

Olney—Newton Link

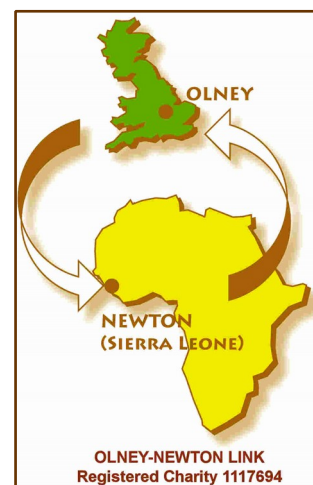
November 2014

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



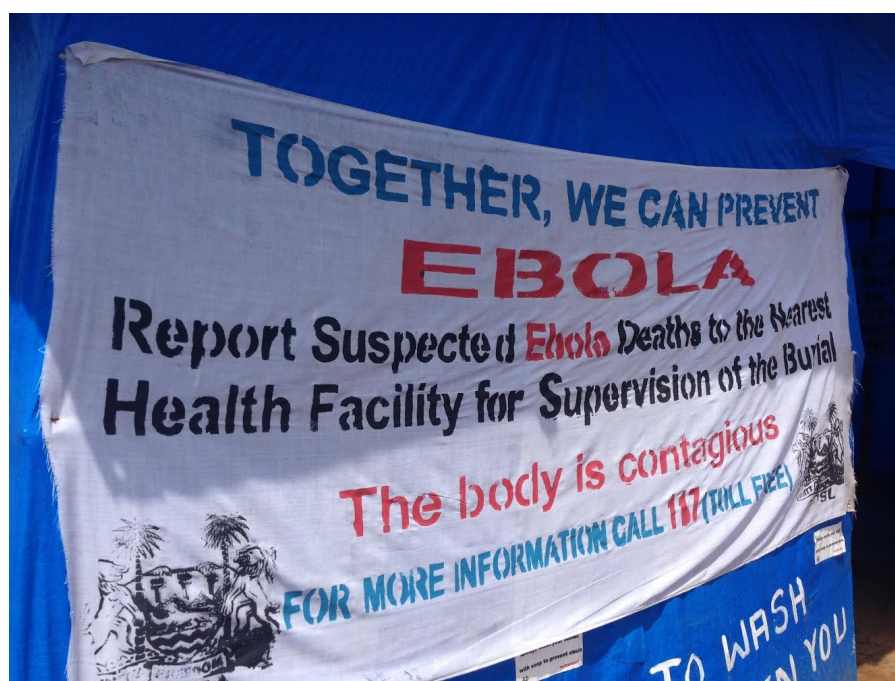
The Fight Against Ebola

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Thank you for your support.

We have received so many generous donations to help us support the community in Newton. These have been used to buy food, clothes, health materials and to support education.

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Newton fights Ebola

By Rachel Lintern

This has been the most frenetic few weeks in the history of the ONL.

We launched an appeal through the newsletter list, the Churches, Phonebox etc. and invited donations. Up to the end of 28th October Virgin Money Giving had received £1300 and Gift Aid will be added to this sum. Cash donations have reached £1835, mostly from private individuals. The Olney Lions have generously given us £1000. To date, over £5000 has been donated and there are more promises in the pipeline.

When we launched the appeal we sent £500 out. When the plea came in for help for the quarantined families, a further £500 was sent. This has been used to take food, fuel, cooking utensils, buckets, soap and disinfectant to many of the 60 houses in quarantine.

The situation out there is changing very rapidly. The indications are that the World Food Program has got its act together so extra food supplies may not be needed. However the need has arisen for clothing for quarantined families as their houses are fumigated with chlorine disinfectant which destroys their shoes, clothes and cooking utensils. It appears that the patients themselves who are taken to the Holding or Treatment Centres have their destroyed clothes replaced (if they haven't died presumably!) but their quarantined families do not. The Newton committee have sourced bundles of clothing at 1million Leones a bundle. The exchange rate is 7300Le/£ so £500 sent is 3.6 million Leones. They have requested 'ideally' 7 bundles of clothes so we have sent two further sums of £500 for the purchase of clothing and household equipment.

We have also sent 3 cartons of children's clothes and toys, generously donated by parents at the Olney schools, to provide for the many orphaned children.

The Ebola checkpoint on the main road through Newton in August



Economics...

In Sierra Leone, \$96 (£58) per person was spent on health in 2012 which compares favourably to Liberia (\$66) and Guinea (\$32). By comparison the UK spends \$3,648 and the US \$8,895

Sierra Leone has 2.2 doctors for every 100,000 people (2012 figures). Guinea has 10 (2005) and Liberia just 1.4 (2008), both far behind the UK (279) and Switzerland (394).

Resources in Sierra Leone and Liberia are drained by malaria treatment. Both had some 1.5 million confirmed and probable cases in 2012, from overall populations of about 6 million and 4 million respectively.

Sierra Leone and Liberia have suffered economically due to civil war. Sierra Leone emerged from a decade of conflict in 2002, while long-running hostilities in Liberia ended the following year.

Statistics source: World Health Organisation

The Newton Committee is in constant touch with us and so far they themselves have kept well. Rachel received two texts on 28th October:

Gd morning mum, we finished d food distribution and provided le 50 000 to each house to buy charcoal batteries and soaps. We now look forward to help Maparia, two new communities have also been infected. Thank u God bless u all.
Abu Bakarr Fofana, Secretary, Newton Committee

Good morning mum we finished the food distribution and other condiments and their are two to three near by villages who are also victim of quarantined homes, so we are asking u kindly to give helping hands and at the same time thanking people of Olney for their support and we also thank u for your full support to help people in the fights against Ebola
Valicious King, Chairman, Newton Committee

MAPARIA—NEWTON RECEIVED FOOD FROM WFP .

The village is under quarantine for 21 days.

From Brima on 27th September



Red Cross workers near Newton

Pastor Brima James Kabia



Pastor Kabia has been associated with ONL since 2003 when the Newton Committee was established. In his capacity as a Baptist Minister he visited Olney in 2005 when he attended the World Baptist Conference in Birmingham and stayed in Olney as the guest of Sarah and David Dewey who was the Minister at Sutcliff Baptist Church at the time. Sarah and David visited him in Freetown and Newton when he was awarded his theology qualifications. He has remained in contact with Sarah and David and other members of Sutcliff Church who have supported his ministry in various ways.

Pastor Kabia is also the Chairman of the Local Health Committee in Newton and has responsibility for the Newton Clinic which ONL has supported in several ways. When we visited in April part of the clinic had been cordoned off by a tarpaulin in case anyone considered as being infectious was admitted. Little did anyone realise just what was round the corner. As the crisis of Ebola became more apparent Pastor Kabia volunteered to be a tracer. It was his job to patrol Newton, an area about the size of Milton Keynes, looking for possible Ebola suspects. He had no transport, just his feet and the occasional motorscooter 'taxi' if he could afford it.

For a while everything was calm and no cases were found, but on 9th Sept he found a very sick lady at Maparia, a small community on the outskirts of Newton. James was responsible for getting the lady removed to a 'hospital' but unfortunately she died. He knew the community needed to be quarantined but he was over-ruled leading to 3 more deaths including the Headman.

Since then the Newton Clinic has become a Holding Centre and Pastor Kabia has continued to be involved in the search for and hospitalising of suspects, and the removal of many dead bodies from the areas around Newton. At the time of writing this he is reporting more cases in Newton itself and is delighted to have received funding for a motorscooter from Sutcliff Church.

Pastor Kabia is now working at the Kerry Town Hospital and training to become a hygienist.

Pastor Kabia is a hero, along no doubt with many others like him in Sierra Leone.

Rachel Lintern

Living in a State of Emergency— Freetown today

***Extracts from a report about life in Sierra Leone,
written last month by Claire Tarawally, nee Lintern***

So here we are in the President's state of emergency, called because of the Ebola outbreak. It's had a bizarre effect but we are not sure whether there is any real effect on the death rate or the infection rate. It's hard to measure as the statistics from the Government may be suspect, and the WHO tend to give the worst case scenario.

Why bizarre? Well, the denial rate has finally decreased but already the fatigue of the measures has kicked in. Also a couple of weeks ago I heard a story that the virus has been created by a billionaire from the USA as a biological weapon. The fatigue is the scariest part though- people are already testing the boundaries of the emergency measures - holding exams and public gatherings. With the football season beginning it will be tested further with people wanting to watch the matches in the hot sweaty huts where the TVs are set up. According to the state of emergency these places should have stopped trading, but this will have a major impact on the livelihood of owners- the 1,000 Le entrance fee often pays for their families to survive. Cinemas have been threatened with a 500,000 Le fine if they are found to be showing games, but as the rains ease and people emerge more often there has to be some leisure provision or civil unrest is a real threat. Food prices are increasing too- staples such as onion have increased 300% although the prices are being disputed.

Schools are in a mess - nobody knows when they will restart, rumours circulate about the sitting of postponed public exams yet colleges are announcing closures until further notice. Those of us who rely on the schools being open for our salaries haven't a clue what to expect and just hope that something is solved quickly.

And then there is the drug debate- should the experimental drug be used here? Mahmoud and I argue about this- I say no he says yes!! WHO has agreed to use the drugs which I find deeply concerning as it sets a dangerous precedent for this continent and its history of drug company abuses. But then if it was my immediate family suffering in a hospital perhaps I would feel differently. It's a very tough question and I pray that we don't face that dilemma for real.

But people ARE doing what they can to be safe. Chlorinated water in buckets is present at the front of nearly every business, shop, and many homes. There are pictures and posters up to tell people to wash hands, and we all do. Shaking hands was the most common form of greeting, and friends would often hold hands whilst talking- all of that has now stopped. Schools, colleges, exams, matches all are on hold and offices close early to ease congestion on the transport system. Taxis are only allowed to carry 2 people in the back and 1 front passenger and the minibuses (poda-podas) are also restricted to 3 people per bench seat to give more space to bodies. As this makes travel much more pleasant I am hoping these measures continue once the crisis passes!! Markets now have to close at 6pm so the population are more likely to go home and therefore meet less people.

In the provinces Paramount Chiefs are implementing bye-laws to stop people working in inter-village work gangs. Nurses here this week had to strike just so that the hospital authorities gave them the protective garb they need just to have a fighting chance of staying safe. There is a toll-free phone number to call for advice or the reporting of a possible Ebola case. This service is so overstretched the phone switches off instead of ringing out. Bodies are therefore left because people daren't touch the corpse in CASE it is infected. Just round where we live 2 men were left for 4 days until people came to collect them. Luckily neither were Ebola cases, but as the sun is out for hours...

What you have to remember is that this country has been here before— because this is a war. Trouble is this war is far harder to fight- in the civil war it was obvious who was likely to kill you as they had a weapon. In this war we are fighting a silent killer, and you can't trust anyone. On the outside they may look perfectly healthy but they may actually be feeling awful and are a mass of thriving virus. No wonder people are scared and don't want to admit they are ill. Quarantine procedures are the ONLY way to deal with this, compounds of families and small communities are locked away for 21 days, and even a city- Makeni was shut off in order to control the outbreak. The areas of Kailahun and Kenema are still under quarantine and are struggling for food and medical supplies.

Now I write on the Wednesday after the lockdown, when everyone had to stay in their own homes so officials could monitor cases of illness. The Government have declared the entire exercise a great success and may be considering a repeat as so many new cases were discovered and bodies brought out. The army have closed the borders of this country and Cuban doctors have arrived to help the incumbent health services cope. The whole thing scares me as I feel that this is all being done with little planning and long term thought. Why? Because closing the borders removes all control of movement as people will continue to cross but use the unofficial roads, therefore no health checks can be carried out.

So what in my humble opinion SHOULD be done? Well, the district-wide quarantines in Kailahun and Kenema have worked well, with cases almost at zero for Kailahun and much lowered in Kenema, so this should be widened for each district hit. Borders should be opened and manned sensibly allowing for travel and health checks to be completed. This would allow for trade and therefore food etc. to flow reducing price increases and averting potential shortages. No more lockdowns would be necessary and the number of isolation centres needs to be increased NOW. The international aid promised has to be realised immediately. My final 'wish' is that the 3 countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia work TOGETHER as a region to combat this disease not as single entities as the virus is NOT a war where the borders stop the fighting, the virus travels regardless of nationality, gender or political affiliation, taking no notice of where it is or why. Only by facing it as a region will this crisis come to an end.

Claire Tarawally (nee Lintern)



Claire and Mahmoud in April



Goderich,
where Claire lives

Newton

UK Volunteers help build hospitals

by Janet Howe

I am sure you have read the paper and watched the TV News about the British Army and the British Medical teams who have gone to Sierra Leone to build hospitals and assist with medical care.

The link has a connection with two of the team working in Kerry Town. You will already have read about Brima James Kabia on page 3, the Baptist Minister from Newton who is training as a hygienist. I was privileged to meet him when I visited Newton, and I have lovely memories of meeting his family at his house and joining in with the service at the church.

I have a family connection with the volunteers too! My daughter's boyfriend Steve Welch is a virologist who used to work in the NHS on the diagnosis of tropical diseases including Ebola and Lassa fever. (They met whilst completing their PhDs). He was asked to volunteer to go out to set up a lab and train local people, so once he had submitted his thesis he undertook some further training, had a plethora of vaccinations and set out for Freetown (via Brussels—there are no direct UK flights).

En route from the airport to Freetown he was pleased when he passed through Newton and sent me these photos of the very quiet roadblock...



The group's task was first to set up the laboratory and then to begin analysis of blood samples (wearing 4 pairs of gloves rather than the usual two) and to train local health workers to do the analyses themselves. You may have seen the facilities on the BBC news.



The Laboratory in progress



One of the wards



The Hospital building



The BBC filming for the news.

Steve was expecting basic accommodation and was quite stunned to be allocated a room in 'The Place' resort, which has been taken over by the medical teams. He said his room was palatial and the views simply stunning! The hotel is conveniently near the hospital and there are no tourists just now so it was good use of the facilities and a secure place for volunteers to stay.



The Community Toilets in Newton

Work has continued on building the Community Toilets, despite the crisis. The original contractor lost 8 members of his family to the disease in Lunghi (near the airport), he went back to his family and then, understandably, was quarantined. He recommended another contractor, negotiations happened and the work is underway again. One block of 4 toilets and washroom is almost complete. The original estimate came to approx. £16000 for the 2 blocks and we have sent £8500 to date. The contractor has checked the price of materials:

Budget for Toilet details	amount	unit cost	total cost
paint emulsion	5 rubbers	100,000	500,000
white wash	4 bags	100,000	400,000
fillets	20 bundles	30,000	600,000
doors steel	2 PCs	500,000	1,000,000
boards for ceiling	60 PCs	35,000	2,100,000
carboleon	10 gals	50,000	500,000
oil paint	10 gals	70,000	700,000
toilets seats	5 pcs	400,000	2,000,000
paint brush	10 PCs	5,000	50,000
balance payment for contractor			3,000,000
rubber drums	4pcs	150,000	600,000
sand for plastering	1 trip		1,000,000
zinc	4 bundles	300,000	1,200,000
balusters	100pcs	10,000	1,000,000
labour and transportation			1,500,000
TOTAL			16150000

The present exchange rate is 7300Le /£1 so the amount being asked for is just over £2250 to complete the block. Trustees have agreed to send this, making a total of £10750 sent to date, thanks to generous sponsorship.



These photos were taken by James Kabia on 6th November. Observant readers will have noted how much the vegetation has grown since August.

From the Schools...

Received recently from Komba Nfalie, Headteacher, Christ Evangelical School. The Olney schools are discussing what they can do to help.

I am writing on behalf of the teachers and pupils of the Newton Schools. To be sincere with you people we are presently undergoing serious difficulties, we are about to end first term but no school is going on simply because our government advised us not to gather, everybody is keeping off from even visiting, touching bodies, etc.

But thank God everybody is safe from this eminent Ebola disease. Also I want to commend your government for it timely intervention and some other countries like U.S, China, Cuba, Nigeria, etc. who are fighting very hard to eradicate this deadly disease called Ebola out of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. Everything presently has come to a stand still.

The government is using the radio and television to provide lesson for the students. This is hugely benefiting the rich and the affluent. As you very well know the children we work with are coming from very poor families. Many of these families do not have radios and listening to the radio is not part of their culture. Of course affording batteries etc., is costly. What I have discussed with my teachers is to find the possibilities of purchasing say 10 small radios and organise our children in groups to listen to the tuition. This will target children in classes 4-6. This is our challenge.

We are appealing for you people to keep on praying for us. If all goes well, at the end of the day Sierra Leone will be boasting of good medical health centres, long before that it was not easy which resulted to the death of so many people.

Mrs. Usman, Mrs Sheriff, are all safe including our teachers and pupils. Everybody is abiding by the advice given by the government of Sierra Leone that nobody should touch each other, visit burial ceremonies of effected persons or suspected victims.

We are expecting encouraging letters from all partners schools.

Thanks for now.

KOMBA



Toys and clothing collected by the schools for the orphaned children in Newton.

Items for the next Newsletter and letters and comments would be welcomed by the Editor, Janet Howe. What would you like to see in the newsletter?

Email: olneynewtonlinknewsletter@gmail.com

The next deadline is: January 16th 2015



A Sporting Gift



The Olney-Newton Link would like to say a big THANK YOU to Olney Football Club for the generous donation of football kit for the youngsters in Sierra Leone. This is in response to a plea for sports kit from Brima James Kabia who is well known to many people here and who is presently working for Save The Children. There are many teenagers unable to attend school due to the ebola crisis and therefore at a loose end who will love to don the kit and pretend they are ManU or Chelsea. It will be much appreciated.

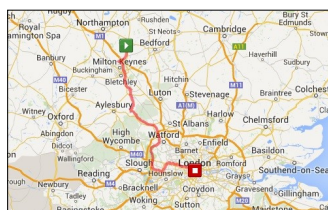
Fund Raising Events



The Olney Newton Link held a successful **Afternoon Tea** event on Saturday August 14th, at the home of Anne and Rob McCallum. The weather was bright and breezy, and a steady trickle of supporters arrived during the afternoon to partake of a wide selection of teas, coffee, and cold drinks, along with a tempting selection of cakes and scones! There was the opportunity to purchase raffle tickets and to make donations to the toilet campaign. The atmosphere was very genteel and sedate - reminiscent of a bygone era! The folk who came along supported the event very generously; purchasing not only entrance tickets, but buying 'left-over' cakes and one of the delightful coloured teapots! A total of £583.10 was raised.

Sue Lynch

23rd November Sponsored Walk



In order to raise funds for Olney-Newton Link to assist the community during the Ebola crisis, Aidan and Glenn Selwood and James Hardy will be walking from St Peter and Paul's Church in Olney to Big Ben in London within a weekend. They will be walking 80 miles in two and a half days by following the path along the Grand Union Canal. Further details from Aidan Selwood or go to <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/olneynewtonlink>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2014

7th December	Support our tombola at Dickens Day, Olney
30th January	Cheese and Wine evening— details to follow
6th March	Soup Lunch—details to follow
27th March	Race Night—details to follow

More details can be found on our website: www.olneynewtonlink.org.uk

CORPORATE MEMBERS SCHEME

We are already fortunate to receive support from local businesses, both financial and practical. We have decided to formalise this arrangement and to offer the opportunity to join the scheme to a wider range of business within the area who may not be fully cognisant with the charity. The scheme will provide existing supporters with greater and more tangible recognition as well. Corporate members will be requested to sponsor the Link's work through a series of packages, briefly:

Bronze Membership, £50 per annum – Benefits:- your website link and name on ONL's website.





Silver Membership, £100 per annum – Benefits:- your website and name and description on ONL's website and your company name and logo in our newsletter.

Gold Membership, £150 per annum – Benefits:- your website name and link and profile (maximum 30 words) on ONL's website and listing as sponsor in newsletter and logo.

Platinum Membership, £500 per annum - Benefits; link, profile (maximum 200 words) on ONL website, logo and advert carrying their logo in newsletter

Our very grateful thanks to those who have already joined the scheme—**David Coles, Heron Opticians, J Garrard & Allen, Souls Garages and Stephen Oakley.**

GOLD

	J Garrard & Allen , Solicitors, has been established for over 200 years. The firm has a local and international clientele. We like to provide a friendly, efficient and prompt service to our clients, many of whom have been with us for years. The firm is pleased to sponsor the Link's work. For more details of the areas of law covered by the firm, please view the website— www.jgalaw.co.uk
	Heron Opticians a friendly, professional family business.
	David Coles Architects
	Stephen Oakley

SILVER

	Souls Garages
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BRONZE