

Links with friends in Ghana are crucial

We've developed links with Anglicans in Ghana for the past 46 years - and Bishop Jonathan has just kick-started them again

OUR relationship with our Christian brothers and sisters in Ghana have been important to us for more than 40 years. We pray for them, learn from them and support them - and they do the same for us.

Originally formed in 1978 as the Inter-Diocesan West Africa Link (IDWAL), it has involved churchgoers from our diocese visiting regularly and Ghanaian friends visiting us here. Individual parishes, schools and deaneries have formed links with their counterparts in Ghana, and have learned valuable insights from each other.

Bishop Jonathan visited all 13 of his fellow bishops in Ghana during his first trip there in May. The 10-day trip included visits to churches, communities and cathedrals across the Anglican Province of Ghana. The chair of our diocese's Ghana Link committee, the Rev Max Cross, rector of Bedhampton, accompanied him.

The pair criss-crossed the country with the Rt Rev Matthias Mededues-Badohu, Bishop of Ho. Bishop Jonathan asked fellow bishops about their current joys and challenges, and asked how the mutual IDWAL links could help them.

He has now promised to investigate an exchange of curates, as time spent abroad may be helpful in



Bishop Jonathan meeting pre-school students in Sunyani as part of his first trip to Ghana in May

their ongoing theological training. The potential arrangements are yet to be worked out in detail.

Among the significant moments for Bishop Jonathan was a visit to Cape Coast Castle, used by the British as a trading post for enslaved people for almost 150 years.

The bishop heard about the horrific conditions they endured, locked in a dungeon underneath the chapel

before being loaded onto slave ships bound for America and the West Indies.

"The British colluded with the Ashanti tribe, who handed over captives from their war with the northern tribes to become slaves," said Jonathan. "We stood in the dungeon where the floor is still six inches deep in human remains.

"I was struck by the intergenerational trauma caused by the pillage



(Top left): Bishop Jonathan, the Rev Max Cross and Bishop Matthias Mededues-Badohu meet Bishop Victor Atta-Baffoe; (top right): a puncture on the outskirts of Accra; (bottom left): preaching in St Patrick's Church, Ho; (bottom right): the dungeon at Cape Coast Castle where slaves were kept



of whole cultures, the colonial method of divide and rule, and the impact of slavery on the Queen Anne's Bounty - which became the assets of the Church Commissioners, which now pays my stipend."

Having arrived on the Friday, Bishop Jonathan spent Saturday in Accra, with a service at the cathedral for a newly-installed headmistress. He had lunch with the Bishop of Accra, the Rt Rev Daniel Torto and the new Bishop of Tema, the Rt Rev George Neequaye. They then travelled to Ho, which is five hours to the north-east.

Sunday morning was spent at St Patrick's Anglican Church, Kpando where Bishop Jonathan preached. They headed back to Accra, but suffered a flat tyre when they were almost there, just before midnight.

It took a heroic effort from the driver Christopher to change the tyre with inadequate equipment, while Bishop Jonathan held the torch for him. They got to bed at 1.30am but had to be up at 3.30pm to catch a plane to Kumasi

'It shows a sense of respect for Bishop Jonathan to spend his time visiting'

On that Monday, they went to Kumasi Cathedral for a thanksgiving Holy Communion for King Otumfuo Osei Tutu II's 74th birthday.

After the service, Bishop Jonathan and the Rev Max Cross met the

Bishops of Dunkwa-on-Offin, Nkoranza, Tamale and Wiawso over lunch.

"We spent a lot of time on the road, but travel is expensive in Ghana and it was important for us to go to the bishops, rather than for them to come to us," said Max. "It shows a sense of respect for Bishop Jonathan to spend his time visiting them, and I think that was recognised."

Bishop Jonathan and Max met the Bishop of Cape Coast, the Rt Rev Victor Atta-Baffoe, and the Bishop of Sekondi Takoradi, the Rt Rev Alexander Asmah, in Kumasi on the Tuesday.

On Wednesday, they headed for St Nicholas' Seminary in Cape Coast, which is an Anglican theological