

CHALLENGE: Mayor waves off Bob on 4,000-mile trek to Gambia

VIP backing for marathon trip



HOW YOU CAN HELP

■ Bob Powell and his team will be arriving in the Gambia after a momentous fund-raising drive and a *Birmingham Mail* team will be there to meet them. We will be following the work of his charity and how money you are being urged to give will make a difference in Gambia. Donations should be marked Gambia Project and sent to *Birmingham Mail* Charity Trust c/o Birmingham Foundation, Suite 2A, St George's Court, 1 Albion Street, Birmingham, B1 3AH. Registered Charity Number 218484.



■ DRIVE OF A LIFETIME... Bob Powell prepares to go to Gambia backed by mayor Randal Brew (inset). Picture: Emma Lee

By Patrice John

THE Lord Mayor of Birmingham has backed an intrepid charity worker who is driving 4,000 miles to raise funds for needy children.

Coun Randal Brew has offered his support to Weoley Castle campaigner Bob Powell who was setting off to Gambia by car today.

Bob, aged 60, has given educational equipment and medical supplies to people in the West African country for more than a decade but he now hopes to raise



£5,000 to set up an educational scholarship.

Coun Brew waved him off on his travels.

He said: "I would like to wish Bob every success with his 4,000-mile trek to the Gambia.

"I hope that the journey will not be too hazardous and that he will arrive safely in Banjul.

"Bob is a local hero but this

To see video footage of Bob's preparation go to our website www.birminghammail.net



journey will surely elevate him to the ranks of international hero."

Bob launched the Bob Powell Gambia Schools and Health Project to provide medical supplies, ambulances, computers and school equipment for the West African country.

His work earned him the accolade of a *Birmingham*

Mail Local Hero in 2005. He and his team of drivers were setting off from the city's Council House for a ten-day trip through France, Gibraltar, Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal.

Once they arrive in the Gambia they will present medical equipment and educational supplies to youngsters in the country.

Kelly 'committed' to Brum

TRANSPORT Secretary Ruth Kelly has come under fire for concentrating funding on London and neglecting the regions.

She was criticised by Labour MPs on the Commons Transport Committee, as she gave evidence to an inquiry.

Ms Kelly said the Government was committed to



■ RUTH KELLY.

improving transport in the regions - and gave a £128 million grant for rebuilding Birmingham's New Street station as an

example. But she was accused by committee chair Gwyneth Dunwoody (Lab, Crewe and Nantwich), of pumping funds into London and the North East.

Ms Dunwoody said the regions were invited to bid for cash on a regular basis - but London had actually got £16 billion to pay for

Crossrail, a major new rail project.

In response, Ms Kelly said a Transport White Paper earlier this year had given the green light to improvements at a number of stations. She said: "In Birmingham, you saw huge investment committed to delivering changes in Birmingham's New Street Station."

Oh yes you can join us!

WOULD-BE thespians are being urged to step into the limelight and let their theatrical skills shine.

Castle Bromwich Theatre Group is currently drawing up plans for next year's pantomime and is looking for others to take part in the fun.

The group meets every Thursday at Arden Hall, in Water Orton Road, Castle Bromwich, at 7.30pm.

■ Further information is on 07850 733 851.

THE BRITISH SKI + BOARD SHOWS 07



Ellis Brigham/John Norris

BIRMINGHAM NEC

2nd - 4th NOVEMBER 2007
Fri Noon - 8pm late night
Weekend 10am - 6pm

Don't miss out on...

- Travel information
- Clothing & Equipment specialists
- Fantastic Holidays

Its all action...

- Ski Racing / Ski Demos
- Free Ski / Board Lessons
- Equipment Test Centre
- Mountain Boarding
- Big Air Demo • Ice Rink

Clincs...Workshops

- Mogul Clinic
- Boot fitting workshop
- Spend a season abroad
- Tune your own skis

Talk theatre

- Mountain properties
- Artic adventures
- Skiing in USA

For more info visit:
www.globalsnowshows.co.uk

Tickets available on the door

Great family day out - It's all here...
World Renowned Resorts... Leading Brand Names
Biggest Selection of Top Fashion

PhotoSales Order your pictures online at: www.birminghammail.net/photosales FROM ONLY £3.50