

## **Notes on a Visit to Bo in 1983**

**Dr Paul Gully**

I hope the note below can be added to the archives but I need help with names, as you can see!<sup>1</sup>

I had the privilege of visiting Bo in 1983, supported by a grant from the University of Birmingham, School of West African Studies. My objective was to explore the possibility of setting up a placement for a UK physician training in public health, as well as to strengthen the One World Link.

Unfortunately, I do not have access to my report of the trip and do not recall too many details.

I was warmly welcomed in Bo by Mussa and Jean Conteh who I knew already from the UK. I spent time at the public health clinic (Jane you will have to help me here - it was run by the Sisters from the mission hospital but I have to admit that I have forgotten the names) and participated in training of medical assistants and nurses. In addition, I was able to see immunization clinics in action in nearby villages. I remember being very impressed by the sense of organization and planning of the public health services and dedication of the staff. I met Dr Jenny Gibson whom I had worked with at East Birmingham (now Heartlands) Hospital. I recollect the lack of supplies at the Government Hospital while in the market in Bo where there was no shortage of powdered milk or antibiotic capsules being sold from a stall.

On reviewing my pictures I see a sign about "Health for All by the Year 2000" - the 1978 Alma-Ata Declaration. 2000 has come and gone and we are now working towards the Millennium Development Goals for 2015.

However, the 30th Anniversary of Alma-Ata will be celebrated next year with a renewed emphasis by WHO on Primary Health Care. It is salutary to think that when I was there HIV infection would have just been getting a foothold in Sierra Leone and would so profoundly effect the public health challenges of Africa and beyond.

Unfortunately my visit did not result in a placement but I hope that it helped to maintain what has proved to be a strong and continuing link between Leamington and Bo.

I am attaching some pictures which may be of interest.

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<sup>1</sup> "I think it was the Serabu hospital nuns and Sr. Hilary who ran it...She was doing a lot of primary health care" – Jane Knight

