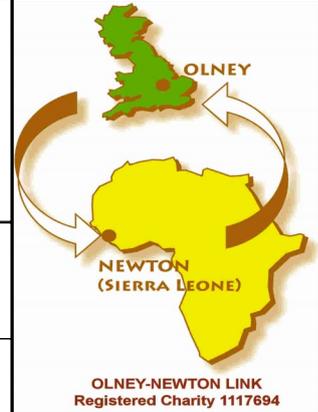


# Olney—Newton Link



*“To advance education and to relieve poverty*

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

**May 2016**

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

**ONL**

## Well... the AGM

### Were you at the AGM?

Rachel and Brian Lintern gave a very informative talk about life in Sierra Leone and the impact of the Ebola epidemic.

**Well...** the highlights are on page 2.

Anne McCallum **Chair's Report** is on page 3.

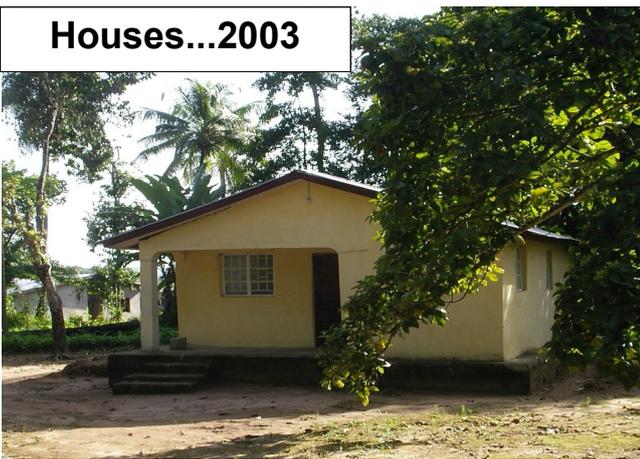
Photographs of the progress being made with the **preschool** ... page 4

**Events and Fund Raising** ... pages 5, 6

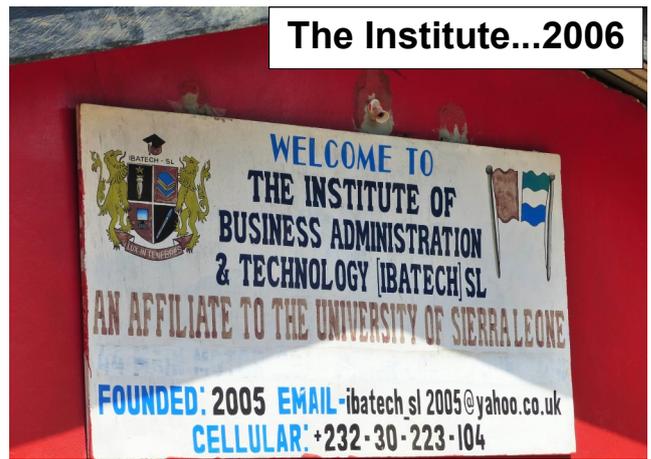
**Schools....** Page 7

**Future Events** ... Page 8

**Houses...2003**



**The Institute...2006**



**Toilets...2014**



**The Preschool and a Well...2016**



# Well, well, well...

The population of Sierra Leone in 2004 was 4 million. There was no census in 2014 due to the Ebola crisis but by December 2015 the population was stated to be 7,750,641. And 1? Who knows!

The Olney Newton Link began supporting Newton in 2003 with the building of 80 houses to replace those destroyed in the civil war. In 2006 the Skills Training Centre was started to provide education for adults in IT, with plans for future training in health care and construction skills such as carpentry. This centre is now fully operational and has been renamed 'The Olney Newton Institute of Technology' and it is affiliated to the University of Sierra Leone. Two blocks of Public Toilets were constructed in 2014, much needed to improve public health.

Then Ebola struck and all our resources were diverted into providing disinfectants, first aid equipment, education seminars, replacement household goods for those who had had their belongings burnt due to infection and toys and clothes for children affected.

Our current project is building a preschool for orphans of the crisis, so that their carers (distant relatives or just neighbours) can still work during the day.

Associated with this is the construction of a well, providing water for the preschool, Institute and the public toilets.

We are very fortunate to have an experienced and dedicated Newton Committee — including Bakarr (Secretary and manages the Institute) and Mabinty (Treasurer and overseeing the preschool project) and Val, the Chair—who have been working with us since 2003 and are all unpaid volunteers, needing to work full time as well as with the Committee. This makes the ONL so effective—all money raised is put to use in Newton, there are no salaries to pay or premises to maintain either here or in Sierra Leone.

*Taken from Rachel and Brian Lintern's talk at the AGM.*



Hand digging a well

Wells in Sierra Leone are either dug by hand or constructed with a pipe in a bore hole. The Newton Committee has opted for the hand dug version because these are easy to deepen if they run dry, and don't need expensive machinery to construct.

As you can see in the photograph, someone digs out at the bottom and the excavated rock and soil is pulled to the top in a bucket. There are no ladders—the unfortunate digger has to get in and out by climbing using toe holds in the sides.

# The AGM: Chair's Report 2016

After the horrors of Ebola and the need for instant action in an attempt to alleviate the suffering where possible, this year has seen the Link, in conjunction with the Newton Committee, try to come to terms with the aftermath.

A lack of money and the need to import materials have always been issues, but these are now more acute than before Ebola. These problems, combined with the loss of skilled labour, have made it more difficult to progress projects.

Considering this, our current project, the Preschool, is remarkably well advanced and it is hoped that the roof will be on before the rainy season sets in!! Those of you who have experienced the rains in SL or in West Africa will know that it is impossible to continue working when the rain comes!

One of the Link's major strengths has always been our "counterpart", the Newton Committee. They are the Link's "ears and eyes". The Trustees rely on the Newton members to provide us with details of the wants and needs of the community. Their local knowledge is invaluable in ensuring that we back projects that will actually benefit the people of Newton and, essentially, be sustainable in the future.

In addition to the Preschool, which will enable children from 3-5 (who have lost one or both parents or a main bread winner to Ebola) to be cared for, whilst their current carer works to ensure food to eat, we have also dealt with a termite crisis at the STC, now renamed the Newton Institute.

At the request of Bakaar and other members of the Institute committee, we have established an annual bursary to enable local people to study. 10 students will benefit this year. Most of these will be mature students, who missed out on an education due to the Civil War.

None of the above would be possible if it were not for our supporters. All of you are an essential part of our work in the help you give, be it practical, financial, or both.

Support comes in many guises: space in the Phonebox, Corporate membership, sponsorship, helping with stalls and at events, running in marathons, sponsored walks, giving of your time, filling collecting boxes with loose change, organising concerts, collecting first aid equipment and books, the list is endless. Everyone's effort is invaluable and I want to thank you on behalf of the trustees and the people of Newton. As always, if any of you would like to join us or have fundraising ideas, we would love to hear from you.

Finally, as we move forward, we ask for your continued help to ensure the fitting out of the Preschool, the building of a water well, and, maybe, an extension to the Institute (STC) to provide a medical unit and other projects yet to be revealed. Please don't be annoyed when we badger you for help, money, goods, your time etc., it is all in a very good cause!

My personal thanks also go to the Trustees, who have supported me in my first year as Chair, especially to the Link's Officers. I particularly want to thank Rachel, who, far from disappearing into the background, has worked as hard as ever!!

Anne McCallum

# Building the Preschool

These photographs were recently received from Mabinty Sesay, Newton Treasurer, via Whats App. They are nearly ready to start the roofing and have begun to construct the concrete floor. They are hoping that the preschool will be in operation by September. The building of the well nearby will make it much easier to mix the concrete needed and of course it will be essential once the preschool is in operation. The well will cost about 25 million Leones, which is about £2800 at today's rate of exchange.



All the concrete has to be moved by hand, in bowls carried on the workers' heads. Imagine a bowl of washing up water and then think of concrete being two and a half times as heavy...

The blocks used for construction of the walls have to be made on site — they cannot be bought, unlike here.

## **ONL Committee, Newton**

Valicious King—Chair  
 Abu Bakarr Fofana—Secretary  
 Mabinty Sesay—Treasurer  
 Oseh Jones  
 Mariatu Kamara  
 Mohamed Koroma  
 Mohamed Y Sesay  
 Doris Harding  
 Unisa Turay



## **ONL Trustees, Olney**

Anne McCallum—Chair  
 Contact Anne at : 43 Carey Way, Olney, Bucks MK46 4DR  
 Tel: 01234 711196

Rachel Lintern—Vice Chair	Liz Brewster	Brian Partridge
Tricia Selwood—Treasurer	Paul Collins	Glenn Selwood
Janet Howe—Secretary	Chloe Kegg	Marilyn Watkins
	Tom James	Sheila Woodhead
	Paula Noble	

# Fund Raising Events

## PANCAKE DAY

A blustery day but thankfully not too cold and the Lucky Dip, bunny biscuits, windmills, bubbles, finger puppets and egg cosies were all popular so we managed to raise £34.



## SOUP LUNCH



Another lovely occasion... a delicious choice of soups, fresh bread, coffee and cakes to follow. Very convivial with three lively (and full) sittings. Thanks to all who came and to the cooks who made and donated the soups — £279 was raised. Wonderful!

## CHEESE & WINE

It was a super evening. There was a delicious selection of cheeses from 'Wild Leaf' and plenty of wine—there must have been as most people didn't leave until 11 30pm! A raffle and generous donations meant £407 was raised for the Link. Thank you all!



*You are invited to a*

## *Cheese & Wine*

*On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2016, 7.30pm*

*at 34 Carey Way, Olney*

*£3.00 p.p. to Rachel on: 01234 711751, or Anne on: 01234 711196*

*or email: [bfintern@aol.com](mailto:bfintern@aol.com)*

*Help us to complete & furnish the Pre-school in Newton*



Is there something you would like to say?

Items for the next newsletter needed, please, by Friday 23rd July to

[olneynewtonlinknewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:olneynewtonlinknewsletter@gmail.com)



# A (London) Marathon Effort



Alexandra Howe was lucky enough to get a place to run the London Marathon this year so when she asked if I thought the ONL would like her to find sponsors, of course I said yes!

It was a cold day which made it easier for the runners (but not the spectators!); thankfully the promised snow never arrived.

Alexandra said she really enjoyed running past all the familiar London landmarks. The number of runners was tricky at times as it was crowded running, there was some jostling, water bottles were slung everywhere and the gel stations were sticky. "I was a bit dispirited when a rhino overtook me, but running up the Mall to the finish was fantastic!"

And I was amazed that she looked so happy all the way through—and was so lively at the finish. Next day her legs ached a bit, though.

Thank you, Alexandra, and thank you to your generous sponsors, on behalf of the ONL, for the £2030 you raised.

Janet Howe

After the finish in Horseguards Parade



10 miles from the start, in Rotherhithe

20 miles done and still smiling!

Poplar High Street



Unusual sights: camel, shoe and rhino (carrying his head!)



# News from Ahmadiyya Agricultural Primary School

Wendy Robinson from Lavendon School has been exchanging news, messages and photographs vis Whats App with Alimatu Kamara from their partner school in Newton, the Ahmadiyya Agricultural Primary School.

Their classes have been asking each other questions about their school and home lives.



School staff and parents meeting outside the school.



Two new classrooms are being built to cope with overcrowding.

The Ahmadiyya school has asked Lavendon School to help fund the purchase of pens, pencils and exercise books and £224, which is almost 2 million Leones, has just been sent out.



# FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2016

18th June 2016	Stall at the Cherry Fair
25th June 2016	An exciting Fun Afternoon and Music Evening with Ian Roberts, at The Two Brewers
3rd July 2016	Raft Race
November	Quiz Night
21st January 2017	Race Night!

More details can be found on our website: [www.olneynewtonlink.org.uk](http://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

	<b>Ashwood Chimneys</b> 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.
	<b>David Coles Architects</b>
	<b>J Garrard &amp; Allen</b> , 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— <a href="http://www.jgalaw.co.uk">www.jgalaw.co.uk</a>
	<b>Heron Opticians</b> a friendly, professional family business.
	<b>Stephen Oakley</b>

### SILVER

	<b>Souls Garages</b>
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### BRONZE