



## WULUGU 22 YEARS: LYNNE'S REVIEW

In 1995 we had built our first hostel for girls, at WULUGU Secondary (hence our name). We filled the school library with books from UK schools, repaired floors and sent science equipment.

Northern Ghana was struggling to make lives better. They are the proudest, most determined of people, ready to extend their friendship and hospitality to all despite the profound deprivation, poverty and neglect. Their rich history, bravery in the face of massive problems, and sharp minds were a privilege to encounter. Their sadness, pain and hunger were often hidden by joyful celebrations. Few heads of families and hardly any women had any education. **But they saw that we would listen, and, even without much money, would help them to help themselves.** Meanwhile, girls were betrothed at birth, sold for four cows, married on first menstruation to an older man with a group of wives.



Lynne & Students at Kabampe June 2016

These are the communities that have embraced our 'small' charity. Over the years we have built together, not just schools but a culture of deep trust and mutual respect, not of 'us' and 'them' but of an extended family. **We have learned so much from each other and shared precious moments, immense challenges, times of doubt but mainly times of triumph - showing the world what is really possible when peoples work together.** We have reached those villages that are too distant and where our projects are hidden from the outside world because the outside world, and often local government, does not go there. We greatly appreciate the support of all religious groups who have worked together to ensure success of our projects, particularly in ensuring that girls and young women have the life chances that their own mothers never had.

This newsletter shows some of the great progress we have made. You will read about our projects leading the way. We

were one of the first to provide teacher accommodation. We are making Junior High schooling accessible for girls which opens the door to qualifications.

For older girls, our Vocational Schools are increasingly popular enabling many girls to return from slavery. We have trained teachers at our Vocational Schools - another 'new' idea.

Thanks to the wonderful Eagle Foundation, who have been so supportive, we have changed traditional building practices to delay the almost inevitable weather damage.

Perhaps the most change is the attitude to early marriage for girls. Families are trying hard to keep their girls at school beyond primary. This has been helped by our income-generating loans for women. Our many toilet blocks (often the first in a district) ensure privacy so that girls and female teachers actually go to school right through the month. Pre-fourteen there are as many girls as boys now in WULUGU schools and the number of girls in school beyond fourteen has increased dramatically.

**The punishing climate, massive disease risk, hunger, lack of infrastructure, education and medical care are still major problems.** As emphasised in our generous citation (see page 3) at the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my first tribal chieftaincy, **we are still very much needed.**

We are eternally grateful to our donors, supporters and volunteers in Ghana and the UK - there are too many to thank individually but you can be assured that your support is making life-changing improvements to this neglected and impoverished part of Ghana.

*Lynne Symonds*

*PS We have crammed as much news as possible into this newsletter - this has been a busy and exciting year for WULUGU!...there is much more we could say but space does not permit. For more information, including two short videos, please visit [www.wulugu.co.uk](http://www.wulugu.co.uk)*



WULUGU New School at Nagboo (see page 5)

## HONOURING KARIMU NACHINA: WULUGU'S FOUNDING FATHER

We reported in earlier newsletters of the sudden death, in October 2014, of our founding father Karimu Nachina. Karimu was the first head at WULUGU Senior School and the driving force behind all the achievements of WULUGU. Our charity derived its name from his school. Now we work with hundreds of villages across Northern Ghana.

A permanent plaque has been erected at his school. Jane and Lynne were at the unveiling during their recent visit. It is one of the most prestigious and important schools in the district and has over 1,500 pupils. The girls' hostel we built has been packed since opening in 1995. The 'Lynne Symonds Library' continues to be one of the best and has been re-stocked several times.

It is a fitting place for Karimu's memorial. He would be truly proud.

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“Road” to Bawina

## GHANA MONITORING VISIT JUNE 2016

We have a very experienced on-the-ground volunteer team in Ghana that manages our day to day activities. Most years we meet up with the team and visit projects old and new. These visits are hugely beneficial: ensuring we continue to obtain value for money, and invest in those projects that meet local needs and are locally supported.

This year’s visit from 5th to 12th June included Jane Scott, Lynne and Roger Symonds from the UK and in Ghana Solomon Nachina (our Ghana Co-ordinator). Brief notes from Lynne’s diary below highlight some of the challenges and difficulties of travelling in this remote part of the world. Bandits, bad roads, punctures, disease and impossible weather meant that planned events didn’t always go according to plan!

DATE	ACTIVITY/COMMENTS
Sun 5th	0715 arrive tired in <b>Tamale</b> after 24hrs via Amsterdam and Accra. Met local Education Officers in <b>Damongo</b> - we stressed need to keep our buildings in good repair. Visit to <b>Larabanga</b> hostel - working amazingly. Very hot 40degrees.
Mon 6th	More high-level meetings in <b>Damongo</b> . To <b>Murugu</b> Primary School - met by local PTA - tremendous! Temperature above 40deg. A long drive to <b>Bawina</b> - buildings in need of major repairs after 12 years (normal life of buildings in this extreme climate).
Tues 7th	Drove to <b>Kabampe</b> to visit recently built Junior High. Building design excellent (our new stronger longer lasting design) - airy and well-planned. Onward to <b>Gbenfu</b> to visit our two schools and teacher accommodation. Getting hotter. Drove to <b>Sawla</b> to our Vocational School - a very successful and model school. Long journey back to <b>Tamale</b> . Tired and getting hotter. Puncture in middle of nowhere. Eaten by flies in the shade - poured water over myself.
Wed 8th	Meeting with John, in charge of our vocational programme. Explained his forward thinking teacher training plans - good. Baking hot now. Off to <b>Kopeng</b> to see school built last year. Welcomed by Chief - “talking drums” drummed us in and out. Greeted by crowds and 300 pupils. Wonderful school - 8 splendid classrooms, a library and toilets - a dream come true. Speeches and dancing - presented with a ram, smocks and eggs. On to <b>Tolon</b> Vocational School - appalling dangerous road - school well kept.
Thur 9th	To <b>Walewale</b> to Eagle FM for 30min live broadcast - good questions and able to get our message across. Everywhere posters about WULUGU’S 20 years. Went on essential toilet hunt, found one in health centre. On to <b>Gbani</b> (we recently made essential repairs here) - well kept and masses of children. On to <b>Nagboo</b> . Audience with chief - he gave us a sheep! Visit our 3-room Junior High. So many children. Much poverty. Shattered by heat/hunger/tiredness/ long travels. On to <b>Nalerigu</b> to audience with Nayiri, King of Mamprugu - most influential Chief. Someone kindly gave us guinea fowl that travelled with us under seats and kept escaping on our long journey back to <b>Tamale</b> . Oh joy!
Frid 10th	Our planned 5 hour each way <b>Lukula</b> trip cancelled (bandits from Niger/Sudan active - they attack, rob and kill). Raining hard but cooler. Went to bank to collect bank statements - asked for a better exchange rate on our funds. On to <b>Savelgu</b> Vocational School - huge successes here with many setting up businesses. Late afternoon meeting with Ghana Director. Late pm meeting with nine of our building team - they were just splendid - friendly and hard-working. Exhausted to bed - early start tomorrow.
Sat 11th	Day of the grand Durbar to celebrate 20 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of my enskinment as Neesin Poanaba and to unveil plaque commemorating the work and life of Karimu Nachina.
Sun 12th	Early morning flight back to Accra. Torrential rain. 10 pm flight to Amsterdam.
Mon 13th	Late. All luggage soaked through. Pretty exhausted but pleased with what achieved.



Parents & Teachers Kabampe



Happy Children at Murugu

## 20th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS: DURBAR<sup>1</sup> 11TH JUNE

One of the many things we admire about our friends across Northern Ghana is that they really know how to celebrate. A typical noisy and atmospheric celebration ceremony in Northern Ghana is a Durbar<sup>1</sup> and one such celebration was held on Saturday 11th June to celebrate 20 years since Lynne's enskinment<sup>2</sup> as Chief of Enlightenment and Education of the Maprusi<sup>3</sup> people.

(1. Durbar - a traditional celebratory Ghanaian gathering of dignitaries, elders and local villages accompanied by intensive drumming, singing and dancing. 2. Enskinment: traditionally, chiefs in Northern Ghana sit on skins of animals such as the lion, leopard and other wild beasts. The coronation process is thus referred to as the "enskinment" of the chief. 3. Maprusi: one of several ethnic groups in Northern Ghana, of about 450,000 people, who live in the kingdom of Mamprugu).

Lynne says:

'As we travelled it became clear that something was afoot. The first indications were the enormous posters announcing the celebration of the anniversary of my chieftaincy at the WULUGU Senior High School. On the big day TV cameras recorded our approach - later to be part of several broadcasts about WULUGU including a live 30min radio interview.

At the start of the day, we were hosted by the chief of WULUGU village, heralded by drumming and dancing. At the enormous 'field' at the school, hundreds of dignitaries came to celebrate. There were speeches, traditional dancing, singing from choirs and more speeches.'

Lynne also received a new 'throne' made from leather cushions inscribed with her name. This magnificent gift came from WULUGU Naba, Chief J.S. Nabila. He performed the chieftaincy ceremony for Lynne in 1996. He is currently Chair of the House of Chiefs in Ghana--the important house parallel to the elected parliament. Following Lynne's speech, later in the day and in punishing heat, Lynne was surprised and honoured by a presentation from the Nayiri (the King of Mamprugu) of the citation below.



Citation Presentation



Durbar - Time for Singing & Dancing



### Citation

#### ON CHIEF OF ENLIGHTENMENT & EDUCATION: LYNNE MARY SYMONDS

Today marks a huge milestone in the journey that began 20 years ago. It is a day when we see visibly before our eyes the fruits of your hard work over the years. WULUGU Project, through your unwavering determination to see development and growth of education in Northern Ghana, has affected the lives of countless children, particularly girls. You have produced female medical doctors, so many nurses, teachers, dress-makers, caterers among others through the numerous schools and vocational schools you have built over the years.

Mamprugu and the Kingdoms of Northern Ghana stand today to celebrate your triumph and success and are proud of you in the execution of your duties as NEESEM POANBA (Chief of Enlightenment & Education).

This citation is not a farewell but a pat on the back for being there for your people. You have rescued so many girls from poverty, slavery and early marriages.

You will always be the voice of so many silent voices and the strength of so many weak ones. We congratulate you on your 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and wish you a long life, good health and strength.

The Nayiri and all the people of the Mamprugu Kingdom say:

TI PUSIYA PAM (Thank you very much!)

From The King and Over-lord of Mamprugu Kingdom:

Naa Abdulai Mahami Buahagu Shefriga 2nd

## OUR VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

We have built seven Vocational Schools, some in the remotest of districts. They have provided a life-line to many 16 to 25 year old girls to learn skills that will give them a future career: dressmaking, catering, weaving, ICT, painting and decorating, typing, hairdressing, english and maths.

When Ghana TV interviewed us, during our June Monitoring Visit, we stressed the importance of providing training for those who would not go to university and wanted qualifications that would be really useful. WULUGU has been very successful in establishing and funding Vocational Schools. However, to ensure their long term future they need to become less reliant on WULUGU funding and ideally absorbed as "Government Funded Institutes". This has already happened with Walewale and Buipe. We expect others to follow soon.

Last year's newsletter described our "in-house" Vocational School teacher training. This year we developed a new practice of bringing together teachers and students. This participative innovative approach is very successful: students provide comment/feedback and ask questions and teachers feel more valued and more determined.



Walewale - Former Students' Restaurant

Our school at **Walewale (built 2001)** is continuing its phenomenal and ground-breaking success with a new Head and a full complement of graduate teachers. There are over 1,500 students. The government has given a bus! Lynne was deeply touched to be presented with some bead-work by girls at the school when we visited in June. We also noticed some enterprising former catering students are running a restaurant next door to the school!

**Buipe (built 2007)** continues to thrive with over 1,000 pupils and with flush toilets!

**Sawla (built 2008)**, visited in June, has always been successful, largely because of Marcelena, the dynamic Head. It is overflowing with more



Sawla Girls' Hostel

than 200 students. We have helped this year with more toilets as the existing ones were destroyed by the weather. We have also re-painted the school and fixed minor problems. They reported how pleased they were to receive ten tailoring boxes from Trade Aid. We know they will be very well used and cared for.

**Savelugu (built 2008)**. Cynthia and her staff are very pleased with the repairs we have carried out this year. A donation from a Canadian friend of Solomon gave enough money to add three extra classrooms and a teachers' office and toilet. There are currently seventy-one students and during our visit we were able to meet and talk to several of them. Students here are making remarkable progress:

- Yaha Aishia (18) - lost her mother - six siblings. Wants to open a clothes shop in Savelugu with the dresses she has made.
- Hannah (26) from Pong Tamale. Will progress from here to polytechnic to train as a teacher.

Tailoring is always successful here: currently all year groups are full. They were given ten Trade Aid Tailoring boxes and they are really being used well.

During our visit we presented sewing machines to two girls: Nachimbia Razaq Ruhiya (18) and Alhassan Latifa (16). Neither had any schooling prior to coming to our Vocational School. Now, having their own machines, will ensure more fulfilling, healthier lives where they can make their own choices for the future. This gift was made possible by a donation from Mrs Ondiah, in memory of her mother, specifically to help young women set up a business so we hope that she will be pleased with our choice.

We noticed the maths master was doing good work and is also teaching graphic design and decorating and this was very popular with students that were in the school. Currently there are thirty girls in maths class, seven of these with no prior education so they are taught basics and then progress. The school has a very popular Civics Club and is now on very firm footing with a very capable head-teacher.



Cynthia - Head Teacher Savelugu

**Karaga (built 2011)** and **Daboya (built 2004)** both had promising starts but currently we are reviewing progress and keeping a careful eye on their future. It is our intention to give our full support so these schools can flourish. Tusk Trust has recently funded essential repairs at Daboya Vocational School.

In June we also visited **Tolon (built 2014)** which currently has seven teachers and eighty students. It is well equipped, in good condition with a keen and young Head and has space for more students. We have experienced similar slow starts at our other Vocational Schools. It takes time for them to fully develop teaching skills and course content as well as managing on a shoestring budget. The roads here are appalling and dangerous. A hostel would possibly attract more students. Meanwhile we have set up temporary dormitories for them.



Sewing Machines for Nachimbia & Alhassan

## SHARING IDEAS: SUNDERLAND BIDDICK ACADEMY AND SAVELUGU VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

Students at Biddick Academy Sunderland recently sent their designs for children's dresses, together with the finished product, to tailoring students at Savelugu Vocational School. Savelugu girls produced their own (photo right), adapted designs, made them up and sent them back to UK. This work involves maths, technology and creativity as well as thinking about life in a different society. What a tremendous sharing ideas experience for both schools. With additional thanks to Trade Aid for the sewing equipment (photo left).



## IMPORTANT STEPS TO HIGHER EDUCATION: PRIMARY TO JUNIOR HIGH TO SENIOR HIGH

The gateway to higher education and better jobs is the Senior High School. Well equipped Primary Schools and accessible nearby Junior High Schools are essential to ensure the flow of pupils through to Senior High. In the past access to Junior High Schools has been difficult for many with large distances to travel. Things are changing: during our visit this year we were pleased to find that Junior High Schools had sprung up next door to some WULUGU Primary Schools. They were funded by Ghana Education Services, the Church, or by NGO's. WULUGU is also helping pupils make these important steps by further investments, illustrated by the three examples below.

### ADDITIONAL ROOM AT LARABANGA PRIMARY

Thanks to Tusk Trust we provided an extra classroom in our Larabanga Primary aimed specifically to give extra attention to the final year students and create a culture where progress beyond Primary is the norm. We are delighted that as a result of our action forty-six pupils, including twenty-four girls, progressed to Junior High this year.

### THE TRIUMPH OF COOPERATION AT KABAMPE



We are gradually improving education for the Mole people so that they will no longer need to live by poaching from the nearby Game Reserve. With over 170 Junior High School pupils (14-17 yrs old) without proper classrooms and potentially a further 100 each year unable to attend because of inadequate space, a new school was fully justified.

We built a Junior High School (to our new design with stronger metal doors and windows), together with toilets and water tanks, with the joint funding from Tusk Trust, WULUGU and the local District Assembly. This is truly a first for co-operation and we are particularly pleased with the funding from the District who often give words of encouragement but never cash as their budgets are so limited. The Kabampe community need and deserve further help. They, as everywhere else at present, want teacher accommodation as this would attract and retain better teachers. It is a very poor, remarkably primitive and neglected community and too distant and inaccessible for others to help so we are their life-

### NAGBOO NEW JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Nagboo is a very remote location near to the Togo border and the road leading to it is exceptionally rough and dangerous. This means that there have not been any sources of assistance except from WULUGU. Parents are ambitious for the futures of their children, as shown by the high numbers of children in school (1,000 Primary and 500 Junior High), but infrastructure help from authorities has been woefully inadequate.

Work commenced in March this year and was completed in mid-June at a cost of £26,000. The new work has provided three Junior High classrooms (to our new design with stronger metal doors and windows) together with a store/teacher room and toilets. This replaces an old, partly collapsed, two-roomed cage-like structure.



Nagboo - Old School 2016



Nagboo - New School 2016

### KOKPENG LEADS THE WAY IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL PUPILS

by Jane Scott



Kokpeng - Palm Leaf School 2015

I was excited that we would visit the new WULUGU School at Kokpeng whose progress we had shared in last year's newsletter (the school that rose out of palm leaf verandas - see picture below). The new school was buzzing with excited pupils and their families, being organised by the impressive head teacher, Ms. Juweira Ibrahim and her admirable staff. We were in for a Durbar of epic proportions with village dancers and drummers to entertain us, speeches of appreciation and promises of maintenance to impress us, gifts from the District assembly and most importantly a visit to the classes. The primary classes were full with enthusiastic pupils and blackboards full of work with an emphasis on maths. There were a couple of tall young men, looking incongruous in their school uniform, helping with the youngsters but obviously not teachers. We were told:

*"They had not attended school when they were younger as there was no school but they really wanted to study now so they enrolled and bought the uniform and came to school regularly. They had been teased as they were in a class with pupils ten years younger and felt so big and uncomfortable so sadly left. The headmistress understood their needs and arranged that they would be taught on their own so that they could learn in their own space and at their own rate. They were thrilled and now they are attending regularly and helping out with the younger pupils as monitors."*

Another first with a WULUGU School being flexible and really meeting the needs of the community.

Juweira reported to us some of the benefits of the school:

*"Pupils can now study all year round whatever the weather, enrolment increased from 131 to 300 and it is easier to attract good teachers. The school is a dream come true. The school is a treasure that we will protect with all our might."*



Kokpeng - Durbar in New School 2016

## RENOVATING BUILDINGS: A CONTINUAL NEED IN THE HARSH ENVIRONMENT



Kubori - in Dilapidated Condition

We try to provide new educational buildings where there is no school. We also help with major renovation work. We always impress on the local community the need to maintain their schools, however, the very harsh weather, together with termite and other pest damage, shortens the life of most buildings: a building's life is around twelve years. Major renovation is often beyond the local communities resources and without WULUGU's help buildings would rapidly crumble and be left to collapse.

We are continually developing our building design to make them stronger and longer lasting - see articles in this newsletter on Kabampe and Nagboo - page 5. Three examples follow illustrating recent repair work at Bawina, Kubori and Tauhidea.

### BAWINA: FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM "INTO" TO REPAIR TEACHERS' HOSTEL

We added a teachers' hostel in 2005 to our Bawina Primary School: this recently required major renovation. The careful repairs we have carried out will ensure we have a strong building for many more years. This, together with the toilets that we have built at the same time, will make this school more attractive to the women teachers who are so important as role models for the girls. We were fortunate to find funding for this project from INTO.

*(INTO work across the globe. INTO's mission is to transform lives by supporting projects that increase access to education and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Their ethos of enabling and encouraging education closely fits with 'WULUGU' and we were delighted to receive this grant for essential repairs at Bawina.)*

### KUBORI: PRIMARY SCHOOL REPAIRS

Funded directly by WULUGU this project was supported by the local community and the PTA. Kubori is in the remote 'Overseas' area: during heavy rains it is cut off from the rest of the region hence its name 'Overseas'. Access is difficult - our metal windows and doors were transported by canoe (see picture). There are ten teachers who work closely with an active PTA. The school is thriving with 568 pupils (285 girls 283 boys). Transition to Junior High is good: in the next academic year it is expected that 63 will do this.



Kubori - Windows & Doors - by Canoe



Kubori - Fitting New Metal Windows & Doors

### TAUHIDEA : REPAIRS TO TEACHER'S HOSTEL

This building has been in full and constant use since we built it in 2004

and again was in urgent need of repairs. The proximity of the teacher block to the school means that teachers attend regularly, do not turn up late, and are more available to their pupils. The teachers are also available to engage with illiterate women, teaching them basic literacy and numeracy in the evenings.

All cracks in the building were carefully repaired. The ceiling was replaced. An electrical system was installed. Wooden doors (damaged by termites) were replaced by rust-resistant metal ones. All window frames were replaced. In order to delay future weather-caused erosion, we built strong concrete and brick 'aprons' around the structure .



Kubori - Finished Verandah



Lynne & Jane with some of the Building Team

### MEETING OUR BUILDING TEAM

We have three well-experienced building teams, all carefully selected from the communities we are helping. Having watched their skilful work many times, this year we invited some of them to meet us on the last day of our Monitoring Visit. They were just splendid: friendly, hard-working and very grateful.

We met **Nyouri Sampson**, a labourer. He is a student studying disease at Kintampo health College. He is very enthusiastic about his course and, like many students, appreciates what he earns working for us.

**John Nkansah**, the foreman - he is proud of his work and feels valued and appreciated and this helps him and the team to work hard.

**Kofi Enoch**, from Techiman in the South - said that the team work hard under Solomon's direction and all feel that he is stern but very fair!



### TOILETS ARE VITAL!

When we first helped in Ghana, no schools and few other buildings had toilets. Today they are in demand everywhere and we are trying to make sure that our schools built some years ago are not left out. The vital importance of providing good toilet facilities are mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. Our builders are expert toilet builders!

Thanks to Kitchen Table Charitable Trust (founded by John Humphreys - this charity focuses on supporting small charities like WULUGU - where every penny goes to those in need and that have a policy of helping people to help themselves and stand on their own feet), The Hilden Charitable Fund and Kabampe District Assembly, we have provided toilets at Kabampe (Primary and Junior High), Tauhidea Primary and Bawina Primary (Picture Left : New Toilets at Sawla)

## BUSINESS LOANS



A Thriving Business

As everywhere in our region, women are the workers - the men generally take little responsibility for supplying food. The women use the loans to buy quality seed and to avoid selling too early after harvest when the prices are at their lowest. They trade in millet, ground-nuts and sometimes cassava and rice. Cassava is used to make Gari (a creamy white granular flour). When there is a good crop of shea nuts they will prepare shea butter, for which there is a good market.

During our visit this year we met Mr Aziz, in charge of the WULUGU loans. He checks with recipients regularly and is continually reviewing how we manage our loans. For example we have recently encouraged women to pay back a little every two weeks instead of all at the end and the loan period has extended from one year to two years. This gives them more time to raise capital so when they repay they still have some capital to build their businesses.

In Mepeasem and Kokpeng, the women are already benefitting from the new loans system this year and the changes seem to be working.

Typically the women are divided into groups of five. The local leaders, including leader of the women's group and village chief, have responsibility of identifying the women and selecting them. Training is provided by peers and older women. It is informal: none of the women are literate. The leader of the women's group (selected democratically and with great skill) monitors the activities of all the group members. In many ways the groups are self-regulating and they really keep a close eye on each other.

**The result: women who have loans are able to afford to send all of their children to school regularly and improve their diet.**

## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS IN BAWINA *by Jane Scott*

When we visited Bawina this June I met Alimatu, a very smart young lady, sitting on a chair, under a mango tree in the heart of the village with an old fashioned telephone next to her on a low table. Her two year old son was playing nearby. I was fascinated. She was very friendly and explained that she was at Bawina school and remembers, how ten years ago we had built the 'new school' there and how more teachers had come to teach her. She moved on to the Junior High School in Damongo, as there was no JHS in the village then, and stayed with her grandmother. She completed her High school education in Damongo but has since come back to Bawina, is married and now runs her own telephone business. With two A4 solar panels she charges up her batteries to use in her phone and charges her neighbours 1 GHC (20p) for a 2 minute call which connects to the nearby mobile mast. The connection she brings to the outside world gives the farmers a chance to check the price of yams, shea nuts, charcoal so that they can obtain better prices for their crops from travelling middlemen.

## MORE HELP FROM TRADE AID



Trade Aid Boxes Ready for Opening at Sawla

Trade Aid was set up to help the poorest communities with practical solutions, improving lives. Trade Aid supply 'Businesses in a Box' to help young entrepreneurs. We were honoured to be awarded a 'Certificate of Continual Support' by Trade Aid Trustees.

This year, again through strong support from Grantham Kesteven Rotary, Trade Aid sent ten tailoring boxes to our Vocational School for Girls at Sawla and ten more to mothers in Nagboo, a most impoverished community. Ten more boxes are due for delivery later in 2016 to our Vocational School at Karaga.

Each box has a sewing machine needles, pins and thread, tape measures, scissors, chalk and account books and pens.

Our teachers tell us that the boxes are greatly appreciated and are perfectly matched to their needs.

## ALAN WELCH : A DEAR FRIEND

We will always be grateful to our dear friend Alan, founder of LabAid, who sadly died in January 2016. Alan and his wife Margaret taught science in Accra. Kofi Annan was one of his students. Alan was a good friend and supporter of WULUGU. His charity has recycled science equipment to schools around the world enabling many more students to enter careers in science. Our first school, WULUGU Secondary, benefited from LabAid equipment when set up twenty-two years ago.

## INTO CHARITY GOLF DAY AT BARNHAM BROOM



INTO UEA Charity Golf Day 2016

INTO generously helped us repair the teacher hostel at Bawina (see page 6). They had heard us speak on local radio - thanks to BBC.

INTO has a branch at UEA. They won a Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade in October for global impact in preparing students for University in UK and elsewhere.

Lynne bravely went to their golf day in full chieftain dress and her threat of doing her anti-rain dance was enough to keep the day dry!

## FUNDS FOR THE FUTURE: CAN YOU HELP?

I hope that when you read this newsletter you will feel very proud of the transformations made possible by your support. Although we do not have the big publicity machines of larger charities, you can be sure that, at WULUGU, we are faced with all of the problems that are shown in their media campaigns. But the remoteness of our communities means that others do not reach them. But we do.

Some very kind people help us anonymously, often with a note saying: 'I prefer to help small charities'. We hope they will read this newsletter on the web site and share our pride. You will also know that we do not pester our supporters for more. But, this time, I just want to ask you if you have any time and if an opportunity arises, could you perhaps run a small fund-raising event for us? Nothing complicated, something everyone will enjoy. Perhaps a coffee morning, perhaps a raffle - something that will not take you long. This would greatly help our work.

This year friends like Stephen and Ginny have sent us the money they have been given for giving talks, Val is doing a bridge event, INTO held a golf day (see page 7), Biddick Academy students raised over £200, Graham (Houghton Rotary) climbed Ben Nevis on his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, David sold his wonderful poetry books, Sue asked for gifts for us for her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, Wendy and Harold did the same for their Golden Wedding and Barbara, born in Ghana, helped us in memory of her parents.

There are large sums of money in the charity world. If we could access some of this, we could do so much more. And it would all be used wisely, quickly and effectively for our work. None of our team ever receive payment, they tell us that their reward is seeing the real benefits for those most in need. And they really appreciate that much of our funding comes from your help. Thanks to you all.

*Lynne Symonds*

## WULUGU'S TREASURER: THANKS TO LEONA LEVINE & WELCOME TO HAROLD POND

Our greatest strengths are our supporters and volunteers in UK and Ghana. Here we have a small team who do all the spade work. A key member of that team is, of course the Treasurer. Leona Levine has meticulously and efficiently filled this role for fifteen years. She has dealt with major challenges including introducing Gift Aid and rationalising rapidly fluctuating exchange rates. She has developed a depth of understanding of real development issues that has helped her to work confidently and with empathy to ensure that our funds have greatest possible long-term impact. Leo patiently met tough deadlines, sorting out costs of bags of cement, window frames, paint and sewing machines. She quickly made real friends when she visited our projects, helping quietly and generously.

Leo's staunch friendship, cheery optimism and ability to make me laugh when we were facing seemingly impossible demands have been invaluable to me personally. I will never be able to adequately say thanks' but know that she can take real pride in the many thousands whose futures she has been key to improving so far. As she is still part of our UK management team her work is far from over!

With Leo's departure we welcome our new Treasurer Harold Pond. Harold and his wife Wendy and family have supported us for many years. Recently their Golden Wedding celebrations brought generous support for WULUGU. Harold is very experienced and skilled and we are fortunate to have his help and for the time he has given to getting to grips with our finances. *Lynne Symonds*



Solomon with Lynne

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM SOLOMON

WULUGU is a unique charity which supports the needy in our part of the world. We work where there is really a need and our transformational ideology of bringing about change in the personal lives of children, families and communities at large cannot be over emphasised. Sitting in an office and deciding where people need help is most often the most misleading as most times one will discover that people will lobby to add to what they have whilst the reality is some don't have at all. It is in this light that WULUGU does not pride itself in posh office work but getting on the ground and making sure that donor fund really go to where it is maximised to yield the needed effective transformational change necessary.

On my assumption of office in January 2015 I took a stand to serve and to deliver quality that will stand the test of time. The challenges are many but when a project is executed it brings an inner satisfaction. I have come to appreciate volunteering in its true meaning while serving humanity through WULUGU. Though a very small charity, our work has immense impact on lives that had no hope of seeing the light of day.

The Northern region is one still plagued with high illiteracy and high poverty rate, hence child slavery is still very ripe, particularly the girl child. It is in this view, WULUGU took the bold initiatives described elsewhere in this newsletter: Primary, Junior High, High and Vocational school building, micro business loans to women, hostels for teachers and pupils, toilets...the list goes on. But so many deprived communities still exist and in

dire need of Primary and Junior High Schools. It is my hope to see these communities supported so together we can help transform the lives and minds of these communities from the old age norms and believe system that still bedevils some of them.

Significantly to vindicate the vision of WULUGU in furthering opportunity for our skills training, the President in the launch of his party's manifesto for re-election, re-emphasises the need for Technical and Vocational Education Training(TVET). The most comforting aspect was when the President in his address to his party faithfuls in Damongo emphasised on the need and readiness to support Vocational Technical education siting the Sawla Vocational School for Girls. Indeed, the school currently through the District Assembly and Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFUND) has been supported with two Teacher bungalows, an Assembly Hall and a student hostel all currently under construction.

Much as I can go on listing the successes, challenges and needs, I must however doff my hat to the strong team in the UK working tirelessly to make all these happen and to our dedicated donors whose funding has brought about this transformation and continues to and will to generations yet unborn.

We say a big thank you to Team UK and our donors for all your hard work and support and wish you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New year and hope you won't relent in the coming months and years to continue to support these people in Northern Ghana in the hope of their future generations. **Thank you.** *Solomon Joseph Nachina* **WULUGU Ghana Co-ordinator**

## HOW TO CONTACT US

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