

Local people provide direct assistance to West African village

by Stephen Lloyd

Reprinted courtesy of the Surrey and Hants Star Courier

Groups and individuals across Hart have been helping villagers in Ghana to improve their lives through a number of micro projects.

All Saints Church in Fleet has staged a series of fundraising concerts, while Cranford Park Primary School in Yateley has twinned with a Ghanaian school and is raising money to buy football kits for the student players.

Meanwhile, Dogmersfield Primary School is collecting money to supply breakfasts for a school in the West African country, while Fleet residents Judy and Jeremy Keep are funding a school building.

Fleet's Dawn Williamson and Paul Bloch, along with their friends Claire McNally and Richard Coleman, are sponsoring the villages of Dadease and Mpenya, which have a combined population of 300.

In November last year they visited the villages to install latrines and mosquito nets, work with local women to train them to make head jewellery for sale in Ghana and the UK and trial a new filter to make water drawn from local streams safer to drink.

Mrs Williamson said: "People were very enthusiastic about the jewellery project."

"On the first day 15 women turned up, although we had only asked for five."

"We devised a system for business start-up loans and already have a stock of jewellery made by the women to sell in the UK."

Mrs Williamson said there is no running water in either village.

“Each morning before school the village children walk to the local stream, which is the nearest water source,” she added.

“Alternatives such as constructing pipes or harvesting rain water from roofs have proved very expensive or impracticable.”

The group, which has vowed to return later this year, is currently investigating ways of providing filters for each household in the village so that they can purify the stream water which was recently tested and was found to be not safe to drink.

“The filters need to be pumped by hand, so this solution is not ideal, but it would reduce illness and disease,” said Mrs Williamson.

“We also spoke to everyone in the village and have agreed to supply mosquito nets to those who do not have them.

“Sponsoring a village gives you the chance either to simply be a financial donor or to be involved in development as you prefer.

“People who sponsor a village grow through the experience and it is very satisfying.”

The projects have been co-ordinated by Ashanti Development, a volunteer charity set up at the request of Ghanaians living in London to help improve the lives of the people they left behind in their home villages.

The charity is urgently seeking more sponsors and contributors to its Develop a Village scheme and are always looking for schools who are interested in twinning.

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Right

This primary school building at Gyetiase was funded by Judy and Jeremy Keep



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Fundraising Group

by Paul Kalinauckas, Group Chair

Thanks to the enthusiasm of all our supporters we have a myriad of fundraising activities taking place. If you have a good idea for running a fundraising event, do please give it a go.

The more money we raise the more impact we can have. And that's why we've established a new Fundraising Group. Some forthcoming activities are:

“A Taste of Ghana” – Saturday 12 July at:
10 Foundling Court, Brunswick Centre, London WC1N 1AN

A fun filled social event with a choice of Ghanaian Food, as well as music, decorations, display stalls and video/picture shows.

Drop in anytime between 4pm and 8pm.
Tickets £10 in advance plus booking fee online:
<http://tinyurl.com/k9xhuk2>

You are welcome to have a display stand to promote your activities for Ashanti Development.

Annual Sponsored Walk

4/8

Saturday 20 September starting at 2pm from St Pancras Old Church, Pancras Road, London NW1 1UL. The nearest tube is King's Cross St Pancras, and the 214 and 46 buses stop nearby.

If you would like to join us and register, please contact Albert Antwi Albert for a Sponsorship Form:

Email: antwi@camden.gov.uk
Telephone: 0207 242 3752 or 07958 594 447

Raffle Prizes needed

We're planning a Raffle and will be distributing Raffle Tickets for you to sell. Do please let Penny know if you can also donate a prize. We need some quality prizes and already have a week's break in a Holiday Cottage in Wales and the fabulous patchwork quilt shown in the picture which was hand-made by volunteer teachers with the help of the women and children of Gyetiase.





Ashanti Development Patron Richard Arthur, seen on the right, decided to mark his 70th birthday by doing something to show he was alive and kicking. So he swam 70 lengths (that's 1.75 km or 1.1 miles approx) and asked his friends to donate £70 (or some other sum), to Ashanti Development.

The response was amazing. He raised over £5,000 which will go towards developing a village yet to be chosen.



In case you don't recognise them, the people in the photo are Ashanti Development's Nicholas Aboagye and two local honey hunters. The three of them attended the Bees Abroad training course at Twifo Praso, near Cape Coast last month and should all now be capable not only of keeping bees, but also of training others to do the same.

In Ashanti, the custom is to destroy bee colonies when honey is harvested, but this practice will cease after the training, and bee colony populations in the area will increase. This will be good for bees, good for pollination of crops and offer excellent new business opportunities too.

Honey is currently sold in Mampong Market for 5 cedes for 300 mls, and for rather more in the supermarkets at Kumasi. The wax can be used to make products such as candles and cosmetics, and of course the work will also generate jobs for dress makers (making protective clothing), carpenters (making hives) and probably many others.

Paul Kalinauckas' video, entitled Village Consultations at Ashanti Development, can be seen at:

http://youtu.be/w2qspkF_upM

It records a meeting held in the village of New Saviour last November.

The village was once part of neighbouring Benim, but moved apart from it for religious reasons. The people told us they moved because they wanted "to subject their lives to scrutiny." They said they didn't drink or fornicate but looked after each other. They were extremely poor, with no clean water and no sanitation.

Pam Smith, shown on the video, is keen to sponsor Saviour but finding the task of raising £7,500 for the sanitation daunting. She'd be happy to hear from anyone who'd be interested in part-sponsoring it with her.

Paul was also responsible for raising the funds to develop Awanya village, which he did through a Crowdfunder project. Awanya is featured in one of Crowdfunder's recent blogs, which can be seen at:

<http://tinyurl.com/qglzelo>

You can also watch Paul being enstooled as Nana Kwasi Mensah.

Message from David Williamson, Ashanti Development Director

I was a RedR member from 1988 to 2007 during which time I undertook many assignments in Africa and the Gulf area. I also worked on a voluntary basis with WaterAid in several African countries, finally working day a week for eleven years with their technical enquiry service until I retired aged 75. As a result of this work I supported the setting up of Ashanti Development where I have been Technical Director since the start.

The time has come when we urgently need a replacement to take over the work I have been doing. This consists of being in regular contact with the Programme Manager in Ghana and the directors in London, visiting Ghana once a year and attending Directors' meetings in London about four times a year.

Ashanti Development along with its supporters in the UK and Ghana would welcome the services of an engineer with experience of working in Africa and perhaps has just retired, or hopes to do so soon.

Please email info@ashanti-development.org.uk or David Williamson at pentlands@hotmail.com

You don't have to be an accountant to help!

Ashanti Development would be very grateful to anyone who would volunteer to do the Gift Aid claim every quarter. It would take about two to three hours and could be done in your own home.

Please email info@ashanti-development.org.uk or telephone [0207 837 3172](tel:0207 837 3172)