

Ghana School Aid



LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Looking back

This has been an interesting year and our nicely prepared newsletter gives an accurate outline to the projects we have been supporting. The classroom project at the University of Cape Coast Primary School is probably the most ambitious we have taken on and although it is very much in its embryo stage, once moving it should soon be finished. The Sandema project under the watchful eye of Patrick Heinecke is another Ghanaian charity we are supporting and in September we donated £2500.00 towards sewing machines, looms, thread, plus helping to support staff salaries. The Sandema project was desperately short of funding and it was encouraging that the entire committee was united in its support to help keep the school running. The Ghanaian schools which have links in the United Kingdom are ones we like to encourage and these are covered in this newsletter. We shall however encourage more links and these are in the able hands of Letitia Boateng.

Our annual reunion and AGM this year was back at the John Adams Hall. We last assembled there five years before and it has now been refurbished. It proved to be an ideal venue and the plans are to reassemble there again in 2009. Our guest speaker was Jon Snow who arrived by bicycle and gave us an illuminating address, putting great emphasis on his love for Ghana. Those who watch his news programme [Channel 4 News] will recognise his Kente cloth ties, one of which he wore at the AGM, which was very well attended. We had input from the Wulugu Project and a representative from Christian Aid attended and brought with her details of the work they are doing in Ghana. Two of our patrons could not attend, but sent their apologies. Paul Boateng is still our High Commissioner in South Africa and is having an interesting time after spending nearly four years there.

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Lynda Chalker is still active with her charity work in Africa and maintains her enthusiasm towards anything to do with Ghana. Hopefully they will be able to come to our meeting next year. The Ghana High Commission was as usual well represented and they remain supportive of our work. As I draft this letter there are elections taking place in Ghana, but whatever the result there will be no change in our relations with the country.



John Snow addressing the AGM in June 2008

Looking forward

We shall continue searching for projects to support and one of our newer members, Anna Corbett, has some very good ideas about fund raising. More school links will be encouraged. Identifying worthwhile projects is not always easy but we are happy our representative in Ghana, Kofi Ohene, has now moved to Accra. He has now retired after

relinquishing his post at the University of Cape Coast and is in a position to take a good look at any project which needs our support. As a group we are well aware of Ghana's needs and today, fifty-two years after independence, the population has almost tripled. Most of the increase is under the age of eighteen and for them education remains a priority. It is our intention to look more at the northern regions where schools are suffering due to lack of funds and we also want to concentrate more on education for girls.

Thanks

The committee has been wonderful throughout the year. They all turn up regularly to our quarterly meetings travelling long distances. I would particularly like to mention Stanley Anthony who has kept the books right up to date, and Jennifer MacDougall, whose efforts have made the publication of this newsletter possible. Thank you Stanley and Jennifer.

A special mention of Eric Cunningham who has been unwell recently and is unable to attend committee meetings. We wish him a speedy recovery and all of us think of him with affection especially in his work to produce the Memories book which has been so popular.

So on we go, and I wish you all the best and I am always happy to hear from any of our members at any time.

Ted Mayne

THE FOURTH GENERATION OF TREGIDGOS TEACH IN GHANA - A Visit in July 2007

By Stephen Tregidgo

Luke Tregidgo taught for three months at the Cape Coast University School from May to July in 2007. In doing so he became the fourth member of the Tregidgo family to teach in Ghana. Best known amongst the four generations was Philip Tregidgo, Luke's grandfather, who first went to Ghana in January 1954. Philip's first post, with Vera his wife, was at Winneba Teacher Training College, then moving to Tamale, onto Accra and thence to Cape Coast and Saltpond. He returned to England in 1963 to write the Practical English series published by Longmans.

What of the other two generations? First to teach there was Philip's uncle, William (Will) Tregidgo who as a lay Methodist missionary taught at Cape Coast in 1926 before moving to Southern Rhodesia (as was) in 1927. He spent the next fifty years of his life there returning to England in 1977.

Following Philip in 1970 was myself, Stephen, Philip's eldest child, who went out to teach for a year as a VSO at St Martin's Secondary School, Nsawam-Adoagyri about 30 miles north of Accra. Philip had another son, Mark, and daughter, Jane-Ann - and Luke is Mark's son, my nephew. Thus the chronology is Will Tregidgo (1926-27), Philip Tregidgo (1954 to 1963), Stephen Tregidgo (1970-71) and Luke Tregidgo (2007).

Why the visit? Luke did an MEng in Aeronautical Engineering at Southampton University and as I live in Lee-on-Solent, being near to Southampton, so Luke and I would meet up at least once a term. As his degree course was coming to an end in 2006, we spoke of his plans on completion. These included spending time travelling in Australia and the Far East, returning to this country via the Trans-Siberian railway and plane home from Russia. Having secured his Ghana work visa, he would then go out to teach there for 3 months as a volunteer.

In my saying how wonderful that would be and how much I had always wanted to go back to Ghana and take Jan my wife to see some of the places I had experienced, Luke threw down the challenge "Well, why don't you both come out for a couple of weeks when I finish teaching?" It was the catalyst I needed and plans to do so started to be made. My brother, Mark and his partner Jo, also decided to make the trip.



So, in July 2007 the four of us left Heathrow for Accra where we stayed for the first the three nights at the Crown Apartments - very nice with a pool etc. We visited the national museum, went to Ridge Hospital, where my brother was born in 1954, and sought out the house in which we had lived in Accra in 1960/61. Mark took his birth certificate with him and when showing it at the Information Point for the hospital was totally mobbed with great enthusiasm, as "you are Ghanaian"! The house we had lived in, if it was the right one and it did look the right one, is now in the middle of the Accra Polytechnic site!

On our second day we went to the school at which I taught - and was received with huge enthusiasm! The school had changed out of almost all recognition from 37 years ago - and all the better

for the progress that has been made. We were shown round by four of the prefects - the bungalow I lived in was still there. We had to make a speech to the assembled staff and explained that not only had I taught at the school but Mark and I had lived in Ghana as children and that our father, P.S. Tregidgo, on his return from Ghana with the family in 1963, had written a 5 series secondary school text book for learning English called 'Practical English'. At this point there were nods of recognition around the staff room (numbering about 50 staff) and the Head interrupted and asked everyone to put up their hand who had been taught English using the series - and about half did - including the Head!!



We then went into the village close to the school where I had made a number of excellent friends in 1970/71. I had taken a series of photos with me and together with piecing together my memory and asking people, tracked down a number of them and ended up at the "Love All Bar" where I had spent quite a bit of time in 70/71! I had a photo of the Love All Bar - and it looked exactly the same with the same lettering and colours. Of course word got

around that I was there and then others came over as well - so it was a really emotional day all round!

We then left to go to Anomabu, near Cape Coast, staying at the Anomabu Beach Resort Hotel which was truly brilliant - right on the sand and with a terrific 'planter's' type building as a restaurant overlooking the beach and sea - waves breaking in the moonlight etc - fantastic! On our way there we went into Winneba where our first house was when we arrived in 1954. We found it and even though I was only two and a half when we went there - I recognised it straight away. To this day, my mother's house in Petersfield is called 'Winneba'!

We also found the houses we lived in at Saltpond (including the cat-flap in the garage door which my father personally cut - it was still there - and at Cape Coast.

We then went over to the village where Luke had made some superb friends - early on a Sunday morning to see the village team play football. The pitch was a site to behold - I'm sure readers who have been to Ghana can remember them, little bits of grass here and there, great pot holes and even ravine-like gashes in it - and talk about sloping - and yet the standard of football was really high.



I had managed through some contacts at home to get hold of 11 proper authentic Portsmouth FC shirts and took them out with me for Luke to 'present' to the team - they were so pleased and wore them during the second half with huge pride. We then went back to his friend's family 'home' in the middle of this village. Although there was clearly very little money around, their welcome was overwhelming. Luke had clearly made a huge impact and was accepted totally

by them - the elder (Luke knew him as 'Uncle Kofi') telling me that Luke was a great man, he had come to their house, he had eaten their food like a Ghanaian, he was a truly good man!

We went to Elmina castle before then going off to Lake Bosumptwe Hotel – a truly 'magical' place. We visited Kumasi and my wife Jan, being a textile artist and teacher, wanted to see Adrinka printing and Kente cloth being made.



So we went to Ntonso (for Adrinka printing - doing some ourselves); and to Adanwomase (rather than Bonwire) for a most wonderful tour of the whole village and the whole process of making Kente from the spinning of the thread to the final sewing together of all the strips of Kente to make the cloth. At every stage we were encouraged to have a go ourselves - including on the looms. Fantastic!!!

From there, we went back to the hotel at Anomabu because we liked it so much and basically 'chilled' - although took in Cape Coast castle and the Methodist church there which we are sure my Uncle Will must have attended in 1926/27. We also went down to a church in Sekondi that is linked to one here - we're not church goers ourselves but a friend here who is told us about the link and said we should visit - so we did and got a magnificent welcome, taken to visit the Bishop and then to lunch. Visiting the Bishop was reminiscent of the visit at the beginning to St Martins Secondary school. In telling the Bishop about the 'four generations of Tregidgo teachers' and my father's books, he told the story of how he could remember being at school, about to start an English

lesson when the teacher told them to put away the books they were using because a grand new textbook was now being introduced – his P.S. Tregidgo and P.Ogundipe 'Practical English'.

In summary, it was a most fantastic visit, full of memories, of emotions and stories. Ghanaian's remain the wonderfully friendly people that I remember both as a child and as 'volunteer'. Jan, who had heard so much about Ghana from me and the rest of the family, loved it too – so much so that we intend to return but this time to tour the north. For me, visiting Tamale, Bolga(tanga) and Bawku would be returning to places I have been to – to Jan it would be a completely new experience again. I do feel a very strong bond with Ghana – I do wonder whether a fifth generation Tregidgo might make it there in 20/30 years time – a century of Tregidgo's would be quite a story!

A MARATHON EFFORT FOR GSA

By Ruth Court

[In April 2008 Ruth Court (daughter of GSA member Wilfred Court) ran the London Marathon in aid of GSA, completing the race in an amazing time of 3 hours 52 minutes in spite of an injury, and raising over £1,380 (including gift aid) for our charity. This is her account of the race and background to it. Ed]

I am a lecturer in Equine Studies at Moulton College, near Northampton. I live in a quiet, picturesque village with my aging Labrador, Trevor, and a Shetland pony, Billy. Although horses are my main passion in life, I am a keen long distance runner and I run for the Northampton Road Runners Club, competing over 10 kilometres, half marathon and marathon distances. The London Marathon this year was my fourth marathon.

I have childhood memories or stories of my Dad's travels and time spent in Africa – notably Ghana, but also Nigeria (where my two older sisters spent their first years). There have been many familiar place names mentioned over the years, but the best remembered is about Dad [being responsible for] the

Flame of African Freedom lit by President Nkrumah when he gave his “Dawn Broadcast”. He also participated in letting off the firework display at the Queen’s visit in 1961.

So when my Dad asked if I would like to go with him on a trip to Ghana I jumped at the opportunity, and on July 27th 2007 we set off on our two week visit. When I say we set off, that’s not exactly true because due to a somewhat significant engine problem with our plane we actually spent the first three days in a hotel in Heathrow. Although it was a particularly nice hotel with a splendid view of the runway it was not quite the start to our holiday we had expected. It is worth adding that neither had we expected not to have our luggage for the first week of the trip.....but that is an entirely different story!!



Wilfred and Ruth Court at Lake Bosomtwe, August 2007

I was not really sure what to expect when we arrived in Ghana, although I knew I would see many new sights and experience a different country and culture. What immediately struck me was the overwhelming kindness and graciousness of the people we met. Everyone was so welcoming wherever we went, and I can still picture children and adults alike smiling and waving at our bus as we drove past. As we were behind schedule we flew to Tamale and then went by

bus to Bolgatanga. From there we worked our way south via Mole Game Reserve, Kumasi, Axim, Elmina and Cape Coast to Accra. I could talk for hours about all the wonderful things we saw, but I would at least like to share my main memories with you.

We visited two schools. The first was the Girls’ Vocational Training School at Buipe, part of the Wulugu Project (well known to and supported by GSA) where we observed classes such as hairdressing, cloth weaving and typewriting. The students were so delighted we had visited. I bought some beautiful cloth that they had made there.

The “Deaf School” at Bechem was particularly enjoyable, even though we were a day late for our visit. Here we were privileged to see some incredible traditional dances by these talented children. This school is proposing to extend its teaching to the blind also, and we have suggested that it is worthy of help from GSA. [*The GSA Committee subsequently agreed to give the school at Bechem £2000. Ed.*]

A happy memory was meeting a school teacher at Mole Game Reserve. I was sitting next to this interesting gentleman while watching elephants in the lake. We got talking and he was marking some end of term exams. Being a lecturer by profession I was really interested to talk with him about schooling structures, curriculum and the subjects that he taught, and have a look at the work of some of the students.

I also remember the beautiful and elegant Ghanaian women who carried themselves with such perfect poise and posture and wore the most incredible dresses in beautiful fabrics. Then there were the immaculately dressed school children walking to school along dusty country roads and the goats in the road that really did not care if we had to get on with our journey... They would move as and when they wanted to!!

Very important people were our team leader Gabriel and the driver George who introduced me to some brilliant Ghanaian music and who ensured that I came home with plenty of CDs to play. These can often be heard when you are in the vicinity of my house or car. What memories they always bring!

And of course seeing the Flame of African Freedom: how fantastic to have stood there, me and my Dad, in Black Star Square next to the very thing I had heard so much about. That is a very special memory for me. (Father's note: The present one is a replacement: the one I did has rusted away).

Whilst in Ghana I had decided that if my entry for the 2008 London Marathon was accepted, I would like to raise some money for Ghana School Aid. I was delighted when my entry was confirmed, and training started in earnest before Christmas. Aiming at completing in 3 hours 30 minutes, training went really well with a half marathon personal best and a 20 mile race indicating that I was on target to achieve this time. Unfortunately, three weeks before the marathon I strained a ligament in my foot. So I set off for London on 13th April, having not run for three weeks and with plenty of painkillers! Not quite the preparation I had hoped for, but nothing was going to stop me from taking part.

Words can't describe the atmosphere of the London Marathon unless you have actually experienced it. Not just the camaraderie of the runners, but the amazing support from the crowds who lined the entire 26.2 mile route. Cheering, music, whistles and drums – a real motivation for tired legs. Through the residential streets of the East End and right through to the Mall, it was remarkable. I have to admit that I had forgotten just how painful and exhausting marathons are! Not just because from about mile two my foot was telling me that perhaps I really shouldn't be running on it, but an overwhelming tiredness, where every turn or unevenness in road surface causes discomfort. But I have learnt in the past that at whatever cost you must not stop and walk, because it is impossible to start again: everything just seizes up!! So I pressed on. I remember running over Tower Bridge because the noise from the crowds was so great – but many landmarks are passed without being noticed as you try to block out the pain and focus on keeping going! Of course the Embankment and the sight of the London Eye tells you that just round the corner are the Houses of Parliament, the Mall....and the finish. This is enough to give a final boost of energy to finish in a flourish and enjoy the feeling of

relief, pride and satisfaction. I completed the marathon in 3 hours 52 minutes. A little slower than hoped, but I was delighted to have been able to finish – all those months of training on cold dark winter nights, watching what I ate and drinking no alcohol, had come to a conclusion.

One of the most satisfying things about running the marathon, and also a huge motivational boost throughout training, is the knowledge that we have managed between us to raise some money for Ghana School Aid, and that as a result, children and young adults will actually benefit, even in some small way, from this. I am so pleased to have been able to help raise some funds for projects that your charity supports, and I absolutely plan to re-visit Ghana as soon as I can, and perhaps will be able to see how some of the sponsorship money has been utilised. Having experienced this wonderful country and its people, I cannot imagine that there will be a time in my life that I will not be looking forwards to my next visit. My niece has already said that she would like to accompany me to Ghana sometime in the future, so Dad can rest assured that the country will remain close to the hearts of his family for at least the next generation after me.

Thank you all so much for your generosity. My Dad also deserves a big thank-you as he was the one who did all the hard work of preparing and sending out forms and receiving money. Both he and my Mum seized every opportunity to collect money from friends and relatives. My foot was "a bit of a mess" to quote my physio, but that is healing, and my memories of the race and a wonderful trip to Ghana with my Dad will remain, along with the satisfaction of knowing that between us all we may have helped some of these wonderful children to get the start in life that they deserve.

Once again, thank you all so very much.



COMMUNITY LIBRARY PROJECT HIA

By Rita De-Graft, Ghana Nurses Association UK

[Rita attended the GSA AGM 2008 and is raising funds for a community health project in Hia, Ashanti Region, which includes a community library. GSA is supporting the establishment of the library with £1000 and also hoping to develop a school link. Ed.]

In the year 2000, 51 countries, including Ghana, endorsed the Millennium Declaration containing the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) to be achieved by the year 2015. The 8 MDGs are:

MDG 1 -Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

MDG 2 - Achieve universal primary education – Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary education

MDG 3 - Promote gender equality and empower women – Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

MDG 4 - Reduce Child mortality – reduce mortality rate of under fives by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015

MDG 5 - Improve maternal health – Cut maternal mortality ratio by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015

MDG 6 - Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases – Halt the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases

MDG 7 - Ensure environmental sustainability

MDG 8 - Develop a global partnership for development

Education remains the core factor, which underpins any effort, geared towards achieving the MDGs. Ghana's education system has undergone a series of changes within the past three decades. Notable progress is being made. However, there are still scores of school children that are not enrolled in schools. Those who are fortunate enough to access basic primary and secondary education often lack access to learning resources, putting them at a disadvantage in comparison to their counterparts in the cities and other urban areas.

The Ghana Library Board has 62 libraries throughout Ghana. According to a GLB report, its facilities offer

potential access to 25% of the population. This leaves 75% of the population with no access to libraries. The majority of rural village communities, including school children, fall within the 75% with no access to libraries. Hia is no exception.

Hia is located in the Ashanti region of Ghana, about 14.5 km from Obuasi with a population of about 2,100. The village has a government primary and Junior High School and a private international school serving 14 surrounding villages. Both the government and private schools have a combined population of 675 pupils, 342 males and 333 females from Nursery to Junior High School. A needs assessment visit to the village in December 2007 revealed that most of the children had no idea what a library is. None of the school children had used a library in their lifetime. Lack of access to books and other learning resources for the school children can hinder learning and limit their opportunities to broaden their horizon for personal and community development. A community library will not only encourage a reading culture and improve literacy levels but will also serve as a resource centre and vital information source for the community and hopefully contribute to achieving some of the MDGs.

In December 2007, the chief and elders of the village identified an old school block to be renovated and converted to a library. Since then, a six-member dynamic library project committee, based at Hia, has been formed and tasked with overseeing the renovation works and future running of the library. The committee has so far organised fundraising activities and banked 600 GH cedis in the library project account. In April 2008, the Ghana Nurses Association UK submitted grant proposals to Ghana School Aid and the Ghana International Foundation UK (part of Ghana International Bank UK) for completion of the library. Ghana School Aid approved a grant for £1000 in September 2008 for the renovation works, which is scheduled to start soon. Watch out for a progress report in the next issue. The Ghana International Foundation - UK is considering funding part of the library project.

For more information on the library project, please contact enquiries.gnauk@yahoo.com.

GSA SCHOOL LINKS 2008

School Links News

By Letitia Boateng (GSA Vice Chair and School Link Committee Member)

Unfortunately, due to my long absence from the UK [working in Ghana] there has been limited progress, especially in establishing new links. Some contacts have been made though, and three new links have been set up. The partnership between Nifa Secondary School and John Hanson Community School fell apart and the latter is now linked with Adukrom Technical School. Shalford Infant School is linked with Integrity Foundation School in Larteh. And lastly Greenfields Primary School in Shrewsbury is in partnership with Kanvilli Tawafikiya Primary in the north.

I have been in Ghana for more than a year trying to obtain a license to operate a pharmacy in my village, Abonse, where there is no clinic, doctor or a decent place to buy medicines. But the process to get approval from the Ghana Pharmacy Council has been painfully slow. However, assurance has been given that the permit will be issued by the end of the year (2008), fingers crossed. Despite the above some activities have taken place.

Link teachers meetings

In November 2007 I met with ten teachers from some of our link schools. They were Mampong School for the Deaf, Adukrom Technical School and Integrity Foundation School. The aim was to explain school linking and how to make it sustainable. By the end of the meeting everyone understood that linking is basically friendship between schools in different countries. Friendship in which students/pupils and teachers learn from each other, gain mutual understanding, and exchange ideas through regular communication without which the partnership or friendship will be shaky.

British Council Workshops

There was a workshop at Okuapemman facilitated by the British Council to help links which were falling apart. Another workshop organised by the Kumasi

branch of the British Council was held in Koforidua to look at “Building effective partnerships”. Teachers from link schools supported by GSA attended all the workshops.

Equal voices in linking

Margaret Burr of the Humanitarian Education Centre in Tower Hamlets and author of *Toolkit for Linking* has identified some problems in linking and is trying to find solutions. She realises that she can best do this by getting ideas from teachers on both sides of the link. At her request I organised a couple of meetings with teachers from Abonse and Aseseeso in July and August 2007. Problems looked at in depth included cultural differences, inadequate communication, commitment, transparency, attitudes due to colonialism, and lack of resources. Solutions suggested were sent to Margaret to add to those from UK teachers. Surely, when the results are published it will be invaluable to links throughout the world and to anyone interested in linking.

St John’s Ambulance

Mr James Gibbs of the Gibbs Foundation and his wife Patience organised a Lifesaver International first aid course in Abonse and in other towns in the Eastern Region. Sixteen learners from Abonse and Aseseeso attended the five-day workshop from 1st – 5th October 2007. The programme has helped to remove myths about certain illnesses such as epilepsy and convulsion which are believed in certain areas to be of spiritual origin. One young trainee put his knowledge into action when someone had a cut on the head and started bleeding profusely. When the casualty was taken to hospital the doctor commended the young man for his action and added that the injury could have been fatal. There is no doubt that first aid knowledge in communities will help to save lives. I would like to thank James and Patience sincerely for their efforts to help in the minimisation of unnecessary loss of life.

SoundAffects the world

SoundAffects is a new and interesting way of exchanging ideas between pupils/students of link schools through audio recordings. Penny Boreham of BBC Radio and her colleague Caroline Swinburn are the architects of this charitable programme. The objective is to enhance school links with pre-recorded high quality audio so children at both ends of links (and across the globe) can really benefit from relationships with their counterparts in the link and share in the learning process.

In July 2008 the pilot project brought Penny and Caroline to eight link schools in Ghana, three of which are links that GSA supports – Okuapemman, Aseseeso and Abonse. Questions from the UK link children were played to their Ghanaian friends, and answers and further questions were recorded on CDs to be sent back to their UK partners. A recording was also made of an exchange of ideas on gardening and foods the children like to eat and grow.

In the SoundAffects first audio newsletter children talked about AIDS and polygamy. What a splendid way for children to learn from each other! SoundAffects hopes that these audio relationships will grow and flourish in other schools in Ghana and throughout the world, and be an effective way of joining children together to learn about each other.

[See also below in News and Projects]

Exchanges

Miranda Liardet of Whitstone School visited Okuapemman with some colleagues to install computer equipment and satellite linking to help improve communication between their schools (see report below).

Five teachers from Cove Secondary School in Farnborough went to their friends at Aburi Girls. The Head of Aburi Girls had earlier visited Cove.

Two teachers and five students from John Hanson School, Andover, visited their old friends at Abonse. They took the opportunity to visit Adutech to discuss the possibility of linking with them. The result was positive. John Hanson was linked with Abonse JHS

but due to their size a more suitable link had to be found.

A curriculum programme exchange of three students and two teachers took place between John O'Gaunt School, Hungerford, and Aseseeso Junior High School.



John O'Gaunt pupils and teachers visiting Aseseeso for the curriculum project, on a trip to Accra

GSA Grants

As mentioned above, installation of computer equipment and satellite linking between Okuapemman and Whitstone became possible due to a GSA grant. Aseseeso JHS was granted £1,000 to repair leaking a roof and ceiling.



Aseseeso JHS with a part of the roof still to be completed, and freshly painted walls, July 2008

But at a meeting with teachers and the Aseseeso Link Committee and a separate meeting with Kofi Ohene (GSA Representative in Ghana) it was decided that replacing the whole roof would be better in the long term. The estimate for a new roof was much higher than the initial grant but, with the assistance of £400 from a friend of the UK link and a donation of £100 from John O’Gaunt, the school now has a new roof for all rooms except one. The Aseseeso-Abonse Association UK has provided funds for completion of the work.

Abonse Basic Schools had a GSA grant of £1000 for the electrification of the whole JHS block. This has been done and all three classrooms, library, office, veranda, and front and back of the block have lights. Fans have also been fitted in the library and the office.



Abonse JHS pupils under newly installed electric lighting, November 2007

Link history is made.

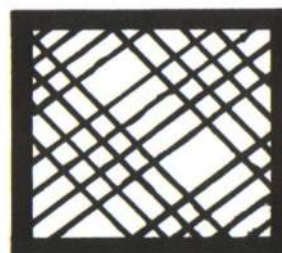
Records show that since 1994 Abonse Basic School’s performance has been very poor with a 0% pass rate in Junior High School examinations. Enrolment was poor because many children did not go to school at all, and there were only a handful of teachers. Nearby villagers refused to send their children to the school and some parents transferred their children to better schools in various towns outside Abonse. Adding insult to injury, there were no adequate text books, exercise books, pens, pencils, nor any teaching resources.

The crisis reached a point when the education authorities wanted to close the school down. Then,

miraculously, the link with Figheldean was established in 2004. “Manna had been sent from heaven”. There was such an immediate positive impact that people involved in the link (Anne Wilkins, the Aseseeso-Abonse Association, and myself) were amazed at the improvement within such a short time. Books started arriving in the school followed by a visit of two teachers from the link school, St Michael’s Primary School in Figheldean. This visit brought the attention of the Regional Director of Education to the school. New teachers began to arrive and their number has risen to 24 excluding 8 trainee teachers (mentees) each year from the Presbyterian Training College, Akropong. Fourteen mentees have been provided this year. School enrolment has increased since 2004 from 76 to almost 250, including children from neighbouring villages.

Further good news is that in 2007, for the first time since 1994, aggregate student passes in JHS exams reached 56%. History was made! The most heart warming achievement is that 12 students who would otherwise be cutting trees for charcoal and firewood are now in secondary schools under sponsorship organised by the link school in Figheldean. Teenage mothers and other disadvantaged individuals are learning dressmaking through the assistance of the UK link, which has also donated 5 sewing machines.

Ghana School Aid has been of tremendous help to the school and people of Abonse. During the crisis mentioned above they also provided badly needed desks, chairs and tables as well as other necessary classroom furniture. GSA did not stop there. In September 2007 they provided funds for the complete electrification of the school (as detailed above). One can say that Abonse School is now firmly placed on the right path and its success story will have a place in the history books of Abonse.



WHITSTONE SCHOOL AND OKUAPEMMAN LINK 2008

by *Miranda Liardet*



During February half term three of our staff spent a rewarding 8 days working with staff and pupils in our Ghanaian Link School Okuapemman. Mel Chadwick our science teacher taught biology to a year 1 class of 50 pupils.

Along with the Science teachers of Okuapemman Ben Mensah and Dzatse Newton, Mel Chadwick has initiated an exciting new joint curriculum project collecting weather data. The data will be exchanged via the internet every week and plotted by year 7 pupils on a large graph in the Science lab. The data will be analysed by pupils in Spring 2009.

Sam Baker, our ICT Manager, spent time with Okuapemman's new Head of ICT, Emmanuel



Akwabe. Due to a generous donation by Ghana School Aid, Sam was able to advise them in the purchase of printers, web cams and various cables which will aid our communication.

The highlight of the visit was a conference organised by Fred Jones Asante and Miranda Liardet to encourage schools in the Akuapem region to think

about linking with UK schools. The conference, supported by British Council Ghana, was highly successful. Over 200 delegates attended and a new support group in Akuapem area has now been set up.

In addition our staff were able to support the church



links that have been facilitated with Pilton and Peasedown Methodist churches in Somerset and Ebenezer Methodist Church in Apropong. The staff brought back warm greetings from the members and gifts for both churches. Whitstone and Okuapemman school pupils have developed an exciting new interschool and international project with Preston School, Yeovil and Sinai School in Ghana. Pupils from the two UK schools have been meeting every month to develop the ideas and have been



communicating with the Ghanaian schools using the internet and a newly established Skype link.

The project involves the UK schools collecting second hand paperbacks and shipping them to Ghana for the Ghanaian schools to sell, and the Ghanaian



schools making bags and jewellery out of recycled materials to ship to UK for our schools to sell.

All profits will go to ensuring pupil travel on the exchanges. The Business Enterprise group have named their company SWOP (Sinai, Whitstone, Okuapemman and Preston.) The biggest expense is the initial shipping of books from UK to Ghana. Fortunately GSA has again helped out this project with a donation towards the first shipment expense.



In July 2008 Whitstone hosted four teachers from Okuapemman: Mr Adams, Assistant Head teacher, Emmanuel Akwabe (ICT teacher), Franklin Otiebu (Art teacher) and Dzatse Newton (Science teacher). As well as visiting local places of interest the teachers observed lessons, taught lessons and developed project ideas with teachers at Whitstone.

Preparation for Pupil Exchange 2009

Preparations are already underway for this exciting pupil exchange in February 2009. The selection day was on March 8th. Ten pupils were selected and this year Whitstone decided to take two pupils as young



leaders giving them a chance to experience leading and mentoring the team. The young leaders have previously been to Ghana as part of Team Ghana 2007. At the end of September the whole team, which also includes four teaching staff, two support staff and a governor, went to Exmoor for a preparation weekend. The weather was very kind



and there was great opportunity for team building while walking and staying in Exford Youth Hostel. As an added bonus, a pupil from Preston School in Yeovil is also going to accompany us as an ambassador for his school. The team will be in Ghana from Feb 6th 2009 until Feb 18th. During this two week period they will be involved in joint project work in Okuapemman school (art, history and business enterprise), work experience placements in the community, visit the Methodist Church link and they will get to do some tourist sight seeing as well.

GHANA SCHOOL AID ACCOUNTS 01/04/2008 - 31/03/2009

Type	Class	Item	2008/9	Gift Aid still to be claimed	1987-2007
Revenue			£13,727.64	£242.57	£136,212.10
1. Donations/Grants:			£11,306.27	£187.00	£121,132.75
		Brought forward 1987-2007			£121,132.75
		General Donations (Gift Aid, CAF, etc):	£2,343.40		
		David MacBean (keen to help N. Ghana):	£800.00		
		Miss S.C.Mercer (part for Accra Girls Sec Sch):	£1,000.00		
		In Memory of Margaret Stackhouse:	£240.00		
		Ruth Court's London Marathon donations:	£1,206.00		
		Gibbs Charitable Trust (re FOYS Abiriw Project)	£750.00		
		Gibbs Charitable Trust donation:	£500.00		
		Morel Trust (re FOYS Abiriw Project):	£3,000.00		
		The Morel Trust donation:	£500.00		
		Inland Revenue Refund (2007-08):	£966.87		
		Marathon Gift Aid, still to be claimed		£187.00	
2. Nett Surpluses on Lunches:			£974.47	£36.67	£2,769.88
		Brought forward 1987-2006			£2,769.88
		Bookings 2007 and 2008	£1,510.50		
		Donations 2007 and 2008	£313.50		
		Post & printing 2009	-£95.33		
		Venue 2009	-£1,063.20		
		Bookings 2009 (early bookings only)	£185.50		
		Donations 2009 (early donations only)	£123.50		
		Giftaid on donations still to be claimed		£36.67	
3. Deposit Interest:			£1,265.90		£10,447.73
		Nat. Savings/NatWest brought forward (1987-1998)			£3,306.96
		COIF brought forward (1998-2007)			£7,140.77
		Charities Official Investment Fund	£1,265.90		
4. "Memories of the Gold Coast and Ghana":			£181.00	£18.90	£1,861.74
		Brought forward 2005-2007			£1,861.74
		Postage	£0.00		
		Donations	£181.00		
		Gift Aid to be reclaimed		£18.90	
Expenditure			-£10,570.00		-£105,538.67
5. Items supplied to Ghana Schools:			-£10,450.00		-£97,825.17
		Brought forward 1987-2007			-£97,825.17
		Angl.Diocese of Tamale(School flood damage):	-£2,000.00		
		FOYS Abiriw Road Safety Project:	-£750.00		
		Hia Library (Mrs Mary Owusu):	-£1,000.00		
		Sandema Educational Resource Centre:	-£2,500.00		
		Univ. of Cape Coast (Classroom):	-£4,000.00		
		Whitstone Project:	-£200.00		
6. Operating Costs:			-£120.00		-£7,713.50
		Brought forward 1987-2007			-£7,713.50
		UKOWLA Subscription	-£35.00		
		Ghana Int. Bank transfer charges to Tamale	-£35.00		
		Ghana Int. Bank transfer charges to UCC	-£25.00		
		Ghana Int. Bank transfer charges to FOYS	-£25.00		
Balance held at bank			£33,831.07		
7. Balance of Funds			£33,831.07		
		COIF Deposit Fund	£28,806.77		
		NatWest Current Account	£5,024.30		
Grand Total			£36,988.71	£242.57	£30,673.43

Please note: bank balances are unusually high to outstanding transfers to Cape Coast, Abiriw, and Bechem School for the Deaf

Stanley E. G. Anthony, Treasurer. Tel: 01926 424702 Email: anthony@talktalk.net, 20/10/2008

NEWS AND PROJECTS

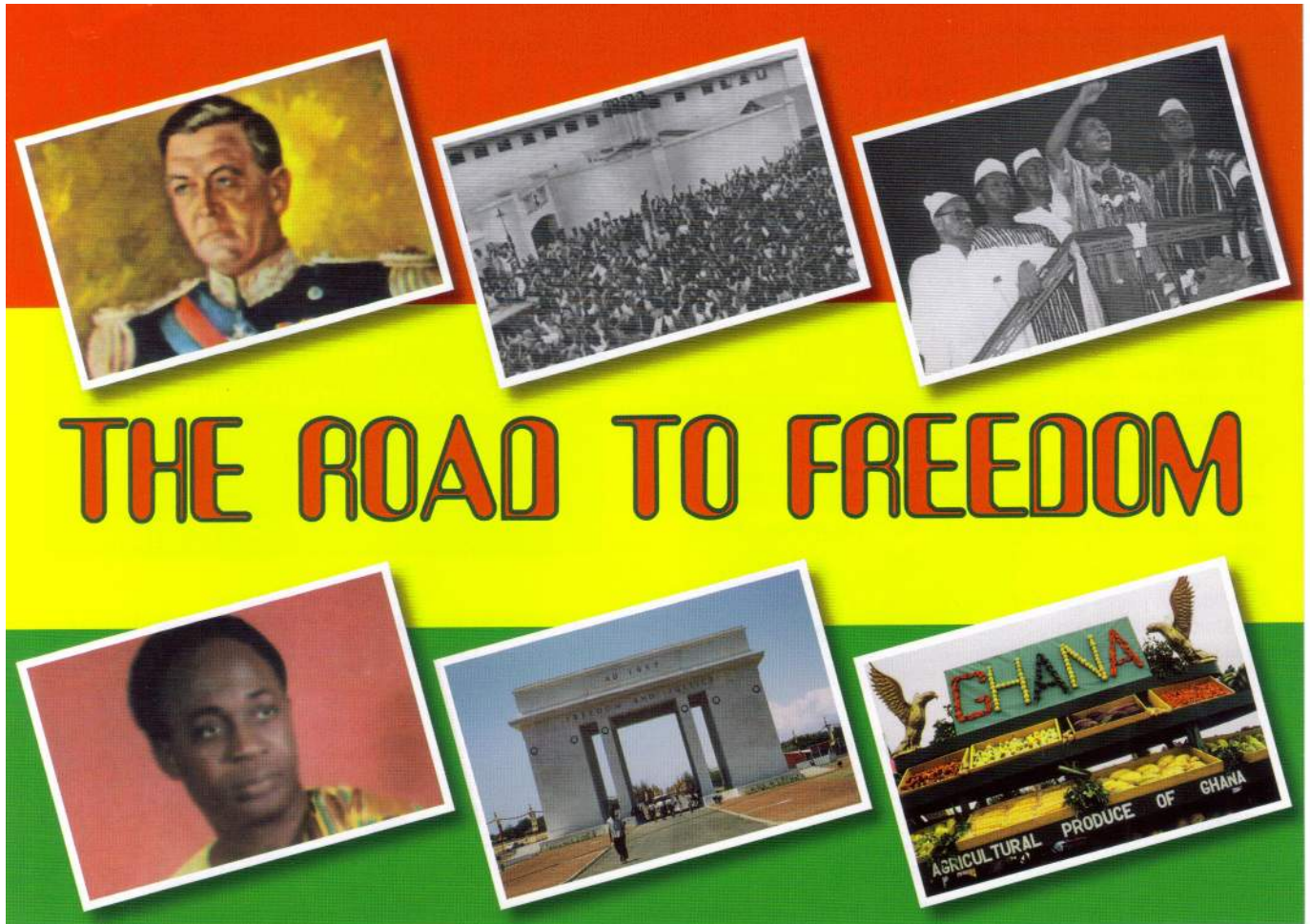
Ghana's Long Road To Freedom: research project

By Eric Cunningham

The Union of Old St Monicans UK, the alumni association of the St Monica's Girls Schools, Mampong-Ashanti, was awarded a grant by the UK

Sound Archives, transcriptions and hard copies being made available to other libraries and educational institutions for research.

During the summer and autumn months of 2008 25 expatriates and some 20 Ghanaians were interviewed by Sam Walker, the Sierra Leonean research officer, and Nana Ama Amamoo, the project leader. They toured Britain to meet, talk to, and record interviews with a wide range of people. Among these were



THE ROAD TO FREEDOM

Heritage Lottery Fund to support their proposal to collect and preserve unwritten perspectives of Ghana's political and socio-economic conditions in the five years preceding independence and the five years following it, i.e. the period 1952-1962. This imaginative and ambitious project was given the striking title *Ghana's Long Road to Freedom*.

The proposal was to make recordings of oral interviews with 25 expatriates and 25 Ghanaians who had had direct experience of the Gold Coast/Ghana during that period. The intention was that the recordings would be deposited in the British Library

several who had contributed to Ghana School Aid's *Gold Coast and Ghana Memories* (2006), but significantly there were others whose memories had not previously been recorded. The consequence is that the *Long Road to Freedom* project embraces a wider range of contributors than did *Memories*, and because of the specific time limit it is very sharply focussed.

With the project's virtual completion, the Union of Old St Monicans UK organised on 1 November 2008 in London the project's public launch. The occasion



was well attended by a large number of Old St Monicans and former staff, and in true Ghanaian style they made their guests very welcome. Among those invited were Ghana's Deputy High Commissioner in London, Mr Eugene Akrofi, representing the High Commissioner, and several expatriates, all supporters of Ghana School Aid, who had contributed their memories orally for the project. These included Michael Anderson, Leslie Beckett, Eric Earle, Jennifer MacDougall, and Robert Mares.

I was invited to speak about Ghana School Aid. Having in 1954 been the District Education Officer in Mampong – Ashanti it was a particular pleasure to be there and to re-acquaint myself with the St Monica's ethos. More particularly, Ghana School Aid's sustained and positive links with Ghana, and my report on the three-fold aspects of its work, viz direct grants for buildings and equipment, planned programmes like *Schools on the Line* and *Schools in Fishing Villages*, and the increasing current emphasis on support for UK and Ghana school links, were well

received. There were some present to whom Ghana School Aid was not previously known, so the occasion gave the charity additional welcome publicity.

The Union of Old St Monicans UK and their project officer Sam Walker are to be congratulated on the successful implementation of their project. Additionally, they are to be applauded, for the project's accompanying exhibition, in their words, "...seeks to celebrate all the remarkable men and women, both expatriate and Ghanaian, who in various ways helped to make this transition [to Independence] as seamless and peaceful as possible". My personal experience is that that is a fair and just description of how it was in Ghana in the years 1952-1962.

Further details of the project and exhibition, and educational packs which can be downloaded are on the Union's website www.stmonicauk.org.

Nana Akua Kwakye I

[As reported briefly in the last Newsletter, Letitia Boateng, GSA's Vice Chair, has recently been made Queen and sub-chief of her home village Abonse in October 2008. This is a great honour and her official name and title is Nana Akua Kwakye I. Here she describes her new duties. Ed]

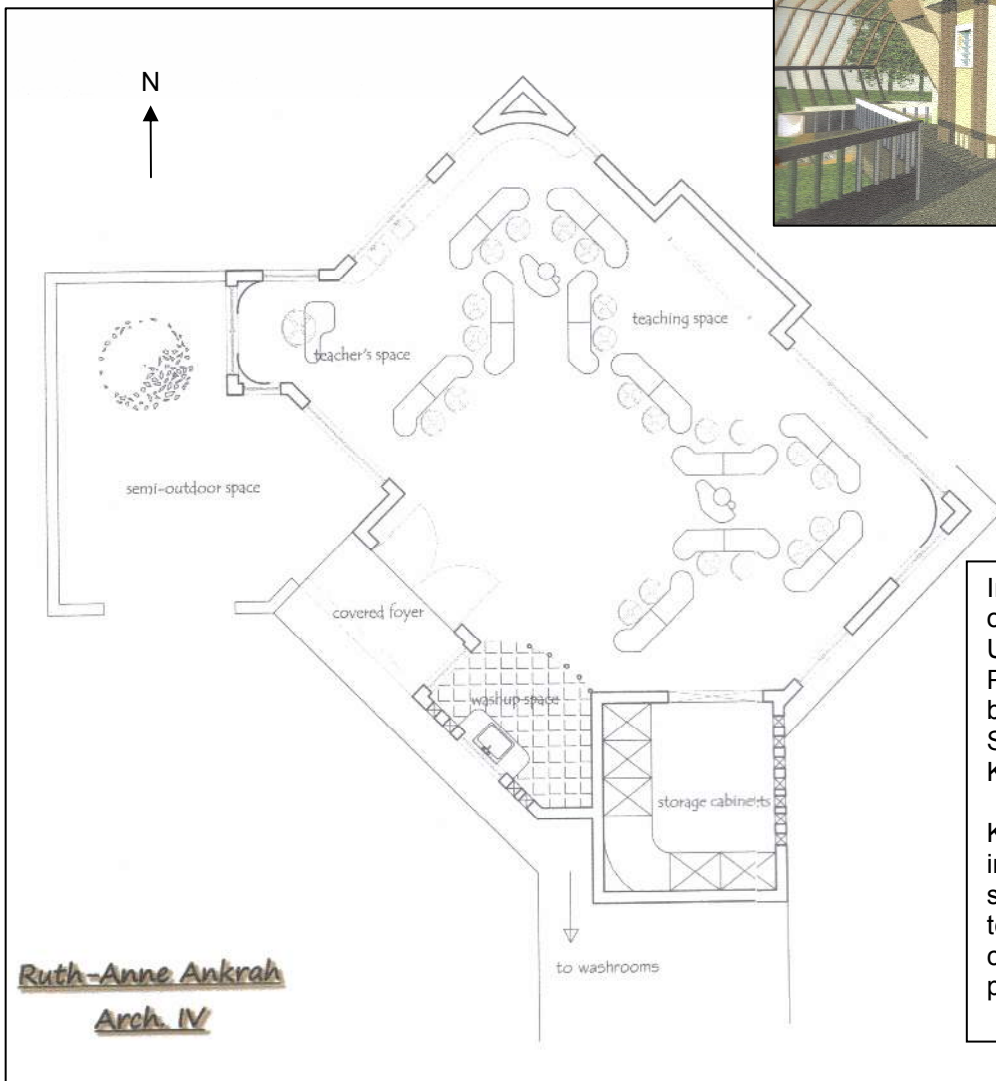


As Aduana Hema, ie Queen of the Aduana Clan, I help the Chief of the Clan to settle disputes and ensure that there is peace in the Aduana family. I also see to the welfare of the women advising them on health and financial issues among other things. As Sompá Hene, we the sub-chiefs assist the Chief of the village in development and peace. We go to the Okre Akwapim Traditional Council for meetings to discuss matters relating to our individual towns and Akwapim in general. I receive several invitations to go to all sorts of functions and also receive important visitors to Abonse. Almost all the Parliamentary Candidates called on us just before the recent elections.

The position is prestigious but I am yet to get used to people, especially my mates, bowing to me! I owe all this to GSA and the Link.

Alan Mayhew Memorial Project

The design competition (launched by GSA, as described in the previous Newsletter) for a new classroom for the University of Cape Coast Primary School in memory of Alan Mayhew (former Secretary of GSA and architect of Cape Coast University) has been won by a woman student at Kumasi University of Science and Technology School of Architecture. The competition was judged by Professor Intsiful of Kumasi University and Kofi Ohene (GSA Representative in Ghana and former Registrar of Cape Coast University) and the £100 prize has been awarded. The winning design



Interior and exterior aspects of the winning design for the University of Cape Coast Primary School Class Room by Ruth Anne Ankrah, Student of Architecture at KNUST, Kumasi.

Key design requirements included the flexible use of space for interactive teaching and low energy and climatically adapted building principles.

including computer-simulated models has been examined by the GSA committee who were impressed by the quality of the design and the amount of thought and effort that had been devoted to it.

This is a significant project which it is hoped will be of real benefit to Ghana in terms of teacher training, educational innovation, and children's learning experiences.

A proportion of the funding needed for building materials to enable the work to start as soon as possible has been transferred to Ghana to be overseen by Kofi Ohene. Further funding and contributions are being sought from other organisations and private donors. It is hoped that the University of Cape Coast and the Primary School itself will also be involved in the practical development of the project.

Sandema

Patrick Heinecke of the Sandema Educational Resource Centre attended the GSA AGM in June and a committee meeting in September.



The project, which is in the Upper East Region north of Bolgatanga, is in one of the poorest and most deprived areas of Ghana. It is a community project with classrooms and workshops providing educational courses and skills training for the whole

village, and includes a public library and the first community radio station in the region (run by young Ghanaian volunteers). Remedial classes are provided and an advocacy programme deals with issues such as witchcraft allegations, gender bias, and genital mutilation. Recently the project has been badly affected by both flooding and drought as well as high inflation. Two major HIV/AIDS programmes are being run but some of the staff themselves are dying of AIDS. Patrick explained that they also needed to replace worn out equipment such as sewing machines and weaving looms. The GSA Committee decided to help Sandema in their current crisis with a grant of £2,500 to keep this valuable project going. Further information from www.sandema.org.uk.

BBC Radio 4

Education in Ghana continues to be a topic of interest regularly covered on the BBC. In particular on the (now axed) Learning Curve programme and in a series entitled A Dollar a Day, both on Radio 4.

SoundAffects. As described by Letitia above, the SoundAffects initiative was highlighted on the Learning Curve when Penny Boreham, radio producer and co-founder, and Jill Adams, Headteacher of St Michael's Primary School Figcheldean, were interviewed by Libby Purves on October 20, 2008. The scheme is designed to work with existing links between schools using the curriculum to make communication more vivid and meaningful through high quality audio recordings. The use of radio professionals on both sides ensures that the exchange of children's questions and subsequent answers is both sustainable and of a high standard. The project circumvents many of the persistent problems encountered by most link schools of unreliable or non-existent internet communication. At the time of writing SoundAffects is working with 16 linked schools in the UK and Ghana including another GSA link school, John O'Gaunt College Hungerford, and aims to extend to other schools and to Sri Lanka soon. From 2009 Ghanaian radio broadcasters will take over the recordings in schools in Ghana.

Jill Adams described the initial audio links with Abonse as “very powerful” and more direct than written questions and answers. The children involved held an interesting debate on the types of questions to be asked. Teachers felt that the children were able to concentrate more easily on the subject content and were not distracted by visual images. Subjects covered already include descriptions of local festivals, and imaginary games in the playground such as pretending to be animals. These proved to be very similar in both schools. Questions from Ghanaian children included “Do you have electricity in your house? Does it go on and off?”. The recordings on CD will be available for use in other schools with the addition of notes for classroom discussion. Further information is available from www.soundaffects.org.uk which includes an audio newsletter.

A Dollar a Day. This Radio 4 programme, presented by Mike Wooldridge in February 2008, highlighted the great strides being made in the education of girls in Ghana, and interviewed Dzifa Adjann who has become an accountant despite a very poor background. She recalled being “highly motivated by my mother’s efforts to help me”. Her mother had made huge sacrifices to get her through school and college. Until very recently 78% of females in rural areas of Ghana were illiterate and many girls were forced to abandon their education due to poverty. The Minister for Education, Elizabeth Ohene, explained that educating girls is the way out of poverty; mothers who know the value of education want their children to attend school in turn.

Divine Chocolate

The Co-op is celebrating the first five years of its Fairtrade partnership with the Kuapa Kokoo cooperative in Ghana, producing high quality chocolate. The resulting Fairtrade premium paid to the community in Ghana has built and resourced the running of 7 schools, as well as providing 200 wells in remote locations, and a number of mobile health clinics. Divine Chocolate has done so well that in 2007 it was able to set up a separate company in the US. [*Source: Independent Business Monthly*]

BOOKS

Emmanuel Evans-Anfom; To the Thirsty Land (autobiography of a patriot) Africa Christian Press, Accra, 2003.

By Anthony D C Hyland

James Gibbs’ review, in last year’s Newsletter, of Ayi Kwei Armah’s memoir of his schooldays in Ghana, published in 2006, prompted me to re-read Emmanuel Evans-Anfom’s autobiography, published in Ghana a few years previously. The two books are very different, as are the two authors. Dr Evans-Anfom is not ashamed to call himself a patriot, and he is no scoundrel, notwithstanding Dr Johnson’s caustic definition of a patriot; it is clear from his autobiography that he loves his country, and is justifiably proud of what he has achieved for, and on behalf of, Ghana. But pride is not a characteristic one associates with Evans-Anfom: devotion, service, perseverance, wisdom, are qualities that more readily spring to mind.

The book’s dedication - “to the memory of MY PARENTS through whom God gave me life, and to my dear LEONORA who brought meaning to that life” - conveys its very essence. His love of family - the extended family into which he was born, in Jamestown, Accra, in 1919, and the new family he and his first wife Leonora founded - shine through the pages of this book, as does his love for the country that gave him so much - his education, his vocation as a doctor and surgeon, his career opportunities, and his love of the God whom he served faithfully throughout his life. He carries no chip on his shoulder, as so many of his contemporaries and juniors who grew up during the end of colonialism; he writes without irony, recrimination, pretension or artifice, he writes about his life as he remembers it, looking back over eighty and more years of memories.

The early chapters of his book are particularly fascinating, describing his early childhood in the family house in Jamestown, and his education - at Government Boys’ School, Rowe Road, at Osu Salem Presbyterian Middle School, and as a colonial government scholar at Achimota, and later, in

wartime Britain, at the University of Edinburgh Medical School. His years in Edinburgh were perhaps the most formative of his life, laying the foundation not only of his subsequent career as a medical doctor and surgeon, but also as an active sportsman – he captained the University hockey team and remained an active player for many years – and as a committed Christian; and in Edinburgh he first met his future wife, then an American postgraduate student of the University, Leonora Evans.

In 1950, Evans-Anfom returned to the Gold Coast as a newly qualified doctor in government service and embarked on the customary series of short-term postings that took him around the country and which he describes so vividly – Korle-Bu, Dunkwa on Offin, Tarkwa, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tamale, culminating in his appointment as Surgical Specialist at Kumasi Central Hospital (now Komfo Anokyi Teaching Hospital). In 1963, he joined the new Medical School of the University of Ghana, at Korle-Bu Hospital, and moved into the field of university education, a move that took him in 1967 to the University of Science & Technology, Kumasi, as Vice-Chancellor. Dr R P Baffour had been the Founding VC, when the University rose out of the ashes of the former Kumasi College of Technology (“Tech”) in 1961, and his was a hard act to follow: the coup that had toppled Nkrumah in 1966 not only lopped the first two initials off the university’s acronym, but pruned the university of several of its senior academics, including its VC. The substantive post of VC remained vacant for more than a year, and there was considerable opposition to Evans-Anfom’s appointment in some quarters. But he was a diligent and scrupulously fair and firm Vice-Chancellor, and won the trust of academics, administrators and students alike: the six and a half years he spent in the post were probably the most satisfying and most enjoyable years of his professional life, and his description of them forms the profound core of his autobiography – or so it appears to this reviewer, who served under him at UST for the whole of this period. Did he know his students’ nickname for him there – “Motorway”, an allusion to the noble swathe of baldness that swept over the crown of his head?

Probably, though he makes no mention of it in his book.

In 1974, he returned to his home town to take up his appointment as Chairman of the National Council for Higher Education; but the times were unpropitious; the late seventies were the most unstable times in Ghana’s history; and the coup that brought Flight Lieut. J J Rawlings to power a second time, at the beginning of 1982, effectively brought Evans-Anfom’s long and honourable career in government service to an end. But not from public life: although Leonora’s death in 1980 was a great blow to him: during his retirement he remained actively involved in professional, cultural and church activities throughout the 80’s and well into the 90’s. The final chapters of his autobiography introduce his present wife, Elise (nee Henkel), describe his many honours and appointments, of which his naming as Alumnus of the Year by the University of Edinburgh in 1996 probably gave him the greatest pleasure, and contain his reflections on life and the state of the country he loved and served so loyally and so well.

This autobiography is not a profound work of literature; the reader is conscious throughout of the roll call of colleagues and family members and friends and events, and is at times exhausted by them all; but the author’s goodness and benevolence shine like a beacon throughout the book, and as a record of life and development in Ghana during the 20th Century, it deserves to be read.



Anne V Adams and Esi Sutherland-Addy, eds. *The legacy of Efua Sutherland. Pan-African Cultural Activism.* Ayebia Clarke, 2007.

By Barbara Roddick and Jennifer MacDougall

This is a collection of tributes to the life and work of Efua Sutherland edited by Anne V Adams (writer and Director of the WEB Du Bois Memorial Centre for Pan-African Culture in Ghana) and Esi Sutherland-Addy (Efua's eldest daughter, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of African Studies and Associate Director of the African Humanities Institute Programme at the University of Ghana). The book comprises a patchwork of over thirty contributions from family, friends, associates, and academics, which range from highly personal reminiscences to critical appreciation and bibliography. They cover the career of a remarkable woman who has been described as the first African female playwright/director south of the Sahara and also as Black Africa's most famous woman writer. The contributors include many Ghanaians, other Africans, African-Americans, and a number of Europeans.

Efua was born Theodora Olivia Morgue in Cape Coast in 1924, the daughter of Peter Morgue of the family of Chief Moore of Nsona Paado, who taught English at Accra Academy, and Harriet Parker from the royal families of Gomua Brofo and Anomabu. After the early death of her mother she was brought up by her beloved grandmother, Araba Mansa, and educated by the nuns of the Order of the Holy Paraclete, first at primary school in Cape Coast and later at St Monica's Mampong. From there she went on to Homerton College Cambridge to train as a teacher and later to the School of African and Oriental Studies, London. On returning to Ghana she taught at St Monica's Mampong, where she was involved in teacher training. It was during this time that she first became actively involved in writing for African children.

Efua's teacher training in England had made her aware that educational material for children should be closely related to their background. Ghanaian children were learning English nursery rhymes that

meant nothing to them. She began writing for them – *Playtime in Africa* with photographer Willis Bell was published in 1960, and subsequently many stories and plays, some in English and some in Fanti.

During the 1950s many African-Americans came to Ghana and became involved in work to promote African culture. Efua married one, Bill Sutherland, with whom she had three children. Following independence in 1957 they lived in Accra where Bill worked in the finance department of Nkrumah's government as an assistant to Kobla Gbedemah. Efua founded the Ghana Society of Writers and, soon after, the Ghana Drama Studio, with the aim of promoting traditional African culture, folklore and storytelling. Joe de Graft was one of many who worked with her at the Drama Studio at this time. Several of the contributions deal with this aspect of her work. Some of the most interesting are verbatim accounts of interviews with Efua which reveal her enthusiasm for Ghanaian folklore and writing based on it, and also her disappointment that there had not been a sustained response to the inspiration engendered by independence – “We're not developing I tell you. We're wasting developmental time and the resources we have.” But she remained hopeful – “There's a lot of strength in our people.”

The book is divided into three sections comprising Efua Sutherland's Artistic Space; Cultural Activism; and Reminiscences and Tributes. The first and longest section deals with her work on the development of modern African drama and experimental theatre, storytelling, folklore and children's literature. It also deals with her influence and work to pave the way for women's involvement in performance, and on gender equality. Some of these academic contributions provide a context for the life and work of Efua Sutherland and have little direct reference to her. There is also a useful bibliography including internet sites and interviews. The second part comprises some fascinating personal accounts of Efua's work including her own words on the development of the Drama Studio, an account of the Kodizan or 'house of stories' experiment, the setting up of the Ghana National Commission on Children, her work on children's literature, her

interest in architecture, and her last interview given a few months before her death in 1996. The last section of reminiscences and tributes includes memories from an ex-colonial officer, a former pupil, an African-American colleague at the University of Ghana, three poems including one by Ama Ata Aidoo, and a tribute from her friend Maya Angelou.

She thought of herself primarily as an educator and, as Kofi Anyidoho remarks, “A concern for children was central to all of Efua Sutherland’s life and work.” On the 30th anniversary of the achievement of full university status the University of Ghana awarded her the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*: “...for the inspiration provided to the development of the Dramatic Art, and in recognition of your efforts on behalf of children for whose benefit you have canvassed children’s libraries and amusement parks....”

The *Legacy of Efua Sutherland* provides a fascinating insight into the life and achievements of a great African woman writer and activist against the background of a period of enormous growth and development in the Ghanaian cultural landscape.

OBITUARIES

Ambassador Kwesi Brew

By Lalage Bown

The fiftieth anniversary of the independence of Ghana is a time to celebrate the generation of talented men and women who came to maturity in that period. It included Alex Quaison-Sackey, an early President of the UN General Assembly, Alex Kwabong, Vice-Chancellor of the UN University and Joe Appiah, lawyer and fighter for justice (husband of Peggy Cripps). One of the brightest and best among them was Kwesi Brew, who has recently died – man of letters, public servant and businessman.

Born of a Fante family which played a distinguished part in his country’s history, Kwesi Brew spent part of his youth under the guardianship of a British education officer, K.J. Dickens, to whom, he used to say, he “owed everything”. He was one of the first generation of undergraduates at the University

College of the Gold Coast, where he read English and became known on campus and in Accra for his talents as an actor, playing a memorable Dr Faustus as well as appearing in modern comedies, some of which he wrote himself.

On graduation, at the age of 23, he was immediately recruited into the administrative service - part of the “Africanisation” programme to replace the British colonial officers - and was successively assistant district commissioner and then district commissioner, mainly working in the area of Kete Krachi. He had to make his way among people who weren’t used to seeing a fellow African in such a post, but was soon warmly welcomed for his affability and lack of pomposity. Among the challenges he had to face were the imminence of the giant Volta Dam, which was to flood some of the Krachi lands, and the dissidence of a charismatic half-German politician who harked back to the days of German rule. Still in his twenties, Brew’s balance and diplomatic skills were thoroughly tested.

When Ghana set up its diplomatic service, Brew was recruited to it and worked in the UK, France, Germany, India and the USSR, rising to ambassadorial rank after a spell as chief of protocol in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He served as ambassador in Mexico, Lebanon and Senegal. He was everywhere appreciated for his civility, wit and good humour, but especially in Senegal, where he was in post at the time of the Second International Congress of Africanists. Later, out of sympathy with the politicians of the time, he left public service and went into business, first joining his younger brother Ato and working as Resident Director of the Takoradi Flour Mills from 1975 – 81. He then developed his own company, the Golden Spoon Flour Mills, based in Tema. He remained a well-known personality and was awarded various honorific positions by the Ghana Government.

Kwesi Brew was in the tradition of writer-diplomats, producing elegant and elegiac verse, in a rather different tone from that of the mainstream of African poets, with a gentleness and almost a diffidence to his work.

His only internationally published collection was *The Shadows of Laughter* (London, Longman, 1968), but he produced other writings which, it is hoped, will be collected. He would acknowledge that he was not a major poet, but his was a distinctive voice.

Most of his writing was personal, but he wrote a compassionate piece on the downfall of Kwame Nkrumah, which ends:

*“It is only the gods who know
Why the bones were broken;
And the Master of the House,
Now Master of Rags
Stays behind on the rocks
To rummage in the rubbish heap
For cast-away morsels of power!”*

He leaves behind his second wife, nee Brew-Graves (a cousin) and his children.

Henry Osborne Kwesi Brew, born May 27, 1928; died July 30, 2007.

John Benjamin Quashie-Idun (Uncle Johnny) 1930 – 2007

By Lalage Bown

The life of Johnny Quashie-Idun was celebrated at the Accra Ridge Church in November 2007 in a magnificent service, with five officiating clergy, two choirs and three organists. During the service, the congregation sang the Achimota School Hymn, of which the second verse goes:

*Born but to rule through service given
The ages all belong to thee;
Oh may thy life more humble grow
Through him whose service makes us free.*

The many ways in which Johnny gave service was shown by the tributes to him, from a wide range of family members and connections, including Kofi Annan of the UN, from his law firm, Old Achimotans, the Ghana Bar Association, the Oxford and Cambridge Association of Ghana and his Masonic lodge.

The following is an edited extract from his obituary printed as part of the order of service:

John Benjamin Quashie-Idun was the first son of Samuel and Charlotte Quashie-Idun, later Sir Samuel and Lady Quashie-Idun, and he was named after a maternal uncle, a merchant prince who had helped to support John's father at Cambridge. He is said to hold the record as the biggest baby ever born at the Princess Marie-Louise Hospital!

He was an intelligent toddler, with a sense of humour and caused laughter when he was asked what he was going to be when he grew up, a doctor or a lawyer and he answered: "I shall eat fufu"; he of course became a lawyer, but maintained a more than casual interest in fufu, becoming a keen cook in later years, under the tuition of his wife. He entered Achimota at the age of eight, in due course representing the school in hockey and cricket, and becoming a prefect. One of his school reports said: "We expect great things from John". At an early stage he starred as Joseph in a nativity play and his co-star, playing Mary, was Betty Van Lare; they married in London, after he graduated. Their marriage was blessed with a daughter, Charlotte, who has followed family tradition and is a member of both the English and the Ghana Bar.

John entered Selwyn College, his father's *alma mater*, in 1951, reading law, playing cricket and hockey for the college, following his father in playing jazz – in John's case, with the Cambridge Traditional Jazz Band. He also became a member of the Cambridge Footlights and took part in their 1954 revue: "Out of the Blue".

He and Betty returned to Ghana in 1958, after he had been called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, and started private legal practice in the chambers of Edward Akufo-Addo, later Chief Justice and President of Ghana. He went into partnership with E.P.Sowah, who also later became Chief Justice; and then he teamed up in 1963 with a British national, E.P.Lynes. During his legal career, John took on many sensitive cases, including that of the deportation of his own partner, Lynes, and he handled a number of briefs for Dr J.B. Danquah, at a time when many considered it wise not to be too closely identified with the old politician, but Johnny greatly admired Danquah for

his compassion and humility and was proud to work for him.

Johnny served four terms as President of the Ghana Bar Association; he was Chairman of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation at the time of its incorporation, was for a time the Chairman of GIHOC, and also served as director of an insurance company.

He was a member of the Accra Turf Club for many years and won the Gold Cup on a number of occasions. He later replaced his interest in horses with his interest in cooking, already mentioned. When the family moved to London in the late 1970s, he would ask for instructions over the phone from Betty, who was looking after grandchildren in Hampshire. The results of these efforts were usually good and he loved having people to meals at his home.

Johnny had a rare gift of friendship and had friends from all walks of life and of all ages, from his smallest grandchild to his jockeys to international politicians. Like Abou Ben Adhem, the name of Johnny Quashie-Idun is written down as one who loved his fellow-men and is therefore blessed by the love of God.

John Lloyd 1924-2007

By Eric Cunningham

John Lloyd served as an Education Officer in the Gold Coast/Ghana from 1954 to 1961. He was one of the first expatriate contract officers, permanent pensionable appointments having ceased shortly after internal self-government was inaugurated in 1952. Following war service in the Royal Navy, working as a radar technician in the Fleet Air Arm, he had trained as a teacher and taught in Oldham, where he took the London BSc (Economics) degree externally.

Initially he was attached to Bekwai District Office, later moving to the Ashanti Regional Education Office in Kumasi. In 1956 he was seconded for five months' service on the Plebiscite that the United Nations had decreed would determine the future of British Togoland, the trusteeship territory administered from the Gold Coast. After voter registration he was appointed Returning Officer for

one of five registration districts in the Northern Region. This was both challenging and demanding, not least because it ended for him, as it did for me, in a court appearance for alleged bias in the plebiscite vote count. The allegations were withdrawn in court. John found the total plebiscite experience formative, as I did, in that it gave direct experience of the significance and strength of political feeling as full independence for Ghana approached. A commendation from the Governor, Sir Charles Arden Clarke, followed this secondment.

John then became District Education Officer, Bekwai, and after leave, when he married Thelma, whom he had met while working in Oldham, he was promoted to Senior Education Officer (Technical), to work in Accra on the rapid development of technical education which followed Ghana's independence. Throughout his time in Ghana he was well liked and respected by all his colleagues and by all Ghanaians with whom and for whom he worked and had responsibility.

Leaving Ghana in 1961 he became Admissions Officer for Aberystwyth University in Wales. This was an appropriate and fortunate appointment, for John was a true Welshman (there is mention of the village where he was born in the Welsh mythological writings *Y Mabinogion*), and Welsh was his mother-tongue. He was however totally bi-lingual in Welsh and English, an attribute which as an aspirant linguist I greatly admired, and he could write a splendidly entertaining letter in English – and no doubt in Welsh too. His overseas experience was particularly helpful for the recruitment to the university of students from abroad, and provided him with several useful contacts.

After retirement from Aberystwyth he and Thelma moved to a village near Caernarfan, North Wales, his wife's home town, to be near their daughter and her family. There he was an active member of his local church and community, and despite some quite serious ill health he continued to enjoy life to the full. He was an admirable family man, devoted to his wife, his children Hywel, Trefor and Sioned and their families, and delighting in his nine grandchildren.

John came to the Ghana Re-union in London in 1986 that led to the foundation of **Ghana School Aid**, of which he was always an interested and generous supporter. Regrettably for him opportunity for regular direct contact was limited because of where he lived, but his belief in the charity's work is demonstrated by his request that any tributes at the time of his death should be not by flowers but by donations to **Ghana School Aid**.

That the mourners at his funeral donated so generously shows the regard in which John was held. Those who knew John will remember, as I do, a gentle, considerate, and thoughtful man.

I have no doubt whatever that they would wish to offer his widow Thelma, and his three children and their families deep sympathy on their great loss, and to express gratitude for John's demonstration of the values that informed his life.



For the Diary!

The Ghana School Aid Annual General Meeting and Lunch will be held on June 9th 2009 at the John Adams Hall, 15-23 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DP. Further details will be sent out later.

Stop Press – Stop Press – Stop Press – Stop Press – Stop Press

From the Chairman: I am now home from Ghana and my visit was a total success. All is well out there and the University of Cape Coast Primary School Project is well under way. The shell of the Alan Mayhew memorial block will be done by early April and the building is due for completion in September. There is great enthusiasm about the project, and the Headmistress hopes a group of us will be able to attend the official opening in September. I have some photos which I shall bring to the AGM.

Appointments: The Very Revd Jacob Ayeebo, Dean of the Anglican St Anglionby Cathedral in Tamale, has recently been appointed a Member of the Council of State, advising Ghana's President Prof. Atta Mills. Father Jacob is a long standing friend of Ghana School Aid and has been over many years instrumental in channelling support from us to children and schools in need in the north of the country. Most recently we supported with his help schools affected by the flooding.

Ghana School Aid - Membership List and Newsletter

Newsletter: Contributions to the next newsletter are very welcome. Please contact the editor, Jennifer MacDougall, at jennifermacdougall@yahoo.co.uk or 020 75788 7520.

Membership List: Please let our Secretary, Michael Hammer (020 7735 2881, email: Michael.hammer@btinternet.com), have your details if you would like them to be added to or amended in the membership list. The Data Protection Act requires written permission for names and addresses to be distributed. If possible, email addresses should also be included please.

Ghana School Aid



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Representative in Ghana: Kofi Ohene

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Margaret Turner, John Whittingham

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