

# Olney—Newton Link

May 2011

Registered Charity 1117694

ONL



“To advance education and to relieve poverty in the village of Newton, Sierra Leone, by the provision of charitable assistance”

[www.olneynewtonlink.org.uk](http://www.olneynewtonlink.org.uk)

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Momoh Sesay

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## Newton teachers visit Olney

OLNEY - NEWTON LINK

At long last the three teachers from Newton, Sierra Leone, have arrived as the return visit of the DfID Grant funded educational exchange between Olney and Newton schools. The teachers have already begun their ventures into the schools and gained experiences of our different cultures, environments and practices. They commenced their visit on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May by attending the Olney-Newton Link AGM within hours of arriving and at the end of an arduous journey. By Friday 20<sup>th</sup> they had visited all four schools and an ‘Afternoon Tea’ at Olney Middle School to meet a wider representation of the Olney Community.



Mrs Isatu Usmann, REC School—Olney Infant School  
Mr Komba Nfali, Christ Evangelical School—Olney Middle School  
Mrs Fatmata Sheriff, Amaddiya Primary School—Lavendon School



**REPORT ON THE SKILLS CENTER DEVELOPMENT**  
**OLNEY/NEWTON LINK COMMITTEE, NEWTON, SIERRA LEONE - 5 MARCH 2011**

FROM: The secretary  
 TO: The chair person, Olney/newton link, U.K

Dear Madam

I am here by writing to intimate you on the development on the activities of the link especially the skill training center. We have not been able to hold official meeting requiring all members to be present, rather we held discussions with the chairman, secretary treasurer, val king and oseh jones.

The making of the benches and tables including the computer laboratory was what we have been concentrating working on and is very near completion. I have also been given mandate to officially register learners from all areas. I have got twenty three students already registered at the moment. We intend to register one hundred students as a start. The secondary school will have to join later after their schools sport and examination. The center itself needs a lot of other things such as giant fans, floor mat, more cables and installation. Certainly more furniture are needed. According to the treasurer, she told members that she have sent to you email on financial explanations. The committee is to meet official next week Sunday and top in the agenda is the time of take off or when do we open the skill to the public.

In another development the toilet project is also progressing. Mabinty is to take a snap shot and send photo to you. It is speculated that the skill will officially becomes operational in June as a test hypothesis and officially in September which will involves a launching ceremony. I shall give you more detail after the meeting next week

Regards, Abubakarr Fofanah

**ESTIMATE OF COSTS TO COMPLETE THE SKILLS CENTRE**

If you can recall on our past ESTIMATE we under estimated for prices and quantity of materials and we do not know the computer building will be as big as it is. This time I don't want to get into the danger of pricing and we have told the contractor to give us proper estimate.

DETAILS	QUANTITY	UNIT COST	TOTAL IN LE	
(1) Cement	300 bags	le39,000	le 1,700,000	
(2) Boards	350 leaves			
(3) Tiles	100 cartoons	100,000	10,000,000	
(4) Hard boards	180 pieces	35,000	6,300,000	
(5) Filet	25 bundles	35,000	875,000	
(6) Wooden doors	6	250,000	1,500,000	
(7) White wash	6 bags	100,000	600,000	
(8) Paint	16 gallons		1,800,000	
(9) Aluminum Windows	2 big 4 small	1,000,000	6,000,000	
(10) Nails	Assorted	1,500,000	1,500,000	
(11) Workmanship	le 4,000,000		4,000,000	
(12) Sand	15 trips	250,000	3,750,000	
(13) Stones	20 trips	300,000	6,000,000	
(14) Iron rods	20 full length	65,000	1,300,000	
(15) Wire mesh	2 rol	50,000	100,000	
(16) Baluster	100	18,000	1,800,000	
(17) Steel doors	1 big one small		1,500,000	
(18) Glass windows	3	400,000	1,200,000	
(19) Potty	8 rubbers	50,000	400,000	
(20) Carboleon	10 gallons	45,000	450,000	This is the current price in the market.
(21) Flush and bathub				
(22) Toilet	10 cortoons	50,000	500,000	Boards we cannot price because it is scarce in the market.
(23) Labour			le 4,000,000	
(24) Working tools			400,000	Cables and other Electrical appliances you will receive the estimate when we get the electrician.
(25) Fender 1	12 pairs	50,000	600,000	
(26) Fender 2	12 pairs	45,000	540,000	

TOTAL  
 49,815,00

## Chair's Report—AGM May 2011

It is incredible that another year has gone by and I have to look back over the last 12 months of

progress with the Olney- Newton Link. Believe me, we have made progress in several areas even though to our Western eyes this progress sometimes seems very slow. It is one of the many lessons that we can learn from cultures such as are found in countries such as Sierra Leone that everything doesn't HAVE to happen by the day before yesterday. YOU NEED PATIENCE AND FAITH THAT THINGS WILL HAPPEN.

Our main project has continued to be the Skills Training Centre. Computers and electrical wiring as well as furniture are all in place awaiting the opening of the Computer Centre. That will occupy one third of the building. The other two thirds have been built and are being prepared for use as admin block and workshops for woodwork etc. We have been fortunate that the exchange rate between the Leone and the £ continues to rise, the downside of that being that as most materials are imported into Sierra Leone the cost of these also keeps rising.

We have also established a study bursary for a member of the Newton community to study for 3 years at a local college. This was made possible by a legacy from Dyson von Bibow Aspland, Tricia's brother, who visited SL in 2003. The recipients are chosen by the Newton committee and receipts for the course fees sent to us. At the moment the bursary is enabling Mabinty Sesay, the treasurer of the Newton committee to study Business and accounting.

The trustees have also initiated the Health and Clean Water Project this year. We are quite getting into latrine building and are just completing a new set of latrines at the Newton Health Centre which we hope will have a better drainage and flushing system than previous projects. We are also very grateful to The Kitchen Table Charity for giving us £1000 to enable the girls' toilets at the Secondary School to be rebuilt after collapsing last autumn. We have recently received a very interesting and informative email from the Community Health officer, Joseph Charles, telling us more about the Health Centre and the trustees will be considering our response at their next meeting.

We have continued to purchase goats for Newton families and we are grateful to Pastor James Kabia for administering this project in Newton. A pair of breeding goats costs about £60 inc vets fees and James will send the donor a photograph of the goat and its new family.

We have also continued to send our cartons of goods via Robert Claire, the shippers. As well as books and other school items we have sent First Aid kits, computers, a drum of electrical cable, tee shirts and other items all very generously donated by people from Olney.

All this costs money of course and that has to be raised. We have two groups concerned with this aspect of the Link. The Marketing Group has been particularly concerned this year in trying to get more corporate sponsorship from local businesses. Obviously in the current financial climate this is not an easy task but we are delighted that four businesses

have come on board and we are hoping that several more will agree to take the plunge. If anyone would

like details of the package we are offering please speak to Anne McCallum or refer to the website.

The Fund Raising Group have been very busy persuading the people of Olney to part with their cash. We have organised stalls, the Quiz Night, the paper quiz, a concert by Andante, three concerts organised by Catherine Rose, carol singing and a coffee morning. We are also grateful to Jill Toosey and the Olney Community Choir for their very generous weekly donations of the proceeds of the sale of refreshments. Olney Parish Church and Sutcliff Baptist Church have also been very generous with their support and we are also grateful to the Phonebox for giving us free publicity each month.

One of the deals on offer to corporate members is to place their website address and more in our Newsletter and/or on our website. We are delighted that Sheila Watts and Sheila Ware have agreed to continue to produce the Newsletter but they would be delighted to hear from anyone who might like to help or learn how to do this kind of work. Also, because of this change in arrangements for the distribution of the Newsletter we have requested that former 'Friends' give a donation rather than being asked for £10. Donations may be given by Direct Debit as well as by cash. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Claire for running the website for us. Again, we would like to hear of anyone who would be interested in taking this on from Sept 2012.

I must now thank all the trustees and the other people who so loyally give of their time to the Olney-Newton Link. Changes have to happen of course and this year we have had to say goodbye to Kate Vilkaitis whose work for World Vision now takes her to the four corners of the earth and to Graham Mabbutt whose support we have much appreciated over the last five years. We are delighted that we will be welcoming some more people on to the committee, it is very necessary for an organisation such as this to embrace new ideas. We also send our thanks to the committee in Newton for administering our projects. Looking back it is great to see how communications have improved but we still have to remember that it is much more difficult for them to do things like banking and emailing than it is for us.

All of this together with the exciting work of linking happening in our schools means that the Olney-Newton Link is a vibrant charity. All money has to be earned and it is a salutary thought that DFID grants such as the exchange visit grant that has enabled our visitors to come today requires both sides to do a lot of work in their schools in order to gain any financial reward. Everyone involved has to be very committed and we are very grateful to the senior management teams in the schools for all the support they are giving

So we look forward to another year in which we hope the friendship between our two communities will continue and prosper.

*Rachel Lintern*



## **Report on 'Saints Together' Link between St Peter & Paul's Church, Olney & St Mary's Church, Newton**

Communications between the two churches have been difficult, with very little direct communication through email. This ought to be improved once we have the Skills Training Centre operational through which we hope to encourage the sharing of information and the development of emailing skills, and associated confidence in this technology. There is a clear lack of confidence in the older citizens in the use of written English, no doubt through the disruption in education caused by the war. Unfortunately the use of telephones is expensive and verbal communications are rendered difficult with echo and time-lag on the line.

On the positive side I am pleased to report that we received a £100 personal donation combined with a donation from the Parish Church of over £800 for Missionary work. This is to be used initially to provide a motorcycle for use of the Vicar to get around his large parish and between the two churches, with the residue to be used for the development of the work of St Mary's church around Newton.

Latterly we have had contact with Doris Harding who is a local councillor, head of a local school and also on the PCC of St Mary's, and our hope is that we may be able to develop contact through her since she appears to be more in tune with the emailing process.

*Brian Lintern*

## **Newton Health Centre Report from Joseph Charles, Community Health Officer**

Long time we have not been communicating due to the polio campaign. I must confess that am delighted over the good intension you have to help the Newton Health Centre and the community.

The Newton Health Centre is the only referral centre in the Koya Rural District serving a population of over twelve thousand. It was erected during 1980 with the support from E.U. The Health Centre currently has eight technical staff, two non technical staff.

Below are the Cadre of the technical staff.

- 1 Community Health Officer
- 1 State Enrolled Community Nurse
- 5 Maternal and Child Health Aid
- 1 Vaccinator.

Below are some of the priority needs of the clinic:

- The Health Centre needs complete and total rehabilitation but special attention should be focus on the delivery room so as to enhance clean and safe delivery.
- The Centre also need adequate electricity in the delivery room especially at night. In connection to the above, am suggesting that you please help us to get a solar power system only for the delivery room and the consultation room.
- Also for a Health Centre to operate efficiently and effectively there must be adequate supply of certain essential drugs and equipment. I am therefore appealing to you so as to please help us in this regard.
- Also I may like to hold a training session for traditional birth attendants in the Newton Community so as to sensitized them, on their roles and responsibilities in preventing maternal death. In this regard I would like you to please help us with funding, even though there are other areas for you to come in for assistance but the above are the chief priority needs of the health centre.

I may also like you to please assist me with a Lap Top Computer.

Charles  
Community Health Officer

*Items for the next Newsletter will  
be welcomed by the editor,  
Sheila Ware.*

*Email: swandsw@btinternet.com*

*The next deadline is:  
Friday 5th August 2011*



OLNEY-NEWTON LINK					ACCOUNTS PRESENTED AT		
EXPEND	INCOME	2009	2010	EXPEND 2010	INCOME 2010	AGM—MAY 2011	
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE					STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT		
0.00	270.00	Friends		0.00	270.00		
10315.00	1300.00	Skills Centre (300.00 from Lions)		11823.02	100.00	Balance B/fwd 2009 3268.50	
		Skills Centre - Equipment		506.53	0.00	Add: Income 2010 17460.25	
		Mabinty - Dyson Bursary		430.00	0.00		
265.00	0.00	Bank Charges		0.00	0.00		
		Virgin Money Giving		117.50	0.00		
35.00	0.00	UKOWLA		0.00	0.00	Less: Expend 2010 18367.27	
117.00	2345.29	Gift Aid - part of future claim sent to J. Kabia		0.00	1429.12		
45.00	13.76	Donation Boxes		0.00	182.32		
635.00	0.00	Transport		739.00	60.00		
		Newsletter Costs		32.09	0.00		
		Tables & Chairs AASS		500.00	0.00	Cash Book Total £2,361.48	
		Sale of bangles YC & Preschool		0.00	32.70		
0.00	0.00	Barn Dance		34.55	570.05		
0.00	120.00	Pancake Race		27.11	64.97		
		URC Table Top Sale		5.00	43.60		
		S Woodhead Walk		0.00	207.00		
10.00	229.30	Cherry Fair		0.00	172.93		
25.58	596.50	Dickens		45.00	393.85	Funds In Bank 2361.48	
0.00	270.20	Christmas cards and notelets		0.00	40.26	Less:	
0.00	73.16	OIS Fayres		88.23	110.25		
0.00	115.66	Carol Singing		0.00	0.00	Allocated Funds 1308.69	
45.00	0.00	Leaflets		0.00	0.00		
		Quiz Leaflets		130.00	340.00		
146.80	734.00	Quiz		133.08	651.50	Available Funds £1,052.79	
0.00	136.20	Coffee Morning (£88) Bring and Buy (£48.20)		0.00	135.40		
		Market Place Sale		0.00	44.50		
		Mkcvo agm stall		0.00	18.00		
0.00	140.00	Amazing Grace		0.00	0.00		
0.00	175.00	Ice Twice		0.00	0.00		
0.00	50.00	Books sold		0.00	128.00		
0.00	35.40	Baptist Church Stop the Traffic		0.00	0.00		
0.00	750.69	Baptist Sponsored Cycle Ride		0.00	0.00		
0.00	0.00	Legacy		0.00	5000.00		
0.00	500.00	Balney Charitable Trust		0.00	500.00		
		Lions		0.00	50.00		
0.00	120.00	D Coles Architects		0.00	0.00		
0.00	100.00	Turvey PCC		0.00	100.00		
0.00	62.16	St P & St P Carols		0.00	0.00		
0.00	543.00	Olney PCC Tything		0.00	1140.00		
		Newton Blossomville PCC		0.00	50.00		
		Newton Blossomville fair		0.00	75.00		
		Broughton School Fair			58.00		
170.00	1222.65	Concerts		30.00	612.58		
		London Marathon - Christopher Barnes		0.00	440.00		
0.00	610.00	SD Donations		0.00	0.00		
0.00	200.00	RP Donation		0.00	0.00		
0.00	500.00	PC Donation		0.00	0.00		
0.00	1100.00	Eglinton Donations		0.00	0.00		
		Odgers/Rose		0.00	0.00		
0.00	50.00	S/O Trimble		0.00	110.00		
0.00	375.98	General (including small donations) & Swear Box		0.00	630.75		
334.65	334.65	Laptops and printer		0.00	50.00		
124.03	0.00	Website		126.76	0.00		
		Fact Cards		23.97	0.00		
0.00	224.42	Ousedale Repayment		0.00	0.00		
		Goat Short Fall		154.10	0.00		
12268.06	13706.02			14945.94	13810.78		
EXPEND	INCOME	2009	2010				
ALLOCATED FUNDS					0.00	0.00	BALANCE 2010
478.42	653.49	Ousedale		62.00	357.29	470.36	
1000.00	0.00			0.00	0.00		
225.97	0.00			0.00	0.00		
1074.52	300.91	Olney Infant		580.89	1133.66	653.68	
0.00	32.25	Lavendon		891.93	526.86	-352.82	
		Olney Middle		782.41	927.56	145.15	
976.03	976.03			0.00	0.00		
1005.00	0.00	Baptist Church		500.00	500.00		
30.00	69.50	Rachel Pancake		0.00	0.00	39.50	
0.00	400.00	Goats		604.10	204.10		
4789.94	2432.18			3421.33	3649.47	1308.69	
17058.00	16138.20	TOTAL		18367.27	17460.25	This total ignores Lavendon	

## CLIMATE CHANGE APPEARS TO BE IMPACTING ON SIERRA LEONE

[Information recently reported in *Concord Times*, Freetown]

Research by the African Policy Studies Network has revealed some interesting and challenging findings which will impact on the small-scale agriculture in Sierra Leone. The research was targeted on 500 small-holder farmers across four agro-climatic regions in the country. According to the research, temperature is already averaging around 28 degrees Celcius, which means that crops which cannot grow well either at or above this limit [tolerance limit] are in danger. Such 'at risk' crops identified being rice, the country's staple, which only survives at the maximum temperature of 25 degrees C, cacao surviving at between 18 to 21 C, and oil palm with a survival limit of 25 to 28 degrees C.

Small-holder farmers have further been acknowledging that weather events are already erratic and hence unpredictable, which has placed them in start-of-farming and start-of-season dilemmas. Their traditional weather predictions no longer work as it used to be in the past, which is one reason why agricultural productivities of small-holder farmers are reportedly very fragile in Sierra Leone. The resultant effects observed in the indigenous farming systems in Sierra Leone therefore includes crop failures,

pest and disease proliferation, frequent animal deaths, hunger and low economic returns (profits).

In addition, small-holder farmers lack the capacity to respond for improved agricultural yields and local economic growth: (i) small-holder farmers lack sufficient information and training on the causes and impacts of climatic change on agriculture and human health; (ii) assistance to respond to climate related problems were discovered to be concentrated in one region (rainforest), but also at very low rate (30%) and only from NGOs/CBOs and government institutions, and (iii) technology adoption, practice and transfers are highly negative.

The above problems are coupled with the burden of climate-related diseases which are also identified as an inhibiting factor for improved livelihoods and development of small-holder farmers. Such results were proved to have strong correlation with agricultural production, food self-sufficiency and local economic growth.

In Newton we know that Brima James Kabbia reported that they had one season where the rains were so heavy that all the seeds provided under one scheme were badly washed away, with a major loss in output. Although the 'jungle' seems luscious it also protects the soil, and when cleared for crop growth leaves the soil open to erosion; thus it is necessary to operate with small crop areas protected by the high palm trees etc.

*Brian Lintern*

## Sutcliff Baptist Church

As a Church we have continued our connection with the ONL this year. The young people at Sutcliff again raised funds for the Link's work. By an incredible effort of the young people and their friends and the generosity of the congregation and outsiders, including sponsorship raised at the quiz evening, the final total was £1,266.90.

In addition a further £500 was donated by the Church for use towards the refurbishment of James Kabia's Chapel.

The money raised by the young people was used to assist in the rebuilding of the toilets at the health centre in Newton.

The young people from the GIG Group were particularly interested in the Link's latest project "health and clean water". They were quite appalled and to some extent amused by the pictures of the medical centre in its current state and the collapsed toilets.

It was also interesting for the congregation to hear what Marilyn Watkins had to say about her visit on her return from Newton.

*Anne McCallum*

## Sierra Leone's 50th Independence Anniversary Celebrations in April 2011 — from Mabinty Sesay

I had some relief and so took the opportunity to witness Sierra Leone's 50th Independence Anniversary Celebrations at the National Stadium.



It was a colorful day of green, white and blue all over Freetown. Different communities and groups came together to celebrate this day here in Sierra Leone. We had visitors from different African countries who also witnessed the celebrations.

The celebration started with a rally outside the stadium and a match past inside the stadium in front of the His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. The military displayed some of their fighting tactics, whilst other



forces displayed what they had. Indeed, it is a lively day here in Sierra Leone today.

Stay Blessed,  
Mabinty.

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2011

Saturday 18 June 2.00pm—5.00pm	Newport Pagnell Strawberry Fair—ONL stall
Saturday 25 June 1.00pm—4.00pm	Olney Cherry Fair—ONL stall
Saturday 2 July 11.30am—2.30pm	Summer Fair at Olney Infant School—ONL stall
Saturday 9 July	Newport Pagnell Carnival—ONL stall



Our Chairman, Rachel Lintern, braves a bright and chilly morning at The Pancake Race, Olney in early February.



Winnie and the Whirly Pits entertaining us at the ONL Barn Dance on 12 March at the Carlton House Club. About 50 people enjoyed the evening, raising £356.00.



Brima James Kabia, the Pastor of the Newton Baptist Church, and his new bride. James's first wife died of chicken pox.

Sadly, Maria Sesay, the new baby pictured on the front of the February newsletter, has died. Maria had a fever for 48 hours.

## COFFEE MORNING!

Thank you to Sheila Ware and Sheila Watts for hosting a coffee morning on 30th March. £200 was raised—to be split between the Olney-Newton Link and the Friends of All Saints, Emberton.

