

Olney—Newton Link

May 2013

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

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The people of Newton are well pleased!



Mohammed Sesay (Newton committee member) telephoned Rachel (Chair) on 24th April to inform her that the works on the water well had been completed and that clean, fresh water was now freely available again within the village.

The torrential rainstorms in this year's rainy season damaged the Newton water well. It had to be reconstructed using concrete and then have the pipes and taps replaced. Fundraising in Olney through the Barn Dance and the Buckingham Chamber Orchestra concert enabled the final amount of 5 million Leones to be sent to the Newton Committee in early April.

Contact:

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Olney - Newton Link AGM



Mike Flood, from Powerful Information, discussing the plight of the disabled in Sierra Leone with Mark Lancaster MP and Rena Partridge, one of the founder members of the Olney—Newton Link which celebrated 10 years in its present form this year.

Full report on page 3...

Farewell and Thank You!

Newsletter editors Sheila Watts and Sheila Ware are retiring. At the AGM they were thanked for all their hard work and presented with a small token of our appreciation. Sheila Ware is also standing down as trustee and she will be much missed, especially for her tombola!

How would you like to receive your newsletter? See page 2.



The Institute of Computer Studies, Newton

The computer school we set up in the Skills Training Centre (now known locally as the Institute of Computer Studies) is to be sponsored from September 2013 by an Institute of Business Technology affiliated to the University Of Sierra Leone - excellent news indeed. 12 years ago a group of young people who had experienced unimaginable problems during a 10 year civil war got together and asked the people of Olney for help. The Housing Project came first and then the building of the Skills Training Centre. They had no experience of building, planning, budgeting or business but with the help of funding only from us they have themselves founded a computer school in the village. Yes, we can be pleased, but those young people can be immensely proud of their achievement; they made mistakes and have learned a lot and this must also be good for the future. We will be developing the remaining two parts of the centre into an administration block and a Building and Carpentry School and I hope that those people here, who worry that charities should not be giving handouts to Third World Countries thus making them dependent on aid, will see that we are not doing that, they are very much helping themselves to improve their lives. Rachel Lintern



Receiving your Link Newsletter

With the change of editor, we are reviewing the production of the newsletter. We need to know the answers to some questions. Please could you e mail me and let me know what you think...

At the moment you receive the newsletter as a PDF by e mail, or a paper copy by post or by hand.

Are you happy to carry on receiving the newsletter as a PDF/paper copy?

Would you prefer to receive a link by e mail to view the newsletter on the Olney-Newton Link website?

Would you prefer to receive a shorter newsletter monthly?

Please let me know your views and any other suggestions you have.

Replies please to Janet Howe, by e mail to olneynewtonlinknewsletter@gmail.com

If you have read someone else's newsletter then please send me your e mail address and I will make sure you get your own copy!

Please let me know if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter.

Contributions Needed

*Do you have some news about Newton? Or about something you have done in Olney?
Items for the next Newsletter will be welcomed by the new Editor, Janet Howe.*

Email: olneynewtonlinknewsletter@gmail.com

The next deadline is: 1 August 2013



Olney—Newton Link Annual General Meeting



The meeting began with a thought provoking talk from Mike Flood, from Powerful Information. He described the plight of the disabled in Sierra Leone and explained what his organisation has been doing to help them since 2004. They are particularly concerned with women's education, having set up learning circles aimed at building confidence and self esteem, and ensured that leadership training has made the organisations self sufficient. They have provided education and skills training for the visually impaired so that they can become useful members of the community without having to rely on their children for support. Mike told us the story of one blind woman who now makes soap and has a valuable role in her village. Many problems they had encountered were familiar to us, but their successes were impressive.

The cutting of the Tenth Anniversary cake by chair Rachel Lintern and Rena Partridge, founder member, preceded a break for refreshments.



The Olney—Newton Link from 2003 to 2013

The business meeting followed, with reports from the officers including Rachel, Chair of the Link, who reported that there was a slow start to the year, due to the elections in Sierra Leone, which completely disrupted normal life there and made communication very difficult. Great success has been achieved with the development of the Skills Centre (now the Institute of Computer Studies, see page 2), the repair of the water well and continued aid for the Health Centre. Unfortunately the Solar Suitcase intended to help by providing power for midwifery services has been impounded at the airport and as yet despite continued appeals to the government there, the US suppliers who sent it out and government departments here it has not been released.

Claire Lintern sent a moving and comprehensive report about her time in Sierra Leone; she is teaching in Goderich, just outside Freetown and has been there for 7 months. She described how the repair of the well made so much difference to people's lives in Newton and how essential fresh water was to prevent the spread of diseases such as typhoid and cholera. In Goderich they have piped water but the supply is erratic and at the time she wrote they had just spent two weeks without water at the peak of the hot season. Imagine living so close to the equator and being unable to shower or wash your clothes...

She begged us not to give up and not to feel that the work we put in isn't worthwhile. Little steps make all the difference in Sierra Leone and although instant results are not always seen the help is long term and the benefits may be immeasurable. She truly believes that the Olney-Newton Link has played a part in improving the lives of ALL the community of Newton as well as that of Olney.

Claire will be coming back to the UK in July and we look forward to hearing all about her year.



And last of all, our congratulations went to Rachel and Brian Lintern who are celebrating their 40th Wedding anniversary.

Scouting in Sierra Leone

Newton Scouts asked for £1100 to cover the cost of uniform for all the Scouters from the local schools in the Newton Area. We were able to send them £500 from Fundraising.

On 27 January 2013 Bakarr confirmed that they had held a committee meeting and ALL the money had now been handed over to the Scouts. Scout Leader Mohammed S Kamara then texted Claire (see below) and he also said 'We will be shopping on Monday'.

5 March 2013

HI MADAM RACHEL, TRECIA AND OTHERS! MY FOOT IS NOW GETTING BETTER AND WE ARE ON D PREPARATION OF D UNIFORM SHIRTS 4 ALL D NEWTON SCOUTS, AND IT IS NOT NICE TO GIVE D ORDINARY SHIRT TO D SCOUTS LEAVING D TROUSERS, IT WILL BE NICE IF U SEND D BALANCE MONEY SO THAT WE CAN PREPARE D TROUSERS TOO. SO WE CAN HAND OVER D SUIT, I.E. SHIRT, TROUSER AND SCARF TO ALL D SCOUTS.

FROM M.S.K. AREA LEADER NEWTON SCOUTS S/LEONE.

(Mohamed Saidu Kamara)

Olney scouts now have further funds, raised at their Bonfire evening, to send out.

"True, it may only be a few pounds that we give, but it's a whole lot more than that for them". A comment from one of the adults in Olney Scouting.

Thank you to all in the scouts.

Tricia Selwood

Barn Dance



Another very successful evening, thanks to *Winnie and the Whirly Pits*, which all who attended thoroughly enjoyed. Good music, healthy exercise and delicious food (thanks to Richard Stone from the Carlton Club), and a chance to socialise over a glass or two. £ 500 was raised towards the water well.



Music for Newton

A very well attended concert in March raised nearly £600 for the link. In the first half the audience were treated to a superb programme of Greig and Templeman from the Buckingham Chamber Orchestra. The Greig was a well known work but the Templeman was new and exciting, composed by Keith Templeman, cellist in the Buckingham Chamber Orchestra, reflecting 18th Century style but including modern passages such as those easily recognisable as traffic on busy streets.

The second half of the concert was a complete contrast and was performed by Pete Edwards, who sang and played the keyboard, accompanied by the string orchestra. He had the audience enthralled with songs from Elton John and Simon and Garfunkel.



Teach yourself Krio

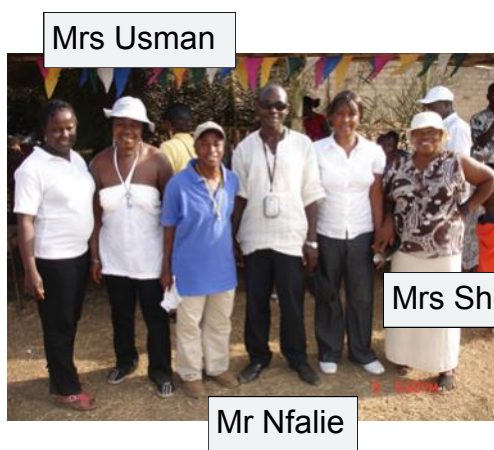
Hopefully this will become a regular feature in the newsletter, so that you will be fluent when you visit Sierra Leone or when you speak to visitors from Newton.

Question *How de body?* How are you?

Reply: *De body fine, I tankee God!* I am very well, thank you.

(Literally I am very well thanks be to God— sort of fingers crossed!)

School News



The schools are applying for another grant to further their work by connecting classrooms. Teachers from Olney Middle School, Olney Infant Academy, Lavendon School and Olney Ousedale Campus hope to visit Newton in 2014. Pictured are the three headteachers from Newton who visited us last time, with the members of their staff who hope to come to the UK next year. Mr Sesay from the Ahmadiyya Secondary School is also hoping to visit.

The schools are delighted that they have been able to talk to the teachers in their partner schools using Skype. Some of the children from Olney Middle School have been able to ask the head of Christ Evangelical School questions about the children at his school. Fund raising has also enabled the schools to purchase metal cupboards, sports equipment and classroom resources for their partner schools.

Life in Sierra Leone: Money

Paying the bill in the guest house wasn't easy when the teachers from Olney Middle, Olney Infant and Lavendon Schools visited Newton in 2010. Counting out the notes in 1000s was exciting, as you can see from the photos. Currently the exchange rate is about 6300 Leones to £1 so a 1000 Leone note is worth about 15p. Children in school there are taught to count in 1000s, for obvious reasons.

The visiting teachers found it quite tricky when money was being discussed as we were never quite sure whether a sum of money written or stated as 500 meant 500 Leones or 500,000 Leones.

Shopping was not quite so difficult as the range of goods was restricted and relatively inexpensive. The photos are of the indoor (vegetables, condiments) and outdoor (dried fish) sections of the market in Newton. The bananas tasted wonderful but the smell of the dried fish wasn't so appetising.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2013

Saturday 8th June 7.30pm	CONCERT at Olney Parish Church 'Young Men and Philosophers' by the Newton Ensemble
Sunday 16th June Saturday 29th June Sunday 7th July	Newport Pagnell Strawberry Fair Olney Cherry Fair Olney Raft Race
Friday 15th November	QUIZ at the Olney Centre

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,**

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
	David Coles Architects
	Heron Opticians a friendly, professional family business.

BRONZE

Souls Garages	Stephen Oakley
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