

Ashanti News

Thank you very much for your interest and support in our project. This newsletter describes the progress we've made over the last few months.

If you know of any responsible and trustworthy people who would like to teach in Gyetiase and Tadiesa village schools for a few months, we'd love to be put in touch.

The bad news is that Ghana is suffering severe shortages of water and electricity; for several months last summer, Gyetiase and Tadiesa received no water at all. We've recently spent many hours negotiating with Ghana Water Company personnel, and as a result water is now reaching the villages twice a week. This is probably the best we can hope to achieve for the time being and so our next step will be to buy bigger water storage tanks for both villages to tide them over dry days.

Meanwhile ProNet, our Ghanaian NGO partners, are in the final stages of delivering their health and hygiene training programme, and are currently building demonstration latrines. After this, it will be for every family to construct their own.

November Visit

In November, Martha Boadu, David Williamson and Penny David, accompanied by two doctors, a banker and a lawyer, visited the villages.

The **doctors**, Ashkan Khalili and Claire Walford, ran a ten-day general clinic while collecting data on the villagers' health. This is currently being input into a medical computer programme to determine the best way forward.

Last April, Martha managed to persuade the District Assembly (local authority) to release 100 acres of farmland to the villagers. The **banker**, Jonathan Reid, focussed on organising small loans, or microcredits, to enable people to buy seed and tools to farm the land. We have also promised to buy a cassava milling machine (@ £1,000) so that the women can sell produce locally. However before work starts, we need written confirmation of the ownership transfer from the District Assembly, which is proving a problem.

As for the **lawyer**, Davan Holt organised the doctors' clinic, distributed second-hand spectacles and when he came home, he and Jonathan put on a spectacular fund-raising concert in central London. The musicians and Alan Hollinghurst (Booker Prize winner, who gave a reading) volunteered their work, as did Marian Pannell, who organised the tickets.

Change of Plan

You may feel it's late in the day, but we only recently realised that poverty in the villages is so severe that they cannot be expected, on the basis of clean water alone, to pull themselves out of it. We therefore decided, while still extending our work to other villages, to pump a little money into the local economy. This is not as expensive as it sounds and it's almost impossible for outsiders to move into the villages.

Consequently, we are now committed to a school building and repair programme, with a financial contribution from the District Assembly. Our aim is to provide separate latrine



21 Downing Court, Grenville Street, London WC1N 1LX, UK
 T: 44 (0)207 837 3172 • M: 07713 743398
 E: penny.david@freenet.co.uk
 W: www.ashanti-development.org

blocks for boys and girls in all three local schools, and make sure they are structurally sound and have clean roofs so that rainwater can be harvested. The children will be taught hand-washing and hygiene which, when they go home, will reinforce the training their parents are currently receiving.

The villagers will do all manual work free of charge.

Children

The doctors found that virtually all the village children were malnourished, some to the severe detriment of their long-term health.

Free school meals are being introduced in Ghana painfully slowly, but the District Assembly agreed that if for five years Ashanti Development paid for school dinners for the youngest three classes in the primary school - the under-fives - they would take over this responsibility thereafter.

Ninety children were registered in the three classes concerned when we announced this decision to the villagers. We are glad to see that today that figure has risen to 140.

The **Woodcarving School** set up on previous visits seems to be doing well. We are currently test-marketing carvings in the UK.

And finally, we are very grateful to the Marchmont Community Centre for raising £1,700 for us by organising a **football tournament** in December.

Donations

If you'd like to make a donation, please make your cheque payable to 'Ashanti Development' and return it to 21 Downing Court, Grenville Street, London WC1N 1LX. We'll be happy to send you a Standing Order form.

Please 'Gift Aid' your donation if you can, by filling in and returning the following form. Provided you pay at least as much Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax as the tax we reclaim on your donations in the appropriate tax year, we can then reclaim 28p in each £1 you donate

Gift Aid Declaration

Name: (caps)

Address:

.....

Post code:

I want Ashanti Development to treat my donations as Gift Aid donations until I notify otherwise. This applies to all donations I have made since 6 April 2000 and those I make from now on.

Signature:

Date: