



## Ghana School Trip - February 2023



On Wednesday 1st of February a group of students and staff from Eggar's School in Alton arrived at school for 07:45 in preparation for our trip to Ghana, in conjunction with the charity TEABAG (The Education And Book Appeal: Ghana).

We checked the weights of our cabin bags and made sure that we had everything that we wanted, then we loaded our suitcases onto the coach and said goodbye to our families. Lots of tears were shed, but excitement filled the air. The coach drove us to Heathrow airport and we checked in our holiday suitcases, after which we had two hours until we needed to board the plane. Many of the suitcases were filled with donations and gifts for our Ghanaian hosts and their community, so there was a lot less luggage to manage on the return journey. We were allowed to look around the shops and get food if we wanted. The adventure had started!



Once we landed, the first thing that hit me was the heat! Going from 2 degrees to 35 degrees was quite a shock. Our first night in Ghana was spent in a hotel, in Accra, with a swimming pool, but the next day we travelled to Mankoadze, a two-hour bus journey down the coastline of Ghana. Even though the first bus broke down, the greeting from the local people was amazing and worth the wait! They lined the road into the village, singing, dancing and playing the drums. They were much more welcoming than anyone in the UK. We were shown to our dorms where we met our lovely Ghanaian student buddies and introduced ourselves to all of them. In the girls' dorm they taught us traditional dances and songs.



Tom Yendell took us on a guided tour around the village, stopping at the water tanks, primary and secondary school and football pitch. It was breathtaking the difference between our schools and theirs and I realised how lucky we were to have the teachers, equipment and opportunities that we have. Then he took us to the preschool and library where we read a book to the primary school children. Water is a very precious resource and we were taken to the sacred watering hole, bare foot, and we carried bucket loads of water back to the village.





Lydia, another Eggar's student, and I had the opportunity to visit Winneba market alongside Castro (the head of the school), CiCi and Joy (catering teachers at the college) to buy ingredients for the meals that the catering team made for us. The market was very hectic and lively; however, everybody was so friendly. It's an experience I won't forget! Also Mrs. Tomkinson (one of the Eggar's staff) and I drank fresh coconut water from an actual coconut!



TEABAG supported the construction of the college where students can study catering, sewing, brick laying, computing and mechanics. Luckily for us, the catering students cooked

us some delicious meals, including traditional Ghanaian jollof rice and red red stew with fried plantain on top. Also, a couple of our buddies are studying sewing and they made some skirts, tops and dresses for some of the Eggar's girls. Each day we played with the primary school children during their break and lunch times. The way they greeted us with hugs and smiles made my day. They taught us some of their favourite songs and games and we taught them some of ours. A sharing of cultures.



On Monday the Eggar's students, along with a few of our buddies, travelled to Kakum National Park where we did treetop walking (very frightening as we were so high up, but with fantastic views which helped calm our nerves).





Then we visited Cape Coast slave monuments. It was a very poignant and thought-provoking visit as, although it is a horrible subject, it is something we should never forget.

Each day we swam in the sea. It was very rough, however the warm water meant we stayed in for hours! The beach stretched quite far and the blazing sun was a beautiful sight.



While we were in the village, we visited the Queen Mother and gave her a small gift to say 'thank you for allowing us into your community'. In Ghana each village has a queen mother who is a figurehead for her community.



Also, some Eggar's students visited Marie's (the local nurse) hospital clinic where we passed on our donations of paracetamol, cataract treatments and baby blankets. With the help of baby blankets, the survival of newborn babies rose by 50% last year.



On the last day we had an assembly where the Ghanaians sang their national anthem and we sang ours. We received handmade bracelets from the sewing students and we said our fond goodbyes. Many tears were shed but the friendships we have made will last for years.



Since coming home I have kept in contact with a few buddies and have contacted one of the catering students to ask for the red red stew recipe, so I can share it with my parents. As a family we are hoping to go back next year with more gifts for the community.