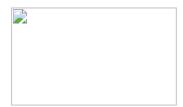
Registered Charity No. 700714

Newsletter: JUNE 2005

Leamington Peace Festival edition

www.oneworldlink.org.uk



Welcome to visitors to our stall at the

Leamington Peace Festival

About us -

One World Link. is a friendship link between people here and people in Bo, Sierra Leone So the basis of the link is personal contact. Anyone can join the Link. There are Committees both here and in Bo made up of ordinary people elected by members. People from Warwick District have visited Bo, and people from Bo have come here. Many people have corresponded person to person.

The link between **Warwick District**, **UK** and **Bo District**, **Sierra Leone** was forged in 1981 and is still going strong. One World Link stands for friendship between the local community in this country and the community in Bo.

Join us!

Sierra Leone in West Africa has a population of 4.5 million in an area of 28,000 square miles (UK 48 million in 50,000 square miles). It is a beautiful country with abundant mineral and agricultural natural resources.

Bo, is inland in the south of the country. It is the major town and administrative centre in the region. It has a hospital, many schools and places of worship, a mayor and town council, and many of the things you would expect to find in any town. It also has fertile land, and a thriving market where villagers come in to sell the produce they have grown.

What we are doing -

Currently we are involved in the following activities:

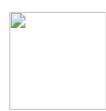
- Links between organisations, such as
- A number of schools (report on p5)
- The Rotary Clubs
- And there have been contacts between
 - Ahmadiyya Muslim communities
- The Red Cross
- A new initiative to link youth groups
- Correspondence between individuals
- Funding for the construction of a Community Centre in Bo as Bo-OWL's
 contribution to restructuring and rehabilitation after the 1990's civil war. (This
 has cost about £35,000 so far for Phase 1 of the project and is an on-going
 commitment)
- An agreement between Leamington Town Council and Bo Town Council
- Working towards participation by Warwickshire County Council in a UK local government taskforce for collaboration with Sierra Leone. (see p. 2)
- Support of the Bo-OWL Committee
- Support of the Bo Koloseum sports project.
- Support of the Kayoma Women's Development Association in Bo

Spare mobile? Donate it to Bo

Call 01926 425403

Warwickshire County Council
Development Partnership with Bo Town Council

We need **you**



Our developments over the past year have cost us dearly! If we are to continue the programmes that we have undertaken and enable further exchange visits, we need to replenish our funds on an ongoing basis. And our funds are currently very, very low indeed!

If you are not a member, please join us (Just £10 a year). If you are a member, please make sure your subscription is paid up. If you are a participating organisation, please pay a regular group membership subscription (Also only £10 a year). And do encourage others to join, too

Please help us run The Link if you possibly can. Every little helps. We are all working on a voluntary basis, doing what we can, when we can, fitting it in with the 101 other things we all have to do on a regular basis. **How can you help?** Here are a few of the ways in which you might be able to assist – one of them may appeal to you

Recycling team volunteer – to collect, or store, or pack or arrange shipment of donations of appropriate redundant goods and material for re-use in Bo.

Women's Link volunteer – to raise awareness of the lives and issues facing women in Bo among women in Warwick District.

Youth Link volunteer – a person to facilitate and support communication and interaction between youth workers and young people in both communities.

I.T. facilitator – to continue the work already done in supporting the development of an IT Centre in Bo.

Schools volunteer – to help the Schools Sub-group in sustaining the work being doine in local schools.

Librarian – to identify all our resources and/or develop the Leamington Library OWL shelf.

Membership Secretary – to maintain a database of members, to help support and retain existing members and help recruit new members.]

Information Officer – to up-date and improve the information we present to others in press-releases, leaflets and fund-raising applications, etc.

Display Volunteer – to develop and up-date our general and specialist displays and identify opportunities for their use.

Newsletter editor – to collect material, edit and produce a Newsletter 3/4 time a year.

Fundraiser - to identify fund-raising needs and develop strategies for them and help carry them out.

Contact:

SECRETARY John Myers contact details treasurer John McFarlane on the back page

Brief Visit of Dr. Wusu Sannoh, Mayor of No Town Council

Hussine Yumella reports on the current state development of local government involvement:

Under the donor-driven post-war construction, the EU, UNDP, World Bank and the UK Department for International Development (DfID) placed a strong emphasis on decentralisation as part of their 'good governance' agenda.

The Sierra Leone Local Government Act 2004 signalled a move towards significant decentralisation of power, authority and responsibility from central government to newly constituted elected local councils.

The local elections, held on May 22nd 2004 resulted in councillors being elected by the local community to take this process forward and to take responsibility for managing local service delivery and decision-making.

After the elections, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) held a workshop for local government stakeholders in Sierra Leone. One of the key recommendations of the workshop was for new local authorities to have the opportunity to learn from and work alongside experienced local government practitioners from other countries.

Leamington Spa Town Council has just signed a friendship link with Bo in January 2005.

OWL hopes to see the growing links between councils in Warwickshire and Bo go beyond ceremonial gestures and develop into real co-operation that assists the linking of both communities, strengthens the redevelopment of local democracy and public service in Sierra Leone, and is therefore of technical and professional benefit at both ends.

A development partnership will enable Bo Town Council to work jointly with a counterpart from another Commonwealth country on projects that seeks to build stronger local governance to address poverty. The programme will draw from the DfID funded Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme and the approach can be further developed by working as part of a 'UK Local Government taskforce for collaboration with Sierra Leone' managed by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and Local Government International Bureau (LGIB), to jointly apply for project funding. The partners in the Taskforce so far are:

Warwick District & Warwickshire County Council - Bo Hull City Council - Freetown Southwark - Kono West Dunbartonshire - Kenema

Hastings - Hastings (Western Area)

Makeni

Projects will be jointly designed by the partners and focused around the specific theme of 'Governance and Organisational Development.' The programme will involve Warwickshire County Council contributing staff time in-kind within conditions stipulated by the Local Government (Overseas Assistance) Act 1993.

18th – 24th March 2005

Saturday: Wusu was guest of honour at the Leamington Mayor's Civic Dinner and was warmly applauded by a large audience of local community leaders, Mayors of neighbouring localities, and other invited guests. Sunday was a rest day.

Monday was spent with Jane visiting aspects of District Council. All went well except that appointment with Robert Inman was missed. Senior Officers appeared to have a genuine interest and gave a warm welcome. Possibility officer exchange discussed. In the evening he met with political groups, and the spread of political ownership and awareness was enhanced.

Tuesday was spent with Hussine visiting aspects of the County Council. There is a general commitment from the County Council, and support for a proposed development partnership plan was given by the Warwick Area Committee with cross party assent. The idea is to have a corporate approach. to coordinate work by different departments. Copies of the report to Area Committee are available. County Council Elections are due in May, further progress will be subject to the sway of the new political administration; but a change of direction is not anticipated.



Wednesday was spent with Bill and John on visits to schools and the County Youth Service; this was helpful in promoting school and youth links. In the evening Wusu attended the Policy Resources Committee of the Royal Learnington Spa Town Council. The support of Councillors representing Learnington at all levels of local government has been invaluable to the Link and to building local authority cooperation. This morning he visited the hospital library and another school; and is due at Young Housing Project and Red Cross later. It was concluded that

A special meeting of the committee was held at the Sydni Centre on 24th March with Dr Sannoh to evaluate his visit.

It was concluded that

- this visit has helped to progress a constructive approach to future partnership
- its coincidence with the Local Government Commonwealth Conference in Aberdeen has helped to coordinate local, national and international initiatives such as the Sierra Leone Task Force
- the congruence of an existing community based link with the proposed partnership is very valuable
- Dr Sannoh has been able to evaluate the potential benefits of future partnership which he will discuss with Bo Town portfolio holders on his return
- The identification of tangible practical outcomes, which are mutually valued, is essential. Given this, there is every prospect that WCC and WDC will seek to cooperate

Public Meeting

24th March Pump Rooms Annex Leamington Spa

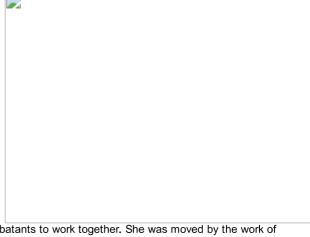
The main purpose of the meeting was to report on the visit to Bo in January.by Mayor Mota Singh, CII. Bill Evans, Hussine Yumkella and Janet Alty.

Bill Evans welcomed **Dr Wusu Sannoh**, newly elected Mayor of Bo Town Council and **Mrs Hawa Sumner** of the Sierria Leone High Commision as special guests, then gave the floor to **Mayor Mota Singh** who had officially invited Dr Sannoh on his own visit to Bo in January.

Mota spoke from point of view of someone who has lived in UK a long time but hails from another developing part of the world. He spoke of richness and poverty. It hurt him to discover the degree of material deprivation and the run down and non-existent public services; but richness exists also in people. He found much richness in the alert and well behaved school children, the social responsibility of citizens (workers and volunteers), the hospitality and willingness to treat people of UK as friends not former masters. In this way Sierra Leone is not a poor nation. He found friendship and respect for One World Link. If the country is not developed, we bear some responsibility. He has received some uninformed criticism of his visit; but it was very fruitful.

He introduced **Dr Sannoh** who spoke about his experience as Mayor of Bo and his visit to UK. As the first elected Council for thirty years, he and colleagues do not have a contract with an electorate, but have to rely on their own conscience and will. People's expectations are great but easily disillusioned in Bo. Maybe the low turn out in elections in UK is due to satisfaction with services. "We are living in a very different set of circumstances; but are willing to look at another set". He now knows a lot more about Warwick District and its politics; and has gained a positive feeling from it all. Previously he had only a few contacts with One World Link; but he has developed a respect for the willingness to make a commitment to other people in the same human family who live a long way away. He feels that it would be good for this substratum to grow; it would be a good thing if we had more people knowing about each other and more exchange visits. He will encourage the partnership to grow.

Janet Alty said her main purpose was to further the women's linking. She emphasised the crucial role women play in building social cohesion and contributing to the reconstruction of civil society after the kind of mayhem that has affected Sierra Leone. She has been singularly impressed with how



Kayoma Women's Development Association has encouraged victims and combatants to work together. She was moved by the work of Conciliation Resources towards restorative justice. There is no way forward without forgiveness and we have a lot to learn about this. She recounted the development of the micro-credit scheme, and it's effectiveness with a 96% first repayment rate. It was very rewarding to participate in the launch of the new micro-credit union", which was a most glorious procession, and speech making. This scheme will extend loans to individuals not groups on a variable percentage.

Bill introduced **Hussine Yumkella** as a "gift from heaven – a diamond and a dynamo. A Sierra Leonean working for the County". She explained that she is on a one year post graduate placement, and was asked to do a study of the potential for a County Council contribution to local government capacity building. She referred to the fact that through civil war Leoneans had destroyed much,. What was in place before had been organised by the colonial power; now the obligation was to rebuild their own nation. "When we have rebuilt it ourselves, we will think twice about knocking it down again" So it is important that any outside assistance is a partnership aimed at indigenous development, and is based on practical achievable goals. This would be part of a wider local government "task force" with other UK/SL local partnerships.

Bill Evans said that Hussine and Mota had had a very busy time not least in Freetown meeting important players such as the World Bank. He had been a little bit more relaxed. He was struck with the changes since his last visit in 2001 which was during the immediate distressing aftermath of the war. He was pleased to find the St Mary's Children's centre flourishing. Generally the atmosphere was very different. He visited the community centre which is very near to completion of phase 1. He met the 2 youth representatives chosen to visit us.

In answer to questions. Dr Sannoh described the priorities. In public services – the provision of a clean reliable water supply; in education – girl's education; in health – maternity and child health. To some degree the priorities are set by the phases of the government devolution plan; but it is also important to build public accountability, and ward committees are being set up to encourage citizen involvement in the planning process. The devolution process is due to be completed by 2008, so there is little time to evolve their own structures, models and examples have to be adopted from other countries. Funding will be provided from national sources by tied and untied grants. Weaker councils will receive special attention. There is also a local property tax and a market trader tax. He does not anticipate that funding will be sufficient. He has set up an Education Trust Fund with an initial donation from Bo Town Council that local people and bodies and people further from afield can contribute to. This will be used to meet immediate individual and school needs which are not budgeted for otherwise.



Youth Visit

George F Mbayo. Age 30. Laboratory technician at Bo Government Hospital; a Baptist, and **Jane Nyambe**. Age 31 Teacher at SLMB Secondary School, Nikibu Section, Bo; a Methodist, **representatives of Bo Youth Council**, were with us on a youth exchange visit for **3 weeks from 23rd April – 13th May**.

A full report of their activities are described in detail on our website www.oneworldlink.org.uk, which would take up too much space in this Newsletter, but the main achievements are listed opposite. (Phone 019226 428635 for a copy of the full diary)

We have many people to thank for their help in making this a most successful visit, but primarily we owe a debt of gratitude to John Myers for the amazing amount of work he put into co-ordinating their programme. We are also grateful to those who acted as hosts: Bill and Joy Evans, Nicola Pocock, Jeff Howarth, Maria Franchi, Bruce Knight and Rebecca Potts, John and Marion Myers. Also to all those who facilitated various aspects of their visit, including Dave Jones, Kevin Batchelor, Rob Harris, Matt Smith, Michelle and her husband, Stewart Cowie, Mota Singh, Janet Alty and North Leamington and Aylesford Schools, among others. But most of all we have to thank George and Jane for the excellent way in which

Achievements (extracted from the website Diary):

25th We learned something about University education in UK. We have stimulated the interest of Warwick Volunteers in One World Link. They are now planning to do a project with One World Link in the new academic year.

26th We gained an overview of the County Youth Service. We had our first contact with young people belonging to a youth club. We had a dialogue with the staff at the Arts Workshop

27th Jane taught a Mende song to Songlines, and did a good public relations job. George stimulated interest in the Link with the GAP Community Centre youth workers, and met the Board Member of Warwick Hospital who is advocating links with Bo Government Hospital

We identified that **Young Homeless Project** would like a link with a similar organisation in Bo. We thought that the Unaccompanied Children Project might be the most suitable. Jane was able to give useful information about Bo and its schools to the teachers. We greatly enjoyed our session with the **Samba Band**, and were able to stimulate more interest in the Link amongst its members

29th We observed how English people conduct themselves when they put on an event to say goodbye to a fellow worker. We saw how able-bodied children interact with disabled children to assist them to join in ordinary leisure activities. they responded to challenges of this visit, meeting many people and groups in very diverse situations.

Unfortunately Jane developed Malaria during her third week, which meant that she was very poorly indeed. We have been very concerned for her well-being and arranged for medical treatment, but a month later she had not fully recovered. This obviously affected Jane's ability to benefit fully from the visit and we hope her health will be fully restored by the time she returns to Bo. We were all very sorry about this.

Among the groups and organisations visited were:

Aylesford School Bath Place Community Venture Black Youth Project Community Arts Workshop Detached Youth Project Disabled Children's Sports **GAP Community Centre** Leamington Samba Band Learnington Town Council Labour Councillors Group Lillington Youth Centre
Marle hall Outdoor Activitty Centre Methodist Scout Group North Leamington School North Leamington Sixth Form OWL Primary Teachers' Group Pathology Labioratory Prince;s Trust Samba Band Sez U Cvommunity Theatre Group Songlines Warwick Hospital Warwick Vulunteers (Warwick Uni. Students) Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs Warwickshire County Council Youth Sercive Young Housing project

They also had visits to:

Asian Dance and Song Asian Ladies Swimming Club Coventry Cathedral Learnington Canal Festival Morris Dancing on May Day Point-to-point racing Warwick University Yulgrave Village Link (Derbyshire)



UPDATE

We have a new young website volunteer, **Alex Fyfe**, who has started work on creating a more visually interesting website. His first contribution has been the **Diary of Jane Nyambe and George Mbayo**, representatives of Bo Youth Council during their stay here as part of a youth exchange – complete with pictures!

Do please have a look at it at www.oneworldlink.org.uk and click on the link in the MESSAGE BOARD to see the diary the visitors made. (If you do not have internet access, but would like a copy of the diary, phone 01926 428635 and we will send you a copy in the post)

We are hoping in the near future to add the resources we have created for use in our Schools in conjunction with the Primary Teachers' Group, so that it is available to other teachers to use.

Many thanks, Alex!

Bo Koloseum

Dear John,

I have just arrived in the UK but only for a short visit to attend a Parliamentary Conference on behalf of Sierra Leone. The Conference concludes on the 10th June and I plan to return to SL on the 24th. for urgent Parliamentary duties....

- 30th We helped build good relations between **Youlgrave** and Warwick links
- 1st A radio interview to talk about our Country and to explain the Link. General public relations and enjoyment
- 3rd Jane saw parts of the performing arts curriculum. And to learn how a group of youths have been motivated to take a sport seriously and gain skill and self esteem.
- 4th We worked alongside university students and other volunteers on an equal level doing the same work. We got involved with a group of younger primary school age children, and had additional contact with youth leaders. We helped the Mayor to reinforce his message to his own Sikh Community that we all live in one world and need to cooperate and understand each other across the world.
- 5th Jane learned to swim. George learned about **pathology** practice at Warwick. More **youth contacts** were made and activities observed.
- 6th We helped to recruit a group of **Sixth Formers** to look at fund raising ideas for Bo, and to think about a presentation of the school to send to their new link school. We assisted in the discussion with the Headteacher of **North Leamington School**, which had a positive result. We helped the Year Head at **Aylesford School** to promote the idea of a One World Link club in the school. We have more understanding of secondary education in UK.
- 8th The main achievement was to have an opportunity to evaluate activities that might be available on possible future youth exchanges for our young people to experience
- 9th George learned how a **detached youth work** works in Leamington. The young people are approached when they are standing around together in the street and engaged in talk and given the opportunity to learn to drive a motor vehicle. Awareness raised of the issues faced by youth in Bo
- 11th We were able to complete a comprehensive picture of the range of youth services in Warwick District
- 12th George and Jane attended an evaluation meeting at which various conclusions were reached about the lessons from the visit and on possible ways forward. Contact established with BODDA. Possibility of reviving a Leamington Bo Scout Link advanced.

We hope this gives you a flavour of the Youth Exchange visit and its wide-ranging effects. It proved to a ground-breaking venture that will undoubtedly have long-term effects in this vital area. For this we have to acknowledge the foresight of Bill Evans in stimulating this initiative.

Schools End of year Report

Our major achievement this year has been the setting up of the

Primary Teachers' Group



This is a group of teachers from our linked schools who have met every half term to share

dassroom experiences and ideas for activities with the children. Materials between linked schools have been exchanged.

We have links between the following schools:

Brookhurst Primary
Clapham Terrace Primary
BDEC School, Sewa Road
Emscote Infants
BDEC Lower School, New Gerihun Road
Ferncumbe Primary (Hatton Green)
St Anthony's and St Peter's Schools
St Mary's School
Telford Infants
UMC Lower School, New Site

St Anthony's received their Race Relations Award partly because of their involvement in the link and Ferncumbe were exemplified in the Autumn edition of 'Name and Acclaim'

During the year the OWL schools' sub-group have continued to support and encourage the schools and have tried to interest the Secondary sector with involvement at Aylesford's International Day and discussions with North Leamington about linking with Ahmadiyya Muslim Secondary School.

From my last visit I told you in a short discussion about the next phase in the development of Bo Koloseum, namely the land for the sports and recreation programme. Well all the official bit has been done.

We have worked a budget to start with a Basket Ball Court, a Volley Ball Court, a Tennis Court, and a 7-a-side Football Pitch. I will bring the budget when I come to Leamington. I would like the BK funds held on O.W.L. account to be released for the construction work to start ... [see note below]

Let me thank you for all the support you have given me and Bo Koloseum. Without your support we would not have been able to come this far!

Look forward to seeing you.

Moussa Conteh



We are now going to transfer the balance of the Bo Koloseum account over to BK. However, this is only the first stage of the development and there will be a continuing need for support from the UK. Therefore we will be keeping the BK account open to receive donations, as in the past. If anyone wishes to continue to donate to BK, they will still be able to do so.

A small group of ex-teachers have also continued to work on preparing materials for use in the classroom and now have work available in a number of areas, such as:

We are now planning, with the help of our website volunteer Alex Fyfe, to put this material on the OWL website so that it can be accessed by teachers anywhere, at any time. This would include photographs, some of which have been made available on CD.

We were encouraged by the new DfES strategy published last November in which one target was to have every school in the UK linked with an overseas school ("Putting the world into world-class education"). We think we are in a very strong position to enable schools to participate in achieving this objective.

We are now waiting for the result of a funding bid to the British Council for teachers at Ferncumbe, Brookhurst and St Anthony's schools to have a teacher exchange during the next school year. Watch this space!

Brian Austin Schools Sub-Group Coordinator

NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

SILVER JUBILEE

We celebrate 25 years on from our inaugural meeting on 24th October 1980.We will probability have our Annual Meeting on 22nd or 29th October to coincide with this, One World Week and Black History Month.

CHAIR

Bill Evans has given us advance notice that we will not be continuing as Chair at the end of this year's term of office due to forthcoming commitments with Warwick District Council. Who is going to replace him? If you would be willing to stand for election, or know of someone else who would, please talk to Secretary John Myers.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The committee and others are meeting for an extended session on August 2nd (12 – 4 p.m., starting with a shared lunch, at 2 Gaveston Road, Leamington Spa) to have a more in-depth discussion about aims, objectives, plans for the future and generally to look at the way forward. If you would like to join us, please come along.

BO-OWL COMMUNITY CENTRE

We understand that the Centre is very, very nearly reaching completion, although the latest setback has been a huge rise in the price of tiles that are required and this has stopped them proceeding with this at the moment. We do know that the Centre has been used by Bo-OWL for a recent meeting and we are looking forward to its official opening and commissioning in the very near future.

Next Committee Meetings - all welcome

Thursday 14th July, 1.30 p.m. 2 Gaveston Road Tuesday 2nd August, 12-4 p.m., 2 Gaveston Road (Special review) Wednesday, 31st August, 7.30 p.m., 12 Claremont Road

BO-OWL RUNNING EXPENSES

Bo-OWL has requested assistance in offsetting their secretarial costs in Bo, including the cost of using the email service at the Internet Café. We have agreed to support them with this and have made a small contribution of £30 p.m. for 3 months as a trial so that we can more clearly identify how much is likely to be needed.

YOUTH GROUP

Hussine Yumkella and Youth Worker Matt Smith with support from Maria Franchi are working towards setting up a core Youth Group, so that the new initiatives that have been established during the visit of George and Jane can be taken forward. If any one is interested in participating in this area, please contact Hussine (contact details below).

SHIPPING

We are still not in a position to actively pursue the collection and recycling of equipment for BO-OWL because of the lack of any sort of usable storage space at little or no cost! Can anyone help with their knowledge of the availability of storage facilities. This is desperately needed.

POST

Brian is still sending packages to Bo monthly, either via The British Council in Freetown, or with returning visitors (please get letters, etc. to him at 31 The Greswoldes, Radford Semele, Leamington Spa, CV31 1TP by the last day of each month) – although there is some evidence that the postal service is beginning to become more reliable. Hopefully we will be able to tell you in the foreseeable future that you can send your own things direct to Bo, but please do not do so until we have ascertained that it is working and secure.

YOUR COMMITTEE 2004-2005

If you which to contact any of the following members, please send an email to info@oneworldlink.org.uk

Officers: CHAIR CII. Bill Evans, SECRETARY John Myers

TREASURER John McFarlane

Elected SHIPPING Janet Alty
Members SCHOOLS Brian Austin

Other CII. Jane Knight members Myf Hodkin

Mrs. Sylvia Lee Cll. Bob Crowther Andy Smith Maria Franchi Lee Hales Hussine Yumkella

Newsletter produced for OWL by Brian Austin news@oneworldlink.org.uk