

# TEABAG

The Education And Book Appeal: Ghana



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## DEAR SUPPORTERS

If you look at the bottom of this page, you will see a wonderful seven digit number. That little number has taken months of work to obtain. TEABAG became a registered charity in September, after seven years operating as a private charity. There are many benefits to being fully registered not least of which will be our ability to claim Gift Aid. One of our Trustees, Jayne Pratt, has been responsible for obtaining our registration and I thank her most sincerely for all the hard work. I also acknowledge assistance provided by the Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Development Agency.

Apart from the sad deaths of four of the children that we were involved with, it has been another absolutely wonderful year for TEABAG and for our work with the children in Ghana. All of our projects have moved forward swiftly and some great people have donated their time and expertise towards our aims. We now have our own website and a bright new logo to celebrate our change of status. The website and graphic design services have all been donated free of charge.

In June, TEABAG and the village of Mankoadze hosted a big party and celebration for a group of overseas visitors who were touring Ghana with the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church. This was a highly prestigious event and resulted in a handsome contribution to our funds. Although I couldn't be there myself, I understand that a good time was had by all and our children performed their cultural dances with great skill and enthusiasm.

I have lost count of the number of TEABAG supporters who have travelled to Ghana over the past year to work with the children. We have had school teachers, students, pensioners, farmers, artists, accountants and various other people from all walks of life to give their time, efforts and love to our kids.

Donations have continued to arrive from many different people, churches and other organisations in addition to our regular sponsors under the educational scheme. To everyone who has helped us in our work, in the many varied and diverse ways, I offer my heartfelt thanks.

Roger Gillman, Chairman of TEABAG



The younger children taking part in a welcoming ceremony for a group of TEABAG visitors in October 2008 wearing ceremonial cloths and holding hand-made Ghanaian flags

## IN MEMORY: KOJO, ISAAC, BENJAMIN AND BISMARCK

Although it is easy to be upbeat and enthusiastic about all the progress that TEABAG and the children are achieving, we are all brought down to earth when we hear of deaths amongst the young people we are working with. It reminds us that these children are living in a seriously underprivileged society and have very limited access to medical care.



Little baby Bismarck had been poorly most of his life. We had taken him to the hospital and received some treatment in 2007 but he was, sadly, not for this world. Benjamin was featured in the last newsletter; he was the lad who was born with two thumbs on one hand. We did have this operated on last year with great success, but he contracted malaria early in 2009 and passed away. Isaac and Kojo had both been on our sponsorship scheme since our early days; Isaac was just about to take his final exams at school. As is so often the case, the exact cause of death is not known as no doctor was in attendance and no examination into their deaths took place.



## FUND RAISING EFFORTS

### YOUNG FUND RAISER OF THE YEAR

The Young Fund Raiser of the Year Award this year goes to Bella Gibbs, aged 9 years, from Battersea. Bella has persuaded her whole family to get involved and between them they now sponsor ten children. Bella didn't stop there: she devised her own fund raising scheme and decided on holding a Yard Sale. She produced leaflets and posters to advertise the event in her locality and sold various household items, homemade cards, books, toys and a bicycle. Bella, with her brother Daniel and sister Taluda, gave TEABAG £203.53 from the successful sale. Well done Bella.

### OLD FUND RAISERS OF THE YEAR!

The Old Fund Raisers of the Year Award goes to Linda and William Heath of Cambridge. Celebrating their sixtieth birthdays, they threw a party and asked for donations to TEABAG in lieu of presents. Over £600 was donated and used towards vital medical facilities in Mankoadze.

### TEABAG VALENTINES BALL

In further fund raising news: a Valentines Ball was held on 14 February specifically to raise the money to pay the salary of the TEABAG Vocational College manager. Tom Yendell and his team made all the arrangements for 30 couples to sit down to a

wonderfully amazing meal. Tremendous generosity of time and effort was shown by all the people involved in making this a very special evening. Special thanks are due to Janet and Trevor who lent their eclectic mill house as the venue, to Sarah for the great catering and to the Holybourne Girl Guides who were the very best waitresses. The event was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone and raised over £2000.

## APPEAL FOR BOOKS, CHILDREN'S CLOTHES AND FOOTBALL BOOTS

We have shipped and distributed a huge amount of donated items in the past year. However, we have been a bit short of children's books recently. Books are in big demand in the schools. Without TEABAG's help, the schools simply wouldn't have any books at all. We are also trying to help a sister project in Tema with reading material. So please do ask around your family, friends and neighbours to see if they have children's clothes, books or shoes looking for a good home.

Football is the national sport in Ghana. All the children are football crazy, including the girls. Every child asks us to bring football boots. So again, please ask around, you would make a budding football star very happy indeed!

We have agreed to give financial assistance to all three of the villages so that they can attend a Sports Festival to be held in November.

The photo on the right shows a little girl receiving a toy from our shipment of donation items. Probably the first toy she has ever been given.



## FOOD PRICE SURVEY

When I go to Ghana on business, I usually buy food at one of the few supermarkets that cater for the overseas visitors and expats. It is considerably more expensive than popping down to your local Asda because everything has to be imported. Recently, food price inflation has been in the news and so I did a little price survey to see what food costs are like in the rural villages. The first noticeable thing was that all food stuffs are sold in very small quantities. Where we would buy a decent sized bag of rice, sugar or salt, the villagers purchase small amounts wrapped in twisted cling film or small plastic bags. When I roughly calculated the costs per kilo, I found that they are actually paying more for their basic foodstuffs than we do in the UK. Bread, fruit, root vegetables have all gone up in price. It is no wonder then that the children seems to develop physically much slower than their counterparts in the "West". Most of the children in the villages are lucky if they get one good meal a day. Added to the general level of poverty is the problem of high inflation, although at 20% Ghana is doing better than many African countries.



## TEABAG VOCATIONAL COLLEGE

Tom Yendell deserves a Knighthood for his work in planning, building and financing this college. He was moved into action when he learnt that TEABAG could offer very little for the children who had finished their education in the village schools. Although a lucky few would move on to Senior Secondary School, most of the school leavers faced a future with no prospects of paid employment and would follow their parents into subsistence farming and fishing. The other alternative would be for them to drift into the cities and face a very uncertain future living on the streets.

The college is due to open in September this year. Every student will be compelled to take English and Maths as core subjects. The vocational teaching will include: Hospitality, Catering, Dressmaking and Building. The particular speciality of the college will be IT skills training, based around a modern and well equipped computer study centre linked to the internet by satellite.

It is hoped that the college will be partially self financing in future years. The building can be hired out for social functions during the evenings and weekends and used as a cinema. The dressmaking classes can make all the school uniforms for the schools. The computers and internet connection can form the basis for other income. I know that Tom is planning to add a restaurant to the complex in the future to help in the practical training of the hospitality and catering students.

When the building of a college was first proposed, Roger said that it was ridiculously ambitious, totally unachievable and far too costly for a little charity like TEABAG to consider. Roger hadn't accounted for Tom's determination, hyper personal drive, resourcefulness and bloody-mindedness!

Tom is now busy renovating another building and converting it into accommodation for the teachers. Without being to offer a decent level of housing, it would be impossible for us to recruit good teachers to work in the village.

We will be asking for sponsorship for some of the student's fees to attend the College once the exact costs are known.



## CHRISTMAS PARTY IN MANKOADZE 2008

Report by Helen Burton and Lindsay Sutton

We went to Mankoadze over the Christmas and New Year period with Tom Yendell and his family to help work on the new TEABAG Vocational College. The welcome we received on arriving at the village was quite unbelievable with the school children dressed smartly in their brown and yellow uniforms marching towards us singing a welcoming song. The scene and atmosphere was an amazing one of joy and an enormous pleasure to see. We then all walked to the beach lodge where we were to stay and the children gave us a wonderful singing and dancing exhibition.

Over the next two weeks we got to know many of the children quite well and despite their obvious poverty we were given nothing but great friendship and happiness from everyone we met.

Despite the heat we managed to do some painting in the college and unpack many items that had been acquired for the kitchen which was needed to get up and running for the Christmas Party. We spent time sorting out the children's Christmas cards with

their money sent by their sponsors, along with preparing 400 party present bags for Father Christmas to give out at the party. The Queen Mother and her ladies had an even greater feat cooking chicken and rice for everyone, which we watched them doing in their outdoor kitchen on a charcoal burner with what appeared to us very primitive cooking implements - especially when they opened a catering size can of tomato paste with a huge machete knife as they had no tin opener!

The party was held on Christmas Day and the mass of children (and adults) that turned up was quite overwhelming. Despite the sheer numbers there, some party games were held and after eating all the children were given a present bag by Father Christmas. Some of the smaller ones appeared in awe and quite amazed at this man dressed in red robes with a huge white beard. However, after a chaotic few hours the party ended with everyone having had an absolutely wonderful time. Another smaller party was held on New Year's Eve for the older children where they were introduced to the deliciousness of a chocolate fountain. It was a night to be remembered in one way because of the torrential tropical downpour that pounded on the tin roof and made it almost impossible to hear anyone talk! But this was seen positively as a good sign for the New Year in that the old year was being washed away ready for a prosperous start to 2009.

Some evenings we showed films at the Centre to the children and these went down extremely well. Somehow once we arrived at the Centre, no matter what time, the word seemed to filter out as if by magic and within no time we had hordes of children there of all ages.



Tom worked extremely hard organising the workmen to get the Centre up and running and then moved his attention to the old fisheries building nearby which is planned to be used as accommodation for the teachers. Having been disused for many, many years it was very derelict and full of bats but Tom was completely undaunted by the task ahead. Work started to get this building renovated even whilst we were there and moved along at an incredible pace, with the overgrowth all around it cleared, the rubbish cleaned out and new electrics starting to be installed.

Our time in Mankoadze was an amazing and unforgettable experience. The children were an absolute delight to get to know and we hope to be able to visit the village again to see how the Centre and the fisheries building are progressing.



### BABY SAMUEL AFFOAH

Samuel is the son of one of the teachers in Mankoadze. He was born blind and clearly needs to be examined by an eye specialist. The pay of a schoolteacher in a village school in Ghana is around £40 per month and his parents have another child to provide for. TEABAG would like to raise the £350 that it would cost to take Samuel to the capital to be professionally examined. If you feel you could help towards this target, please mark your donations: Samuel Affoah.



## FINANCE REPORT

Stuart Payne, Honorary Treasurer

At a recent meeting of the Trustees I was asked to detail exactly how much of the charity's funds had been spent on: the charity registration process, secretarial costs, printing, postage, telephone, website, travelling costs, visitor's accommodation, wages and any other overheads. I did not have to resort to my trusty calculator to give a comprehensive answer as the total is **NIL**, thanks to those many people that have given their time and skills free of charge.

Since the beginning of March, we do have an employee. Castro Amoah is a university educated Teacher and Administrator. He has agreed to become the manager of the TEABAG Vocational College in Mankoadze. We have already separately raised the money for his salary so that any general donations will still be used exclusively towards our work with the children.

I would like to add my thanks to those of Roger to all of you who have donated funds to TEABAG in the last few years. It is a very exciting time for TEABAG becoming a registered Charity as we are opening up a whole new area of funding for TEABAG. Firstly we will be asking all of our supporters to fill in a Gift Aid form. If you are a UK tax payer then we can recover money direct from the government for everything that you give. You only need fill in the form once; it will be valid for every penny you give to TEABAG after that. We will also be looking at Trust funds to help with our work. There are many Trusts out there that have money to give away each year; it is just a case of asking them. Many of these Trusts give in the form of Matched Funding, so basically they will match pound for pound a sum raised from a particular event. We have already received some money this way from Barclays Bank Charitable Trust. If you have knowledge of any Trust that could possibly help please contact me, I will happily contact anyone who is willing to help us raise funds and keep our wonderful work going.

We now have our bank account at Barclays Bank. If you would like to make a donation directly into the account, the details are: Account Name: TEABAG, Sort Code: 20-21-78, Account Number: 70715980. Please ensure that you put your name as the payment reference.

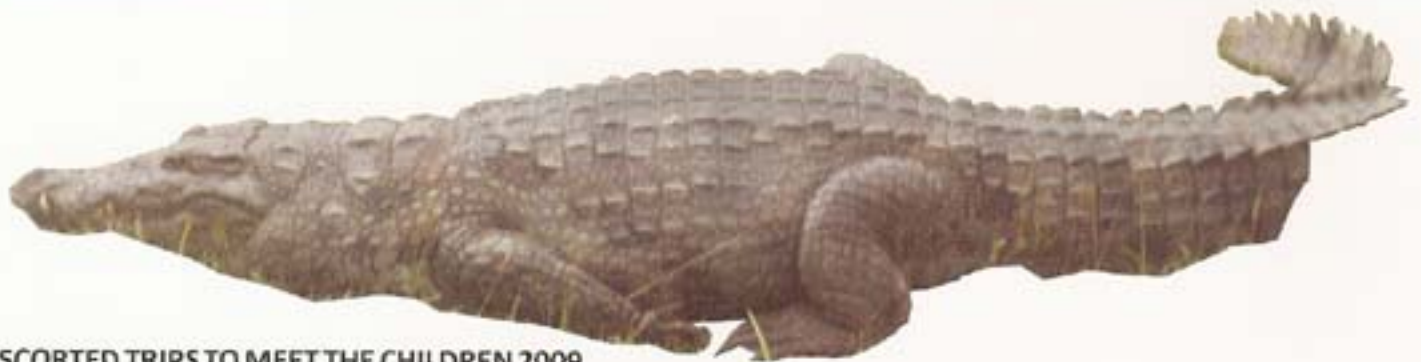
## CHRISTMAS PARTY FUND RAISING

Many thanks to all who were able to contribute towards the Christmas Party. Many of the sponsors sent Christmas cards with some cash enclosed. Wherever possible, a photo was taken with the child holding the card and the money. Members of Tom's group managed to take 91 individual pictures of the children receiving their Christmas gifts and those photos will be enclosed with this newsletter. There will always be a few children that just couldn't be found or were out of the village on the day the gift were distributed.

A special 'thank you' goes to the Shadbolt family of Earlsfield. Mrs Elsie Shadbolt passed away in October 2008. The whole family are wonderful supporters of our charity and asked that donations be sent to TEABAG in lieu of floral tributes at the funeral. The £220 was used towards the Christmas party costs.



The children in Ghana love nothing more than a chance to dress-up, sing and dance. When we have a group visit, they perform a welcoming ceremony involving children from each age group. Visitors are quite rare in these rural villages and it is considered a special privilege to welcome visitors from overseas. The King and Queen Mother also play a role in extending a warm welcome to their guests. For a first-time traveller to Ghana, the hospitality can be quite overwhelming and moving. These expressions of their friendliness, warmth and welcome are not shows put on for tourists but a genuine and important part of the culture. You need to experience it to believe it!



#### ESCORTED TRIPS TO MEET THE CHILDREN 2009

TEABAG assists any of our supporters who wish to visit Ghana and spend time with the children in the villages, whatever time of year the trip takes place. However, we try to take a reasonable sized party in the first week of October each year. At this time, the flights are fairly priced, the weather is comfortable and there is a festival in Mankoadze. We handle all the visa requirements, airline and hotel bookings. If you would like to join this party, please contact Roger.



Although we try to spend as much time as possible working in and around the schools, we do like to arrange a two day trip for a little site-seeing in the Central Region of Ghana. We hire a mini-bus and take about a dozen of the village children with us. First stop is usually Cape Coast Castle, which was one of the holding pens for captured slaves awaiting arrival of the boats to take them to the Americas. After a night in a hotel, we then visit Kacum National Park where a rope bridge walk has been built in the canopy of the rain forest. The UK visitors and the children have a great time on these outings.

(Thanks to William Annal for the wildlife photography)

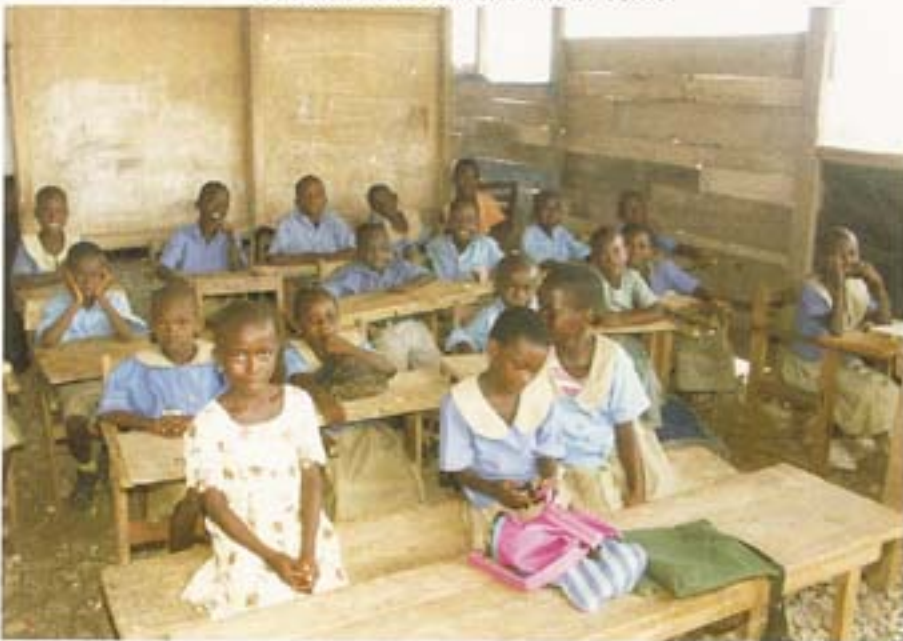


TEABAG visitors usually stay in a comfortable house recently built near the Mankoadze beach. The beach of pure white sand stretches for miles in each direction. Generally, the house is not open to the public and we thank the owner, a Ghanaian living in Vienna, for allowing TEABAG guests to stay there. Below are some images from recent visits of TEABAG supporters meeting the children they sponsor.





The children of Winers Basic School, pictured outside the new Greek Orthodox Church in Tema



Inside one of the two classrooms in the school

## OTHER CHARITY PROJECT IN GHANA

TEABAG has been offering some practical assistance to other groups who are doing similar work to us in Ghana. Recently we helped a group of teachers and parents from Ravenstone School in Balham. They have formed a close working relationship with a school in a village near Bolgatanga in the Upper East Region of Ghana. This is so far north that it is almost in the Sahara desert and is a dreadful journey from the capital: Accra.

From their reports, it would seem that life is indeed a hard struggle in such a dry landscape. Ravenstone School has already installed a well and have many other projects progressing well. Our help was mostly with transport and local advice.

We would also like to provide assistance to Winers Basic School in Tema. This area is the main port of Ghana and feels quite industrialised. The school is situated near a shanty town where the living conditions are really quite grim. As there is no state school in the area, an amazing man called Ike Joseph Asumah decided that he would build and open a school to help the poor children of the area. You may notice that Ike was born without legs; he walks around with flip-flop shoes on his hands and is a determined and resourceful man.

As you can see from the photo, the school is mostly built of scrap wood and their only teaching equipment is a blackboard. TEABAG will pass on some of our children's books to the optimistically named WINNERS SCHOOL and may be able to provide further support in the future.

### DONATIONS FORM

Regular donors, under the educational sponsorship scheme, will be sent their annual invitation to renew with this newsletter. As this newsletter is read by other people, this form is included to attract new sponsors and to encourage general donations towards the work of TEABAG. Please make your cheques payable to "TEABAG"

No administration or shipping costs are deducted from donations. Every penny is used directly to help the children.

I would like to sponsor the education of \_\_\_\_\_ children in Ghana @ £15 each per year

£

Please indicate if you would prefer a **BOY** or a **GIRL**

I enclose a donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_ to be used for other TEABAG projects.

Name:.....Tel:.....

Address:.....

Post code:.....