



**“making a real difference” in**

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### **Forthcoming trip**

Just two weeks to go till **we** fly to Sierra Leone! Did you notice I said **we**? I'm being joined on the trip by Barry Gascoigne, an ex-pupil, fellow Round Tabler (back in the day), a retired builder. He's been with me to Freetown & South Africa on 2 trips.

### **Westminster Community School**

The plan is that we are going to start to build an additional classroom at Westminster Community School. The local builders have already concreted the foundation trenches. In an e-mail from Solomon, he said “We will have enough blocks pre made ready for Mr Barry to oversee us with the start of the classroom. The guys are excited to have the benefit of his building knowledge to help them, and it will be the first time that they will have had a white man (Opotho) helping them build a school”. I am pleased Barry is with me as he will ensure that the new room is properly “tied in” to the gable end.



The enrolment of children has been steady and we now have 48 children attending. Initially, we decided to start with just years 7 & 8, but we are now opening it up to year 9 children as well.

This will be my **14<sup>th</sup>** trip to Sierra Leone, and sadly, almost certainly my last. This is because of the ever-escalating costs of flights, hotels and insurance. **NONE** of these costs are taken from the charitable funds, they are all funded by me personally or from sponsors who have donated directly towards my trip expenditure, but this is sadly decreasing. I will continue to fund projects from the UK via my two main contacts on the ground in Freetown and this has worked successfully over the years, especially during e-bola & covid when I was unable to visit.

### **Christian Hope School**

Last Friday, I was informed that the school had been broken into during the night. Several computers and thirty desk and bench sets were stolen. The thieves must have had a pick up or lorry, as the school is situated at the top of a hill. I am in contact with the school and will see what I can do to help them as they don't have any insurance to cover the losses. I've told them I'm committed to the Kono Town project and currently do not have any spare funds. Solomon visited the school yesterday and sent these photos. You can see that lessons are continuing but some of the children are either having to sit/crouch on the floor, stand or balance books on their laps.



More juggling of funds will be required, me thinks!

### **Shipment of goods**

A shipment of goods has arrived in Freetown and all the various items will be distributed during our trip. A lot of football kit, kindly donated by Oxford United, Banbury Irish FC, Easington Sports (Banbury) and Cumnor Minors, Oxford. There are some brand-new items but a lot of it is good quality second hand, but it will all be gratefully received.

### **I'm now in the 21st century!**

Thanks to the help of a fellow Rotarian, I am now able to take donations via QR codes. For more info visit [www.alansafrika.co.uk](http://www.alansafrika.co.uk) click on Donate. At the bottom, click on QR codes – a quick way to donate.