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Canon Graham Morris writes...

In this issue:

Insights from the students of Ryde School as they visit the Diocese of Tamale October half term 2017

What a wonderful privilege for me to accompany 12 students and two members of staff on Ryde schools second visit to Ghana. Our destination the small village of Nako, south of Wa in the Upper West Region. The students tell their own story of their encounter with The Ven. Canon Moses Banungwirii, his colleagues and his family. Eyes were opened, feelings challenged and friendship built, so much so one of our students is returning in the spring / summer of 2018 to work with the Anglican Diocesan Development Relief Organisation, in Wa. (ADDRO) Moses Banungwirii is an amazing parish priest, who keeps in motion the wheels of a very successful link project. Ryde School linked with Nako School, and St Aidan's Church Wa, linked with Ryde All Saints'. We have plans to expand the schools links with two schools in Ryde, Haylands and Greenmount with St Aidan's Church Primary in Wa.

For me what makes our link successful is that there is little talk of money, but lots of talk about support in so many and varied ways, and of course money comes into the support. What really counts is the relationships between individuals nurtured, building into friendships that link families together.

I am so pleased that this year's students have found great satisfaction in making once again an outstanding contribution to the wellbeing of the links and the fostering of friendship between our schools and our church communities. Fantastic.

Community by Pip Andrews

Community stretches well beyond just your family in Ghana. A person cares for another's welfare regardless of their religion, gender or even if they'd never met you before. This was clear through the way Muslims and Christians live together harmoniously or through the kindness of a lady selling fruit in the market who would give us, complete strangers, free fruit every time we bought our pineapple and gave bananas to school children that would pass her stall. Every community we visited, we'd experience the same united feeling in the way they'd welcome us on the behalf of the whole community or mourn together, as a village, over the deaths of two young boys or through just simply working together to pump water from the borehole. The sense of togetherness was so evident in every aspect of Ghanaian culture, it became contagious and quickly rubbed off onto us in the two weeks we spent out there, teaching us to work better as a team as we sang and painted the school buildings.



The team at the Walji Lodge in Tamale with Bishop Jacob

Ghana's Landscape by Luke Wilson

Ghana's landscapes are very vast open areas, from beautiful rainforests to stunning beaches. It seems like there is no limit to the variety that Ghana has to offer. We spent some time in the north of Ghana which seemed like a different world from the south. The north was more plain and less green in the ways of no forests and no grasslands whereas the south was flourishing with an oasis of green and idyllic beaches. In the north where we stayed for most of our visit the land was hot and resembled a desert with some patches of green. Most of the animals that lived in the north were from the animal kingdom of reptilia and managed to survive in the arid landscape where water was scarce. The south of Ghana created a vibrant contrast to the north with its weather climate and the sea which was close by.

Transport by William Loach

As we ventured further north up the country, it became evident that road safety and the highway code were completely ignored by the Ghanaians. Heavily overloaded lorries trundled past, carrying passengers who seemed to be everywhere but on a seat. Mopeds would zoom past with one, two or even nine people all cramped together on a rickety trailer. No engine? No problem, bicycles littered the roadside. They could be missing pedals, seats or even have more rust than protected metal. However, this would not deter the people of Wa and Tamale from cycling to and fro work on these 'Death Traps' as anything is better than nothing to them. The roads, to everyone's shock were surprisingly good around the more southern and central areas around Tamale and the capital Accra. Unfortunately, this trend did not remain as we travelled north and driving turned into an thrilling game of who can dodge the most potholes as we were tossed around the back of the trucks as if we were in washing machine!



Joining in the fun and games at the FiF Brothers Guest House in Wa

Work in Ghana by Rhiannon Cobb

I was mesmerised by the work out in Ghana because it is so different compared to the work in England. Here consists of mainly office administrative jobs, whereas in Ghana the jobs are mainly manual and practical.

The work is wide and varied with the majority of the population working in retail by selling their products on the edge of the road. I can remember a lady who was selling various pairs of shoes that were neatly arranged on the pavement of all different colours and sizes. Many women carry large basins on their heads filled with fish, drinks and fresh Ghanaian grown fruit. It amazed me how men who are mechanics have tyres piled up in their shop and fix cars on the road.

Even though the Ghanaian people have very little they still work with huge smiles. Despite this, it can be quite competitive because many people are selling the same product.

Gender by Mary Caddick

Before my trip to Ghana, gender equality had never been an issue in my eyes. I had never seen serious prejudice against females in the UK or any European country that I have been to. However while in Africa the harsh reality of inequality hit me like a tonne of bricks. I found it hard sitting at the table of a priest knowing the females of his family were in the kitchen preparing food and refusing to come out while the males in the family happily ate at the table. I also found out that many females in the poverty struck area could not go to school on their period. This was both due to the thought of them being "unclean" but also that they didn't have enough sanitary supplies to have a period while doing daily tasks such as leaving the house issues which shocked me deeply.

Since back in the UK I have become fiercely more passionate about female inequality in less economically developed countries and aim in the future to improve this issue and I am so happy to have been given the opportunity to see the vast contrast of attitudes to females in different countries.



Nako School by Lucy Holloway

The highlight of my trip was definitely Nako school, and, although Issy and I were the ones running our lessons, I felt that I learnt even more from them than they did from me. The most striking difference between the UK and Ghana in terms of education is how much they value it, which raises some interesting issues. In the UK, where education is accessible to everyone, the common view among students is that school is a burden that one has to endure. However, in a country such as Ghana, where education is not a given, students evidently enjoy and appreciate their time in the classroom. During our time at Nako we got to see this first hand: during lessons it was common for the class to break out in applause when something new was achieved, such as learning the numbers to ten in German. These small moments were truly uplifting, and I wish more students in the UK were able to have the same attitudes as the Ghanaians.

Water and Sanitation by Isabelle Terry

Unclean water and the lack of basic sanitation clearly are prominent issues in Ghana. Although there has been much progress in the past few years because NGOs such as ADRO have been funding projects like the construction of the borehole at Nako School. Ghana is still far from our western standards of sanitation. Despite this it is clear that Ghana is improving. Normally it is the women and children who have to collect water, this uses up a lot of time and children will often miss out on an education to collect water. However, the new borehole at the school is giving the people from the surrounding villages access to clean water and it encourages children to go to the school. It will take a very long time for Ghana to have a level of sanitation comparable to the UK but it is clear that even the smallest thing can have a huge impact on the community and the people living in it.

Food by Lily Ainslie

One of the things I was looking forward to on this trip was the opportunity to try authentic west African dishes, especially jollof rice, and I was not disappointed. While we were in Wa, we ate at the Upland Restaurant. It attempted Western 'Sanacks' such as burgers and pizzas, as well as serving 'Ghanaian' meals. While the pizza bases were strangely biscuity, the local dishes were delicious, apart from the banku and accompanying soup, which was only comparable to raw bread dough dipped in mucus. One evening, we ate at Moses' house, which was the best food of the whole trip by far. On offer was more banku, for the braver ones among us, as well as fried plantain, a personal favourite, jollof rice, red red (a bean stew) and yam chips. In Tamale we ate at Swad, which offered Indian cuisine as well due to the owners' nationality. In Cape Coast we ate at Graham's idea of a club (some coloured lanterns and slightly louder than usual music). The food here was great too, even if the pizzas did take over an hour. Finally, at the airport I got my first chance to try fufu. It turned out to be a slightly nicer version of banku with a much nicer, nutty soup.

Religion by Freya Williams

What fascinated me during the trip to Ghana was that religion is fundamental part of life for many Ghanaians. Christian church services are about 3 hours long during which song and dance feature in praise. The dancing is of high intensity and joyous and the whole room is used, I spent hardly any time sat down. My impression that I have taken away is a community coming together to sing and dance with each other in a beautiful demonstration of praise. The two main religions in Ghana are Christianity and Islam and I was struck by how integrated the different religious communities are, there is a high mutual respect for others' religions which was incredibly refreshing to see complete respect and such minimal conflict.



Deputy Head Teacher Ben Sandford Smith playing bass guitar with the worship band at Tamale Cathedral.

People by Ben Ockendon

Ghanaian people should be an example to us all. Everybody was so friendly and incredibly welcoming to us - complete strangers. So many people are so poor but they make the most of what they have. What continually amazed me was that these people had so little but were such happy and wonderful people. Money is really just an object in Ghana. It doesn't change people like it does here and we should learn from that.



One amazing priest called Moses

Community by Alice Gordon

Our recent trip to Ghana has really awakened a real sense of family for me. During our time out there, we had the pleasure of spending time with and getting to know a man named Moses and his family, and they were all the loveliest people. I think I can speak for everyone on the trip when I say that, from the moment we walked into Moses house, everyone there pretty much became our family. Everyone there welcomes you into their family straight away, whether it is with a certain handshake, or by calling you sister or brother, everyone accepts you. There's this real sense of family and community. This is something which I've really been able to take away with me, and seeing how important family is to these people really made me think about my family back at home. It's funny how here we can have so much extra that we forget what we already have.