



OWL NEWSLETTER - September 2003

NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE

from the minutes of the committee meeting held on 24th July 2003

Shipping

Janet reported that offers keep on coming in e.g. a massive amount of text books from Kingsley School. Computers will not be accepted now unless they are very good ones. New storage or space to store a container still needed.

Concert

The One Night in Bo Concert was a great success as an entertainment, as an awareness raising and as a fund raising event (over £1,000). Much appreciation to Bruce expressed.

Library

The Library Launch event went well. Karen cannot continue her role but will be a member

Correspondence

We have been invited to run a stall at Student Volunteer Fair at Warwick University in October

Lee's Report

In the previous Newsletter (June 2003) we reported on Lee Hales visit to Bo. Lee has now produced a very comprehensive REPORT on the whole operation and the result of his visit and his activities there. Copies are available on request from John Myers - Tel. 01926 425403, [email](#)

Finance

Travel, shipping and phone were major items of expenditure. Income was boosted by donations of £1800. Subscriptions are steady: £750 between Dec and Feb.

Fundraising

Jane reported that the fund raising group had just met. With regard to the community centre the leaflet is still being finalised due to technical problems. It will then be distributed to members and others on our mailing list. The group is also considering a neighbourhood door-to-door coverage as a pilot.

General funding

John McFarlane has prepared a letter for all existing members and newsletter recipients to consolidate and develop existing income from subscriptions and donations. It has not yet been possible to identify a dedicated fund-raiser, or membership secretary and it was suggested that the CVS could be approached to ask if they have any potential volunteers. Ability to use MS Access would be an advantage for a membership secretary. Ideally we should be able to forecast a budget income from fundraising.

Health links

John Myers reported on correspondence with Ian Smith, Nuffield, and SW NHS Hospital Trust. Marion Grimwood says that she will have another attempt to follow this up now that the Hospital is on a more even keel with new managers.

School links

Brian Austin reported that the group still meets regularly and is planning to develop some tailor-made material for primary lessons. We continue to have contact with schools, but progress is still slower than we had hoped. Jane Knight recommended

Newsletter
produced
for OWL by
Brian
Austin,
31 The
Greswoldes,
Radford
Semele,
Leamington
SpaCV31
1TP

Jean Conteh as a person to contact for educational books and showed members copies of a new Macmillan-Africa series for which Jean is the editor.

Community links

John Myers has circulated a letter to David Ngombu which outlines some of the contacts that have been made. The community group needs to meet and ideally recruit another person at least. Funds are being raised for the Kayoma Group, and Janet Alty has convened the local support group and written to Teresa Bangali to develop more dialogue

Swim

Myf Hodkin swam her 80 lengths and hopes to have raised in the region of £1000. Half of this is destined for Kayoma. John McFarlane has created a separate account for funds raised specifically for Kayoma.

ONE WORLD LINK LIBRARY SHELF

I am pleased to say that our library shelf is finally up and running in the Leamington Library! (In fact, most of the books are already off the shelf! - out on loan) Thank you to everybody who came to our launch on the 4th July and to everyone who was involved in putting it all together! It was a huge success and we had a great turn out!

I would like to also say a special thank you to John Myers for all the work he has put into this project and for donating a book for the shelf, to Jane Knight for her support and advice, to Brenda Leyton for her help with the launch and to John Fisher for donating a book

We look forward to its continued success!
Karen Marshall

WARWICKSHIRE POLICE IN SIERRA LEONE

Warwickshire Police Officer Keith Hudson, who is doing a stint in Sierra Leone, writes:

I have been redeployed from Kissy to Bo. I will not bore you with the details but they needed a Civpol to go to Bo very quickly and I jumped at the chance. I have been there for 2 weeks now and its good. We have been very busy due to the President, vice president and cabinet ministers attending a 4 day cabinet meeting at Bo Town Hall 6th - 9th Aug. I will contact you when I am back in the UK to meet. I would now like to find out a few more links from the area to Bo for example the schools in contact with each other, any library contacts, etc etc. Up to now I have been unable to contact anyone involved in OWL but certainly will when I return to Bo. Back in the UK 15th Aug and leave again 28th Aug.

Regards, Keith

Kayoma Women's Support Group

When **Teresa Bangali** left Leamington after her visit in 2000 she was determined to form a women's self help group in Bo. She felt very sure that women could and should play a real part in the programme to "reconstruct civil society" in Sierra Leone. Being a woman of great zeal and energy, the **Kayoma Women's Development Association** soon came into being with a Project Proposal for Income Generation covering food preparation, gara dyeing and small-scale farming.

We have now formed a **Kayoma Women's Support Group** here in Warwick District, and we meet to discuss what we can do at this end to work with Teresa at that end. When Myf did her amazing "80 Lengths for 80 Years" half of the sponsorship money will come to the Kayoma Group. There have been other donations as well, so there is now a marked fund in our OWL accounts for Kayoma Women. This will be spent on purchasing items that are cheaper here and worth the cost of shipping and some will be saved to bring another visitor from Bo to visit with Women's Groups here.

The next meeting is on **Tuesday 16 September at 7:00p.m. at 18 Lillington Road,**

Leamington (01926 427773 -[email](#)) so do please plan to come along - but if you miss that meeting, please let Janet Alty know so that you can be kept in touch.



WARWICK DISTRICT ONE WORLD LINK

Chair's Report to AGM - 20 September 2003

This report is intended to be a brief overview of an eventful year. Many of the activities to which it relates have been the subject of some most interesting more detailed reports. At the outset, however, I would like to make a plea. The work of Warwick District One World Link is being carried by a desperately small group of busy people. Over this past year we have not managed to recruit any new committee members and indeed our overall membership is growing only slowly the course of this year a number of other contacts have borne fruit. Castle Sixth Form Centre (Kenilworth), plus Brookhurst, Ferncumbe (Hatton Green), St Anthony's, St Mary's, St Patrick's and St Peter's Primary Schools have actively communicated with partner schools in Bo. All schools continue to receive our newsletter. The sub-group has started preparing classroom lessons for teacher use, and also has a link with a teacher from UK who has started a school in Sierra Leone. The group would also like to hear from teachers interested in going to Bo for linking/curriculum development.

I mentioned in last year's report that we were hoping to get some shelf space in Leamington public library. After much hard work by a team led by Karen Marshall and with strong support from the library staff, we now have a One World Link shelf in the library, launched at an impressive "African Adventure" evening on 4th July.

We have a women's group which is supporting Teresa Bangali's;
We are particularly looking for a Membership Secretary, a Fund Raising Worker, a Promotion and Awareness Assistant. Please, as you read this consider if there is any way you can help.

The continuing improvement in the situation in Sierra Leone has made communication with our Bo partners easier, one very obvious sign of this being that John Myers, Bruce Knight and Lee Hales have each undertaken productive visits to Bo. They all enjoyed tremendous hospitality from our friends in Bo, for which they were very grateful. Unfortunately we have not been successful in arranging for any of our Bo OWL friends to visit us this year - an issue which the committee is trying to address.

John Myers went to Bo in November 2002. John did a lot to reinforce the links with Bo OWL. He was able to take part in the ground breaking ceremony for the new community centre, while at the same time ensuring that our fundraising efforts for the centre matched the needs in Bo. John produced a comprehensive report on his visit. Bruce Knight visited Bo over Christmas; his specific purpose was to learn songs in Mende and other indigenous languages and to teach English songs. He had what appears to have been a mutually successful and enriching time, and has done a lot to broaden and strengthen the link at either end. A particular highlight for us was the Songlines

concert, which Bruce presented to a packed audience at St Mary's Church, Leamington in July.

The money raised from the Songlines concert has helped us in our fundraising for the Bo Owl community centre, which is now focussed on the "Buy-a-Brick" campaign. The building has now reached ground floor wall height, but we do need to keep on raising money.

Last year I reported that Janet Alty and a team of volunteers was working towards filling a container with goods for Bo. In December we sent a container full of donated goods including 90 computers, some of which were provided by Warwick District Council to fulfil a commitment to Bo Town Council. The container and its goods got to Bo intact. The goods have been distributed and the container is being used for storage.

Lee Hales is a Warwick University student who helped prepare the computers before

Lee Haines is a Warwick University student who helped prepare the computers before they were sent. As a follow-up Lee went to Bo over the Easter vacation. His visit was of enormous value in ensuring that the equipment we had sent was effectively installed and that key people were trained and inducted to use the computers. Lee also made sure that within Bo OWL some volunteers were prepared and equipped to maintain the installations. In a very short time Lee laid the basis for future IT training and development among our partners in Bo Owl, Bo Town Council and a number of schools. It was also an amazing experience for Lee himself. His detailed report is well worth reading.

Our Schools Sub-group has worked hard to rebuild schools linking. Last year we had just had a visit from Father Peter Konteh from Bo, who had spoken to a number of local Roman Catholic schools. During Kayoma Women's Group in Bo. The group raised £700 for Kayoma largely thanks to an 80 length sponsored swim by Myf Hodkin to celebrate her 80th birthday! The women's group at Bath Place Community Venture has a continuing interest in Teresa's work.

Although we do not necessarily hear about them, we continue to work to engage the interest of organisations such as Leamington Rotary, which is interested in its counterpart in Bo. We also have links with the African Caribbean Project, Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs, the South Warwickshire Volunteer Forum, the Council of Disabled People, and Basic Needs, to explore how they might become involved. We have also taken part within Action 21 in the setting up of a local2global group. The Nuffield Hospital Physiotherapy Department has donated the stock of its discontinued walking aid loan scheme - equipment which may be of real benefit to people in Bo. We are making approaches to the South Warwickshire Hospital NHS Trust to consider resuming their link with Bo Hospital.

Despite many frustrations, it is still one of our priorities to develop civic links between our own local councils and those in Bo. We would like to build on the visit by the Deputy Town Clerk of Bo two years ago. There are some signs of hope that we may be able to progress our plans quite soon. One very positive sign is that there are now three active committee members who are district councillors: the link also features in the council's corporate strategy.

Warwick District OWL acts as an umbrella to the Bo Koloseum Project, which was set up in the Milton Keynes area to support Moussa Conteh's youth rehabilitation project in Bo. Although Moussa's project continues to flourish, his funding needs have changed and there is now very little active fundraising going on for it.

We are beginning to develop useful relationships with some other groups who have community links with Bo - notably Olney (Bucks), Hastings (Sussex) and Yougham (Derbys). Unfortunately we have not been able to make regular contact with Hull, which has an important link with Freetown.

We are affiliated to the United Kingdom One World Linking Association and this year two of our members have served on the UKOWLA Council. In many ways this is quite an exciting time for UKOWLA. A fairly high-powered conference held in Windsor last year led to the formation of a new group called Building Understanding through International Linking & Development (BUILD), for which UKOWLA is the main co-ordinating body. One outcome of this is a new All Part Parliamentary Group on Linking. UKOWLA is also working with others towards a further international conference (like Leamington 2001), probably in Africa.

Although some people have been mentioned by name in this report, there are a number of others both here and in Bo who have worked very hard on behalf of OWL. I would like to thank you all for your contributions. *Bill Evans*

Shipping

As a result of Lee's report (see above) we will for the foreseeable future be collecting **software** (e.g. the kind that comes from computer magazines) and **appropriate dot matrix printers** rather than more computers. Computers need to be top of the range (Pentium 2 or better).

In addition we have also just taken in a huge load of school text books from Kingsley School who have been having a clear out, which will have to be boxed up in the near future. for which we need **12-bottle size wine boxes**.

But, above all else, what we really, really need is **SPACE** where we can offload and leave a **20ft container** to fill it over the next months for shipping when full! Any offers?

Any offers of help to [Janet Alty](#) Tel: 427773

LORD FRANK JUDD

Frank Judd, The Rt Hon the Lord Judd of Portsea, will address us on September 20th about the issues of how ordinary people in local communities can combine across the world to make a difference to the poverty, strife and injustice pervading north-south relationships. What is it that they do or can do about it when so much is dictated by world trade rules, corporate imperialism, power politics, and corruption? Are there ways in which they could make things worse? This will be related to the small impoverished West African Country of Sierra Leone, created by colonialisation, beset by internal rivalries, unable through size and lack of development to hold its own economically. How can it proceed from peace-making to prosperity? Can it make the exploitation of off-shore oil work for its people? How can its people start to believe in themselves and deal with those who resort to malpractice or mayhem? Is West African Union feasible? This matters to us because Warwick District has a 22 year old friendship link with the District of Bo in Sierra Leone. We want that friendship to honour its meaning and go forward with a good sense of direction. 22 years ago, Frank addressed a packed audience in Leamington Town Hall at our inaugural meeting. It will be a delight to welcome him back now that we "have come of age". His knowledge of the 'majority world' will be enlightening.



We send our best wishes to Hastings, Sussex on the launch on October 9th of their Sierra Leone Friendship Link between themselves and Hastings in Sierra Leone!

WRITE TO SOMEONE!

Can we urge you to have your own friendship link with someone in Bo - contact Brian Austin on 428635 or [email](#) for details.



BUY A BRICK CAMPAIGN

Have you bought your brick for the Bo Community Project yet?

Send your £10 donation to The OWL Secretary,
44 St. Mary's Road, Leamington Spa CV311JP

Have you thought of leafleting your family, friends, place of work or your street to give them the chance to have a physical involvement with the Bo Centre?

Attractive leaflets are available from Jane Knight:
2, Gaveston Road, Leamington Spa, CV32 6EU. Tel: 01926 311807 or email jknightuk@ntlworld.com

OWL POSTBOX

How to send letters and materials to Bo

Put your letter or package into another envelope or wrapping and send it to

OWL POSTBOX
c/o 31 The Greswoldes
Radford Semele
Leamington Spa
CV31 1TP

This is a monthly service: please ensure that materials reach the OWL POSTBOX by **the last day of the month**

Please ensure that:

- There is a return name and address on your letter or packet
- Letters and packets are unsealed (British Council security requirement)
- No cash or 'things' are enclosed

Your letter or packet will then be forwarded to the British Council in Freetown that has facilities for delivering to Bo Town.

They will be taken to One World Link in Bo and distributed by them. (You may be asked to pay for the cost of sending bulkier items).

Further information and/or advice can be obtained from

OWL POSTBOX: Tel: 428635 or [e-mail](#)

A leaflet about penfriendships is also available - please ask for one.