

FRIENDS OF AHOTOKUROM NEWSLETTER

June 2006

Edition 12

Registered Charity DMJ No 232421

Welcome to the latest newsletter from Ahotokurom - Ghana!

We thank you for all the good work that you have enabled through your generous support.

Ahotokurom has Quads - and they are all doing well.

Quads were born on 21st January to a lady from Moree. This village is a few miles from Ahotokurom and is reputed to be the poorest village in Ghana. It is entirely reliant on fishing but with catches being considerably down there is very little food for anyone there.

The mother already has 3 children and was not producing anything like the volume of milk required and inevitably the quads would have all died. She doesn't even have a single room for her family and no money at all. However, the Sisters arranged for the mother and quads to move to Ahoto. As the mother has been unable to cope even at Ahoto its been down to the Sisters, staff and students to get up throughout the night, change the nappies, feed and wash them, sterilise the bottles etc etc. Surprise, surprise, one of them is always crying!

There are 3 girls and 1 boy named Atta Panyin, Atta Nenu, Atta Nansa and Atta Kwame (Atta meaning twin). We are told that with all this going on in addition to all the other tasks the place is in a *state of complete chaos*.

Photos, hopefully in next issue.

Rains Arrive

At the end of May the rains had arrived with a vengeance, roads were flooded and impassable, trees were down and electricity was out. Luckily there is a small generator to provide basic needs.

Trudy hands over, but is still in charge.

Most of you know Trudy Kilcullen who started these newsletters 6 years ago. Trudy probably knows more about Ahoto than anyone in the British Isles, having worked there and visited many times. She has always kept in close contact

with the Sisters. She is still Chairperson of the Friends a role that she carries out with unbelievable enthusiasm and dedication. Well she has twisted John Hayward's [arm to take over writing the newsletters on a trial basis.](#)

Minibus transforming lives

The wonderful new minibus supplied by the parishioners of Coulsdon Parish is transforming lives. The Sisters have increased the number of disabled people at Ahoto and many of them come for training with a parent so that lessons learnt can be reinforced in their homes. There are plans to train many more disabled people but more of this in the next issue.

Building Work has started

Work has started on a new workshop, store and garages. They are typical single storey Ghanaian construction with the object of more room for the tradesmen that work at Ahoto, a store and a dry safe environment for the prize possession, the new minibus.

Read the Web Site

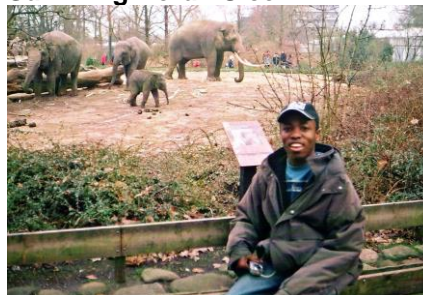
Why don't have another look at the Ahoto web site. It's now been upgraded and is a wonderful insight into the activities at Ahoto.

We have been having temporary problems with the internet company who host the site - so for a short while you will find it at

<http://mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/ahotokurom>

We will be moving it to another host shortly and will keep you in touch with the changes.

Joseph Oduro's story – Surviving Boruli Ulcer



Joseph with his new prosthesis, at a zoo in the Netherlands

Boruli Ulcer is a frightening disease that is considered to be the new leprosy in Africa. It is a progressive ulceration and bacteria that eats away at the skin and flesh and is the third most common mycobacterium disease in Africa after tuberculosis and leprosy. Most medicines are ineffectual.

Well, Joseph is now 24 but without his tremendous courage and the support, nursing and caring at Ahotokurom he wouldn't be here today.

When he was 10 years old he was infected by this terrible disease and soon after had his left arm amputated but he also had infection in his right arm and left leg. He had a series of skin grafting operations, medication and physiotherapy. Eventually he had to have his left leg amputated. Basically, he had to spend 4 horrendous years in various hospitals in a variety of far-off parts of Ghana for his 7 operations. Fortunately, his younger brother Benjamine was his faithful companion during this entire period travelling with him and looking after Joseph's various needs. Then he was fitted with prosthesis for his arm and leg but these were very basic and heavy. Added to this the treatment to his right arm had left him with little manipulative skills in that hand. A Sister Elizabeth had kept an eye on Joseph during this period and arranged some financial support. When he was 17 Sister E arranged with Sisters Pat and Monica for him to move to Ahotokurom. Here he needed considerable nursing as he was very weak and undernourished. But they were very successful in nursing him back to health and then arranged for him to start Junior School. He did really well in his studies and raced through the system. Eventually he was awarded a place at Cape Coast University in July 2004 to study Geography and Sociology. But there is no free education in Ghana even for the

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disabled. However the Sisters approached their contacts and arranged overseas sponsorship for him.

Joseph was still struggling with his locally made prosthesis which was very heavy and by then ill-fitting. In August 2005 he was sponsored by the Adjoa Foundation in The Netherlands to go there for a new lightweight state of the art prosthesis.

This new prosthesis was to take 6 months to design and fit but he was worried about the break in his studies. So, they arranged for him to study at the University of Groningen to make up for the studies that he was missing in Ghana.

Now he's back at Cape Coast University working hard but during the holidays he goes home to the Sisters at Ahotokurom.

Joseph has come a long way from the very sick lad who arrived at Ahoto. He has achieved with considerable disabilities the 3rd level of education. Many thanks must go to the Sisters and Friends from across Europe.

Kuful has a football team



The Kuful teams

Kuful is a village about half a mile from Ahotokurom. It is a very poor village with no roads or drainage but it does have a tap and an electricity connection! The Sisters, as part of their outreach programme, help as much as they are able. The villagers have set up two football teams and they compete against other teams but didn't have any kit. Well, through Trinity School in Croydon they were given a complete set for both the Junior and Senior teams. Now they are the only teams in the area with kit. In celebration they had an

inaugural match which the juniors won 2-1. We're hoping that the next Thierry Henry will come from Kuful.

Working at Ahotokurom. A Students Story

James Kelly from Limerick, Ireland recounts his story working for 7 months when he was aged 19 at Ahotokurom.

Thinking back now on seven months spent in Ghana is difficult. All the memories come flooding back of the kind people, the life and culture, the villages and most especially friends made. It is hard to describe the feeling I get, but it is something like being home sick when you've been away from your family for a long period of time. I suppose that's what it actually is. Home sickness.

The welcome I received in Ghana was fantastic. Arriving in the midst of a celebration of the new Community Centre built for the very poor village of Kuful, was amazing. It was a celebration of life one which I had never experienced before. Culture shock...oh yea! Sitting under a canopy watching everything that was going on after parading for an hour behind a crowd of people dancing and singing was unbelievable. The Chiefs out in their robes and the whole village out to perform and be part of the celebration showed upfront the true nature of Ghanaian people and life. There was a sense of happiness with people smiling from ear to ear. At the time I thought it was just because of that big day, but I soon found out that everyday was going to be the same.

Working in two separate places gave me an opportunity to be part of two very different experiences. Teaching Computers, P.E and choir in a Secondary School was an amazing experience. Being part of a school where the small skills you had to offer were welcomed with open arms would give anybody the chance to give everything, even if that included me teaching choir when I haven't a note in my head.

The song the school all sang together was one from Sister Act. Even a year later in 2005, long after I had gone, at their graduation the class sang that song, which for me was something special. Then of course P.E was a multi-cultural experience where we played basketball and volleyball and finished the evening off with dancing and singing, Ghanaian style.

Ahoto was the main community where I worked, that is if you could call it work. For me, if you love and enjoy something so much then it shouldn't be called work. Being part of Childcare, St. Clare's and Special Unit made time fly too quickly. Simply things like supervising the children during meal times or helping out Teacher Rose with the children in Special Unit are little things which can go a long way. Initially to grasp the idea that you can't help or try and do something for everyone, is difficult. You can only help out as best you can giving your all and that's what I tried to do. Getting to know people on a personal level rather than being just a visitor was the best part of Ghana and it was easily done by sitting and talking with everyone, even if you had piles of jobs to do! Everyday brings something new. A knock on the Sisters door early in the morning; to the car breaking down; to the children being sick - these were just everyday things that cropped up frequently out of the blue. Time rarely exists. If you can't do something today, then try and do it tomorrow.

Of course leaving was so tough. I missed everyone so much that I returned this year for three weeks to see everyone again and to help out the new volunteers who were just starting their six month placement. It was just as hard leaving the second time. I know I will return again though, that is for sure. Until then the memories will have to keep me going. Go on Ghana in the World Cup!!

We thank you all for your care and concern and hope that this

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**small newsletter will help you to
understand the very real
difference that you can and
do continue to make**

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