



OWL NEWSLETTER - September 2004

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, 16th October

12.00 - 3.00 p.m.

at

Bath Place Community Venture

Bath Place, Leamington Spa

Food and refreshment provided

A fantastic visit!

How can we describe the incredibly successful visit of our guests from Bo, David Ngombu, Teresa Bangali and Joseph Boakerie?

Fantastic! Educational

Wonderful! Seminal! Exhilarating!

Humbling, Exhausting! Awareness-raising

Challenging! Bridge-building, Stimulating!

These are just a few of the words that immediately come to mind. Perhaps your own experience has given you a different personal perspective.

One thing that we must not lose sight of is the energy and commitment that David, Teresa and Joseph brought with them. How they worked! They were each given a very demanding and intensive programme that they responded to with enthusiasm without any complaint and did not seek for rest! We all owe them a very big

'Thank You!'

Thanks are also due to all those people who hosted our visitors and made them welcome, giving them food, accommodation and hospitality. Also, thanks go to those who helped to facilitate the visit in one way or another: providing transport, hosting meetings, providing meeting space, cooking meals, arranging introductions with organisations and people, and in a million other ways.

But above all, we all owe an immense debt of gratitude to John Myers, our Secretary, who unceasingly and at great personal cost, coordinated the activities of everyone involved for the whole month!

This edition of the Newsletter tries to incorporate many of the experiences of the visit, but so much happened in such a short time that it is inevitable that some things will be omitted.

Hopefully, however, it will give you an overview and a tangible feeling of its impact.

Now the work begins! There are many, many things that need to be followed up and built upon. That cannot be done without your own person involvement. We need more paid-up members to give us an ongoing income to cover expenses that are bound to increase with more activity; we need more people prepared to give some of their time in doing work for the

Link; we need more people to write and correspond with members in Bo; we need more money for the major investment in the community centre in Bo and for the funding of the micro-credit scheme plus any other initiatives that we decide to pursue. If you are not already involved, please join in. There is much to do.

Brian Austin

Did you meet our visitors?

During the visit the following groups, organisations and individuals had contact with our guests. Apologies to any that have been omitted!

African students at Warwick and Coventry Universities
Amnesty International
Aylesford School
Bath Place Community Venture

LETS picnic
Lillington Arts College
Lillington Community Centre
Lillington Fun Day
Lillington Parent Child Group

Local Action 21 members
Local Education Authority staff.
Mayor of Royal Leamington Spa
North Leamington Arts College

BBC CWR radio
 Brookhurst School
 Brunswick Community Centre
 Business Women's Association
 Chair of Warwick District Council
 Clapham Terrace Primary School
 Community Arts Workshop
 Community Education Service
 County Council cabinet member
 County Youth Service
 Emscote Infants
 Ferncumbe Primary School
 Headteachers' end of year Garden Party
 Hope and Homes for Children
 Inter Cultural Support Service
 Intermediate Technology Development Group
 Kenilworth Soroptimists
 Leamington Elders Action Project
 Leamington International Friendship Society
 Leamington Peace Festival
 Leamington Town Council
 Leamington Trade Justice

North Leamington Sixth Form
 Public Debate on the EU
 Race Equality Council
 Ryton Organic Gardens
 Salvation Army
 Samba School
 Schools Multi-cultural festival
 Sikh Temple
 Sikh Womens Association
 Songlines Community Choir
 St Anthony's Primary School
 St Mary Immaculate Primary School
 St Peters Aid for those in Need
 St Peters Catholic Church
 St Peter's Primary School
 Starfish Initiative
 Sydni Community Centre
 Telford Infants School
 Union of Catholic Mothers
 United Nations Association
 Warwick Rotary Club
 Women's Arts Workshop
 Young Housing Project

REFLECTIONS ON THE VISIT TO LEAMINGTON

Janet Alty made the following notes from discussions between Joseph Boakarie, Teresa Bangali, David Ngombu and OWL members at a Workshop on 15th July

"What were your expectations of the visit and to what extent have they been met?"

Our expectations of the visit were as follows:

- * that we were to visit link schools in Leamington Spa
- * we were to visit communities that have a link with Bo
- * we were also to meet people in the link that we have heard about
- * that we were to advertise the link between Bo and Warwick District
- * about 3/4 of the above expectations have already been met

"What have you learnt about -

- the British society (culture)?

- the Link?

- How has your understanding changed or grown?

- What ideas will you take back?"

- * British society (culture) is very caring about its people
- * the people are also responsible to their government
- * the government takes care of the aged, the handicapped and even the unemployed
- * few people are working for the link at this end
- * in addition most of the members are retired people
- * the link has positive ideas in mind for the friends in Bo

"What advice will you give for the next visit from Bo?"

- Who?

- What should they do?

- How could it be organized at this end?"

* that teacher visitors in future come at a time effective academic work is in operation in the schools

* the paramount chief or his representative and youth leaders also come over

* that visits be made to youth groups, community leaders and women's groups

that visits be made to youth groups, community leaders and women's groups
* that more groups be created to link with the groups in Bo. For example: teachers, police, scouts, hospital, civil servants etc

"How has the visit contributed to the development of the link?"

- * The visit has created enough awareness among people in Leamington Spa and its environs
- * More people and communities have grown interested in the link
- * As a follow up these people and communities are to be contacted after our departure

"How should the link develop from here?"

- * That more committed members should be encouraged to join the Link from here
 - * And that young and energetic people be encouraged to join the Link
 - * More contact made with friends in Bo through letters, phone calls and emails etc.
-

The Visit

What was it all about?

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

3 members of Bo One World Link should visit Warwick District UK for a period of four weeks in the summer of 2004 for the purpose of sustaining and developing the community friendship link between Bo and Warwick Districts.

David Ngombu, Secretary, Bo-OWL

In particular it is planned that

1. A teacher representative (Mr Joseph Boakarie) will work with the four Warwick Primary Schools who have links with corresponding schools in Bo, give talks and generally assist with development education in other schools, prepare materials for use in Bo schools, and work on the development of mutual educational aims between schools in the two districts
2. A women's association representative (Mrs Teresa Bangali) will work with the Warwick based women's support group to further links between women's groups in the two districts, to further understanding of the position of women in Sierra Leone in the Warwick District community, gain support for the micro-credit scheme initiated by her women's association, and as a qualified practising teacher assist on the schools programme
3. The Secretary of the Bo One World Link Committee (Mr David Ngombu) will be actively engaged in the development of links between community groups, assist in the implementation of a link between local authorities in both districts, participate in public awareness raising events, participate in the planning of future developments in the link, and assist in the programmes of his two colleagues.

The visitors will

- * create an educational pack for use in Bo schools, and assist with school links and materials and class work in Warwick schools. We will jointly develop an understanding of the plans for the use of the community centre
- * assist with women's development awareness education and possibilities for involving more women and women's groups in linking
- * develop the dialogue and understanding between Warwick and Bo OWL re purposes, priorities, and funding
- * utilise their visit for publicity and public events to raise awareness, recruitment, and funds.

What happened?

COMMUNITY GROUPS

ACHIEVEMENTS

- * Bath Place Community Venture has made a commitment to an on going association with the link and the Bo OWL community centre project.

- * Teresa Bangali taught the Songlines Community Choir another 2 songs from Bo; and its teacher Bruce Knight is sustaining his support for the link through musical cultural exchange through his adult and school classes
- * David Ngombu attended an Amnesty International Link. It was agreed to take joint action on the current Amnesty campaign "Conflict Diamonds". It was also agreed to work towards a link with the Amnesty Group in Bo especially in the area of domestic violence.
- * The Leamington Elders Action Project gave all 3 visitors a session on computer and email skills
- * 17 other community contacts made

FURTHER POTENTIAL

- * Significant contacts (talks to, formal or informal meetings, or visits to) were made with the following community groups:
United Nations Association, Community Education Service, Young Housing Project, County Youth Service and Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs, St Peters Catholic Church and St Peters Aid for the Needy, Sikh Temple, Sydni Community Centre, Lillington Community Centre, Brunswick Community Centre, Community Arts Workshop, North LeamingtonL Arts College, Salvation Army, Leamington International Twinning Society, Warwick Rotary Club, Kenilworth Soroptimists, Leamington Trade Justice, District Councillor Maureen Hirsch (Scholastic Books), Starfish Initiative.
- * Various contacts were made at the Leamington Peace Festival, and David Ngombu gave a talk over the public address system.
- * All three visitors were interviewed on BBC CWR radio, and the producer Tim Atkinson expressed an interest in a link with a Bo Radio station
- * Contact was made with a number of African students at Warwick and Coventry Universities from various countries. These students did a presentation at the Link Party on July 10. Discussion took place about inter-Africa community links.
- * A discussion took place re. Tikonko village and a proposed visit by Daniel Stevens to UK in the autumn and the possible benefit to youth links and a village-to-village link.

THE COMMUNITY CENTRE

ACHIEVEMENTS

- * A considerable amount of time was spent with our visitors in agreeing and submitting a bid to Comic Relief for initial consideration (subsequently rejected!)
- * Work continued on Phase One of the building programme
- * Sums of money were donated or promised during the visit

CIVIC LINKS

ACHIEVEMENTS

- * The Mayor of Royal Leamington Spa, Councillor Mota Singh has made a commitment to make time to visit Bo during his term of office and he acted as a personal host to David Ngombu for one week
- * The Leamington Town Council officially welcomed the visitors at its full meeting. It had previously allocated £1k to enable a youth visit from Bo. It has decided that an official plaque to acknowledge the link should be placed alongside the twinning plaques in the Town Hall

FURTHER POTENTIAL

- * The visitors were given a formal welcome by the Chair of Warwick District Council on 18 June which received press coverage.
- * The Chief Executive Officer of Warwick District Council attended the public meeting on the 15 July
- * Jane Knight gave an account of her Commonwealth Local Government Forum/Local Government International Bureau sponsored visit to Sierra Leone to the District Council which aroused interest from members and officers..
- * A County Council cabinet member met our visitors and there were various contacts with

staff of the Local Education Authority.

* The Mayor of Royal Leamington Spa had close contact with the visitors on many occasions. He is also a County Councillor and former Chair of the Police Authority. He has just become a member of the Hospital NHS Trust

ACTION (AGENDA) 21

FURTHER POTENTIAL

- * Contact was made with members of the local Action 21 at the Peace Festival
- * Study visits were made to Intermediate Technology Development Group, and Ryton Organic Gardens.

SCHOOLS

ACHIEVEMENTS

* Brookhurst School received 2 visitors who participated in various educational activities including a debate on corporal punishment. The school also received a video of the activities at their link school of UBC Bo which has been used in the classroom. A Classroom Assistant at the school is very interested in visiting Bo

* Joseph Bockarie (left), teacher at Kakua Primary School spent several days at the link school Ferncumbe Primary (Hatton Green), participating in classes and a variety of school activities. This is starting to be a whole school community link and involving the wider village community

* St Anthony's had earlier this term had two "firsts": a link up between MPs in Bo and here visiting their respective schools; and an assembly taken by a SL priest Fr. Prince Brainard. St Anthony's has also piloted lesson plans about Bo. This was consolidated by visits to the school over 2 days by all 3 visitors who presented lessons on a variety of themes. The headteacher, Joe Cannon, has agreed to replace the nominated teacher who is no longer able to visit Bo. Progress has been made in sorting out the fact that the Catholic schools in St Francis parish are single sex whereas the schools here are mixed.

* St Mary Immaculate Primary, Warwick is part of the cluster linking with St Francis parish schools and received a visit for one day from Teresa Bangali.

* St Peter's Primary is part of the cluster and Joseph Bockarie spent a day with a group of children attending an inter-schools inter-cultural event.

* Formal recognition of the Link by WCC LEA was strengthened at the Headteachers end of year Garden Party where our visitors were officially welcomed by the Director of Education and a Cabinet Member

* A Group of interested teachers met with David Ngombu to co-ordinate school - based linking activities and decided to meet on a regular basis. It is proposed that a Reciprocal visit

of teachers from a cluster of schools in each community should take place during the next calendar year. The UK teachers have been identified.

* Aylesford School received one visit from Teresa Bangali for a domestic science lesson. Joseph also visited with Ferncumbe leavers

FURTHER POTENTIAL

* Emscote Infants, Telford Infants, and Clapham Terrace Primary have all formally indicated a wish to have link with a Bo School and sent representatives to the Teachers Group, The new head of Sydenham Primary has indicated an interest.

* Various staff at North Leamington School have indicated an interest, at least in fund raising for the community centre.

* Suzanne Lukehurst North Leamington Arts College and Paul Hamilton at Teachers Resource Centre have indicate a willingness to give practical assistance with aids to teaching

* Kenilworth School Castle Hall Sixth Form Centre link with CKC is still a possibility, despite recent lack of contact.

* 3 very positive contacts were made informally with the Inter Cultural Support Service

* Supper meeting with LEA Race Equality Officer

WOMEN'S LINKS

ACHIEVEMENTS

ACHIEVEMENTS

- * A four figure amount of money raised for the micro-credit scheme
- * Awareness of and support for the Kayoma Women's Association was broadened.
- * Warwick OWL understanding of the Kayoma role developed
- * Teresa Bangali gained understanding of various women's groups in Warwick such as Catholic Mothers, Sikh Women, Soroptimists
- * Overall, this visit has been a very great boost to the further potential of the link

FURTHER POTENTIAL

- * Visits made to Women's Arts Workshop, Lillington Parent Child Group, Catholic Mothers Group, Sikh Womens Association, Business Women's Association, Rosemary Parfitt (Hope and Homes for Children), Kenilworth Soroptimist

WE NEED YOU
WOULD YOU LIKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN OWL?
Please contact John Myers on 425403 to discuss
what might be suitable for you

"A SUMMER OF CATCHING UP WITH OLD FRIENDS"

"This summer some of the "veteran" members of OWL were delighted to meet up with two of the Bo "veterans": Mussa Conteh passed through and was even in Leamington for the arrival of Johannes Mallah. The two of them were the pillars of the One World Link when it started in 1981. Mussa managed to revive interest in Bo Kolosseum (the sports programme for young people which is supported by his friends in Milton Keynes and for which OWL helps to keep accounts. Johannes came over for a holiday. It is 15 years since he visited Leamington. He was the Chairman of Bo OWL in its early days and organised OWL exercise book production for the schools and a procession of OWL members through Bo for One World Week long ago. Since then he became Human Resources manager for the Bo Kenema Power Stations and he now acts as advisor to Bo OWL. The Community Centre was one of his dreams which is slowly coming to fruition.

Johannes experienced some traumatic events during the war including a horrific ambush between Bo and Kenema, but thankfully came out unscathed. Most of his stay was spent relaxing and two parties were thrown for him attended by African students from Warwick University. They were very lively events and it was exciting to see the interaction across ten different African countries. One of the key themes was how can such informal contacts be built into more permanent Africa-wide networks?

Johannes also managed to find time to offer useful advice at our OWL meetings and he met up with old friends in London and with Ken Hall and John Holliday (previous OWL chairs). He also accompanied Jane Knight to a BODDA meeting on September 12th. BODDA is the Bo District Descendants Association (UK). Colomba Blango who was Mayor of Southwark and comes from Bo, invited OWL to attend their meeting to tell them about our link and for them to introduce their ideas to us. There were about 20 Bo people present and they are keen to contribute to development in Bo. They showed great interest in our activities and particularly in the community centre. It was agreed that they would try and meet up regularly with us and that we would find means of working together. Meanwhile Johannes, who is now back home, will tell BO OWL about them and about our various deliberations about prospective activities relating to the local councils, women's' groups and school activities, adding to the feedback already taken back by David Ngombu and Joseph Boakarie."

Jane Knight

What to do with your old mobile phone?

Please can we put in an appeal for redundant, but still workable mobile phones; this will help communication between Bo members.

John Starkey has offered to supply 20 wind up mobile phone chargers for the first 20

phones we get this way.

Please send them to:
Janet Alty 18 Lillington Road, Leamington CV32 5YY

Report of the Public Meeting on 15th July in the Royal Pump Rooms Annex, Leamington Spa

Firstly, **John Myers** gave a very brief history of the history of the link from the first public meeting to propose it in 1979 up to the present.

The visitors then gave their reaction to their stay.

David Ngombu expressed appreciation of the visiting group's very open handed reception by Warwick OWL.

Some of their misconceptions about British Society have been corrected. They had thought that British people are very wealthy and that every person is only out for themselves. However they now realise that any wealth acquired is earned by hard work, and that the Government and local councils act very responsibly towards their citizens. They had been impressed for example by the degree of care afforded to people who are disabled; and contrasted this with provision by the Sierra Leone Government.

Teresa Bangali reflected that the timing of future visits needs to be carefully planned. For example, teachers need to visit schools while they are in full session following their curricular timetable. She said they appreciated the time and trouble that people had gone to during their programme of visits and meetings, and mentioned the co-operation of teachers and community workers in particular.. "People have shown faith in us, and we will not let you down". She also observed that more younger people need to be recruited to the link to serve as understudies to ensure its continuation in future.

She went on to describe the formation of the Kayoma Women's Development Association following her previous visit to Warwick District in 2001 to co-ordinate income generating and empowering activities of various women's groups which led on to the initiation of a micro-credit scheme with the co-operation of Maria Franchi during her visit to Bo last year. During this time the groups also learned business-planning skills. This scheme would greatly benefit from the provision of a generator and an industrial sewing machine to maximise the earning power of the constituent groups and to spread its effectiveness to more groups who are interested in affiliating to add to the existing eight.

Joseph Boakarie described the formation of a group of teachers to promote and develop school linking ideas and activity following workshops with Maria last year. The group has continued to meet though it can be difficult to get a lot together very often. At a well-attended meeting he was selected to make this trip. He will be reporting back on his experiences, learning, and his ideas for future progress. He stressed the need to establish good communication links between teachers to make the school links effective and lasting. The opportunity he had to meet students from other African countries has helped him to realise that links between different places in Africa is very important.

Jane Knight was invited to speak about her very recent visit to Sierra Leone for a CLGF Conference. Jane stressed the importance of Local Government for ordinary people. Despite its imperfections it is an essential structure. The Conference brought together all the Chairs of the new local authorities; and some very real work was done on setting priorities. UK local authorities can be a useful support to linked authorities in Sierra Leone. Southwark is likely to be linked to Koidu and West Dumbarton to Kenema. Jane had the opportunity to spend 24 hours in Bo and confirmed with photos that building progress continues to be made. She also discussed the proposed bid to Comic Relief with Joe Kobba and Johannes Mallah.

Janet Alty as convenor of the women's group emphasised the value of the micro-credit scheme as an example of how a little can be made to go a long way.

Bill Evans reported that Leamington Town Council have allocated £1k for the purpose of

enabling a visit from Bo by a person involved with youth work. He also acknowledged the contribution of others who have visited Bo recently, namely Bruce Knight, Lee Hales, and Keith Hudson.

Sarah Davies Head of Ferncumbe Primary school said that the link they have formed with Joseph's school has been very rewarding and is now involving the whole school community. It is hoped that a group of teachers will qualify for a reciprocal visit to Bo to build up the communication and understanding that Joseph had advocated.

John McFarlane, Treasurer confirmed that £31K has already been sent for the construction of the community centre. He hoped that the completion of Phase One will enable income generating activities.

Brian Austin stressed the importance of links between individuals as well as institutions; and reminded people that post needs to be sent through our own postal system using the kind offices of the British Council.

Bill Evans summed up. He pointed out that we have a relatively small number of active workers and it can be a struggle to develop the Link. He is immensely proud to be connected with the Link. He said that what may seem a little here can have a large impact there. He ended by paying tribute to the dedication and hard work of the people in Sierra Leone in their efforts to restore their communities.

WRITE TO SOMEONE IN BO

*We have people in Bo wanting to have a correspondence with someone here.
Further information and/or advice can be obtained from Brian Austin: Tel: 428635
or e-mail: owl@31cv311tp.freeserve.co.uk*

Review of the Year

This has been an eventful year in which good progress has been made in several ways such as school and other educational links, The Bo OWL Community Centre, women's empowerment, and local government links. In turn this means we have been spending our money up to the hilt. We have spent a lot more since the end of the last financial year in April. Apart from money, we need more people to perform a variety of tasks to help us to function better. We still need more active helpers in membership recruitment and retention, development of educational and promotional material, media relations, recycling and shipping, fundraising and event organisation.

Exchange Visits

Face to face contacts between the people of both communities are the adrenaline of our link. It is essential that they lead on to a much wider involvement of many more people. The number and quality of visits this year has been excellent.

From Warwick District, Maria Franchi volunteered to visit Bo for 2 months at the end 2003. She did an outstanding job in reaching out into the Bo Community and in making significant strides to strengthen the development of school linking and to support the Kayoma Women's Development Association. Maria was given very helpful support by Keith Hudson, a police officer from Whitnash on a tour of duty in Bo with the UN. Since then both Jane Knight and John McFarlane have made short visits to Bo Rosemary Parfitt from Warwick, also visited Bo in support of the charity Hope and Homes for Children

From Bo Before Christmas, Nancy Nicholas, then Mayor of Bo, paid a short visit, and was officially received by the Leamington Town Council, met the CEO of Warwick DC, visited 4 primary schools, and had a public welcome at the Parish Church. Joseph Bangali, Director of the Creative Crafts Education Centre in Bo paid a short visit, He visited Warwickshire College and made other contacts. In May we had a visit from Father Prince Brainard, who assisted Maria in Freetown. He was hosted by Father Aldo Tapparo at St Peter's Catholic Church, attended community events and celebrated Mass at St Peter's Church and at St Anthony's School. To crown the year's events in June/July we received a month long visit of three

people from Bo OWL, David Ngombu, Secretary, Teresa Bangali, women's representative, and Joseph Boakarie, teachers representative. They worked hard on three very busy interlinked programmes, and a lot was achieved. Very recently Johannes Mallah has also spent helpful time with us.

Reports are available on Maria's visit to Bo, and on the visit of the 3 Bo representatives.

The Bo OWL Community Centre.

The decision taken in 2001 to raise the money necessary for Bo OWL to build a multi-purpose community centre was a challenge and a potential distraction. We are now nearing the completion of phase one of the building programme. We have exceeded our fund raising target of £30K. Perhaps inevitably, the estimated cost has risen and we still need another £6K to finish the internal plumbing and wiring, the fitting of doors and windows, and the erection of a security perimeter fence. Once the windows and doors are done, Bo OWL can start to equip it and put it into use with community and income generating activities. (Various reports are available on the community centre.)

The rest of this report demonstrates that we have maintained our core activities. Once the Centre is in operation it will become a hub for those activities and the development of the link, so the potential distraction will be removed.

Phase two will be necessary to fulfil the Centre's community and international functions in the comprehensive way we envisaged. An ambitious application for funding for this to Comic

Relief was not successful; so we may need to progress on an incremental basis by finding funds for different aspects by different means.

School Links.

The Education sub-group has made good strides. The linked primary schools are becoming more confident and pro-active. Ferncumbe School Hatton has exchanged audio cassette tapes with Kakua Primary School, Joseph Bockarie, a teacher at KPS, spent a lot of time here. The whole community is becoming involved in the link. Brookhurst School and UBC have exchanged classwork for 2 years running. Brookhurst sent UBC a transcript of a philosophy lesson; and UBC have sent Brookhurst a video of a typical school day. St Anthony's and St Francis have exchanged class work about each other's homes, and on 'Back to School Day' each school invited their MPs into school and they spoke to each other by telephone. Three more primary schools have expressed an interest in a school link. Two secondary schools are developing more interest.

Teachers support groups connected with linking have been set up in Bo and Warwick. Brian Austin, convenor of the education sub-group, comments "It has been a heartening year, we are now re-establishing a firm base for school linking. We are developing a range of ideas and materials to support national curriculum topics, we will support the teachers group, do direct work with schools, and we hope to see a reciprocal visit of teachers funded by the British Council happen during the next year. We much appreciate the support of the County Council Education department and of Rohini Corfield the Race Awareness Officer and Davinder Virk of the Inter-Cultural Support Service in particular. Communication with Bo remains a stumbling block. Even with the assistance of the British Council in Freetown, the exchange of materials between schools takes longer than we would wish and email communication cannot come fast enough."

Women's Activities

Thanks to the women involved, the Kayoma Women's Development Association has been a clear success so far. Eight different groups have combined under the KAWDA umbrella to initiate a micro-credit scheme through which the groups rather than individuals are the immediate beneficiaries. KAWDA is a registered member of Bo OWL with many of its members also being members of OWL. Janet Alty says "Having Teresa here has cemented the relationship between the very large Kayoma Women's Development Association in Bo and the rather small Kayoma Support Group here in Warwick District. We were able to meet informally and gain a much better understanding of the amazing impact of the £1000 micro-credit scheme. When Teresa returns - with £2000 to spend from the Tibden Trust on

credit scheme. When Teresa returns - with £2000 to spend from the Hubert Trust on equipment, and £2000 to spend on a new round of micro credit - she will be launching Women's Workers Co-operatives, and a Credit Union too!

Myf and Teresa wrote a report on the first Kayoma Micro Credit scheme (whereby £1000 radically changed the lives of at least 240 women, many of them ex combatants and victims of the war) The report is available from Janet.

Local Authority Links

We have dropped the term "civic linking" because we want the growing links between the respective Town and District Councils to work towards real co-operation that assists the community link, strengthens local democracy and public service in Sierra Leone, and is mutual of technical and professional benefit. Since Mrs Nicholas' visit local elections have taken place for the first time in over thirty years. The new chair of Bo Town Council is Dr Wusu Sano, a supporter of the Link . He is willing to invite the Mayor of Leamington Mota Singh to Bo during Mota's term of office. It is hoped that this will be reciprocated by Dr Sano.

Leamington Town Council has set aside a sum of £1k to promote the development of youth links, and we are exploring how we might most usefully do that.. The Local Government International Bureau has visited us to see our Link in action. The Commonwealth Local Government Forum sponsored Jane Knight to attend a conference on local government in Sierra Leone. The CLGF and LGIB are combining to promote the growth of LG in SL. Jane says "this year the District Council has shown a steady growth of interest in the link with Bo which is timely now that Bo is likely to need support in establishing true local democracy in the district "

Community Links

Slow progress has been made There has been renewed contact between the Bo and Leamington Rotary Clubs. Community Education Services are making links with the PEA as well as CCEC in Bo. We are developing an even closer relationship with Bath Place Community Venture who will give support to the development of activities in the Bo Centre.

Within the Warwick District we maintain a relationship with many community groups, co-operate with like minded groups such as UNA, TJM, and AI. We still support and promote the Local2Global electronic network. We support the move to make Leamington a "Fair Trade Town". Bruce Knight and Songlines Singers continue to be a good ambassador on our behalf. Bambadinka drumming group have helped to enliven our events. Community Arts Workshop has given us video assistance.

Awareness raising

We have received press coverage on several occasions in the last year. We have maintained our input into the One World Link shelf in Leamington Library; we have taken displays to various events, and made presentations to a small number of secondary schools and church groups. We feel that there is a serious gap in "Development Awareness Raising in the District" We led a bid in partnership with ACP, CAW, Action 21, the LEA. and 4 primary schools for a DFID mini grant to address this, but it was unsuccessful. We campaigned with Amnesty International on "conflict diamonds". We organised a presentation of the international work of local groups to the Warwick District Community Action Forum attended by over 70 people.

We would like to increase our activity in this area; but need additional volunteers and some money.

In Conclusion

We have suffered some disappointments during the past year, and we still have not recruited sufficient activists to do all that we might. The overall strategy for the future will be to carry on developing in those areas where we are already making progress, but trying to incorporate new elements according to our overall plan for the longer term as the opportunity arises.

We are in the process of making more detailed plans for the forthcoming year, and hope to

report on that to the Annual Meeting.

Thank you to David, Joseph and Teresa for their hard work, good humour and tolerance. It is not easy being away from home in a cold climate and doing all that you did. Thank you, too, Maria for giving up nearly 3 months of your life to work hard on our behalf in a very hot climate; and we are relieved it was not really malaria you suffered.

John Myers, Secretary

Only £10 a year!

£10 is all it costs to become a member of One World Link.
We need many more members, so do join us by making a regular annual

subscription, especially if you met our visitors while they were here and you would like to keep in touch with events as they develop.

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:

- 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 or collected by 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: owl@31cv311tp.freeserve.co.uk

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

Newsletter produced for OWL by Brian Austin,
31 The Greswoldes, Radford Semele, Leamington Spa CV31 1TP