

NEWSLETTER

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GHANA
UNION
MIDLANDS

Published by

Ghana Union Midlands (GUM)

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Ghana Union Midlands (GUM) Newsletter, the maiden edition this year. As you are all aware, we suspended publication of the hard copies of our newsletter nearly 18 months ago due to high production and printing costs. Since then, we have received numerous enquiries about the publication of our newsletters. As a result, we took the decision to resume the publication of the newsletters but this time to distribute them in an electronic form. However, we may consider printing small number of hard copies of the newsletters upon request. In return, we will ask for a small donation towards the printing cost from members requesting this format.

The purpose of our newsletters is to inform, educate and entertain our members and readers. Our newsletters also serve as part of our communication methods to reach out to our primary target groups, who are our members, the Ghanaian community and friends of Ghana.

In the Ghanaian community, the term GUM is used synonymously with the Birmingham Union, and people find this confusing. The frequently asked question by most Ghanaians is whether GUM is the same as the Birmingham Union? The simple answer to this question is NO. They are two separate entities. In this edition, we will try and explain the differences between GUM, the regional umbrella body, the Birmingham Union and their respective roles.

We will also update you with current and past news, including our programme of activities for 2016, membership dues, Lottery funding for the community cohesion project, Ghana @59 independence anniversary, the youth chapter, prayer group and the bereavement scheme, which will be of interest to our members and audience.

We look forward to receiving your review and feedback on this new format so that the next edition could be improved.

ABOUT GUM

The Regional umbrella Body



Ghana Union Midlands (GUM), the regional umbrella body, is the regional voice for the Ghanaian community in the Midlands region. The late President of Ghana, His Excellency Professor John Atta Mills' memorial service in August 2012, was the catalyst that brought together the various Ghanaian groups operating in the Midlands region under one roof. It was also the beginning of the formation of the regional umbrella body for all the Ghanaian groups in the Midlands region.

A meeting was arranged and held in Birmingham in October 2012, after the memorial service, where all the groups that participated in the memorial service attended. It was unanimously agreed at the meeting to form a regional umbrella body in the Midlands region, in order to present a collective and unified voice for the Ghanaian groups. It was believed the formation of a regional umbrella body would help us to deal effectively with local authorities, statutory bodies, UK policy makers, and the Ghana High Commission on matters affecting the Ghanaian community in general, in the region. We are certain that the concept of a regional umbrella body allows member groups to work effectively together as a 'hub and spokes' network organisation.

This 'hub and spokes' model allows each group within the umbrella body to retain its autonomy and identity in managing its affairs at local level. Working in collaboration in a coordinated way provides us with a unified voice for all the Ghanaian groups in the Midlands region; more than any single group could do on its own.

Building a general consensus is a time-consuming and difficult process in the formation of any community group with diverse interests. Since 2012, the journey to become a regional umbrella body for the various Ghanaian groups operating in the Midlands region has been a difficult and tortuous task. The journey was marked by a process of ironing out differences amongst the various interest groups through hard negotiations and agreements. Eventually, on the 31st January 2015, we achieved our main goal of forming a regional umbrella body in the Midlands region for Ghanaian groups.

An overwhelming majority of the founding members of the regional umbrella body finally appended their signature to a constitution to agree on a legal document that binds all the members of the regional umbrella body. Following the adoption of the constitution, the umbrella body was later registered as a charity with the Charity Commission in April 2015.

Main Functions of the Regional Umbrella Body

The regional umbrella body will perform the following functions to:

- (i) Bring together the various Ghanaian Unions, Associations and other Groups under one regional umbrella body, and foster good relationships and understanding amongst the various groups which support the Ghanaian community in the Midlands region.
- (ii) Provide a forum for GUM network member organisations and other Ghanaian groups in the Midlands to co-ordinate activities, and share resources, expertise, information and experience in order to enhance their common goal of providing support for the Ghanaian community in the Midlands region.
- (iii) Offer support and advice on management, financial management, funding governance and advocacy: and provide consultancy and training to assist the umbrella member groups to efficiently manage and run their respective unions or associations in their respective localities in the Midlands region, and also to promote good practice amongst the GUM membership.
- (iv) Organise an annual conference to discuss major issues affecting the Ghanaian community in the Midlands region to promote community development and cohesion.
- (v) Raise the profile and status of GUM as the sole recognised umbrella body that represents the various Ghanaian Unions, Associations and Groups in the Midlands region,

and liaise with the United Kingdom Government, Local Authorities within the United Kingdom and other statutory agencies, on behalf of the said Ghanaian Unions, Associations and Groups.

(vi) Provide a united voice for GUM and its associated member groups by which the views of GUM and also the views of other Ghanaian unions and associations relating to the needs of the Ghanaian community will be heard in policy circles by UK policy makers and statutory agencies.

Membership of the Regional Umbrella Body

Membership of the umbrella body is open to any Ghanaian group in the Midlands region that is properly constituted or working towards it, and wishing to join GUM to further its mission, goals and objectives. The Ghanaian groups are classified as affiliated members when they become members of the umbrella body. Membership of the umbrella body is also open to non- Ghanaian groups, who must be properly constituted or working towards it. Such groups are classified as associate members. All groups wishing to become prospective members of the umbrella body are required to complete a membership registration form.

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For further enquiries, please contact:

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GHANA UNION GREATER **BIRMINGHAM**

The Ghana Union Greater Birmingham is a community based organisation dedicated to supporting human infrastructure development that maximises and strengthens community building. Its mission is to mobilise the Ghanaian community in Birmingham and its environs to build a strong human infrastructure and vibrant community to support each other, and the Ghanaian community in general.

It also provides welfare support to improve the conditions of its members in Birmingham and its environs. The union's work is driven by a passionate belief that all its members have a collective responsibility towards each other, and also to support the Ghanaian community in general.

The Union has had a rather chequered history in its 49 years of existence. During this period, the union has gone through different stages of development and growth. It started around 1967 as the Birmingham African Students' Union supporting Ghanaian students, and also other African nationals studying in Birmingham at that time. It later evolved in the mid-1970s as the 'Ghana Union Birmingham' as a result of the increased numbers, and diversity of the Ghanaian community in the city of Birmingham and its environs. In those days, there were hardly any Ghana Union activities in the West Midlands region, and Birmingham was the centre of attraction where major Ghanaian activities took place for the Ghanaian community in the Midlands region. Today things are different as we now have a growing number of Ghanaians residing across the Midlands region. This has also resulted in the formation of various Ghanaian unions, associations, churches and other groups in the Midlands region.

In 2010, the Ghana Union Birmingham (GUB), changed direction in the next stage of its development, and took on a new and challenging role in bringing together, all the major Ghanaian groups in the Midlands region under one roof. GUB assumed a new name 'Ghana Union Midlands' (GUM) to reflect its ambition to lead the formation of a regional umbrella group. At this point, GUM took on a 'dual role' in looking after its Birmingham members, whilst pursuing the formation of a regional umbrella body to provide a unified voice for the Ghanaian and friends of Ghana community. This 'dual role' model led to some concerns regarding GUM's 'modus operandi' and types of membership, which included groups and also individuals. Despite attempts to clarify the structure of GUM as an umbrella organisation with a 'Birmingham Group' serving as the Secretariat, the message did not resonate with people, and hence the confusion of synonymously referring to GUM as the Birmingham Union.

Having accomplished the task of forming a new regional umbrella body, it has now become necessary to resolve the confusion by clearly distinguishing between the Birmingham Union and GUM. The Birmingham Union has now relinquished its caretaker role of GUM, and has assumed the same status as any of the groups affiliated to GUM, the regional umbrella body. The Birmingham Union has now been reconstituted as the 'Ghana Union Greater Birmingham' to reflect the City's new administrative jurisdiction which includes Birmingham city and its environs. The 'Ghana Union Greater Birmingham' is temporarily acting as the secretariat for the umbrella body, until an administrative office and a new secretariat is established to take over the affairs for the regional umbrella body.

What? Do We Do?



Our Services

Ghana Union Greater Birmingham provides the following services to support our members.

- Information & Advice
- Advocacy & Representation
- Welfare Support
- Bereavement Support
- Social & Leisure Activities
- Support for the Youth Chapter

Membership

Membership of Ghana Union Greater Birmingham is open to anyone who is interested in furthering its purposes, and who by applying for membership has indicated his or her intention to become a member, and agreement to abide by the rules and regulations of the union upon becoming a member.

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GUM Planned Activities for 2016

No	Proposed Tasks / Activities	Target Date	Lead Person
1	Website Development	31st April 2016	Odehye
2	Members' General Meetings	Quarterly	Selassie / Odehye / Aku Ahiagbedey-sowah
3	Independence Anniversary Celebration	12th March 2016	Dr. Botchway / Odehye Selassie / Frank / Mrs Clegg
4	Annual General Meeting	April / May 2016	ALL
5	Republic	July 2016	Dr. Botchway / Odehye / Selassie
6	Launch of Youth Chapter	July 2016	Pastor Williams
7	Youth Trip to Ghana High Commission in London	July 2016	Pastor Williams / Dr. Botchway
8	GUM Summer Activities / Outdoor Programme / Sponsorship	July / August 2016	Frank/ Eric/ Selassie/ Mrs Clegg/ Dr. Botchway/ Mrs.Aku Ahiagbedey-Sowah
9	Prayer Group Meetings	Monthly	Mrs Estibah
10	Black History Month - Youth Chapter	October 2016	Pastor Williams / Mrs Estibah
11	Franchising and sale of Merchandise	July / August 2016	Pastor Williams / Dr Botchway
12	Newsletter	Quarterly	Dr Botchway / Odehye
13	Outreach Programme	Summer	Pastor Williams / Selassie Aku Ahiagbedey-Sowah
14	Christmas Carols Service	10th December 2016	Odehye / Frank / Mrs Clegg

Membership Dues

The Ghana Union Greater Birmingham is now in a new financial year. We are appealing to all our members to pay their membership dues, which is still **£20.00** for the whole year in full, and also to pay your dues on time. This amount equates to just **£1.67p** per month or **£0.05p** per day.



GUGB relies on the dues to generate enough funds so that we can plan and implement our programme of activities for the year for the benefit of our members. Without adequate funds the Union will not be able to function effectively and efficiently.

For just **£20.00** membership of the union for the whole year, members receive free publications of our newsletters and annual report & accounts, which enable the GUGB executive committee to account to members for their stewardship, plus subsidised events such as summer trip, Ghana Independence and Republic anniversary celebrations, free seminars and workshops and many more. These activities allow our members to socialise and network to make new friends.

We also encourage members who belong to the GUM satellite groups in the region to pay their membership dues to their respective unions or groups in their locality in the Midlands.

Therefore, we expect everyone to cooperate with GUM, and also with their respective satellite groups or unions in their locality and pay their dues in full and on time. This will enable all the unions and groups forming the umbrella GUM to deliver efficient service to its members.

The bank details required for the Ghana Union Greater Birmingham members to pay their dues are as follows:

Name of Account: Ghana Union

Bank: Nat West

Sort Code: 60-01-27

Account No: 78403529



Note: *When making direct payment into the GUM Bank account, please write your name plus Dues as your reference number.*

End of Project Report- Community Enhancement and Cohesion Project

Updates

Following successful application to the National Lottery (Awards for All) last year, GUM was awarded a grant for the Community Enhancement and Cohesion Project. This grant enabled GUM to deliver a two day conference to promote Black History Month in October 2015 to help improve community cohesion.

The key objectives set for the project were:

- a. To promote knowledge of black history, culture and heritage and to showcase and acknowledge individual achievements and contributions that Black Britons of African origin, past and present have made to British society.
- b. To promote community cohesion and the need for people from diverse communities to coexist peacefully together.



GUM set out to implement the project activities following the approval of the funding for the project. Throughout this journey, elaborate preparations were put together to kick-start the project. Finally, this journey has ended, and GUM was able to successfully deliver the project under the terms and conditions which the grant was given.

As part of the terms and conditions of the grant aid, organisations that have been awarded a grant are required to produce at the end of the project, a report detailing how the Lottery funds were used to implement the project, and also to account for the grant given.

We are pleased to let our members know that GUM was able to meet these key requirements. In January 2016, we successfully submitted our End of Project Report to National Lottery (Awards for All) within the time frame for the submission of the report. We have since received confirmation from National Lottery that our report has been accepted, and our project has now formally been closed. The GUM executives would like to take this opportunity to thank our members, and all those who participated in the two day conference to make it a success for us.

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Updates



Ghana's



**Independence
Anniversary
Celebration**



A special flag raising ceremony was held on Sunday 6th March 2016 at the forecourt of the Birmingham City Council by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Raymond Hassall. This event was organised by Ghana Union Midlands, and hosted by Birmingham City Council as part of the celebrations of Ghana's 59th Independence Anniversary from British colonial rule.

This was an historic occasion for GUM in the sense that it was the first time such an event has been hosted by the City Council for the Ghanaian community and the Union in our 49 years of existence in Birmingham. It was pleasing for us to note that 40 people in a jubilant mood braved the cold weather to attend this special occasion.

Members were punctual and there were no latecomers to the event. By 8:45am all our members had assembled at the forecourt of the Council House waiting to receive the Lord Mayor. The punctuality of our members at the event was historic,



and also a record in itself. At 9:00am prompt, the Lord Mayor hoisted the flag of Ghana with jubilant cheers from our members and friends of Ghana. This was later followed by an informal tea/coffee session, where members interacted with the Lord Mayor and guests



BIG THE BLAST



The successful flag raising event on Sunday 6th March by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham at the Council House was the first part of the celebrations to mark Ghana's 59th Independence anniversary event. The second part of the celebrations followed later with a Dinner Dance on Saturday 12th March, which was held at the Brasshouse Community Centre. Ghana Union Greater Birmingham took the lead role to organise this event on behalf of GUM, the umbrella body.

The weather was relatively warm and nearly 150 members, guests and friends of Ghana trooped to the Brasshouse Centre to celebrate the occasion in a great style. This year's event was a low key affair without the usual representation from the Ghana High Commission. However, the High Commissioner's speech was read at the event by the GUM President on behalf of Mr Victor Smith, the High Commissioner.

Updates

What a big blast we had despite the fact that the event was meant to be a low key affair. The atmosphere was terrific with plenty of sumptuous food and drinks available for all to enjoy. The music was fantastic too with DJ Stone delighting the audience with a combination of old and modern music to satisfy the varied tastes of the audience. It was pleasing to see our elderly members who normally don't dance get up on their feet to dance the night away and enjoy themselves. The youth were not to be outdone, and they also displayed their dancing skills to the delight of all. The GUM President and Executive Committee wishes to take this opportunity to thank our members and friends of Ghana for coming in their numbers to support us.



THE
BIG BLAST

Commonwealth Day

The Commonwealth is an organisation made up of 53 member states that were mostly territories of the former British Empire. The organisation formally started in 1949, which established the member states as 'free and equal'. Queen Elizabeth II is the Head of the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth Day is held on the second Monday in March every year. It is an opportunity for individuals, communities and organisations to promote shared Commonwealth values of peace, democracy and equality, and to celebrate the association's rich diversity. Commonwealth Day this year was on Monday 14th March 2016. The Birmingham Commonwealth Association, of which GUM is a member, held a three part events on the day to celebrate the occasion. The first part of the event proceeded with raising the Commonwealth Flag outside the Birmingham City Council House, in Victoria Square, at 9.30am

The second part of the celebratory event was linked with the presentation of British citizenship certificates to mark the Commonwealth Day. 27 people from Commonwealth countries after swearing an oath of allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and her heirs, received their certificates from the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, and became the city's newest British citizens. It is pleasing to note that one of the recipients is of Ghanaian origin. At the event, Dr Quaye Botchway, the GUM President and representing the Birmingham Commonwealth Association on this occasion, delivered a speech on one of the Commonwealth values regarding tolerance, respect and understanding. During the ceremony, Dr Botchway and Odehye Nana Kwasi Ofei, GUM President and Vice President respectively later presented framed certificates composed by the Birmingham Commonwealth Association to the recipients who had been granted British citizenship.



Updates

The third part of the event was a special dinner later in the evening (7:30pm) to round off the Commonwealth Day event in Birmingham. The Birmingham Commonwealth Association comprises three main groups, which are: Education, Trade & Business; and communities, who all sent delegates to the dinner. GUM is part of the communities group. Dr Quaye Botchway and Odehye Nana Kwasi Ofei represented GUM, the umbrella body, whereas Mrs Victoria Clegg and Mr Osei Bempong Mensa represented the Ghana Union Greater Birmingham at the dinner.



Dr Quaye Botchway
President of GUM



Odehye Nana Kwasi Ofei
Vice President of GUM



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Ghana Union Greater Birmingham has taken over the management and running of the GUM Youth Chapter. The principal aim of our Youth Chapter is to inspire lifelong learning, and prepare young people for the future to achieve immediate and lasting changes in their lives. The Chapter motivates young people aged 12-25 by developing and transforming their minds for positive change and help them to realise their talents and potential to achieve their goals.

We are planning to set up two projects which are leadership, and homework club to help young people with their development. The leadership project will offer the opportunity for young people where they can build leadership skills and learn about civic action to shape the world around them. The home work club will offer extra support to young people to focus on their education, and assist those lagging behind with the studies where they can receive one to one support tailored to meet their specific needs. We are looking for volunteers who will act as mentors to support the young people with the necessary skills and knowledge to help them to develop and grow.

The Youth Chapter meets monthly at the Norman Power Centre, 14 Skipton Rd, Birmingham B16 8JJ on the third Saturday of every month between 3- 5pm. We appeal to parents of the Union to encourage their children to join the Youth Chapter

If you are interested either to join the Chapter or becoming a mentor, please contact Pastor Williams Owusu, the Co-ordinator on 07951 767 608 or the secretariat on **07904 090 878**

Announcements

Prayer Group

A prayer group has been set up by dedicated Christians within the GUM fraternity. The principal aim of this group is to offer prayers for our union, country and its citizens by like minded people, so that we can all work and live together in unity and harmony with each other.

This group are just ordinary people who were inspired and moved to search for the truth about God's existence. This group has a flexible and democratic approach to doing things. Before a prayer begins, those present will discuss what they are going to pray about, and to be specific whether to pray on major national /particular issues, or to share burdens or give praise. This enables the group to pray 'in agreement and in harmony' to achieve a common purpose.

The group meet monthly at the **Norman Power Centre, 14 Skipton Rd, Birmingham B16 8JJ** on the first Saturday of every month between 4-6pm. All are invited to join this group. If you are interested to becoming a member of this group, please contact Mrs Josephine Estibah, the leader of this group on **07757303750**



Gum Bereavement Scheme



Are you aware of the GUM Bereavement Scheme? In May 2015, we formally launched our Bereavement Scheme as part of our welfare support after wide consultation with our members. The scheme is now managed by Ghana Union Greater Birmingham on behalf of GUM.

What is the Scheme about?

This is a voluntary and not for profit scheme, which is a form of 'communal' assistance that is designed to support members in the event of bereavement. The aim of the GUM Bereavement Scheme is to provide financial support, and to serve as a kind of 'insurance policy' for members in the event of the death of a member, or close family relative of a member.

How the scheme works

A special Bereavement Fund has been set up purposely for the scheme to provide financial assistance to members who have applied voluntarily and been accepted onto the scheme. Members of the scheme will be required to make regular payments into the Bereavement Fund. Contributions or premiums collected from participating members of the scheme will be paid into this fund. This money will be used to pay out Death Benefit Entitlements from the fund.

How much do I have to contribute?

We have a plan called the flexible premium (contribution). Under this plan, when you join the scheme, you will be asked to pay an initial amount of £20.00, or an amount determined by the scheme administrators, as your 'seed capital' into a Bereavement Fund. You will not be asked to pay any premiums until the death of a member or his/her close relative. When such a death occurs, every participating member of the scheme (except the bereaved) will be required to pay a fixed amount into the bereavement fund. The money collected will be used to pay out the bereavement entitlements to the bereaved member.

Qualifying Period

Every registered member of the Scheme is required to serve a qualifying period. Upon registration and acceptance onto the scheme, a participating member agrees to serve a qualifying period of three months before he or she can make a claim to receive benefit entitlements when bereaved.

Registration

Any member interested to join the scheme will be required to complete an application form before he can be a member of the scheme.

Agreement

A member will be required to sign an agreement with GUM to participate in the scheme when his or her application has been accepted. Both parties are expected to respect and comply fully with the terms of the agreement.

How much will I be paid when I am bereaved?

The table below are the indicative rates of contributions and entitlements when a member of the scheme suffers bereavement. Please note that the rates of entitlements are likely to increase as the number of participants in the scheme increases. .

Member and Designated Relative	Flexible Contribution (premium) rates per member upon death	Benefit entitlement upon death
GUM Member of the Scheme(Payable to the member next of kin)	<i>£30.00</i>	£600.00
Member's Husband or Wife	<i>£25.00</i>	£500.00
Member's natural or adopted children (Maximum three children)	<i>£20.00</i>	£400.00
Member's natural father/ mother or persons nominated to serve as parents	<i>£15.00</i>	£300.00
Member's close siblings i.e. brother and or sister (No more than two siblings)	<i>£10.00</i>	£200.00

NB: The premium contributions and benefit entitlement rates are currently based on a minimum number of 20 members, who have voluntarily signed up to participate in the first year of the scheme. However, the benefit entitlements rates payable to participants are likely to go up when the minimum number of participants increases.

How do I join the Scheme?

Please contact the secretariat on **07904 090 878** or email us at ghanaunionmidland@hotmail.co.uk for registration form.

Information

More detailed information on the scheme's proposal is available on request.

Our Contact Details

Telephone/Mobile:**07904 090 878**

Email Address:ghanaunionmidland@hotmail.co.uk



Views and opinions from members and readers

We welcome the views and opinions from members on the management and affairs of the union. We believe that constructive criticisms and positive recommendations

from our members will help us improve how your union is run. Members also wishing to contribute special articles are encouraged to do so here. Please don't hesitate to have your say on the way your union is run and managed.

My Experience with Ghana Union Youth Chapter

I heard about GUM through a friend and she persuaded me to join the youth chapter. I like the way that GUM is trying to bring Ghanaian youth together and also to support us through various activities. I also like the manner GUM is educating us to be aware of, and also proud of the Ghanaian culture and traditions, which I believe will help us to preserve our Ghanaian identity.

I became a member of the Youth Chapter in January 2016, and since then I have made new friends to encourage us to talk about ourselves, and also to share our life experiences. I have found that taking part in the Youth Chapter's activities help me to relieve stress. My experience with the Youth Chapter is that I have met people from different backgrounds, with many of whom I share similar interests in music and culture.

I was amazed to see different varieties of Ghanaian food served at the Ghana 59th Independence Anniversary celebration held at the Brasshouse Centre, and this made me feel at home.

I also enjoyed the variety of the Ghanaian music played at the event. Finally, GUM should focus on empowering the youth and create more opportunities for them. I would also like to see GUM organise more educational programmes for the youth which will help them know about our Ghanaian culture.

~ Bernice Akosah-Sarpong

You Are Welcomed Back! GUM Needs You!!

The recent events of GUM have consolidated GUM's growth in the Midlands and now GUM has become a household name amongst the Ghanaian community living in the Midlands. The Flag Raising Ceremony which was performed by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Councillor Raymond Hassall at the Council House during the 59th independence celebration on Sunday 6th March 2016, clearly demonstrated the impact GUM is having on Ghanaians, their friends and dignitaries of the British establishment.

The 59th Independence Dance at Brasshouse Lane in Smethwick was a convivial occasion which attracted a large audience. The food was very good and there was plenty to satisfy everybody to the extent of even going for seconds. The youth played an important role in this regard by entertaining the audience with the dexterity of their dancing moves and skills.

There is nothing more exciting than to see our elders supporting our young people during GUM special occasions. I was therefore really pleased to see our elderly members, the likes of Dr Sam Appiah, Mr Kwabena Kesse, Mr Seth Appiah, Mr Pan Danquah and Mrs Dzotsi (wife of one of our late Presidents) etc, at the recent independence anniversary event. This is an invitation, especially to our former executive members who have made sacrifices in the past to underpin the growth of the Union in Birmingham. GUM is appealing to all of you to come back and support the Union and our young people who will take up the mantle of leadership here in the UK and in Ghana.

I understand plans are already underway with the GUM executives who are preparing for the Big 60th Independence Anniversary in 2017.

Any new ideas from the former executive members or from any other Ghanaian



would be appreciated through the GUM secretariat. Bring your families and friends to enjoy this forthcoming event. Also, remember, members are being encouraged to pay their dues on time because the dues and welfare donations are the oil of GUM's machinery.

through the GUM secretariat. Bring your families and friends to enjoy this forthcoming event. Also, remember, members are being encouraged to pay their dues on time because the dues and welfare donations are the oil of GUM's machinery.

Finally, on behalf of the Ghanaian community in the Midlands I shall take this opportunity to thank GUM's President Dr Quaye Botchway, Odehye Nana Kwasi Ofei Deputy President, Mrs Victoria Clegg, Welfare Officer, and the entire executives of the union for their dedication and resilience in putting the union and Ghana on the map. 'Ayikoo'. Well done!

THE GUM EFFECT

For some of us in the Birmingham conurbation, GUM has been nothing but a blessing!

My family including my wife Anita, and our boys Kofi and Kwame, relocated to Birmingham from Bath in 2006, and at the time we knew only one Ghanaian here. Interestingly, I heard about the activities of Ghana Union Birmingham in 2007 through a Nigerian client of mine. However, I did not pay much attention at the time as we were still finding our feet in Brum, while at the same time going through a grieving stage in reaction to a life changing family challenge.

It wasn't until sometime in 2010 that I revisited the issue, after hearing of the rebirth of Ghana Union Birmingham as GUM through a friend at church. Anita and I decided to test the waters by attending the Independence Day celebration, and since then have never looked back.



We try to attend some of the social events such as Independence Day Celebrations, The Festival of the Nine Lessons and Carols' Service during Christmas, and Members' General Meetings whenever we can. Through these we have made a few friends, some of whom we are yet to know even better. The brilliant part of it all is the all-inclusive GUM WhatsApp platform, a melting pot of ideas and fun. We've now come to the point where my boys have started showing interest in the Youth Chapter, and looking forward to the big launch in the summer. Who knows, one day they may find their wives here.

If you are still contemplating joining GUM; may I simply say, take the chance and jump on board with both feet..... absolutely nothing to lose!

~David Akuoko



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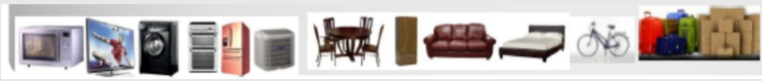


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Photos @ Flag Raising Ceremony 6th March 2016







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Poetry by Hannah YAAWUSUAH ADJEPONG



Awards

1999: first INTERNATIONAL POET OF MERIT award

2001: Second IPM and a recording contract.

2002: Third IPM

2003: Recognition as a DISTINGUISHED member of the International Society of Poets.

Published 4 poetry books and 5 children's story books.

Hannah Yaawusuah Adjepong was born a member of the Kaachi tribe in a small Ghanaian village.

She worked as a primary school supply teacher but went on to study Nursing and eventually became a midwife.

From her modest beginnings in her village Hannah now lives with her family in the United Kingdom where she gathers inspiration for her poetry from her work as a part time nurse and a dedicated housewife.

Integral to her dedication to her family is her dedication to God, for it is from the Bible and old hymns that most of her motivation as a poet flows.

There are milestones in the progression of every poet's craft – writing a first poem, first giving a reading, and for a talented few, being published.

However, some poets have the special gift to reach our hearts on the deepest level. For this reason these poets deserve extra recognition. This elite group earns our attention, our gratitude and our praise.

It is therefore, the honour of both the International Library of Poetry and the International Society of Poets to present this recording of the award-winning artistry of Hannah Yaawusuah Adjepong. (International Library of Poetry and the International Society of Poets)

Hannah's children's book "Panda's Song, is beautifully illustrated and relates, in a language children will relish, how Panda is unhappy in her "skin". She gradually learns to love herself and to appreciate she is as beautiful as the other animals, and this is what is at the heart of Hannah's message.

Hannah also specialises in children story telling.

Other books published by Hannah:

Anyi's Cat, Spotty Blue Ted, Zelia the Young Gazelle and Let's Write a BookPoetry: 200 Years 1807-2007

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Photos - Ghana @ 59 Independence Anniversary Celebrations





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