

# Olney—Newton Link

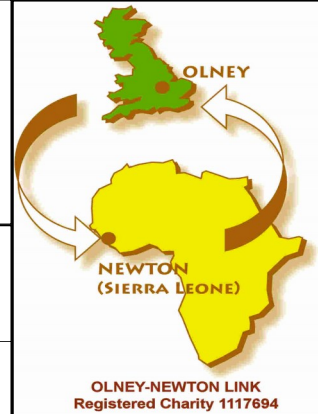
*“To advance education and to relieve poverty*

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

**September 2022**

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

**ONL**



## Well Repaired!



### **In this edition...** News from Newton and Olney

Wells	2
Money	3
Roof repairs	4
Sierra Leone News—landslides, riots	5
AG250	6
Lifepath	7
Fund Raising	8

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# News from Newton

## Well repairs

We have at last received some news and photographs from Val King, Chair, Newton Committee.

Inflation is causing big problems and he has so far only managed one complete repair and one partial one. We have asked for more estimates and also for the exact locations of the wells as we are a bit confused as to which ones he's working on. We also need to check costs as the currency has just been changed in Sierra Leone (see opposite) and we're not sure which he is quoting.

This is his latest bulletin...

*Good morning Anne*

*Am working on the wells to get finished before time but the only problem am facing is the inflation in building materials which is rising up every now and then especially the cement and iron rod. Anne remember the cost price we send u for the three wells is not the same as of now, for example a bag of cement is one hundred and ten thousand Leones per bag( le 110:000) like wise the iron rod and have just finished one and half of the work already which am finding it very difficult to finish the remaining work. So Anne if there is delay in the completion of the of the work this is the problem but will send u photo of the just completed one and also send u photo of second well which is uncompleted .*

*From chairman Valecious King*

First repair site Nyandehun Newton



Second repair site New site Newton



# New Currency



SL has now changed the currency as of Friday 1st July. Year-on-year inflation in the West African state was 24.87 percent in May, according to the national statistics agency, so it is going to be difficult for them to give us realistic estimates; any we do receive will need further assessments to avoid the 'triple zeros' error!

In the photo the note at the top is the old currency...  
10,000 Leones...  
which is now 10 New Leones.

Brian Lintern

We received this information from StoneX, the service we use to send money to SL. It could be rather confusing!

*Following the Bank of Sierra Leone's decision to go live with its new currency, the New Sierra Leonean Leone (SLE) on July 4th, StoneX is now able to offer the newly denominated currency to its customers.*

*Quick facts about SLE:*

*The rate is truncated by a 1,000 while keeping the same value as SLL. i.e. SLL 150,000.00 = SLE 150.00*

*SLL and SLE will be running in parallel [until September the 30th](#)*

*All SLL payment orders received will be automatically converted into SLE [until September the 30th](#)*

*Please contact your StoneX representative for further information.*

# Roof Repair Request from James Kabia

On Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> of June, we received an urgent WhatsApp message from Brima James Kabia, the Baptist Pastor in Newton. The heavy rain and strong winds had blown the roof off his church.

The cost of repairing the damage would be approximately Le. 5,375,000 (just under £400) and the repairs needed to be made as soon as possible to avoid the torrential rains of the rainy season, which had just begun. The ONL's available funds were earmarked for the repair of water wells.

Sutcliff Baptist Church, Olney, was approached. Brima had visited the church some years ago, when David Dewey was the Minister and has strong ties to it. (Sarah and David Dewey are staunch supporters of the Link and are nicknamed our Northern Branch!)

The Leadership recognised the urgency and sent £400, via the Link to Brima and his congregation.

After discussion with the contractor, it was decided to carry out temporary repairs to the roof to see the church through the rainy season. These were completed and Brima sent a photo on 28<sup>th</sup> June.



The balance of the money will be used to lay a foundation slab for a new Newton Baptist Church, at Kpoubu-Newton, to be started, probably in December or January, during the dry season. We have been promised an update!

Brima James Kabia and his congregation of 68, thanked Sutcliff, very warmly, and the Link, for all their assistance.

Anne McCallum



# Problems in Sierra Leone

The newspapers have been reporting on riots in Freetown and in the north of the country. It seems that at least 6 police officers and over 20 people have died. There were some reports of tear gas being used and also shots being fired as protesters threw rocks and burning tyres. The internet service was disrupted, presumably to stop messages being sent and causing further unrest. Curfews were put in place during the hours of darkness.

The protests were about the rising cost of living, particularly the cost of basic items in a country where 8 million live below the poverty line according to the World Bank.

Claire Tarawally explained when she visited her father in Olney last month...

The riots in Waterloo meant that people in Newton couldn't take produce to market or buy things. The killings sparked memories of the terrible civil war in Sierra Leone.

The government is struggling as the opposition have 1 MP more than those in power.

The exchange rate is appalling... recently there were 12 new Leones to the pound, now it's 16.8. All imported goods are hugely expensive - the riots were due to inflation and rising fuel prices and the cost of fertiliser were a big contribution to this.

Agriculture is very important and the government is encouraging self sufficiency and the teaching of agricultural techniques in colleges.

Making compost is difficult as the sun causes it to dry and so it doesn't rot... leaves don't rot down, just pile up and go crisp. Crops grow very quickly in Sierra Leone - for example sweetcorn can be harvested in 3 months and so multiple crops are possible, even in the dry season, if you have access to water. Most land is tilled by hand so small rotivators would be a help to smallholders.

Bamboo and plum stick can be used 3 or 4 times for scaffolding and then used in building - so avoiding wastage.

Claire has just sent news of another mudslide in Kissy Town near Freetown where sadly at least 4 people died.

She said 'the force of the water has been really bad, causing lots of damage. It has rained constantly all day today and the heavy continuous rain is forecast to continue tomorrow.' This is the link she sent to the photos on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/SierraNetworkSalone/videos/757107372215383/>

Sadly, we heard today that houses in Newton have been damaged as well.

# AG250

We were delighted to be invited to the Cowper & Newton Museum for the opening celebrations of Amazing Grace 250 years. It was a delightful warm evening, the gardens were beautiful and the speakers very interesting. We also had the opportunity to talk to people about the ONL and their links with Sierra Leone.

Our thanks to Amanda Molcher from the museum.



Spotted in Campbell Park...





# Lifepath 2022

Every two years the Scripture Union organises an event based at Olney Church to inform children about the work of John Newton and to encourage them to consider their future 'lifepath'. There was no event in 2020 due to the pandemic so we were delighted to be back this year.

The Olney Newton Link is asked to provide workshops for groups of children on life in Sierra Leone. We tell them about the climate, the town of Newton, the sort of house they would live in, the duties they would have in the home (role play involved here—getting water, sweeping, washing, cooking) and then give them a school lesson Sierra Leone style.

This year the workshops were organised by Marilyn, Sue, Rose, Anne and Janet and we really enjoyed sharing information with the children who responded very well. We were pleased that we could help them learn a little about Newton life.

Our thanks go to the Scripture Union who have made a generous donation towards the next water well.



# Fundraising

## Cherry Fair

The Cherry Fair was sunny and warm and the tombola and jewellery stall did very well. Thank you to all of you who donated gifts for the tombola and a big thank you to Lynda Barber for the donation of her late mother's jewellery which attracted a lot of attention... what a good way to ensure someone's precious belongings continue to be used and loved, at the same time as raising money for a good cause.

Thank you to all our helpers on the day, some of whom are pictured. Apologies if I didn't manage to get you in a photo... it was busy at times.



## Olney Infant Academy

Having survived a very warm day at the Infant school, we managed to make a small profit. After deducting the pitch fee and float, we made £157.05(not sure where the 5p came from!!) - and talked to lots of people about the ONL.



**A big thank you to our GOLD sponsors**



**David Coles Architects**

**Contact Anne or Tricia for more details of bronze, silver and gold sponsorship**

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You can donate online - go to our website, [olneynewtonlink.org.uk](http://olneynewtonlink.org.uk) and select 'donate' from the menu - or by dropping an envelope through our treasurer's door - Tricia Selwood, 18 East Street.

You could also ask us for a collection box in which to put your small change - assuming you're still using real money, that is!