

Report to the KOA Committee July 2009
from the Friends of Bonou

**GRAND OPENING OF THE DANGBO
SECONDARY SCHOOL LIBRARY**

By Laurence Lalanne-Devlin

As you have been informed, the project was completed in December 2008 and the library was put into use in the next few months but it had not been properly "inaugurated" with a grand official ceremony. That sort of things is serious business in Benin! It has now taken place and I was there to witness it and even, I dare say, to give it the seal of approval from the funders: KOA!



The Commemorative plaque

I had not seen the library completed because I had not been able to go to Benin as I usually do every January but I can now report that it is looking truly magnificent, outside and inside! The head of the school and all the staff were there and of course they are all VERY pleased and very proud.... And so can KOA! The Minister of Education had dispatched his number 2 ("Directeur de Cabinet") a tall, lanky man, very charming and very articulate and we had a lovely ceremony, as only the Africans know how to organise them! Speeches galore, dances, theatrical sketches, filming, refreshments, the lot! It was great!



The library inside

Outside the official speeches it is worth mentioning the one made by the school's head where he paid homage to **KENNINGTON** and to the "grandeur d'âme" (noble mindedness) and to the extraordinary generosity of its inhabitants who work so hard for far-away children that they have never met: That should be an example to us all in Benin, who always expect other people to do things for us!" (Sic).

Dominique, in his usual precise and amazingly flowing way also paid homage to the "very successful collaboration between Kennington and Friends of Bonou." I myself talked at length (as I was expected to!!!) and paid special homage to Dominique without whom nothing could have happened, explained in detail the way KOA works and fund-raise ...to the amazement of many in the audience and talked about the importance of imagination and literature and story-telling in education, how books are essential to open young people's minds and are not at all incompatible with computers ... I have it all on DVD!



Putting the plaque up is a collective effort!