

IN DEPTH: OUR GHANA LINK

college that our diocese has supported.

On the way, Bishop Jonathan gave Bishop Alexander a lift to his next appointment, at Christ the King Academy in Cape Coast. He was introduced to the newly-installed headteacher, Robert Redfern, and was keen to explore potential links with Christ the King College on the Isle of Wight.

At St Nicholas Seminary, the bishop and Max were greeted by the principal, the Very Rev Joseph Bain-Doodu and his staff team. Joseph had spent time studying in our diocese from 2009-11. And it was after time at the seminary that the bishop headed for Cape Coast Castle.

There was some time of prayer and reflection there as they stood by the grave of the Rev Philip Quaque, the first black Anglican priest, who was ordained in 1765 and became chaplain to Cape Coast Castle.

On the Thursday morning the bishop and Max headed to Sunyani to meet the Bishop of Nkoranza, the Rt Rev George Dawson-Ahmoah, and the Bishop of Sunyani, the Rt Rev Festus Yeboah-Asuama. They visited a hospital run by the Diocese of Sunyani, and Angutech, the Anglican University College of Technology, where students study healthcare, agriculture and business administration.

And on Friday, they headed up to Asante Mampong where they met Archbishop Cyril Kobina Ben-Smith. He is the Bishop of Asante Mampong and was elected Archbishop of the Province of West Africa in 2022.

They worshipped at the cathedral and spent the night there, before heading back via Kumasi and meeting the Bishop of Kumasi, the Rt Rev Oscar Amoah.

And on their final day, they met

Village links are built on friendship

THE long-standing links between All Saints Church, Denmead, and St Paul's, Tafo, are definitely based on friendship – not just shared faith or funding.

It has now been 22 years since congregation members from Denmead launched their link with Ghanaian Anglicans from Tafo. And those friendships have only grown deeper since.

Each of our deaneries was initially linked with a diocese in Ghana. Havant deanery was paired with the Diocese of Koforidua, in the eastern region. Individual churches and schools in Havant deanery were invited to pair up with churches and schools within Koforidua diocese.

Angela Herring, from All Saints, who is also the Havant deanery representative for our Ghana link, said: "It was in 2002 that our then vicar, the Rev Andrew Ashdown,

took a group to Ghana, which included me. We visited St Paul's in Tafo and I have visited virtually every year since then.

"There have been several groups who have visited from All Saints, but the links are definitely not just priest-to-priest. In fact I've mostly corresponded with a lay co-ordinator from Tafo called Dorothy. It used to be by air mail, but now is by WhatsApp!

"One of the great things about this link is that it's also not just church-to-church. For instance, we have two groups in Havant – led by Nicola Ellis – who knit baby clothes for those in the intensive care neo-natal unit in Koforidua. They love hearing about those babies.

"It's also not just about money, it's more about friendship. We will obviously help where we can, but sometimes that involves asking

others to help too. A couple of years ago, Denmead used a bequest to help them build a new St Paul's Anglican School – the plans were actually for a creche for about 40 children.

"We worked out the best way to do it, and suggested that they opened half of it now, and half later, and that we could fundraise for some of the equipment they needed. So when we visited in January they had almost finished the building.

"But they had no equipment for the school/creche and an appeal was made in All Saints and Denmead Village. This was successful and the money has been transferred in August. We will visit again this October to see it open for 20 children."

The village has previously hosted Ghanaians visiting from Tafo, but not since 2005, because



Angela Herring and Nicola Ellis offer knitted baby clothes to staff at the neo-natal unit in Koforidua, Ghana

of more recent difficulties in securing visas.

And in 2023 Angela and Nicola also visited St Nicholas Anglican Seminary in Cape Coast, which trains new clergy. Its principal, the Very Rev Joseph Bain-Doodu, spent time studying in our diocese from 2009-11.

"What strikes me is their tremendous faith," said Angela. "They dance and sing and wave hankies in their services, and they are so joyful even when they don't

have much. We send them details of what we do in Messy Church or in holiday clubs in Denmead, and so many of their children want to be involved. We also compare different services, such as Harvest – totally different in each country – and of course both congregations pray for one another.

"I think that because we see them every year, there is a mutual trust, and a desire on both sides to be totally involved in each other's lives."



Bishop Jonathan is shown the site of a new building that will be part of the Anglican University College of Technology in Kumasi

the Rt Rev Felix Odei Annancy, Bishop of Koforidua. When they travelled back to Accra to catch the plane home, Bishop Jonathan was also pleased to meet Maxwell, an old friend he was chaplain to at the University of Surrey, and his daughter.

It was a significant trip for Bishop Jonathan and he and his fellow bishops consider how to enhance our links with the Anglican Church in Ghana.

To read more, see: www.portsmouth.anglican.org/ghana.

More than 40 years of close links

OUR diocese has links with a number of places around the world, but our oldest and strongest links are with our Anglican counterparts in Ghana.

The Inter-Diocesan West Africa Link was formed in 1978, and was the umbrella organisation for links forged between Anglicans in West Africa and the English dioceses of Chichester, Guildford and Portsmouth.

Since 1998, Portsmouth's links have been primarily with Ghana, although some individual parishes continued with separate links with other parts of the world.

There was also a strong link with the Diocese of Stockholm under our former bishop Kenneth Stevenson, who had personal Scandinavian heritage. A recent visit by

guests from that diocese is helping to reawaken that link.

Many worshippers from our diocese have been inspired in their Christian faith and mission by links with Ghanaian Anglicans, and many have visited in person. Money has been raised over the decades for a variety of projects, including the 'Hayling Bridge' in Asasewa in Koforidua diocese, wells and toilets in Dominase in Dunkwa diocese, and a nursery at Essikadu in the Diocese of Sekondi-Takoradi Diocese.

Our Bishop's Lent Appeal has also given regular support to projects to benefit the Anglican Church in Ghana as a whole, including helping to create the St Nicholas Anglican Seminary in Cape Coast, and a new spirituality and retreat centre in Nkawie in Kumasi diocese.

In 2016, 17 adults and teenagers from churches in Portsmouth deanery went to St George's, Ho, to redecorate a school for children with special needs. They were hosted by the Bishop of Ho, the Rt Rev Matthias Mededues-Badohu, who has also visited our diocese a number of times. It was branded as 'Project G' and a number of the teenagers from that trip have gone on to Christian ministry elsewhere.

The Church in Ghana is part of the Anglican Province of West Africa. Last year, two new dioceses were created in Tema and Nkoranza.

Ghana already has its own Archbishop, the Most Rev Cyril Kobina Ben Smith, and there are plans for it to become a separate Province in its own right.