

The Olney-Newton Link



*"To advance education and to relieve poverty
in the village of Newton, Sierra Leone, by the provision of charitable assistance"*

May 2019

www.olneynewtonlink.org.uk

ONL

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To get in touch with The Olney-Newton
Link contact Anne McCallum, Chair
Telephone 01234 711196

For the newsletter e mail:
olneynewtonlinknewsletter@gmail.com

Please can you help?
We need **tombola prizes**
for the Cherry Fair.
Anything at all! Look out those unwanted
gifts and hand them to any trustee.



AGM 2019



25 people attended—thank you for coming. We heard an inspiring talk from Sarah and elected trustees for the next year.



Sarah Dewey

Hope from the North



Sarah and David Dewey used to live in Olney as David was the Baptist minister until 2007, which is how Sarah became involved with Sierra Leone and the ONL..

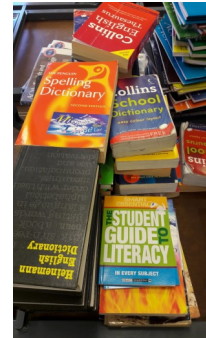
David and Sarah hosted Brima James Kabia, pastor from Newton, whilst Brima was attending the World Baptist Alliance Conference. It was quite an experience! Brima, of course, rose at dawn (as do all Sierra Leoneans because with no electricity you have to make full use of the 12 hours of daylight – and as it's nearly on the equator it is always 12 hours daylight from about 6am to 6pm, unlike our seasons). Sarah took him for a walk over the fields. Brima thought the rabbits they saw were to be caught for breakfast – Sarah's first introduction to SL life.

In 2006 Sarah and David went to Sierra Leone and the trip changed their whole outlook on life – their values and their knowledge of what it means to be poor. Whilst there they attended Brima's graduation – sadly before they had chance to send out the photos they had taken, Brima's wife died of chickenpox so never saw them. It changes your life to realise that what we regard as an innocuous disease can be so devastating without good medical care.

They have since moved to Barnsley and have introduced the ONL to their church there. And their grandchildren (who they look after) have become involved too – the young children did a sponsored 25 mile bike ride to raise money for Ebola victims – an amazing distance for the two youngsters. Sarah herself astounded her family by completing a triathlon to provide solar lamps for the Health Centre.

Sarah appreciates the ONL being a small charity – people in Olney know the people in Newton and know that all they donate goes directly there.

A while ago Rachel Lintern was speaking to Sarah on the phone and telling her about the need for equipment and books for the African schools. Sarah appealed on Facebook to her 'friends' for help. She found an offer from a teacher in Hope School. It was closing down and had books which no other school wanted, which would be thrown away. Visiting the school, she found a classroom FULL of books and even more in the basement and on the third floor! Sarah checked with Claire Tarawally in SL about what was needed there and filled 6 car loads with books.



The cost of shipping to SL was £400, which was raised by Sarah's church in Yorkshire. Some books went to Claire's school in Bo, some to the Ahmadiyya Secondary School in Newton and some to the primary schools in Newton. The schools in Sierra Leone sent their thanks through photographs and videos.

Since then, Sarah has discovered 500 brand new exercise books that a headteacher was throwing out as they were the 'wrong colour'. They are going to SL too. They have also been given 180 calculators which were the wrong sort for UK exams.

Sarah can't bear to watch the wastefulness of our society, knowing what is so badly needed in Sierra Leone. She thanked everyone for their help so far and appealed to everyone to help even more by **talking to friends in education and elsewhere, asking...**



- *Is there another teacher you can have a conversation with to see what is lurking unused in their storerooms?*
- *With constant changes in curriculum in the UK, many resources are obsolete but still useful to a school where staff struggle to get hold of books, and calculators are "as rare as hens' teeth".*
- *Does your family have good quality games or toys they no longer use?*

From Sarah Dewey's talk on 8th May 2019

AGM: The Chair's Report

Wikipedia describes Newton as *a city in the Rural District in the Western Area of Sierra Leone. Lying approximately 22 miles east of Freetown, with a population of around 36,000, it is the third most populated city in the area, after Freetown and Waterloo. Named after the British slavery abolitionist, John Newton, it retains a philanthropic link with Olney (Newton's former residence) through the Olney Newton Link.* No mention is made that it is only a group of hamlets, spread over an area approximately the same size as MK.

An initial friendship was established in the early 1990s between St. Peter and St. Paul's, Olney and St. Mary's, Newton, by Rena Partridge. The growing link was temporarily severed by Sierra Leone's vicious Civil War, but re-established at its end in 2001/2002. Funds were raised to assist the returning survivors to rebuild and renovate their homes, all of which had been ransacked, and a third totally destroyed. Apparently the survivors had to hack their way through dense undergrowth, to uncover the devastation!

Following a group visit, from Olney, in 2003, to ascertain the ongoing requirements, the Schools Link was established. This is still in existence and provides an opportunity for inter-cultural exchange, which will, hopefully, ensure the Link's future.

As a support charity, our object is to raise funds to enable projects, suggested by our Newton Committee, or members of the Newton Community, to become a reality.

Following the housing project, work was begun on the Skills Training Centre, now the Newton Institute, in 2007. The aim is to provide educational and skills training opportunities, particularly for those who had missed out on further education because of the war. The STC has been a phenomenal success and is now affiliated with the University. Its graduation ceremonies are spectacular, as Brian and Rachel Lintern have witnessed.

Sadly, education, and life in general, suffered a further serious disruption in 2014, with the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic. The after effects are still being felt. It was out of the needs it created, that the idea of the Preschool was born. It is a great credit to the incredible spirit of the Saloneans that they pick themselves up after each reversal, re-build and carry on.

Many of the Newton Committee have served since the Link began. They are all unpaid volunteers, who give up their very limited spare time for the Link.

For example, Val King, the Chair, oversees the digging of the water wells. Clean water, which is essential to support life, is only available from wells and standpipes in Newton, where there is no piped water. Our water well appeal is ongoing – this year we have sent sufficient funds to build 1 well, with another 2 requested. Each well costs just over £3000.

Mabinty Sesay, the Treasurer, is still heavily involved with the completion of the Preschool. The toilet block, which is essential if Government registration and funding is to be obtained, is still under construction, the untimely death of the building contractor having delayed work.

There are now 120 children enrolled, at the school, with 5 teachers, including a kindergarten teacher, employed. Money is still required for furniture and the general fitting out of 2 of the classrooms.

I would like to thank all the members of the Newton Committee for their hard work and unfailing dedication.

We also work with other members of the Newton community, including Brima James Kabia, the local Baptist Pastor. This year we have sent funds to enable the building of a workshop/showroom for use by the tailoring apprentices. This building will ensure the protection of both students and machinery in the rainy season and, through the installation of solar lamps, give them the ability to continue working after darkness descends at 6pm. James is very good at providing us with updates, for which we thank him. He has a very practical approach to serving his community, including training as a medical assistant during the Ebola crisis.

As always, we give thanks to all our supporters and helpers, without whom we would not be able to continue. Whether it is time, money, gifts of toys, clothing, sports kit and equipment, first aid supplies, spectacles, books, or, in the case of the Phonebox, free publicity, or other resources and skills, that are freely given, we are immensely grateful to you all.

I would also like to express my personal gratitude to my fellow Trustees and long term helpers, who make my life much easier! Sadly, we lost one of our Trustees, Chloe, recently, as she and her husband have moved away from the area – thank you, Chloe, for all your help over the years, we will miss you.

If any of you are interested in joining us, as a trustee or helper, we would love to hear from you, so please don't be shy! We could do with new blood and ideas. Finally, I would also like to thank Claire and Mahmoud Tarawally, who provide us with information, advice and a sounding board, on life in SL

We hope to be able to start to support new projects, once the Preschool is finished. The provision of more water wells will continue to be a primary objective.

However, another area of need is the improvement of medical care and facilities, along with hygiene and nutritional education, in Newton.

This year's Christian Aid appeal covers an issue, which is particularly close to the hearts of one or two of our Trustees.

Rural SL is one of the world's most dangerous places to have a baby, with very limited medical facilities and a very high rate of maternal and infant mortality. We have been asked by the Newton Committee to look into medical care and are considering feasible options, one possibility being the funding of training courses for nurses and midwives. Brima James Kabia is involved with the Newton Health and Social Alert Group, so we may be able to work with him, to ensure that real needs are met.

Anyone who has any ideas, on this matter, or just wishes to be involved, please contact us.

Anne McCallum



Training to be Tailors

Newton in Sierra Leone is a long way away so how do we ensure that donated money is spent wisely?

Using e mails or post is almost impossible so the Newton Committee communicate with us using WhatsApp. They can send text messages and photographs easily using their mobile phones (And although there is no mains electricity to charge them there are lots of small huts which are 'charging booths' they can use to keep their phones working).

We have been raising funds to support the construction of a building for Brima James Kabia's tailoring apprentice scheme. Brima is extremely good at keeping us informed of progress and has sent many messages and lots of photographs which record the progress of the building.

This was his message sent on 20th March, which gives a detailed account of monies spent and also points out how the costs have risen due to inflation:

The workshop construction is ongoing, I will send report on it as we do the roofing, as I reported earlier there were changes in the prices quoted but not with standing that we progressing. This is a progress report on the tailoring work shop. I will refer you to the estimated quote I sent for the construction. I am here by sending utilization report on the funds so far.

Items bought and service utilized:

- 1) 1500 mud bricks bought @ 1,800 by unit cost. The total is 2,700,000 le.
- 2) 6 Roll Zinc bought @ 1300,000. Total is 7,800,000 le.
- 3) 1 double steel door bought @ 1,900,000 le.
- 4) 6 single still door bought @ 1,000,000 unit cost Total 2,000,000 le.
- 5) 50 pieces of 2*4 bought @ 25,000 total 1,250,000.
- 6) 50 pieces 2*3 pieces of boards bought @ 20,000 Total 1000,000le.
- 7) Cement 30 bags bought and used @ 55,000 Total 1,650,000.
- 8) 3 trip sand @ 350,000 Total 1,050,00le. 1trip stone @ 700,000.

Payment for masonry work 2,700,000.

Transportation of materials 2,350,000 le.

Total expenditure is 25,100,000.

Balance cash at hand is , 7,534,000le.

If you go back to the earlier price quoted you will notice variation in almost in every items. We are now needing 17,000,000 le to complete the construction including the ceilings. This excludes the electrification cost. There are eight lighting points in the building. My appeal to for the electrical (lighting points) is for you to help with the Solar lamps. If you could afford them over there. Over here it will cost 3,600,000 le for the eight lighting points. Thank you all stay blessed. James

The progress of the building is shown opposite, James sent lots of photos.



Making the concrete blocks for the building



The walls go up



Roof timbers being constructed



The zinc roof



One of the walls needed redoing—an error by the builder, apparently



Front doors being placed

News from the Preschool



Mabinty sent these photos of the preschool children—
getting ready for an outing in April.



And a HUGE thank you to those who donated and collected hoodies. The children are very proud of their new warm outfits (it's cool in the evenings in January)



Another well

This account was received from Val King, with reference to the expenses occurred in the building of another well.

FIRST EXPENDITURE		FOR WATER WELL	
PROJECT		TOTAL	
			16,625.000
1.	IRON ROD HALF TON	4,125.000	4,125.000
2.	CEMENT 50 BAGS	2,750.000	2,750.000
3.	SAND ONE TRIP	1,500.000	1,500.000
4.	IRON STONE	3,500.000	3,500.000
5.	BINDING WIRE	250.000	250.000
6.	WORKMANSHIP	3,000.000	3,000.000

He also sent this message:

Good day to u all people of Olney. Here is a breakdown of first money spent for water well project which has been disbursed for buying of materials and workmanship. We are almost to the digging of the well and we are waiting for the second money for installation of culvert and other necessary things to be done at time of next week.

Valicious King

The Olney trustees sent the £1500 needed to complete the well on 22nd April.



Schools' News

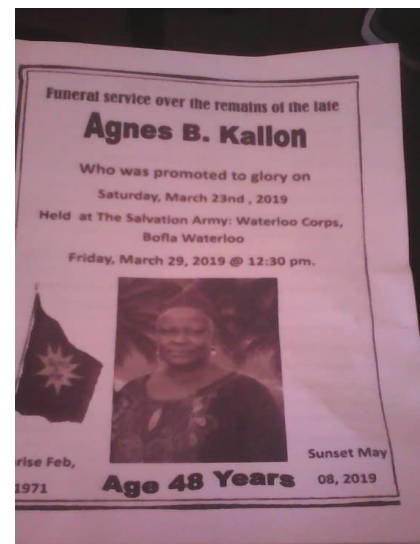
The Onley schools were delighted to receive these photographs of the Inter House Sports on March 23rd. The certificates were presented by Dominic Usman (former chair of the Newton Committee) and Beatrice Usman (former head of the REC school).



Mr. and Mrs Usman distributing certificate to the pupils

The schools and trustees were very sad to hear that Mrs Kallon, headteacher of the REC school in Newton, died suddenly in March.

Our thoughts and prayers are with her family, friends, the staff and pupils.



Thank you to the children of **Newton Blossomville School** for the gift of teddies, First Aid kits and £57.46 for the children in Sierra Leone.



Fund Raising

Pancake Day

A cold and breezy day with, we thought, fewer visitors than usual. The Easter Egg Raffle, Easter Egg gifts, Lucky Dip, biscuits, mini animals and windmills helped us raise £87 so many thanks to those who helped and those who donated eggs and the other items.



Soup Lunch

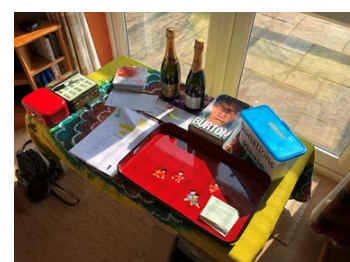
This was a lovely occasion, though less well attended than usual. A first time visitor said he wasn't sure whether to come but he really enjoyed it. There was good food, it was a very sociable occasion with the opportunity to talk afterwards. So if you want a relaxed and unpressured event which is a good opportunity for new people to meet, informal and homely... join us next year! Thank you everyone for helping raise the magnificent sum of £294 for the ONL.— all by generous donation as the occasion is not a fixed price event.

Broccoli, mint and pea

Spicy tomato

Mushroom

Butternut squash



Thank you to Art Mart,
Desmond Smal,
Bernadette Foster,

Olney Newton Link Trustees 2019-2020

Anne McCallum (Chair)
Brian Lintern (Vice Chair)
Tricia Selwood (Treasurer)
Janet Howe (Secretary, Newsletter Editor)

Debby Hall
Tom James
Brian Partridge
Marilyn Watkins

Would you like to be involved?

We are a friendly committee and are looking for new members. Contact one of us to find out more.

Easter Egg Hunt

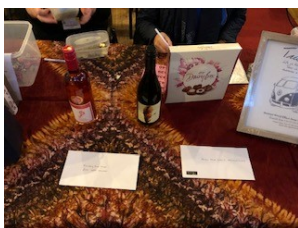
A new venture this year and one which proved popular. A variety of arts and crafts activities were provided (baskets, headbands, sheep, eggs, badges... all with an Easter theme) was provided and the successful completion of 5 tasks brought the award of an Easter egg. Coffee and biscuits for parents was provided too. It seemed to be enjoyed by all the youngsters and made a wonderful contribution to the ONL funds of nearly £200 which has been sent to buy equipment for the preschool.



Bozeat Windmill Singers Concert



Thank you once again to the Bozeat Windmill Singers who staged a wonderful concert in aid of the ONL. The choir were resplendent in white, black and purple. There were a few African songs interspersed with old English and Belgian songs and spirituals. There were also some stunning solos some of which required audience participation (How brave! Bow Wow!). There was a very moving song in memory of those who lost their lives in the tsunami, a funny one about a new vicar, and a trio of ukulele players. My favourite? So difficult—but maybe Hakuna Matata from The Lion King.



All that singing (and listening) is thirsty work and the interval was a refreshing time. Thank you to those who donated prizes for the raffle: just over £700 was raised.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2019

Saturday 15th June	Cherry Fair
Friday 4th October	Ian Roberts gig
Autumn Antics	October
The Quiz	Friday 8th November

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, 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.
	Stephen Oakley
	Souls Garages

SILVER

BRONZE