

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Ashanti Mining

I have read the article on Ashanti Mining (*Mining History* 13:4 p.12) with great interest. I feel that the article does not make it clear that gold dust was used as currency in Ashanti until the colonial government's decree of 12th April 1889 which established the pound sterling as the sole currency. (G. van Rijn, 1979 *Goldweights*. Amsterdam).

The use of gold dust as currency involved each trader having a currency bag (*futuo*) containing a box (*kuduo*) for the gold dust, sieves (to separate out nuggets), spoons, scales, and weights. These items were usually made of brass, the weights being cast by the "lost-wax" process. Early weights were simple blocks of brass but the craftsmen later showed their artistic ability by producing weights in the form of animals, fish, natural and man-made objects, and items illustrating Ashanti proverbs. The weight was, if necessary, adjusted by chipping bits off. The use of gold dust as currency involved a great deal of haggling, verification of weights and so on, but after all, time was of no great importance. A great deal of information about this subject is in T.F. Garrard (1980) *Akan Weights and the Gold Trade*. London.

Yours faithfully

David Tew.