

Wartime jottings of telephone and other communications which kept Warwick District One World Link in touch with Bo friends.

Jane Knight

1985

July 12th to August 7th Fr. Koroma visited as guest of Leamington Christian Council.



Spa welcomes special guest from Bo

It was a dream come true for members of the One World Link when Father Patrick Koroma from Bo arrived for a three week visit.

It took two years of planning and organisation before Father Koroma, from the Catholic Education Office in Freetown, Sierra Leone, could finalise his visit.

He was officially welcomed

at the Town Hall in Leamington by deputy chairman of Warwick District Council John Morley, Val Davis, Mayor of Leamington, and Naomi Kendall, Mayor of Warwick.

A packed schedule has been

drawn up for him over the next three weeks, which started off when he conducted mass at St Peter's Church, Leamington on Sunday morning.

It was then on to Dale Street Methodist Church for an evening service, and next Sunday he will preach at Lillington Free Church.

He will also preach at All Saints Church, Leamington, on August 4, and meetings have been arranged with local diocesan education officers and lay people.

Outside this schedule Father Koroma has said he will visit schools and educational bodies.

The visit was arranged on the initiative of Jane Knight, founder of One World Link, who met Father Koroma two years ago on a visit to Sierra Leone.

She contacted the Leamington Christian Council who readily said they would sponsor the trip.

Father Koroma, as well as conducting his duties as a Catholic priest and education officer, has a special interest in the Scout movement and the plight of elderly people.

And he will be giving Dale Street Venture Scouts, who are travelling to Bo at the end of the year, the chance to learn more about the country.

© Above, Father Patrick Koroma with Jane Knight, founder of One World link, and Father Fabian Redcliffe, a member of Leamington Christian Council and chaplain of Trinity School.





Fr. Koroma's visit in July 1985

5/8/97 Patrick (Koroma)

Received money and it has gone to Bo.

Banks not functioning but markets keep going.

Food and diesel coming in.

People being raided and barricades up in Bo and bars are being guarded. Archbishop gone to Canada until September.

6/8/97 Joe Pyne

Quiet,

Shops open half time - shopping done in a rush

Bo OWL has bought rice and oil and distributed it to their executive committee members.

Chair and Raymond James and children displaced.

Raining heavily

He had retrieved his mother.

23/09/97 Johannes

New chair of OWL in Bo.. Joe Kobba from the Planning Parenthood Association.

Report money sent.

- 1. 35 bags of rice distributed to link members and displaced from Freetown and money for condiments to some of same.*
- 2. They had formed a 3 person committee - chair, secretary and one other to plan what to do with gifts from Warwick OWL.*

Schools closed so children were playing all day.

Joe Kobba

Small attacks, supposed to be rehabilitation but nothing happening. Relief only possible and people flocking for it.

Difficult to meet, new government people trying to stop meetings. Dangerous to keep money other than in bank.

16/10/97

Letter to Fr. Koroma.

"Dear Patrick,

I phoned just now and heard your voice but you could not hear me. So here goes with a fax. I hope you are well despite everything. Bo has asked us for £5000 ie.£2000 for

immediate relief (medicines and food) £1000 for a scholarship scheme as soon as government returns to Sierra Leone, £2000 for a One World Link building for meetings and storing dispensing goods sent from here.

If our committee agrees to this, would you be in a position to pass the money to Bo? (Choithrams have already said they are prepared to do the transaction as before). I will try reaching you again by phone to get your comments.

I was with Momodu Koroma this week in London. The President is coming and there is a flurry of activity around the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. He seems sure it is a matter of weeks before they are back and they have prepared a 90 day immediate plan of action with help from the British Government....

09/02 98 - Henry Sheku

Trying to move children ? UN needed, didn't know what was happening to civilians.

Started on Thursday, Charles Taylor was isolating Nigeria?

JMK diary... More problems in SL. Janet (Alty) phoned in a bad state because she had received a fax from Fr. Koroma and was relieved at least she had reached him on the telephone. Things are certainly bad there..in fact worse.

10/02/98

JMK diary ...Sierra Leone burst forth with kidnapping of Archbishop Ganda. I contacted Associated Press and any other Press I could get through to. In fact it turned out a bit later the Archbishop was found to have had a narrow escape. A rebel had gone into his house but had found him in the toilet wearing his white robe and had been terrified and ran away. So the Archbishop had gone to his neighbours' house and the priests were worried because they did not know where he had gone. Eventually they took him into their residence at King Tom.

16/02 98 Fr. Koroma - rebels in the bush and still a threat. Bo OK - in a hurry had to say Mass!

04/03/98 Fr. Koroma - British in Bo all OK. A ship had come in with rice 200 Leones per cup. This will ease situation. Going back to normal apart from looting etc. No news of Johannes. As far as OWL Bo was concerned we should wait.

24/12/98. Fr. Koroma

He was worried but OK. Road to Bo closed.

24/01/99 Fr. Koroma. Cut off - Hiding, Doing work but removing priest wear and passing off as gardeners. Have buried 100 people in a trench. Yesterday in Kissy, a Sister was shot. News of BO...not affected. No attack in Bo or Kenema. No food. Shops open one door. Need firewood.

Open access to Lunghi, fish again with cassava leaves. Price down.

Doesn't know re. ship with our goods. Docks were taken over. Contact the shippers. It could have gone to Guinea or Ivory Coast. Have to take possession of goods within 6 months. Canadian medicine supplies not landed but trying to drop at Conakry.

Leave money for the time being. Fires in King Tom and kissy Some people have lost hope.

We must build up spirits again.

01/03/99 Fr. Koroma.

Waterloo taken back. Relief food for 2000 people. More confident. Schools to reopen but no teachers' salaries. To relocate people in stadium. Bo hungry, road closed. Someone in government going to Bo by plane from Lunghi. Bob Moran (ex Peace Corps who never returned to America) going back to Bo next to look at how things are. Can buy food with our money. Bishop Ganda in US. Shipping - some things coming...