and it tastes very good! (There was an article about it in Guardian Education, 15 October 2002). Another interesting development is The Chocolate Tasting Club (which your Chairman has joined); they have joined up with a Ghana-based charity, the Green Tropics Group, and are giving help to a JS school in Osuben in the heart of the cocoa-growing region. Their newsletter has an article titled "An Ethical Approach" giving details of this project (address for interested chocaholics: CTC, Mint House, Royston, SG8 5HL).

The travels of Nana

Our Representative in Ghana, Michael Asiedu (Nana ATTANUAMAH III) will, if all goes according to plan, be attending the AGM and Annual Lunch on 29 May and making various visits during his stay in the UK. His provisional programme is as follows: arrive London 24 May and travel to York, where John Hampshire and Mary Allen will be responsible for his programme; from 29 May to 3 or 4 June he will be based in Guildford with Eric and Auriol Earle; then to Chichester with Eric Cunningham, c4 to 7 June; in Bath with Alan and Elisabeth Mayhew 8 to 10 June (including a visit to Bristol (James Gibbs); then to Exmouth where Dennis and Elsie Trussler will look after him (10 to 13 June) and on to Cheltenham with Geoff and Myrtle Pitchford and Leamington Spa with Stanley and Ann Anthony (13/14 to 18 June); finally a few days in Norwich with Lynne Symonds (the Wulugu Project) before departing for the USA to visit his daughter in Chicago. If you would like to be in contact with Michael at any of these locations please contact Eric Earle (01483 562690) for the phone no. of the relevant host if you haven't got it.

A note about Michael for those who do not know him: he was educated at St. Augustine's College, Cape Coast (where one of his teachers was Richard Graves) and at the University of Ghana. He became an education officer and was a particular friend of Brice Bending; on promotion in the 1960s, he became Assistant Director i/c Teacher Training in the Ministry of Education and in that capacity knew Madge Claxton when she was at the British Council in Accra. He subsequently achieved high office in the Civil Service, becoming a Permanent Secretary; after retirement from that post he became



Nana Michael and Mrs Victoria Asiedu

Executive Secretary of the Ghana Olympic Committee for the Barcelona Games. He also became a traditional chief in his home town of Asin Achiase near Cape Coast. If I have got any of this wrong, Michael can correct it / add to it in the next issue! E.E.

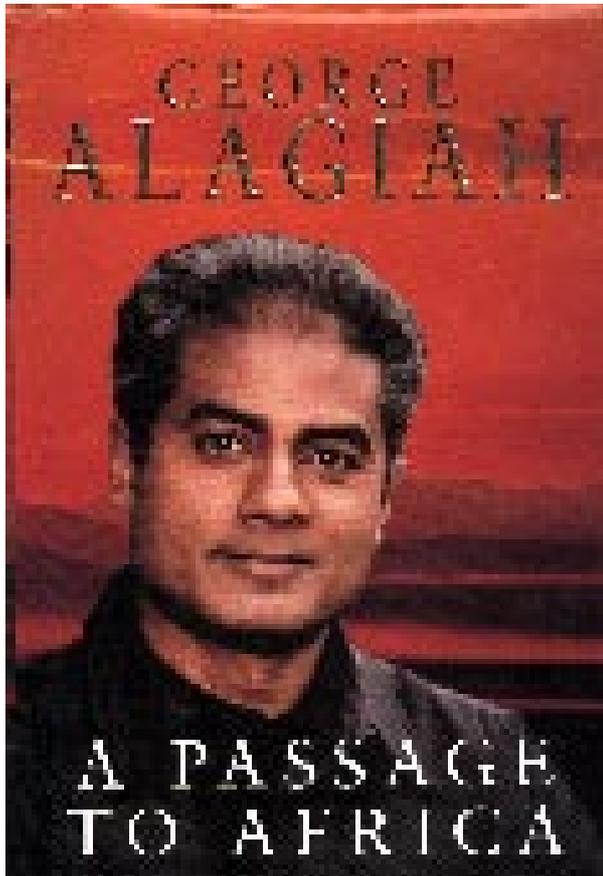
Teaching reading

MARY ALLEN, widow of David Allen (former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health) has devised a linguistic programme to teach reading with particular reference to word recognition - called COME AND READ. It takes the syllables of the English language, shapes them into patterns and puts them to music. She has tried it out with 60 children aged 6/7 in Grahamstown township South Africa and recently sent a CD rom to Michael Asiedu with a view to the programme being tried out in Ghana. More news next time, hopefully.

Memoirs

A few years ago, some 16 members sent in personal accounts of their lives and experiences in Ghana. For various reasons, it has not been possible to publish these up to now, but Eric Cunningham is now working on the texts with a view to putting these accounts together in a volume for circulation / purchase at a modest cost. More news on this subject soon.

Book Reviews



**George Alagiah. *A Passage to Africa*
Little Brown and Company 2001**

The Alagiah family emigrated to Ghana from Ceylon in 1961 and George went to primary school in Accra from arrival, aged six, until he went to a boarding school in England seven years later. Those years in Ghana gave him his identity and, returning to Africa some twenty years later as the BBC's African Correspondent he saw, heard and felt as an African. Combined with great integrity and the disciplines of a journalist's training these qualities give *A Passage to Africa* special authority. He sets out to chronicle 'what freedom's children had made of themselves and their continent' Sadly the book's momentum comes from the correspondent's stories from ill-governed countries, most of them torn by conflict or governed by brutality. The counterpoint of western intervention, cold war rivalry and self interested economic advantage is exposed without rancour or exaggeration, and the more telling for its muted emotion.

Set against concise historical contexts and described in vivid prose, the stories of violent lawlessness are chilling. They include the exposure of reporters to danger, told without over-emphasis. The scenes unfold first in Liberia with its boy soldiers 'product of a sick society, the victims of a continent that has failed to provide for its most vulnerable people.' Then Somalia with murderous groups and clans fighting among themselves using weaponry left behind by Americans and Russians, then ganging up against the "Americans when their well-intentioned intervention brought catastrophe". Next Rwanda's appalling genocide, the evasions and' excuses of the rich world and 'awkward

questions - of where the weapons came from.' So to Zaire, the context of Mobutu's accession (with western help) and, thirty years on, his removal and the murder of his replacement Kabila.

The complexities and balance of culpability in Zimbabwe's story are particularly well done. The mistakes, ruthlessness and deceptions of Robert Mugabe are exposed in all their awfulness, but also the constraints of the Lancaster House agreements and the failure of many whites to respond to the offer of belonging to an inclusive society. He defines the moral dilemma too; white farmers' land was held legally, but belonged morally to the people of Zimbabwe from whom it had been expropriated. Against these are the pragmatic dimension of national economic needs and awareness of environmental issues. These accounts of lost visions and lost faith are relieved by hope in two chapters. In South Africa 'Mandela's miracle', though unique, showed what new freedoms can deliver in democratic societies. There are success stories to recount here, but nagging long term problems too: inadequate education, increased criminality especially in poorer, mainly black, areas and unresolved tensions between ethnic communities. He sees Mandela as the last of the freedom fighters who came to govern, not the first of a new kind of leader. He finds this in Uganda's Museveni 'arguably Africa's greatest success story'. His rounded view includes strictures against Obote the dictator and Amin the brutal tyrant and the West's connivance at Amin's coup. But Museveni's style is perhaps a symbol of the new generation of African leaders. The confident spirit of newly independent Ghana still drives George Alagiah's personal optimism. It will resonate with those who knew Africa then and who experienced it subsequently. Media priorities probably reduced his opportunities to experience more of Africa's achievements; his job took him to more disasters than successes. His optimistic belief will cheer, but the main stories will sadden and the taint of western policies should give pause for serious thought.

David Bradshaw

Thomas Hodgkin: Letters from Africa 1947-1956

A few years ago, there appeared on UK postage stamps the likeness of Dorothy Hodgkin, Oxford scientist and Nobel Laureate. Some of us may have met her in the late -1940s and 1950s when she came with her husband Thomas during one of his visits on behalf of the Oxford University Delegacy for Extra-Mural Studies of which for a while he was Secretary. Thomas Hodgkin Letters from Africa 1947-1956 (Haan Associates, 2000) are letters, for the most part to Dorothy, written during seven trips, three of which included the Gold Coast. These are well edited and annotated by his daughter and his future biographer, Michael Wolfers. Thomas was a charming chap, a great lover of Africa and of aspiring Africans. In 1947, under the aegis of the Colonial Office, he came to the Gold Coast keen to use his expertise to

*Schools on The
Line:
- presentation
to Afiénya JSS,
by Nana
Michael Asiedu
2 July 2002*



introduce high quality adult education. He was allowed only a fortnight in February but in that time met some sixty officials and educationists and prepared the ground for J.A. Maclean to come a few months later. Maclean established classes in Accra, Cape Coast, Sekondi and Kumasi; lecturing and tutoring in each town each week, insisting on written work from those who attended, he set high standards. From this developed the Peoples Educational Association (PEA). Ghana owes a great deal to JA Maclean and to Thomas Hodgkin for sending him. These letters give some excellent pictures of the closing years of the colonial period, of aspiring African nationalism, of the sorrows and joys of travelling privately in Islamic and Francophone Africa, in the Sudan and East Africa. Thomas met interesting people, including in Timbuktu a French sergeant-chef who had acquired seven 'wives' in 9 months, each costing £4 to ú6. He clearly obtained a good impression of Jack Marshall and John Wilson of the Gold Coast Education Department. He met Sir Thorlief Mangin; it would be interesting to know what passed between Hodgkin, an ex-communist, and the Chief Commissioner of the Colony Region who considered Maclean to be a member of the CP and was not uncritical of educational work. Sadly, there is no mention of some whom Thomas might have met including Kofi Busia, George deGraft Johnson and W.W.Sawyer of "Mathematician's Delight". Harold and Doreen Ingram are noted but not by name. A pity he never got to Guinea to meet Sekou Toure, great trade unionist and later President who received the deposed Nkrumah as Co-President. One cannot do everything or meet everyone one would wish to see when travelling on a limited budget; after 1952, Thomas was living largely upon his journalism. The fruits of his travels

and study were his articles in 'West Africa' and elsewhere and his books from Nationalism in Colonial Africa (1956) onwards. Later, Thomas was Director of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana (1962-65). For more about this interesting scholar and great friend of Africa do read these enjoyable Letters and his biography by Michael Wolfers.

E.D.Roberts

GSA WEB-SITE

At the end of last year my son-in-law, Michael Hammer, set up for me and my wife an e-mail facility. He was also able to provide one for GSA as well, and further to create a GSA website for us. Running the website will cost around £25+ VAT annually. Initially it is proposed to place on the website a modified version of the GSA pamphlet with a map of showing the location of GSA projects since 1987. This will be supported by a changing series of articles - mainly from the newsletter. The site is currently under construction and further details will be announced soon.

Just a final note about books, in addition to the two reviewed: William Boyd's latest "**Any Human Heart**" is a marvellous tour through the literary world of the twentieth century (and includes a Ghanaian character, Dr Kwaku Okafor).

"**The Shadow of the Sun - My African Life**" by journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski starts in Ghana 1957. Ammatta Forna's Sierra Leone father was murdered by Siaka Stevens; her book "**The Devil that Danced on Water**" describes her childhood in Sierra Leone and subsequent return;

AND please do write in with any comments on this newsletter or with suggestions for future items, perhaps 'Letters to the Editor'!