

Along the coast noticed lots of  
lumber & split firewood, chainsaw cut.  
Chainsaws appear to be common here.

A truck passed us loaded with  
enormous logs, nearly a meter in  
diameter. Ghana has a big lumber  
industry, and much more forested  
land than Togo.

So far we've found Ghanaian  
people very friendly & helpful. They  
are eager to give directions or lead  
you to a place, but never expect  
money.

An abortive trip to the visa  
ministry once in Accra - no go. On  
the way my taxi's front wheel  
plunged abruptly into a cement  
sewage canal. On the way back  
I couldn't find a taxi - avoiding  
me? - and was at last picked up  
by a Ghanaian Methodist minister  
in a big new van. A very nice  
man.

Bought a mask at the Star  
Woodcarver's for much cheaper than in  
Togo.

After dinner & 2 movies at  
"the club" had a taxi fiasco  
getting to a hotel. We were  
directed to a <sup>wrong</sup> taxi, which ended

up north of the city in an ~~army~~ Army barracks. We were shocked to realize we were crossing into a military

zone, late at night, and had no idea what papers we'd be expected to produce. To our relief they didn't hassle us. Driving through the unlit streets it was uncomfortably quiet and still. Cement barracks & fences & shadows. I began to feel I was in "The Year of Living Dangerously", creeping along through some back road in war-torn Cambodia, not knowing what might happen next.

The driver, when he learned of the mistake, was very nice. It wasn't his fault, yet he didn't blame us, or make us pay a cent. He simply deposited us back where we'd begun. Found a taxi to the Date Hotel - full. So we're back at the California, which is much better the second time around.

We're upstairs - good bathrooms and a cleaner room. And they're remodeling.

cln ghana, rhetoric - political & religious - abounds. The <sup>several</sup> ~~3~~ daily newspapers admonish people to "support the revolution" and to "work for the good of all". Prominently displayed quotes offer pearls of

revolutionary wisdom from the likes of  
Mao, ~~Lenin~~<sup>Mao</sup>, Bishop Tutu, and most  
often, Lt. St. Lawrence himself. The

<sup>viator's</sup> traveller's first impulse is to laugh  
it off as rhetoric, and to assume it  
doesn't go below the surface. But the  
longer you stick around, the more  
you feel it really isn't just rhetoric  
here, but the sincere convictions  
of a people genuinely dedicated to  
pulling their country up by its bootstraps.  
Ghanaians emanate a pride in their  
nation, and in its impressive  
rebound from near economic & political  
collapse. "The people" are battling  
corruption, inflation, a huge foreign  
debt, falling agricultural & industrial  
production - and they've won some  
encouraging victories. Being in Ghana  
is to feel Phoenix is rising from  
its ashes all around you. An educated  
hotel owner in El Mina told me he  
was fully confident that Ghana was  
well on its way, and would rebound  
back better than ever.

In Ghana, unlike in neighboring Togo, politics isn't Taboo. People seem much more aware of world events, and eager

to talk about them.

Accra feels like a city emerging from a long siege. The neglected pieces of the city, rusty & grimy from disuse, are being dusted off & put back <sup>together again</sup> ~~into shape~~, as if some ancient elf were gently. Parks, landscaping, streets & buildings are being trimmed, scrubbed & painted afresh. Shops are reopening like hatching insects after a long stage as cocoons.

Everywhere you go here there are people sweeping streets & sidewalks, ~~trimming~~ <sup>cutting</sup> hedges, ~~mowing~~ grass (with a machete, that is).

Huge billboards advertise the latest in advance technology, ready & available for the asking (and the paying) - from computers & photocopiers, to tractors, trucks, and fancy cars. All this seems to have sprung up too quickly, almost overnight, and you suspect that ~~is~~ this high technology has been here all along, but was simply submerged for a few years, ~~and~~ like holding its breath, and has bubbled ~~is~~ fully intact

back to the surface, there to pick up where it left off. (Billboards of spings).

Abelian beggars are a common sight on Accra's streets - ragged refugee children with heart-breaking "Save the Children" faces. As I pass them by, I can almost feel Sally ~~Fields~~ <sup>Struthers</sup> frowning at me from wherever she is. Ragged mothers with snotty babies, and their young children, trained to beg from the moment they were born, and now quite good at it. The Ghanaians give.

~~The~~ Heard a radio music programme for housewives this morning: "Well housewives, I hope you've had your fill of this. This is Mr. So & So. See you next time!"

The Ghanaians are friendly. A cheerful good morning will invariably earn you a dazzling smile & an equally cheerful reply. (and what's more dazzling than bright white teeth in a chocolate or ebony face?).

got our visas back Thurs. morn - a full day early!

A bit sick yesterday, so we hung out, and today also. Jamale tomorrow.

Sun. July 20

Tri. morning we boarded a Ghana Airways Fokker F28 in Accra, bound direct for Yamalé. Only 2 hrs. late leaving. Each time I fly I'm more nervous, instead of less. Flying is an exercise in controlled terror. My stomach muscles tighten up and by the time we land I'm exhausted from the isometrics. We had good weather & had good glimpses of Accra & the surrounding expanse of green before we broke through the clouds into the glaring expanse of sun above. Occasional glimpses of dark green jungle - tiny patches of red-brown habitation linked by wisps of red clay road like fine thread on a patchwork quilt. A lobed arm of Lake Volta like a child's drawing of pudgy fingers. Puffball clouds like expanded balls of white cotton suspended by invisible threads. A wispy mobile in a rich child's playground. Patches of mild turbulence that

destroyed my careful flying composure. The worst thing about flying is that only by a supreme effort of will can you take your mind off the fact that you're suspended in a metal tube that could at any moment remember the laws of gravity and come crashing out of the sky.

So we made it safely to Tamale. 5 ~~other~~ <sup>Chang</sup> PCU's had flown up on the same flight. A PC truck had come to pick them up, so we got a ride into town, and a tour of Tamale into the bargain. A sprawling, dusty town, but nonetheless the 3rd largest city in Ghana (after Accra & Kumasi). Lots of tree-lined streets and colonial architecture. Downtown is crowded & dirty, with no real central features. From the air the region is flat, well-dotted w/ trees, and a patchwork of flat, brown fields (bad rains this year). Fun to see Jack & Mary Anne - if a little uncomfortable. Haven't felt totally ~~at~~ welcome. We're staying at Jack's, much to my surprise & discomfort - Maryanne doesn't have enough room. Jack lives w/ another PCU, Steve. Their house is filthy & depressing.

It's also a long walk from town. Saturday we wandered downtown in the morning. Maryanne picked

me up in the afternoon and to ~~to~~ shop in the market. Spent the afternoon at a dancing presentation for the new trainees. An Ewe group demonstrated popular Ghanaian dances, and we were "required" to join in - ugh. The dizzy shuffle and the chicken dance. In Ghana, the "African disco" I dislike so much is called 'High Life'. Had a delicious Chinese dinner at Maryanne's.

She has a small apartment near town, with electricity & running water. It's comfortable & pleasant - lots of light & air. She also has 2 cats!

We've been disappointed with our visit to Tamale. We'd hoped to visit some villages, see the surrounding countryside, hang out with some volunteers. We've missed out on several opportunities: a village self-help rally Fri. night, a trip to a rice farm today. Our PC friends seem to assume we're not interested - they've seen it so many times. ~~But~~ In reality, it would probably be very



similar to life in Togo.

We'd thought to leave today, but Steve actually asked us to stay

and come to a volunteer picnic tonight. Warm, sunny weather.

(Ceiling fans everywhere in Ghana. Rare in Togo.)

Went to a trainee picnic up on a hilltop. Great food. About a 4 mile walk to get there.

Spent the evening at Jonathan's, a VSO director. Met 2 lovely Ghanaian women. Nice to have an interesting chat, about somewhat "worldly" things, with "host country nationals." One works for Ghana Broadcasting in Bolga. She does announcements & programs in the local language. Her programs for women & children integrate advice on health, nutrition, education, with songs, stories, and interviews with "experts". What an effective way to disseminate "development" info. I wonder if they do anything like that in Togo?

Tues. July 23

Jamali to Bolgatanga on a nice, uncrowded bus, in record time - 2 1/2 hours! Nice to be back in the north. It's green & lush now, thick with grasses, millet, shimmering ponds, and even the 'sterile, hard-baked laterite has a coating of green. Lots more trees here than in northern Togo. Fields often contain lots of trees. Saw an ornate mud dwelling: tall, square huts like turrets, with rookery tops & curved designs.

I like Bolga. It feels exotic, self-contained, like a place of pilgrimage without its pretensions. The market's central feature is a granite boulder garden: combination half-covered in goods. The market is non-linear, almost concentric in feel. It rises & falls & twists in upon itself around a series of small rocky knolls. Lots of crafts are made in Bolga: baskets, woven smocks, all kinds of leather goods. Had wonderful street food with Will & Ian: spaghetti + <sup>fried</sup> wagasi cheese.

Wed. July 23

Took a ~~bus~~ ride in the back of a construction truck to the Navrongo market. It's crowded & linear: rows of tin-roofed cement hangars. ("Small time" means see you soon!).

There were no crafts to be found, so we got in a truck bound for Sandema, where PCU Vicky lives.

Horrid ride in the back of a big truck. You either balanced on the thin edge & risked being jolted off, or you sat on the bed between puddles of oil & piles of sand, and got your tail bone jarred by every pothole. Arrived very dirty. Vicky lives in an isolated bungalow in a sprawling, deserted secondary school compound.

Tried to get a ride out in the afternoon, but no luck, so we spent a mosquito-ey, sleepless night at Vicky's. In the morning, we

walked into Sandema village down a wide, smooth road lined by thick old Nime trees, past tree islands, thickets of shrub & grass, lily pad ponds, and neat rows of corn, millet & groundnuts. The houses here resemble those in the Tambourma

valley: square, tall with flat roofs & a ~~2~~ second story terrace. Many are painted dark brown & red,

~~and~~ often with designs. The compounds are a jumble of these 2-story squares, ~~towers~~ ~~to~~ round huts with conical straw roofs, apertures, and turret-like granaries, lost in a sea of tall millet.

Sandema reminds me of gando, where Peter lives. The marché is shady - lots of trees. Fun to watch the marché surge to life - trucks packed with people & goods pouring in.

Finally got a bus to Bolga about 10:00!

Bolga market: an unleashed baboon the size of a 2yr. old kid, skips madly about, leering & grinning, scratching & screeching, swinging from tree limbs & hopping onto tin stall roofs. The market crowd laughs & catcalls, children taunt & chase, I take its picture. I swear it posed. After I clicked, the crowd cheered.

Spent Thurs. morn buying out the Bolga market. Beautiful wicker work & leather goods are made here. We then caught a

## Principle Languages of the world

1	Mandarin	755 mil. speakers
2	English	409
3	Russian	280
4	Hindi	276
5	Spanish	275
6	Arabic	166
12	French	110
33	Hausa	27

bus to Bawku, near the Togo border. rounded hills appeared on our left, and all was very lush. The lower pop. density in Ghana was evident by the large, uncultivated spaces of trees, shrubs, & wild grasses. Often these areas aren't even grazed. In the Bawku market we purchased a beautiful, hand-woven traditional boubou at an incredibly low price.

Crossing the border into Togo was so easy we were nervous

we'd forgotten something. They didn't ask for money vouchers, a dash, or anything. At the

Togo customs in Cinkassé we met the usual run-around of unmarked checkpoints, but all went well. Spent the night in Dapaong and arrived back in Bogou Fri. midday to find the Chef laid up from a minor moto accident and everyone else smashed. Seems there's a lull in field work as everyone waits for the early millet harvest to begin. There's much about this village that drives me nuts, but I guess that's just the way it goes. Adia & his wife seem to be getting along worse than ever.

Fri. Aug!

Yesterday was African Women's Day. It rained after that - all night, ~~20~~ hours straight. Our banco walls are falling down. Gamin. Horrible stomach aches last night.

Fri. Aug. 15

Christian & Muslim fites coincide today: Assumption of Mary, and Tabaski. Plan to fite chey Assibi. I enjoy hanging out there.

Spent Aug. 4-8 in Lomé, part of it helping prepare for phase 2 of our stove expansion project. We now have prototype visual aids & publicity packets which we'll test before producing the final materials this fall.

Plans for our 3-4 week northern vacation have been pushed back to about mid-September.

It's raining like mad here, now pretty regularly, every 2-3 days. Crops & garden are doing well, but banco walls are dissolving & falling down. Thank goodness our shower's still standing.

Family getting more & more on our nerves. Kids especially. Adia & his wife fight a lot - he's been moody & melancholy.

Elephants have disappeared  
as Fosse grows swampy. Where  
do they go? No - they're still  
around after all. Saw many  
yesterday; as have quite a few  
other people. Image: 3 white  
tourists in a land rover pull  
over right in front of a large  
elephant emerging from the  
woods. They gleefully prance  
out of the truck and stalk  
the elephant, face-on, with  
their cameras. Like children  
playing games, they crouch  
& advance, safari-style,  
grinning foolishly, actually  
approaching within meters  
of the elephant. He grew  
perturbed and began to  
advance. Luckily for them  
he wasn't serious.



Thurs. Aug 28

Dotogou with Dave yesterday. Very beautiful - low mounds of hills, many cattle, clouds of every kind. Surprisingly good road. A retarded baby girl rocking herself in lotus posture - amazingly limber - cross-legged with her cheek on mat.

Busy with work. Training 4 agents to use dossiers.

Martine left today - Assib's sister who lives in Lomé. She has 2 young kids she must leave behind in Bogou - too expensive to support them in Lomé. She cried & cried at the market today, waiting for the taxi. It doesn't help that she hates her job in Lomé.

It's very common here for parents & children to live apart. Many times a childless brother or sister will be "given" a niece or nephew to raise.

Adia's daughter, Falabont, has thus gone off to live with

her aunt in Bombonaka. I asked her mother when she's coming back, and I'm fairly sure the reply was, "she isn't". Families here often live apart. It's common for husbands & wives to live at opposite ends of the country, and to see each other every few months. The ruthless re-affectation of civil servants means no family security, no real home. Family ties here are thus ~~so~~ both much tighter & much looser than ours. People are fiercely loyal to relatives, and yet the term brother can mean anything from full blood brother to my uncle's sister-in-law's kid. Thus everyone has several mothers & dozens of brothers & sisters. The terms aunt, uncle, cousin, in-law are seldom used.

Been very tired lately. Don't know if it's lack of exercise or a bug. Had amolbas at mid-term physical so took drugs. Still feel