

Olney—Newton Link

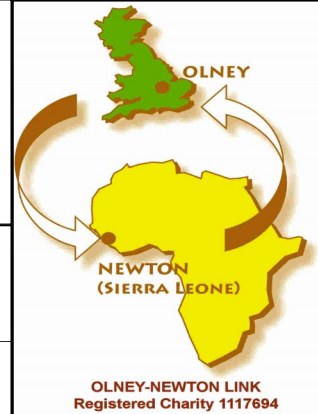
“To advance education and to relieve poverty

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

November 2017

www.olneynewtonlink.org.uk

ONL



Olney Children help build a well for Newton



Half Term week... Did you wonder what to do? About 40 people enjoyed coming to the ONL's Autumn Antics, thereby helping raise about £300 towards the current wells project in Newton. More on page 5.

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Terrible disaster in Freetown



At 6am on August 14th, after three days of torrential rain, flooding caused a mudslide that ran down a hillside and destroyed a large area of Freetown (the capital of Sierra Leone), killing an estimated 1,300 people. Most people in the hillside settlement of Regent were in their homes at that time of the day and many were trapped. The natural disaster was probably made worse due to overcrowded, poorly built settlements and the clearance of trees to create more space.

Flooding is common during the rainy season in Sierra Leone. This year, 104cm of rain fell in July and August in Sierra Leone, which is three times more than expected (US National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center).

A week of mourning was declared in the country. Governments in the UK, UAE, Turkey and Israel pledged help.

Large displaced populations, limited clean water supplies and no or unhygienic places to go to the toilet, all create the perfect conditions for deadly diseases to spread fast. Within four days of the disaster, the Sierra Leonean government had called on the new UK Public Health Rapid Support Team to deploy to Freetown and help them prevent a major outbreak of disease.

The team of experts (two microbiologists, two epidemiologists and a logistician) commit to jumping on a plane within hours of a disaster anywhere in the world. It was created in response to the world's slow reaction to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Little did the team know that one of its first deployments would be back to one of the worst Ebola-hit countries. They look for first signs of diseases such as cholera, measles, malaria and typhoid and plan strategies to avert epidemics.

The Newton Committee called on us to help as well. They asked us to make a donation to the fund which is raising money to rehouse over 3000 people made homeless in the landslide.

Olney trustees considered this, and whilst the people of Newton are not directly affected, we felt that we wished to help, as large numbers of their friends and relatives are involved. A decision was taken to hold a raffle at the Quiz with the proceedings being donated directly to the 'Build on Books' fund for Mudslide disaster relief.



Don't Bank On It!

(The current exchange rate is about 10000 Leones to £1)



Recent experiences with sending money to Newton have highlighted the differences in financial affairs between our two countries. Do you remember the days before we had debit cards, credit cards and 'holes in the wall'? Those were the days when to get cash for our daily lives we had to go INTO the bank and write a cheque 'to cash' and hand it over the counter to receive 'the readies'. We have become so used to making payments by card and going to a reasonably nearby ATM and withdrawing cash. 18 months ago when our son-in-law visited the UK he commented that he rarely saw us actually exchange money for our purchases and therefore wondered if we were really aware of what we were spending. So, what happened to promote this article? We frequently send money to our committee in Newton to carry out the work of the Link. The process entails a fairly lengthy but robust procedure. A Formal Request is made to the International Funds Transfer organisation, FCStone INTL, who seek to obtain the best rate of exchange for the sum we wish to send. This request requires a confirmation by another member of our committee to accept the rate of exchange before the transaction can be completed. The rate is for a 'forward date' a couple of days later and the funds are transferred internationally to a bank in Sierra Leone with which the INTL trades. That recipient bank then has to transfer the funds to the Newton Committee's bank account. In theory this process is secure and reliable, but can be subject to 'human error' etc at times. Just to add to complications Ecobank, which the Newton committee use, decided to close their branch in Waterloo next to Newton and transfer the account complete with a changed account number to a branch in the Eastern part of Freetown. This simple change means that to obtain the cash to pay for goods they now have to travel somehow into Freetown and no doubt waste literally hours with travelling and queuing in the bank, an operation which we would undertake at a local ATM. Frustration occurs when on reaching the counter they are informed that the money is not in the account. We then get a phone text message 'we are in the bank but the money is not there!' On these occasions we then have to institute an investigation via INTL to obtain written proof of the transfer and then WhatsApp the information to Newton to endeavour to locate the funds. This is, one might say, at least frustrating at both ends, but is to some extent a symptom of the deficiencies in their electricity supply, lack of telephone land lines and other infrastructure. There is clearly still a lot of development work to be done! With all these difficulties one must give due respect to the Newton committee who try to do the Link work whilst also carrying on with their efforts to earn a living.

Brian Lintern

Sewing Machines Sent

We have recently had a request from our friend Brima James Kabia in Newton. He would like to set up a dressmakers/ tailoring business for young people who have missed out on education. He has asked for manual sewing machines and an electric one plus a small generator.

We are delighted to say that a charity based in Chesham, Workaid*, have supplied us with an electric sewing machine plus an assortment of accessories all free of charge so all we need to do is pay the shipping cost.

The manual machines will be purchased in Sierra Leone. We are looking forward to receiving photos of the workshop in due course.

Rachel Lintern



**Workaid tackle poverty by supplying disadvantaged people with the tools they need to acquire practical skills and become self supporting.
(<http://workaid.org>)*

Bursaries

Each year the Link supports students at the Institute through the Dyson Bursary. This year awards have been made to the following students in the subjects listed:

1. Florence Bassie: Reproductive Health
2. Abdul Salam Koroma: Banking
3. Sahr Pesima: Business Administration
4. Lansanah Amara: Public Health
5. Alimay Bangura: Social Work
6. Rose Mary: Public Health
7. Kanceess Conteh: Banking
8. Abdul Karim Turay: Accounting
9. Magnum Dukuray: Accounting
10. Caesar K Turay: Social Work



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Comments, articles and letters for the February edition of the newsletter needed please—send to the Editor, Janet Howe, www.olneynewtonlinknewsletter@gmail.com



Autumn Antics

Half term week and special event was planned... all sorts of Autumn activities for the children. Held at the Youth Club, so there was plenty of space, we provided pumpkin carving, apple bobbing, doughnut strings, leaf prints, a barbecue, iced gingerbread men and stories.

The organisers had great fun and the families who came enjoyed it, I think! Thanks to all for raising about £200 for the water well appeal.



"I just wanted to say a huge thank you to all who were involved with 'Autumn Antics'. Betsy and her friends had the most wonderful time. It was so lovely and the variety of activities made for a great afternoon of fun!! Jess and Betsy Collins"



BRING A BOTTLE *please!!!*



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We need donations for our Dickens Day bottle tombola. Bottles of anything—wine, water, washing up liquid... Take advantage of the 'bogof' in the supermarket and give us the spare. Or find that bottle of something you don't need and give it to a good cause.

To Tricia (18 East Street) or Anne (34 Carey Way) or any trustee.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2017

Friday 10th November	The Quiz, 7.30pm, The Olney Centre: Buy tickets in advance from Anne (01234 711196), Rachel (01234 711751), Wilsons or The Phonebox.
Saturday 2nd December	Lavendon School Christmas Fair
Sunday 4th December	Dickens of a Christmas: Support our Tombola!

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—**David Coles, Heron Opticians, J Garrard & Allen, Novalex Solicitors, Souls Garages and Stephen Oakley.**

GOLD

	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.
	Do you want high quality, commercial legal advice for your business as well as excellent value for your money? If so, call Novalex Solicitors on 01908 440020 or email karen.mason@novalex.co.uk .
	Stephen Oakley
	Souls Garages

SILVER

BRONZE