

Olney—Newton Link

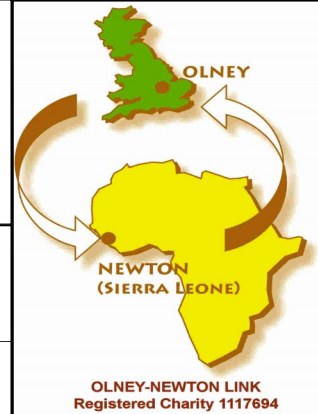
"To advance education and to relieve poverty

in the village of Newton, Sierra Leone, by the provision of charitable assistance"

February 2016

www.olneynewtonlink.org.uk

ONL



Christmas Day in Sierra Leone



Rachel and Brian Lintern visited their daughter, Claire and her husband, Mahmoud, in Bo, which is in the second city of Sierra Leone.

They also found time to make an 8 hour return journey to meet the Newton Committee and view the developments at the Skills Training Centre and see the progress with the Pre-School.

A full report begins on page 2!

Bo



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Rachel and Brian's visit to Sierra Leone

Where did you stay in Sierra Leone?

Our daughter and her husband now live in Bo, the second city of SL. It is a 5hr drive from Lungi Airport along a metalled road built by the Chinese. Bo is a busy city but much less congested and polluted than the capital, Freetown. Claire and Mahmoud's house is in a new development on the edge of the town approximately 1 mile from the main road along a rough, deeply rutted track. The house is one of five recently constructed around the water pump. There are water pipes being put into Bo to bring running water into the town. The electricity supply is erratic—it comes and goes several times a day. Bo has several schools, shops including at least one small supermarket, a 'cottage' hospital and hundreds of small motor bikes called ocados which are the only means of public transport.

The Water Well



Cocoa beans drying—in the street!



'Ocados' - the usual form of transport



Did you visit Newton while you there?

We were invited to attend the Matriculation Event in Newton on Saturday December 19th. It is a 4 hour drive from Bo so we booked a night's B and B at the local Guest House where we stayed in April 2014. It was salutary to hear that we had been the last visitors at the Guest House—no one had come due to the emergency restrictions during the Ebola outbreak. How did they survive?

On arriving we went immediately to the Graduation Ceremony (as we would know it). There was an audience of 500 or so people all dressed in their finery, seated under a wooden structure which was partly roofed by palm leaves and partly by tarpaulin. We were greeted by our friends Mrs Sheriff and Mr Komba Mbawa, (in photograph below), two of the teachers who visited Olney a few years ago. We were ushered to the top table and seated next to the Chairman and alongside 10 other dignitaries, all dressed in academic gowns and mortar boards. A welcome was given by a group of lively scouts chanting and singing—this was 'enhanced' by strange noises from a large loud speaker system! The ceremony lasted about 4 hours and food and water were served during the speeches.

ADKAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMME OF EVENT FOR MATRICULATION CEREMONY

10:55 – 11:00 call the program to order Micheal Kerurah

11:00 – Prayer (i) Christian

(ii) Muslim

11:10-11:15 Introduction of Chairman By:

11:15-11:20 Introduction of Members of the High Table

11:20-11:25 Chairmen's Opening Remarks

11:25-11:30 Welcome address by Director of Studies (ABK Nyallay)

STATEMENTS

- | | | |
|--|---|------------|
| 1. Acting registrar Mr. T F Kajwa | - | 5 Minutes |
| 2. Administrative Officer | - | 10 Minutes |
| 3. Port Loko Teachers College | - | 10 Minutes |
| 4. N.C.T.V.A. | - | 10 Minutes |
| 5. Njala University Dr. A.M. Bangura | - | 10 Minutes |
| 6. Karim's School of Technology and Business | - | 10 Minutes |
| 7. Y.D.C. | - | 5 Minutes |
| 8. Chief Executive Officer of Adkan (Hon. H.G.K) | - | 10 Minutes |
| 9. Hon. Claude D.M. Kamanda | - | 5 Minutes |
| 10. Guest of Honour Olney U.K. (Rachellintern) | - | 10 Minutes |
| 11. Keynote Address by Minister of State – Hon. Amadu Kanu | | |
| 12. Vote of thanks – Student Union President. | | |



How is the Skills Training Centre used?

We must now call it the Newton Institute. It is used to provide higher level courses in subjects such as business studies, accountancy, engineering and IT. The tutors are from local universities. At the moment there are over 200 registered students of all ages over 18.



What is the Preschool like?

The Preschool/Day Care Centre is next door to the Institute. The walls when we visited were approximately 4ft high. More funds are needed as the cost of cement has increased from Le 38,000 to Le 50,000 a bag and it is still rising. Everyone is very keen to get on with the building during the rest of the dry season.



(Editor's note: In the last two weeks we have sent a further £2500 to Newton to facilitate the progress of the preschool. We (and they) hope that it will be possible to erect the roof before the rainy season.)

What about the Pineapple Project?

Last summer a new crop of pineapple suckers were planted and they are doing well. One of the problems frequently encountered is wild fire and that destroyed some of last year's crop. Better firebreaks have been put in this time, so we hope for a better outcome. Farming of any type in those conditions is extremely difficult. It is being run as a micro-finance scheme.



Did you meet anyone else while you were there?

As well as Mrs Sheriff and Komba we met Alusine Sesay who until recently was the headmaster of Ahmadiyya Secondary School. He has reached retirement age and is desperately trying to access his pension from a very reluctant Ministry of Education.

We also met Dominic and Mrs Usman who have been involved with the Link since 2003 and Brima James Kabia. He brought along his friend Sillah Kamara who had worked with James at the Kerry Town Hospital during the Ebola outbreak. I was also delighted to meet Mariatu Kamara who joined the ONL committee in 2003 and is now a fully qualified and experienced nurse.

Do you do anything else while you were in Newton?

We were able to invite about 16 people who have worked with the Link over the years to a supper at the Guest House. The owner had made a wonderful effort to make the room look decorative and she provided a good spread of African food.



We also held a couple of meetings with various members of the committee to discuss topics such as how to maintain the Institute building, how to ensure succession of the committee and what we might undertake after the Preschool is completed.

I was also able to discuss our offer to fund bursaries up to a total of £500 per annum for students attending the Institute.

Were you able to visit the schools?

Not in Newton. The schools had all closed at the beginning of December as the teachers were needed to conduct a National Census. We were given some work from Mrs Usman's school and Komba's school to bring back to Olney Infants and Olney Middle schools. We visited several schools in Bo, just to look round and were appalled at the state of the Government schools which are very badly in need of repair and maintenance. Overcrowding, poor ventilation and lack of toilet facilities border on child cruelty. Yet, the children learn and pass their exams. How???

What was Christmas like?

Apart from being very hot, compared to here it was non-existent for the vast majority of people. There are no gifts or special meals. The Churches celebrate with Christmas Services and the shops close on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. This year Christmas Eve was also a Muslim holiday so many shops were closed then too. The only way to celebrate is to visit friends and relations, sitting chatting or listening to music on a radio. My family exchanged gifts and had a plastic Christmas tree that Claire had seen outside a shop and bartered for but this is not the experience of most people. Christmas carols, dominated by Mary's Boy Child by Boney-M, are played over the radio.

How has the country been affected by Ebola?

During the crisis many of the NGO's and most of the mining companies withdrew their staff. There is therefore a huge lack of investment in the infrastructure such as the repair of roads and public buildings such as schools. Many people lost their income or had their wages greatly reduced so corruption is rife. The teenagers are struggling as they lost a year's education during which time they had nothing to do so teenage pregnancies are a problem. Things can only get better!!

Rachel Lintern

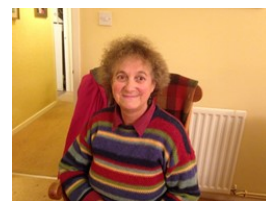


The Quiz

An evening in November which was very enjoyable and hotly contested—but it really challenged our brains! The questionmaster Rob was just back from a relaxing Caribbean cruise—obviously too much time on his hands!

Congratulations to Sheila, Steve, Tony and David, aka 'The Numbskulls' who were the victors.

Thank you to all those who catered—the food was delicious. And the wonderful sum of £651 was raised for the Link.



The Car Raffle

Did you buy a ticket for the MK Community Foundation Car Raffle? We sold tickets in CMK on three occasions—half the money we collected will come to the Link, the other half supports local projects. Thank you to Rachel, Tricia, Sue and Jenny who sold tickets with me. We hope to receive £150 in February. Janet Howe



Race Night



January 30th 2016, our first event of the year. It was brilliant! A good evening with a good atmosphere. And £450 was raised for the link, thank you!



Items for the next Newsletter, letters and comments
Have you anything to say?

Send to the Editor, Janet Howe.

Email: olneynewtonlinknewsletter@gmail.com

The deadline is: Friday 29th April



Dickens Day



Thank you very much to all those who donated bottles, manned the stall and supported us by buying tombola tickets. We raised the magnificent sum of £875! The pictures show some of the 'Victorian' ticket sellers and some of the prize winners.

A special greeting to the young lady on the left—her family won the very special bottle of champagne and they will be saving it until April in order to celebrate her 18th birthday. A very Happy Birthday from the ONL—we hope you have a great day!

Carols...

Carol Singing – The 24 Doors of Advent

Carol singers from the combined churches in Olney agreed to sing one Carol each day in Advent, from December 1st through to Christmas Eve, at a different door in the town every day. The 'doors' included most of the community groups in Olney; the schools, football and rugby clubs, senior citizens lunch at the Olney Centre, and also pubs, notably 'The Swan' and the 'Two Brewers'! Aside from the warm welcome at each event, and the willingness to join in with the singing, the folk present were invited to donate to a collection in aid of four local charities, one of which was the Link. Our charity benefitted to the tune (pun intended!) of £443 so our grateful thanks go out to anyone who contributed by singing or donating to the collection.

Carol Singing 2

On a similar note (pun intended!) Carol singers from Olney Parish Church were joined by supporters from the Olney Newton Link for traditional Carol Singing in the Chantry Rise area of Olney. Despite the atrocious wet weather, the Singers sang heartily, and their efforts were much appreciated by the residents who generously donated a total of £103.48. Many thanks to Susan Heron, and others at the Parish Church, for organising and supporting the Link in this festive manner!

Sue Lynch

Work from the Newton Schools

Olney Middle School and Olney Infant Academy sent work to their partner schools in Newton.

The Rural Education Committee School sent work on the topic of 'Celebrations in our Community'. They received some lovely work...



This is a very important day in our country. Sierra Leone we gained independence in the year 1961 April 27. So we celebrate this day every year.



Birthday is the time my mother remember the day I was born my mother use to dress me well and prepare a lot of foods and drinks invites the church family to go and pray for me and my friends eat and dance with me together for a whole day enjoyment time for me

Naming Ceremony




- (1) Relatives come together.
- (2) The baby is then taken out.
- (3) The person naming the baby takes the baby from the mother.
- (4) He calls prayer on either ears of the baby.
- (5) He then announces the name of the baby. offering of sacrifice of kola nuts and pounded rice flour is done.
- food and drinks are served to witnesses in the ceremony.
- Dancing in various Musical instruments follows.




After fasting for 30 days or 29 two month and ten days the muslims day The prayer of perform prayers Eid-ul-Ahada will to break their comence to remember the promis of Abraham to Allah.


Some of the work received from Christ Evangelical School described their lessons in school...




I am sweeping.
My name is Agness
Campbell. We are on
Home Economics Practical.
We are pupils of year
Four in Christ Evangelical
Primary School Katutown-
Newton.



Some are Pounding the condiments,
Others getting the fire ready while the other person is slicing the
onions.



Do you have any subject
like home Economics, If
you have, what activity do
you do in your last exam





Our class teacher is using
the spade to straighten the
seed bed, mr. Kangbo.

We the year six pupils
are doing our first day bush
clearing in our school garden.
The girls are observing us while
we work.



ONL Trustees

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Contact Anne at 34 Carey Way,
Olney, Bucks MK46 4DR Tel: 01234 711196

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Mohamed Y Sesay
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FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2016

Tuesday 9th February	Olney Pancake Race—visit our stall
Friday 4th March	Soup Lunch at Anne's, 34 Carey Way.
Friday 8th April	Cheese and Wine Evening at Sheila's, 40 Midland Road
Wednesday 11th May	AGM—details to follow

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

CORPORATE MEMBERS SCHEME

We are fortunate to receive support from local businesses, both financial and practical. Corporate members sponsor the Link's work through a series of packages:

Bronze Membership, £100 per annum – Benefits:- your website link and name on ONL's website.




Silver Membership, £150 per annum – Benefits:- your website and name and description on ONL's website and your company name and logo in our newsletter.

Gold Membership, £200 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—**Ashwood Chimneys, David Coles, Heron Opticians, J Garrard & Allen, Souls Garages and Stephen Oakley.**

GOLD

	Ashwood Chimneys is a professional, highly accredited, family run company based in Olney which undertakes and specialises in all aspects of chimney works within the Beds, Bucks and Northants area.
	David Coles Architects
	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.
	Stephen Oakley

SILVER

	Souls Garages
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BRONZE