

We have still been very stretched this year, and didn't get everything done that we spoke of at last year's A.G.M., but we did make a good deal of progress despite the very small band of activists. The level of interest and moral support has been very encouraging, but practical help is harder to come by.

The twinning with Eastern Cape has, of course, again been our major focus, and within this the Book Appeal with the Balmore Trust has still been the most unrelenting and labour intensive part of our work. Not a week goes past without phone calls about books needing to be uplifted from somewhere, and we are especially grateful to those who can deliver them either to Airds Lane during the Sunday sorting or to a local branch of the Scottish Co-op (to whom we are also deeply indebted). A visit to the receiving depot in King William's Town in March did resolve the matters that were concerning us most 12 months ago i.e. whether books were still wanted and how they should be sorted. The piles of books selected from our last load by local teachers for delivery to their schools, the reception at Blythswood school for 2 boxes of books from our container to supplement their last gift of books from Scotland in 1899, and the local youth workers in Idutywa who had persuaded schools to make wooden library boxes but still had no books to put in them, all made clear the need, and guidelines from the Libraries Department staff there cleared up the question of how we should sort and pack. We now have a container-load ready to go as soon as the customs and import paperwork can be finalised. Sorting and packing has taken much longer than we had hoped due to a severe shortage of pairs of hands. We have also had all sorts of ideas for possible sources of new books or of funds or of help with publicity, but have not had the capacity to follow these up yet.

On Education, the return leg of the Alexandria/Port Elizabeth youth exchange duly happened in January as planned. Direct exchanges of this kind are enormously valuable to the young people taking part, although they are costly and labour-intensive. On wider education links, meetings with the new Provincial Minister of Education, Prof. Mayatula, and with regional and district officials in various parts of Eastern Cape, re-emphasised the commitment over there to building links with schools in Scotland, as did the supply, at last, of the statistics on numbers of schools in each educational district. Renfrewshire Council is now actively considering links with both the City Council and the education district of Umtata, Idutywa will be put in touch with a partner shortly, and we hope that a meeting with Helen Liddell the week after next will help to encourage official support for links at every level. The Glasgow Caledonian University link with University of Transkei looks set for revival after Cheryl Carolus' visit, and Brian Filling's participation in an educational delegation to South Africa generally and his chairing of the steering committee on the follow-up are potentially very important.

On Health, we have been given large numbers of nursing books and periodicals, more student nurses' uniforms, and a variety of teaching aids by Caledonian University. We have prospective homes for all of these, and hope to get 600 uniforms despatched very soon.

On Arts, Culture and Sport, we have had lengthy discussions at two Scottish Committee meetings about possible football links, but the meetings to get down to organising these have not yet happened. The new Mandela museum in Umtata has asked for some of our plasticised Sechaba posters for display. We have been given a CD of the Soul Jazzmen jazz band from Eastern Cape to raise interest in jazz circles here, and the Scottish Youth Jazz Orchestra which visited South Africa with the Education delegation, and performed with Mara Louw, is a potentially very useful connection.

We have maintained our close involvement with the Scottish Churches Group on Southern Africa, which supported our very successful and moving memorial service for Trevor Huddleston in June. After discussion at the Group we were able to supply a great deal of background information on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the Church and Nation Committee report to the Church

of Scotland General Assembly. We also were glad to transport a donation from Cumbernauld Old Parish Church to Blythwood school, arising out of Mrs. Balindlela's visit two years ago. Graham Duncan, the minister at Cumbernauld at the time, is now teaching at Fort Hare and keeps in touch.

On Local Authorities, we raised with COSLA during Cheryl Carolus' visit the possibility of setting up Scottish Local Authority ACTSA as a joint operation, an idea which was received very positively and which we hope will produce results very soon. We can also put COSLA in touch with their Eastern Cape equivalent as soon as the formal decisions are taken.

The Debt campaign we have done some limited work on. We distributed a fair number of the national Mandela birthday cards on the debt issue, and have been members of the Jubilee 2000 coalition in Scotland from its inception 12 months ago. As from Tuesday this week we are now represented by David Kenvyn on the coalition's committee, which should mean a more active involvement, including in their major Scottish event planned for next June 12th. We were also represented at the launch of Zimbabwe's Jubilee 2000 campaign on national television there – Having Iain Whyte in the country at the right moment did help.

The national ACTSA campaign on tourism we avoided taking up for most of the year due to the pressure of other work, but when a national speaking tour was arranged for last month we did take the opportunity to hold a very successful meeting in Glasgow which attracted a range of new contacts and led to a commitment to doing some campaign work on the issue in the New Year.

On the European Union/South Africa trade talks that Ben spoke about last year, our main contribution was lobbying quite a number of MPs personally at the Labour Party Scottish Conference, as well as distributing large numbers of leaflets and briefing papers. The Cardiff Summit did not in fact produce an agreement, but there was still some hope that one would be reached by the Vienna Summit which is happening as this AGM meets.

We hosted two major events in the year, both quite recently. The September conference was well attended and very productive despite some practical problems. Cheryl Carolus, South Africa's new High Commissioner on her first visit to Scotland, was inspirational as always. Apart from reinforcing existing work, the conference led directly to some new initiatives on Angola and on work with women's groups that will be described later on in the AGM. Cheryl came back three weeks later for a more formal 2½-day tour, which Brian Filling managed to pack with at least a week's worth of very useful meetings, many of which should have long-term practical effects.

One of the things Cheryl saw during her visit was a display from the Anti-Apartheid Movement archives at Caledonian University, which are still in process of being sorted. George Johannes, Political Counsellor at the South African High Commission who accompanied Cheryl, has now also presented the papers from his years in exile to GCU so the Southern African collection is becoming quite a significant resource.

Finally, we continued also with the routine but important tasks of running stalls at events, of speaking at quite a number of other people's meetings, of making and keeping up connections, and of responding to requests for information and contacts.

We are still trying to keep more plates spinning than we can comfortably cope with, but that is inevitable given the amount of work that needs to be done.

John C. Nelson