

One World Link

The friendship link between Bo District in Sierra Leone and Warwick District, UK

www.oneworldlink.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 700714

June is bustin' out all over!

• OWL members are going all-out this month to spread the word about One World Link. As well as organising an informative and fun programme for our visitors from Bo, we are involved in a busy programme of events which will help OWL increase its profile in the community.

First up is the two-day **Peace Festival** in Leamington's Pump Room Gardens on 13/14 June. As usual, OWL is mounting a stand to promote its work and attract new members. Make sure you drop in to say 'hello'. Myf Hodkin has penned a short history of the Festival, which you will find on Page 3 of this Newsletter.

The Youth Group have also been incredibly busy organising some fun events to celebrate the **Day of the African Child** on 16 June and a **One World Weekend** of food and world music on 19/20/21 June - all with the help of the Newbold Comyn Arms in Leamington.

All the details of these events are shown on the flyer enclosed with this Newsletter. There is something for everyone, so make sure you get along there to support OWL, meet new people and join in the fun!

OWL have also been asked to speak at three forums towards the end of the month:

- Alan Moss and John Myers will be guest speakers at a Rotary Lunch at the Ramada Hotel, Kenilworth, on 26 June;
- the next day, Chris King, JoAnne Fisher and Ben Wesson have been invited by Kenilworth School's Sixth Form to talk about OWL at their *'Love Music - Hate Racism'* event in Abbey Fields at 1.30pm;
- and on 29 June, Jane Knight and Glenn Fleet from Warwickshire County Council will address a high profile and influential audience at the BUILD conference (Building Understanding through International Links for Development) at Mansfield College, Oxford. Their subject? - the Warwick/Bo Link - of course!

And that just about rounds off a hectic June for OWL! Watch this space.....

Bo Visitors - Update

After some frustrating delays getting UK visas, our three visitors from Bo - Catherine Kamara, Maada Fobay, and Alpha Bah - have all been cleared for take-off and will arrive with us on **Monday, 15 June**. A huge welcome - and a packed itinerary! - awaits them. A provisional programme for their 3-week stay can be found on our website www.oneworldlink.org.uk. If you want to catch up with any of our visitors during their stay, please contact Chris King on 01926 421093 or email caking@hotmail.co.uk

Waste Project Gathers Pace

The Solid Waste Management project facilitated by OWL - with Warwickshire County Council assisting Bo City Council (and Makeni City Council too) - has overcome some funding hurdles and is progressing reasonably well, says WCC's European Officer, Andy Smith.

Procurement is underway with the first of two JCB excavators now ready for inspection pre-shipping. The first skips and skip lorry are due from China next month and the UN has just approved the second tranche of funding to enable a second batch of equipment to be ordered. The Commonwealth Local Government Forum has also approved a £45,000 grant to pay for the technical assistance provided by WCC to the two partner Councils.



A Waste Project meeting in full session

Glenn Fleet, Sustainability Group Manager and Derek Greedy, Strategic Waste Adviser from WCC, are due to visit Sierra Leone in July to train staff from the two Councils and community leaders in the new scheme - both landfill site management and the collection system. Bo is ahead of Makeni, with Eric Moosa now project managing arrangements there. Bo OWL is also involved in the Project Implementation Group which steers the Bo project and includes local Councillors and residents. Hopefully, Maada Fobay and our other visitors from Bo will be able to give us a full update when they arrive this month

Chairman's
Notebook



So, they're actually coming!

Many moons ago, Jane (Knight) and I agreed that we'd make a special effort to get the visa applications organised well in advance to anticipate delays - but it seems our efforts just weren't good enough! We were all left hanging and hanging, so much so in fact, that I'd begun to think they were certain to be refused. But with a positive result, we now feel that this might, after all, be something of a break-through - and we achieved it all without the British Council whose help, until a couple of years ago, was always on hand.

Since the last Newsletter, we've had the sad news from Bo of Mussa Conteh's death. Mussa was a long-standing, loyal, wise and visionary friend of the Link, and he will be very sadly missed. In contrast came the news from Jane on her recent return from Bo that Johannes Mallah, previous chair of BoOwl, is much improved after suffering a stroke. He is moving around easier and able to chat as his old self. It will be wonderful to hear all the news first hand from our visitors.

Now that their arrival is certain, the starter's gun has fired in the race to arrange their programme. The Civic Reception, the meeting with Leamington's new mayor, their attendance at a meeting of the Town Council, and much more. I am the coordinator for their activities and, if anyone has suggestions for events that would be interesting and fun for them to attend or join in with, then please let me know - just phone me or e-mail me*. It's going to be an exciting three weeks!

*01926 421093 or
caking@hotmail.co.uk

Chris King

OWL pays tribute to a
generous benefactor

Doris Frizzell worked as a volunteer in the medical field in Bo. In her will, she remembered her friends in Africa and left a significant bequest to OWL on her recent death. Here, Jenny Gibson, a medical doctor with a long term commitment to Sierra Leone, remembers a remarkable woman.....

Doris came to Sierra Leone as a "mature" VSO, having previously had a senior post as a lab technician in the UK. She worked for two or three years as a lab technician at Bo Government Hospital in the late 1970s. She did a lot to improve the standards at the Bo Pathology Laboratory, working particularly in biochemistry. She was a very friendly person who got on very well with both her Sierra Leonean and British colleagues.

She retired to the Isle of Wight, where she was a pillar of her local Unitarian Church. She struggled with cancer for several years before her recent death and many people will miss her, especially for her friendliness and her sincerity.

Trinity's Got Talent
- and a BIG Heart!

Trinity Student Jemma Knight reports... At Trinity Catholic School, the student council held a charity talent show early in May. Staff and student acts took part & it was a fun lunch-time for everyone involved. The school decided that the £188 raised would be given to One World Link, so that the money can go towards table tennis tables and equipment for the youth group in Bo.

Thank You Trinity, from Everyone at One World Link!



INTERNATIONAL DAY
OF THE AFRICAN CHILD

Tuesday, 16th June



The International Day of The African Child has been observed every year on 16 June since 1991. It honours those who participated in the Soweto Uprising of 16 June 1976 during the Apartheid Era in South Africa. Over 500 African children and young people were killed after 30,000 African school children led a protest against being denied the right to study their own language and culture in school.

Each year the day is given a different theme with this year's being:

"Africa Fit for Children: Call for Accelerated Action Towards their Survival".

The day is sponsored by the African Union (logo above). It is a national event in most African countries and aims to bring together young people and children to demand action and accountability from leaders in their commitments to eliminate poverty and improve their well-being. We aim to make this an annual event here in Warwick District.

This year there are two events taking place to mark the day. The first is an inter-schools concert organised by Warwick District primary schools linked with schools in Bo. It is being hosted by Brookhurst School in Leamington. Each of the schools participating in the event will bring along their own song, to be performed in the school's amphitheatre. Special guest will be Councillor Balvinder Gill, Mayor of Leamington, who will open the concert. This is a schools-only event and not open to the general public.

The second event, however, is open to all! FOOD AND FILM is at the Newbold Comyn Arms, Leamington Spa, CV32 4EU, and starts at 7.30pm. It features traditional African food (buffet style) and the showing of the film "Sierra Leone Refugee Allstars". This is a ticket only event and tickets (£10 per head to include buffet) can be obtained from JoAnne Fisher on 07904 351247. Please come along to support the day and enjoy the fun!

Education in post-conflict Sierra Leone



Mitsuko Matsumoto is studying for her Doctorate in Education at St Cross College, Oxford. The subject of her research is the part education played in fuelling the civil war in Sierra Leone and its role now in the lives of adolescents in the post-conflict era. With the help of OWL, Mitsuko was able to visit Bo earlier this year and to use our contacts there to help lay the groundwork for her studies. In this article for OWL News, Mitsuko tells of her experience.....

My chance to visit Bo came in February this year, as part of a month long stay in Sierra Leone. My stay was both productive and pleasant thanks to the very generous support from the One World Link. I visited several secondary and primary schools, all of which are Linked Schools. I met with the principals, and occasionally with teachers and students, and asked their perception of the impact of conflict on children in learning, and what support each school has for children who suffer from the lingering effects of the conflict. I also visited various types of institutions that provide support to war-affected or disadvantaged children and youth in Bo, gaining information about their activities and their perception of issues concerning such children and youth.

The impacts of the conflict on children in learning were subtler than I thought; of course, some are still traumatised, but many principals mentioned poverty of the family due to the effects of the conflict affecting their ability to support children to go to school (for example, not bringing or having any food, not providing them with basic learning materials such as textbooks, not making sure that children go and arrive school on time because these parents leave before children go to school, etc.). Interestingly some also mentioned the issue of indiscipline; they thought that children were not respecting teachers, or not following the rules because they had learned to have power (especially ex-combatants).

There are a number of special educational opportunities available for young people in Bo. For example, some students attend formal secondary schools at an older age than official age, like at over 18 years old, due to the disruption of the conflict, lack of money to attend when they were younger, or to retake grades. In addition, there are some vocational training centres and also some institutions that provide free educational and vocational opportunities for those who are disadvantaged or deeply affected by the conflict (such as street children, girl mothers, and physically maimed).

I am very thankful to One World Link members who made sure that my stay in Bo was very pleasant. Youth group coordinators of OWL came to see me shortly after my arrival. Every night some members of OWL were there to see me to make sure that I had some company. A lovely dinner was organised by the executive committee members of One World Link on the last night of my stay, and made a perfect ending to my very pleasant and memorable stay in Bo.



Mitsuko with Theresa Bangura and David Ngombo of BoOWL

OWL@The Peace Festival

OWL will once again be represented with a stand at this year's Leamington Peace Festival due to be held in the Pump Room Gardens on 13th and 14th June. Here, Myf Hodkin, long serving member and former Chair of OWL, looks back at the long history of the event.



The Festival started over 30 years ago. At that time, an Oxfam Fete, a Health Festival and a Peace Festival run by members of the Bahai faith, were all taking place. Organisers of these events realized that they had much in common - developing awareness of global issues, promoting international understanding, and putting into practice the Oxfam slogan "Think Globally - Act Locally".

As a result, a Committee was formed, and an annual festival established. Over the years, many other charities, churches and community groups have become involved; also, commercial traders selling a variety of ethnic goods, food and drink. Musical entertainment and talks have also become an important part of the festival.

Probably the Festival's most valuable function today is as a venue for networking between the groups represented - making new recruits and generating new ideas as well as much enjoyment.

Thank you to all those, past and present, who have made this possible. Long may it continue!

....and see you there!

! COMPETITION ! COMPETITION ! COMPETITION !

In the last issue, we asked members to come up with ideas for a **lasting memorial to One World Link in Warwick District.**

The response has been fantastic - so thank you to all those who put forward their suggestions...and here they are:

1. A display board and treasure hunt in the temperate house in Jephson Gardens.
2. A mural located at the recycling centre in Leamington - fits with the co-operation on the current waste management project in Bo.
3. A 'virtual development centre' using technology to access resources.
4. A modern style owl in Jephson Gardens that can be interactive - children able to play on.
5. A mural/carving showing an owl flying over a map of the world.
6. A physical resource centre where all our archives etc. could be housed.
7. The name of Bo added to the town twinning road signs.

Please let us know BY 1 JULY which of these ideas would have your support. SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO:

Alan Moss, OWL Secretary, 11 Leicester Street, Leamington Spa, CV32 4TF or email alan.j.moss1@btopenworld.com



School Report

from Brian Austin
Schools Group Leader



Website Resource

The **Education Pages** on the OneWorldLink website www.oneworldlink.org.uk are a major resource to all our linked schools and obviously available to teachers in all schools.

Currently we have:

- **A Home Page**, which we try to keep up to date
- **What's it all about?**, an introduction to schools linking
- **Teaching Resources**, with all our lesson materials/photographs
- **Quick Links**, to other useful sites, local, national and international

We have plans to add a **Secondary Schools** page and also include our **PowerPoint Presentations** and possibly Video content on YouTube. 'Watch this space!'

Africa Week at Kenilworth School

Six OneWorldLink people supported **Kenilworth School** during their 'Africa Week' by delivering ten lessons to year 9 and year 11 students on Reconciliation and Girls' Right to Education, very ably facilitated by presentation material produced by John Myers. For us it was challenging but very rewarding and much appreciated by the school.

Primary Teachers' Group

The **Primary Teachers Group** meets every term and have been preparing for **The African Day of the Child** on June 16th when they will be having a sing-song at Brookhurst School's amphitheatre ending with combined rendering of the Sierra Leonean National Anthem!

We are also currently exploring with several Primary Teachers the possibility of **reciprocal visits** with teachers in Bo, hopefully at sometime during the next year.

If you want more information about schools' activity contact us by email: education@oneworldlink.org.uk

if you want to know more about any of the projects or topics covered in this issue, you can always visit:

www.oneworldlink.org.uk

News from Sierra Leone

Independence Day

The people of Bo enjoyed a public holiday on 27 April as the country celebrated its 48th Independence Day.

The day marks the anniversary of the date in 1961 when Sierra Leone, which had been a British Crown Colony since 1808, finally became an independent nation within the Commonwealth.

Kakua Paramount Chief dies

Chief Rashid Kamanda Gbonge, elected Kakua Paramount Chief in 2003, has died at the age of 57. Elected for life, the Paramount Chiefs have proved useful in harmonising the traditional system, which still commands respect, with modern local democracy. The Kakua Chieftdom is contained within the town of Bo, and Chief Gbonge's relationship with the Mayor of Bo has been a crucial factor in local politics.

Chief Gbonge was no stranger to OWL, and made time to visit us in Leamington when he visited the UK in 2005.

Mussa Conteh



It is with great sadness that we report the loss of a true friend - **Mussa Conteh** lost his battle against cancer at the end of May. He will be sorely missed. Our thoughts are with his family and all his friends both in Bo and the UK as they come to terms with his untimely death.

A full tribute to **Mussa** will be carried in the next Newsletter. If you wish to contribute, please email to:

ronstone101@btinternet.com
or write to
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