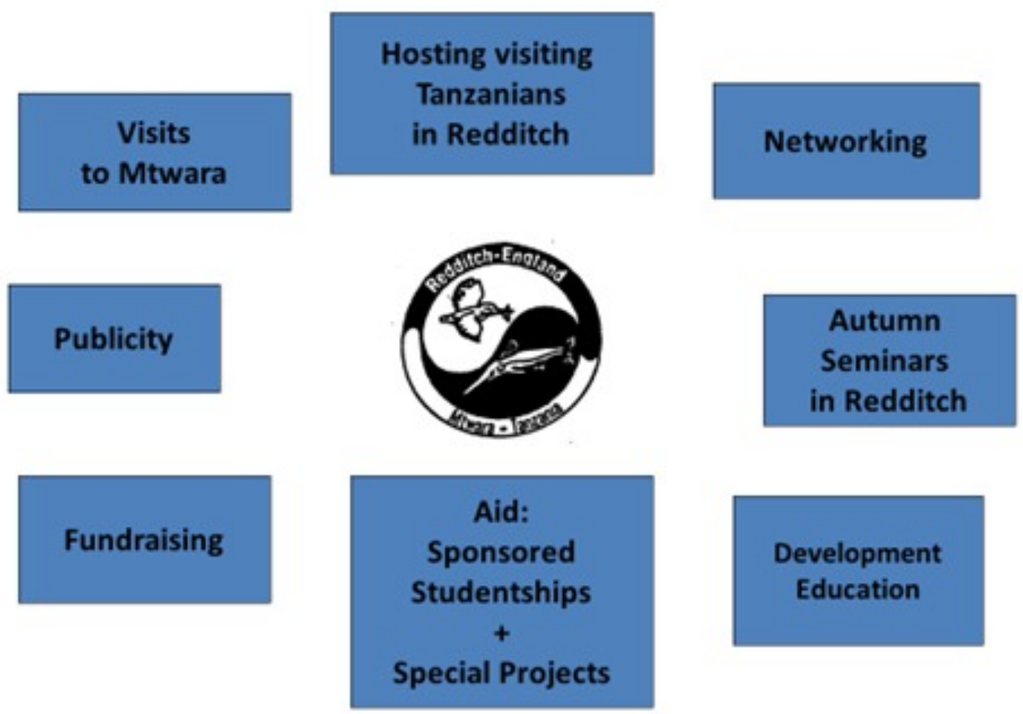
David & Jackie Morgan remember……..

The Twinning Of Redditch and Mtwara

In September 1970 we came to live in Redditch after 4 years in Tanzania. We had been teaching sciences at Minaki Secondary School near Dar es Salaam, as part of the British Government's overseas aid programme to Tanzania soon after Independence. Along with our young daughter, Leonie, soon to be joined by Sarah, we were one of the first residents in Rushock Close, Woodrow South. From a simple bungalow fringing tropical African bush, we found ourselves resident in a brand-new house on the edge of Redditch New Town in Worcestershire. David settled into his chemistry teaching post at the County High School, soon to become The Abbey High School. Four years later he became Community Tutor at The Leys High School, with additional adult education and community responsibilities.

Little did we realise then, that 2 decades later, Tanzania would once again become prominent in our lives and others in the Redditch area. In 1983, unbeknown to us, a visionary steering committee, headed by Councillors Ron & Betty Passingham and Dr John Cochrane, was planning a Friendship Twinning Link in a developing country with another similar-sized 'New Town', Mtwara in southern Tanzania. Redditch One World Link/Friends of Mtwara (ROWL) came into being in 1985. Ron as Mayor and Betty made the first visit to Mtwara in 1987. Four years later, we decided to celebrate our Silver Wedding by making our first return visit to Tanzania. A week was planned in Mtwara as part of our itinerary. We were so warmly received that we resolved to become active in supporting ROWL. Soon Jackie took on the role of Secretary. To enhance the friendship link, the committee promoted a party visit to Tanzania. In summer 1994, a party of 17 flew out to Tanzania, visiting Mtwara and other places, including Dar es Salaam, Kilwa and a game park. During the year following, we raised funds to bring back a small exchange party from Mtwara to Redditch. This pattern of exchanges about every five years has continued to the present. In 2018, a group of four Mtwara visitors again visited Redditch. A return visit to Tanzania is being planned for July 2020.



Activities of ROWL – Friends of Mtwara

Image courtesy of David Morgan

With the aims of promoting friendship based on equality, knowledge and understanding through learning and personal involvement, ROWL and its partner Mtwara One World Link (MOWL) encourage twinning links between schools, churches and other organisations. The former Leys High School, for example, was linked with Saba Saba Day Secondary School in the 1990s.

For many years, a student sponsorship scheme has operated: ROWL members have raised funds each year, which is administered by MOWL, to help support the education needs of children from poorer families. About every 2 or 3 years, ROWL has organised a seminar in the Redditch Town Hall, usually in association with other groups such as the Britain-Tanzania Society. Themes have included Tourism to Tanzania, Fair Trade Matters, Linking, Environment Matters and, this autumn, an Expo on the theme of Sustainability. It is planned to include a live Skype link to Mtwara.

Our links with Mtwara have not only generated friendships, but also a clearer understanding of what life is like in our coastal Twin Town in East Africa. From an educational perspective, the link has been of great significant to both Redditch and Mtwara, especially to the younger generations.

David & Jackie Morgan

A *Redditch Local History Society* Recorded Memory

David & Jackie Morgan remember……..

The Twinning Of Redditch and Mtwara

Photo taken at a Hospitality event in Mtwara.

Planting a walnut tree in Morton Stanley Park

last year's party visit group outside Town Hall with Tanzania flag at mast.

Mtwara visitors the at Forge Mill Needle Museum

Image courtesy of David Morgan