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Ashanti News

Water News

Multinational civil engineers, Ove Arup, have agreed to second us a hydrogeologist/water engineer to work in the Sekyere West (local authority) area of Ashanti. Over two or three visits, s/he will survey the water supply in all communities in the area and report back on possible source development and its cost.

This is a major breakthrough, and hopefully will show us how to provide water to multiple villages cost-effectively. We need to plan a fund-raising drive on this basis.

Meanwhile, we have installed mega water storage tanks in Gyetiase and Tadiesa. Both villages can now depend on the availability of clean drinking water all week.

Health and hygiene training in Gyetiase is complete, and twenty demonstration latrines have been constructed. It is now for individual villagers to build their own latrines, with Ashanti Development paying for material costs.

Ashanti Development is bigger

Our new patrons are:

- Sir Stephen Wall, former ambassador to the European Community
- Alan Hollinghurst, 2006 Booker Prize winner
- Richard Arthur, chair of the Child Support Agency
- Dame Jane Roberts, chair, Commission on Local Councillors
- Henry Roche, head of music, the Royal Ballet
- Frank Dobson and Lemar remain patrons, with Frank as our Principal Patron.

We have four new trustees – Jonathan Reid and Davan Holt, who came as volunteers to Ghana last year and who since organised a magnificent fund-raising concert; and Drs Claire Walford and Askkan Khalili of UCLH, who ran a clinic for us in the villages last year.

We have new volunteer helpers in this country too - Martin Middlehurst is a kind and expert accountant; James Gloyn has brilliantly upgraded the website (see www.ashanti-development.org); and Flick Feeny is a development specialist and physiotherapist. She is helping set up a sustainable community health project and developing remedial exercises for village women suffering muscular-skeletal damage through carrying heavy loads - mainly water - on their heads for many years.

Links

Meanwhile, we have established a relationship with the Development Planning Unit of University College London. This has still to be worked through, but we hope that our two organisations can refer problems and needs to each other. As a start, the department is researching the Ashanti area, the village and their interaction; and we have asked them to comment on our proposals for microcredits (for men, which is unusual), and are looking forward to helping their students' research.

Health and Education

Mrs Gladys Amaning, the Sekyere West Director of Education, will visit London for a series of school visits later this month at our invitation. To thank us for our help, she has arranged for remedial reading lessons for Gyetiase Primary School, and will disseminate Flick's exercise programme, mentioned above, across Sekyere West.

We are £10,000 short of finishing an eight-room clinic in Gyetiase, which will double up as volunteers' sleeping accommodation. The Ghanaian High Commissioner has asked his government to send us a full-time, paid nurse for the clinic, both to treat local people and train community healthworkers. (We have so far been unable to identify suitable local training courses.) We also hope to make a formal link with UCLH, London to provide for doctors' visits both to tackle some illnesses on a one-off basis (eg cataract surgery), and to progress healthworker training.

We have provided free school meals in Gyetiase Primary School since the start of the January term, at a cost of £1,500 for c.160 children. The menu for the term is:

- rice – three times a week
- ampesie (yam, plantain or cocoyam) – once a week
- gari (ground cassava, cooked twice) and beans – once a week
- fruit and eggs – once a week.

Meals are organised by Mr Marfu, Martha's former headteacher, an unpaid volunteer, who has built an open kitchen and hired two cooks. He tells us the children look much better already.

However we have still made no progress in identifying two volunteer teachers for the Gyetiase Primary School. Any help or thoughts you have would be welcome.

Income Generation

We do not yet have a signed document (essential) giving us rights to let the villagers farm 100 acres belonging to a local tribal chief, but the details seem to be agreed – that we should have the land for ten years without charge and with a possibility of renewal thereafter, again without charge. We have now to organise loans for seed and tools (proposals in a separate consultative document entitled 'Microcredits.' Please say if you would like a copy).

We recently agreed to the villagers' request that the carving school should be re-established and are now selling Gyetiase carvings and kente cloth, among other places, in the UCLH atrium. At the DPU's suggestion, we also take commissions – eg mock Rodins – which are selling well.

Over the last three months we have received grants of:

- £3,700 for water storage tanks (Filerder)
- £10,000 for the clinic (private)
- £9,600 to re-roof the middle school (BasAid)

However, our expenditure patterns are being terribly skewed by Ghanaian inflation. This is due, we are told, to electricity shortages because of the effect of the drought on the Volta Dam. Cement, for example, is obtainable only through personal contact and costs at least three times its price last November.

We'll tell you more about fund-raising plans as they develop. They include:

- a slavery concert, with dancers and musicians from the Royal Ballet



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- an organ recital in Hampshire
- Davan and Jonathan's annual concert
- a pop concert
- putting Ashanti Development collecting boxes in all friendly local shops
- setting up special relationships between Ashanti and a couple of UK schools.

Martha and Penny have also spoken to the Finchley Women's Luncheon Club and Probus (men's club) and Ashanti Development has been adopted as a special project by the Mayor of Wolverhampton.



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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)

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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.

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Date: