

History Society Newsletter

Rondebosch Boys' High School



GHANA 2011 Blog

This is just a tiny peek into our wonderful two-week tour.

For more details, read our day-by-day blog:
<http://www.rbhsgghanatour2011.blogspot.com/>

Twelve Bosch men ventured out into the depths of Deep Dark Africa, expecting nothing more than jungle and poverty. We sure got that. But alongside the stereotype, we were introduced into a lifestyle that demanded an eye-opening shift from our Western paradigm: a lifestyle in which one truly appreciates the beauty of our continent; where altruism is the capitalist-defying norm; and where God's name or a message of love decorates every household. Akwaaba, welcome, to our unique African heritage.

Of course, this was coupled with the less serious group-induced fun, all

contributing to the life-changing two weeks in Ghana. Here are a few of the highlights, the good and the embarrassing.

Saturday, 25 June - The Flight to Ghana:

“We were greeted by syrupy thick air, which was a great relief from Cape Town's icy grip on us, and we immediately began attempting to learn the famous Ghanaian handshake. Upon arrival at SOS Hermann Gmeiner International College we each had a last crack at the handshake and departed to our dormitories, which saw much fuss with relation to the putting up of our mosquito nets.”

Sunday, 26 June: Boat Trip on Volta Lake

“The lively Reggae-esque Ghanaian band, Kings and Anchors, coupled with guinea fowl for lunch set the stage for a peaceful beginning to our stay in Ghana. Grounded in the ideals of peace and hope we see the Ghanaian people as optimistic and a good example of how to live life to its fullest.”

“Supper saw us tasting Accra Fried Chicken, which is much less oily than its Kentucky counterpart.”

Monday, 27 June: Bus trip from Accra to Kumasi

“Apparently it's prudent to order the opposite of your meal: orange juice was translated into pineapple juice and English Breakfast became Continental Breakfast. English may be Ghana's official language, but the accents still support the barrier.”

- A commentary of the breakfast we were served at a roadside stop.

“...we met the famous Kente cloth (from the village of Bonwire) weavers. Our first haggling experience left us all poorer; even half the tag-price is still a rip-off.”

- We all learnt the hard way that the 'retail' price of Ghanaian goods is easily four-fold what one should pay for such items.

Tuesday, 28 June: Trip to Lake Bosomtwi

“After a drive that was lengthened by traffic, we were very excited to get on a boat and take a relaxing trip on the only natural lake [in Ghana], [Lake] Bosomtwi.”

“Instead of taking the boat back [to the bus], we walked through a local village and were treated as welcome guests. What made it a memorable moment was that we got to mingle with the people and not observe from the bus.”

Wednesday, 29 June - Saturday, 2 July: Visit to Cape Coast

“During our tour of [Elmina] castle we were privileged enough to have a guide that not only invested his time on us but also provided us with an emotional view on the topic which allowed us to empathise with the slaves that underwent the torment of the slave trade. We saw how badly the slaves were treated during the time of this trade. We were given the chance to really experience the things we read in our

textbooks.”

- *Sentiments associated with tour of Elmina Slave Castle*

“Much like Tarzan, we ventured from tree-top to tree-top along nothing more than wood and rope. Pictures can do very little to justify the view from 40m above the forest bed. With both fear and bravery edging us forward, we all managed to conquer the majestic tree-top adventure.”

- *These words hardly encapsulate this incredible experience in Kakum National Park.*



“To our surprise, we came across a small fishing village along the coast. With a ball in our possession and a sandy vacancy between two fishing boats; we instinctively challenged the locals in a friendly game of soccer. Before we knew it we had at least 100 spectators and were humbled to a 1-0 defeat by budding Ghanaian stars. This was by far our most personal experience yet.”

- *We were treated like stars in the eyes of these Ghanaians. It was a very sobering experience to be so appreciated and welcomed by this village.*

“Waking up to the gentle rhythm of crashing waves welcomed this day of R & R (July 1) that we all needed so desperately. The Anomabo Beach Resort, close to Cape Coast, was true luxury in Ghana.”

Sunday, 3 July: Wli Waterfalls (second highest in Africa)

“A light walk, they promised us. An easy trail into the jungle assured us of the relaxing activity...45 minutes of a 45 degree incline climbing, or should we say ‘light walking’, led us to the refreshingly refined waterfall. Bliss. Euphoria. [The] Animalistic joy of Mr. Hellenberg.”

“The steady hard pounding of the water created an almost supernatural breeze surrounding this jungle oasis. The wind was refreshing and woke up everyone’s senses and appreciation for this beautiful location.”

One interesting aspect was the faith, which was deeply rooted in the Ghanaian

culture. Even though religion was an integral part of every person's life, dogma did not overtake tolerance and appreciation of other faiths.

Ghanaian Islam:

“...a simple Mosque was easily found. As four strangers intruding on an intimate gathering, we were cautious. The small group, however, acted quite the opposite: they immediately welcomed us.”

“Interestingly, the traditional conservatism of gender separation by an opaque barrier (women, with the shorter end of the stick, sitting at the back) was mixed with an air of liberalism.”

Ghanaian Christianity:

“We awoke bright and early to experience a Ghanaian church service. A team of us comprising of Ihsaan Bassier, Sebastian (Seb), Matthew (Maddy), Sean (Steven), Hellenberg boys and myself (Joao). The church service was enjoyable and we were warmly welcomed by the locals who even broke out in applause!”

“Ghana is really God's land...”

All twelve of us emerged transformed. When asked to sum up the trip, the words ‘motivating’, ‘epic’ and ‘humbling’ came to mind as thoughts rushed back of our momentous experience. Ghana taught us about the strong bonds of humanity, a true feeling of Ubuntu; and painted an enduring picture of its patriotic African custodians. It will always hold an irreplaceable part of our memories and our hearts.

The History Society holds a meeting every Wednesday in Room 75 (Mr Hellenberg's classroom). Details of all events are posted on the History Society Notice-board.

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