

# Voice

of the Connexion



The roof going on  
at the Health Centre



The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion  
and The Sierra Leone Mission

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## A word from the editor

Hello everyone

*After a year without an editor, I have agreed to rise to the challenge of putting something together, so that we can be informed as to what is going on in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, in the U.K. and in Sierra Leone.*

*We will all agree the Covid19 Coronavirus has been and is being a little constraining to say the least. The annual Trustees conference for 2020 at High Leigh Conference centre was cancelled, but it is hoped that we may have a mini conference, along the lines of a couple we had a few years ago, later in the year. Please see the letter from David Lockett.*

*A lot has happened in Sierra Leone over the last year and I for one was looking forward to hearing the reports during the S.L.M. A.G.M. at High Leigh. One of the things that didn't happen, because conference didn't happen, was the annual conference offering, this has been in the region of £6,000 and means that the income is down, so if you feel you would like to make a donation, maybe along the lines of what you would have given at conference, the S.L.M. committee would be very grateful.*

*Finally can I thank our previous editor, Sarah Waters for her professional work as Editor and wish her every blessing in her career, and for what the Lord has in store for her.*

God bless

**Gordon**



## Obituaries

Sadly during the last year, we have lost, or should I say we promoted to glory, some lovely people from the connexion.

On 27th July last year Ralph O'Shea went to be with the Lord. Ralph was a Cornish Londoner, having met Janet while on holiday in St Ives, he left London for St Ives. Latterly Ralph has been running the Christian Bookshop at St Ives, albeit from his home, due to ill health. The funeral was held at Zion on 7th August and the chapel was packed. Ralph had touched a lot of lives.

On 25th April this year Morgan Pearce, who had been a member at our church in Woodmancote for many years, died very suddenly, aged 88. Morgan's wife, Gill, died some years ago. Both Morgan and Gill were strong supporters of the Sierra Leone Mission.



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## Covid 19 Coronavirus update Sierra Leone

Confirmed cases by district:

Western Union: 81,

Western Rural: 15,

Tonkolili: 3

Kenema: 4

Bombali: 4

Bonthe: 10,

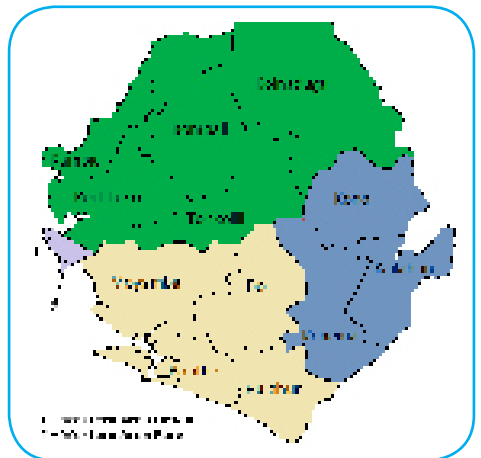
(as of 30/04/20).

New cases: (as of 8.30pm 6/5/20)

Total confirmed: 199,

Deaths: 11,

Recovered: 43



## Health Centre, Brama

A couple of years ago we were asked if we could help with the building of a health centre in the Brama area of Sierra Leone. If people had a health problem it was too far to travel to Freetown. Costings were worked out and they felt that £30,000 would pay for the building and setting up, after that they would be able to run it themselves, without any further financial help from the connexion in the UK.

As a committee we felt that we didn't have the resources to fund it and that it wasn't really in our remit, but we did let it be known this was an issue that would benefit the area around several of our churches, and that if somebody felt the Lord was touching their heart, we may be able to help in putting the two parties together.

Somebody did come forward and the land was purchased and as you can see from the photograph (taken on 25th April) the building is coming on. So I understand a few days later the roof was being put on. As I say, this is not a S.L.M. project, but we are glad that this health centre is being built for their wellbeing. To God be the glory.



## Retiring Trustees

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.... But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. [James 3:13 & 17]

On behalf of the Congregations, Ministers and Trustees of The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion we would like to express our deep gratitude to Noel Vallely and Glynn Phillips, servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, who both retired as Trustees in April.

Noel served on the Board of Trustees for 18 years, including nearly 13 years as Chair of Trustees, during which he led a vital strategic review of the Connexion's mission and purpose and steered the Connexion through its biggest structural change since our charity's Scheme was instituted in 1899.

Noel's focus has always been on people and mission rather than buildings and maintenance, a priority that was very evident in his desire to achieve consensus for positive change, always taking pains to listen and understand before seeking to

be understood. His people focus is further reflected in his desire to select, support and develop the best ministers possible, to build a ministry team to be the collective spiritual leadership of The Connexion, and for that team to work closely alongside the Trustees to secure the future mission and ministry of The Connexion.

The move to establish the satellite congregations as individual CIOs was a monumental task, keeping Noel working long hours on the legal minutiae of constitutions and lease agreements that finely balance the needs of the Trust and its constituent churches. Noel's wisdom and resolve combined with his characteristic calm reassurance and evident deep faith gave us all much needed encouragement throughout a potentially unsettling process, maintaining unity of purpose and a strong sense of fellowship across The Connexion.

Noel's immense contribution to the Connexion will secure its future for years to come, maintaining its integrity as one fellowship, a movement of missional churches, while releasing individual churches to take full control of their legal structures and finances.

Glynn became a Trustee 11 years ago and has served with diligence, devotion and compassion, making a vital contribution to the life of The Connexion.

A very visible aspect of Glynn's ministry was seen through his work on the legal and technical aspects of land and building management which has been a godsend as so many of our churches have benefited from Glynn's support and guidance on building development as well as maintenance issues.

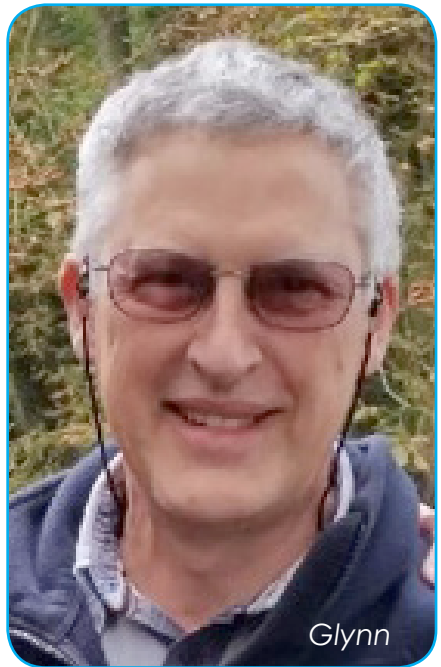
Less visible, yet even more important, has been Glynn's willingness to come alongside congregations and their leaders, dedicating precious time to worshipping and praying with them, whilst often helping them work through problems, or grasp opportunities, in leadership and mission. Glynn has been likened to the Apostle, Paul's companion, Barnabas. A true encourager, with a joyful spirit, even through his own illness, and a testimony to the grace and love of Jesus Christ.

Noel and Glynn, we thank you and give thanks for you, true examples of what it means to be servants of the Kingdom.

### **The Trustees**



Noel



Glynn

## Prayer for the Coronavirus time

Everyone kneel! At the foot of the cross,  
Drooping one's head at the thought of a loss.  
Hush! Hush! Whisper who dares!  
Listen to everyone saying their prayers.

Regular washing, we know that's right.  
To wash that virus out of sight  
Not in cold, it's got to be hot.  
Then Coronavirus will then been shot.

Cleaning our surfaces at regular times,  
To stop infection to others inside.  
Two metres distance 'tween me and you  
For everyone's safety, keep it, be true

As we see what the virus will do  
We'll want to save our loved ones too  
Also, all those we know and love  
Please protect them with your dove

Those susceptible to the virus, or old  
Lord please be with them, in a close hold,  
Let them feel your love and warmth,  
So that they know they're safe from harm.

Oh! Thank you, God, for each new day.  
Please, keep us in your loving way  
Protect us please from this disease  
So that we will always be at ease

Please provide our needs and rest  
And concentrate on Thee, 'The Best'  
Helping others where we can!  
Living life as You have planned.

Lord, let us remember that, You're in control.  
And, this illness, You have foretold.  
You know the outcome, and what is to come  
Please help us remember, 'Your Will', be done.

## SLM Chair Report

We are indebted to the faithful team of committee members who have continued to support the Mission in its ministry to serve our brothers and sisters in Sierra Leone. It was a particular joy and encouragement to welcome Esther Green and Nina Killick, two new younger committee members who were co-opted in January. We are thankful to God too for the indefatigable Magnus Bendu and Daniel Koroma, respectively the Bishop in Sierra Leone and our Agent on the ground there – particularly so, Brother Magnus for his continuing support in a whole variety of ways not least at Bethesda and with the Street Children, in addition to all his new responsibilities as Bishop.

We could not possibly undertake our work without the generous prayerful and financial support of the trustees, churches and individuals in the UK to all of whom we are most grateful.

The visit of Janet, Nina and Tino to SL. 17 June to 2 July was another great success and we are so grateful to each of them for giving their time, energy and financial resources to make this trip possible. Janet's unstinting commitment to SL and the Bethesda Children's home especially is a glowing example to us all.

We pay tribute to Ralph's support for Janet and his blessing for her visit when he himself was so unwell. We record with much sadness Ralph's home call on 24 July and Janet's testimony during this difficult time of the 'peace of God which defies understanding'.

We were able to produce one bumper issue of the Voice during the course of the year with the Chairmen and committee members all pulling together to get it published. Sadly the work involved was too great to sustain without the benefit of an editor. If you are willing to take on this vital role or know of another with the relevant skills to do so, please do let us know because it is a vital link within our church groups.

The shoe bags purchased, gathered and lovingly filled with gifts for the children in SL were brought by various church members to Crawley for the annual shipment in September. These arrived in good time for the distribution around Christmas. What a blessing to see the joy on the youngsters' faces as they received their shoe bags.

Two containers of much needed goods for the people of Sierra Leone were bought and the transportation costs covered by Zion St Ives. Once again,



projects formerly backed by FSL, as resources permit.

In November following a request from Magnus written with an intense spiritual burden and concern regarding additional funds for training, the annual pastors retreat and youth conference which the committee was unable to finance,

Janet's speaking engagements, and appeals to the Reading music festival, locally in Cornwall and the surrounding area, for finance and items to fill the containers brought many examples of God's singular blessing and encouragement. Sadly this is likely to be the last of these container shipments which involve a huge amount of time, energy and financial commitment, unless others willing to undertake such a task, are willing to come forward.

The funds of the Friends of SL administered by Ken and Chris Stone together with Mike Ward have over the recent years following the generous bequest of Gladys Durrant, brought much relief and support to many in SL. These monies have now been fully expended and the SLM is seeking to take over a small number of individuals and

a direct appeal to the UK churches was sent out by e-mail. We are thankful to the Lord who touched the hearts of many of you to give generously and sacrificially and in the goodness of God these additional needs were met in full.

Through a contact Janet made on her last visit to SL, several of the committee were able to meet Alex and Mette Klausen of the Relay Trust, in London in September. Alex and Mette have been seconded to SL by Relay, a Danish organisation, and together we explored the possibilities of working in some form of partnership in the area of e-learning and digital training for Pastors and teachers, in innovative new ways. There are exciting opportunities in this field although finance issues have precluded us from taking this forward at present.

We have given further consideration to a new vision document to help us focus in a more efficient and directed way in meeting the increasing challenges we face in the support of our teachers, pastors, Bethesda and indeed all the work we undertake in SL. Please pray with us that a clear picture will emerge of how we may better prioritise the needs and use the limited resources we have in a more strategic way.

TISLMA- The formal reporting to Companies House was made during the course of the year and the resignation of Alice Russell and the appointment of Sunah Kangbai duly notified as required.

We were pleased to convey warm fraternal greetings to the 228th Annual Conference in SL which was held at St Mark's

Waterloo 7th-9th February.

The Annual Golf Day in aid of Sierra Leone raised a further sum of £360 for our ministry and we are grateful to one of our patrons Gordon Hamilton, for once again organising this successful fund raising event.

We conclude this report with renewed thanks to all who generously support the work of the Mission and brought much relief and comfort to our fellow workers for the gospel in Sierra Leone. Sadly Ian Denyer who has now moved to Oxfordshire is no longer able to fulfil the role of co-chairman and we are looking to the Lord to fill this role too. In the meantime Gordon Hamilton will be steering the committee.

**Tim Wells & Ian Denyer  
Co-Chairmen**



*Youth Conference*

## Sierra Leone June 2019

We landed at Lungi Airport at 4:15am on Tuesday the 17th June, the long journey from St.Ives almost at an end. As we exited the plane the distinctive smell and a wall of heat hit us ....welcome to Sierra Leone! Magnus was ready to greet us and drive us two hours to Bethesda; he had already driven two hours through the night but was still cheery and chatty.

As the daylight was dawning my companions, Nina and Tinoda were able to see more of the country; it was their first visit and they were apprehensive yet excited. Nina is my grand-daughter and Tinoda had spent a few months helping us at Zion before Christmas. How wonderful that our arrival at Bethesda was before the children had left for school; they were very emotional.

This visit was going to be very different from our usual schedule; we were to spend most of our time at Brama School which is about ten minutes down the road from Bethesda. With the support of Nina and Tinoda I was going to teach the reception class for eight days and we were going to paint the classrooms in the evenings.



Wednesday morning we arrived at Brama School ready for our first day of teaching. After an hour or even half an hour I had this awful feeling of panic; I love challenges but this was going to be a tough, onerous task. Where should we begin? At the end of the day (which was only 2:00pm) we went back to Bethesda to think, pray and eat. At 4:00pm we returned to the school with some of the children from Bethesda.

The classroom is full of desks that are the same height as the children and of no use to them. We carried them to the older children's classrooms and were left with just the benches. We cleared the walls of torn, tatty paper and started to paint. We painted all of the walls with the first coat and also painted the new metal windows and doors. The next night we gave the walls a second coat (after a lesson in painting) we then commissioned

the children to paint the next classroom while we remained in the first classroom. They completed the whole school by the middle of the second week!

My second day of teaching was encouragingly better. I focused for the eight days on basic numeracy and phonics. Children in Sierra Leone learn by rote and therefore have little understanding. In reception they can count but cannot recognise numerals or 'pick up 5 stones' or 'show me 3 fingers.' Reading again is by rote 'C A T spells cat' repeated 20 times even though they do not know what a 'C' looks like. I had taken teaching aids with me to use and tried to make the lessons as interactive as I could. We played lots of games and used the outdoors as well.

Friday evening we started to decorate the walls of our classroom. We had made some templates and purchased others. We had also taken out 36 bottles of acrylic paint, 6 of pearlised and a bottle each of silver and gold paint. Add to that a tin of blackboard paint our suitcases were quite heavy!

By the second week teaching had become a pleasure; the children arrived early to read books with us, they engaged in the 'jolly phonics' and were word building by the time we

left. Numeracy took on a new interest as the children were engaged in activities that included them. New children arrived each day and a marked change could be seen in their behaviour. Parents came to thank us and the Chief of the village came to tell us that there was a difference in the children as they returned from school.

We spent most of the time after lunch (not that the children or teachers had any!) playing games. They loved 'British bull dog' the speed that they could run was amazing and left Tinoda and Nina standing. Because of the change in the classroom set up we could now use the floor space very easily so Ladders, Duck, duck, goose, In the river on the bank became favourites. It's wonderful how a simple game can teach children how to take turns, not to cheat, not to hurt others, to listen to the rules to follow the instructions.

It was very exciting to watch children over a few days becoming interested in books. We established a book corner and introduced several traditional tales. At lunch time the children would creep back in to look at the books. They are like sponges just wanting to learn.

There are six teachers at Brama School plus the headmaster;

he is the only trained teacher. Some of the teachers are now receiving training that a local person is paying for. They are keen to improve their teaching skills and their learning environments; the deputy headteacher had already

started to paint learning aids on her walls before we left.

I would love to encourage folk in the Connexion to commit a couple of weeks to one of our schools in Sierra Leone. It is a challenge but so rewarding!!



## Trustees General Report 15th April 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic our usual 3-day conference at High Leigh was cancelled this year. The Trustees are planning to hold a one-day conference on a Saturday in October, subject to the lifting of restrictions on mass gatherings. If all goes well, this will be held at one of The Connexion's churches. Full details will be released as soon as possible.

Trustees: Since our 2019 Conference Trustees have continued to visit and assist churches on a wide range of matters. As ever we were by turns impressed, humbled and blessed by their commitment to living biblically, preaching the Word and the astonishing array of work and outreach into local communities carried forward by our churches.

During the year, the Trustees continued the practice of holding meetings in various churches to demonstrate support and also take the opportunity to chat over lunch about the life and ministry of the church with those leading it. We met in St Stephen's Middleton, Bolney Village Chapel and Rosedale Community Church. We thank them all for their welcome and hospitality and plan to continue the practice of holding Trustee meetings at Connexion churches.

The mesothelioma case that featured in last year's report was taken over by Congregational and General who accepted liability and the Connexion's Trustees had no further involvement with it.

During the year advice was taken from the Connexion's solicitors, as to whether or how the central Connexion itself might become a CIO. Detailed advice received from them in February 2020 indicated that it would be possible to form a CIO without a requirement to amend the Scheme in any way. This meant the formation of a CIO whose primary purpose would be to "manage" the Scheme was considerably simpler than originally anticipated, but nonetheless still a complex task. At the time of writing detailed work was continuing on this matter.

Once again, we carried out the annual church survey online. We are grateful to David Lockett again for sending out the survey, analysing the returns and preparing today's presentation on them.

**Ministry and Education:** The Ministry Panel under the joint leadership of Rev. Ben Quant and Rev. Simon Allaby continued, comprising Rev. Simon Allaby, Gordon Hamilton, Rev. B. Quant, and Noel Vallely. During the year one interview was carried out and a candidate recommended to the Church.

The Connexion Ministers and Trustees met together in High Leigh on 14th - 15th November 2019. They were again joined by Dr Paul Woodbridge who acts as independent pastoral support for the Connexion's ministers. All Trustees and Ministers, apart from two who could not be there for family reasons were present. A full and honest discussion took place on the topic of women in ministry as promised during last year's Business meeting, conducted graciously and with generosity respecting differing theological perspectives between the participants.

This combined gathering represented another step in the process of bringing the Ministers and Trustees together into a closer collaboration in the interests of creating a shared and meaningful sense of direction, of ministry and mission leadership across the Connexion. It built on a similar although smaller gathering in November 2018 at Stanton House, Oxford, following which it was recognised that a wider and more established leadership gathering of this nature would be beneficial for the Connexion as a whole.

**Leadership Development** – Mentoring Scheme: The idea that the Connexion should develop a mentoring scheme for trainee pastors or those considering a call to ministry and wishing to test it emerged during the Ministers' and Trustees' November gathering. As a follow up to that idea by mid- February 2020 a possible scheme was in the early stages of being drawn up with one of our churches exploring what a detailed job and person specification might look like and what the associated funding for any such post might need to be. Discussions were ongoing at the time of writing.

**Broad Oak:** The fellowship continues to seek the Lord's will as to the pastoral vacancy at the church. During the year Peter Riddle and George Wiggins continued to support Broad Oak from Sheppey and build links between the two churches.

**Copthorne:** The church continues being ministered to by visiting speakers on Sundays and is again being supported by Gordon and Sue Hamilton. The fellowship at Copthorne continued during the year to seek the way forward as to the future leadership of the church.

**Mortimer West End Chapel:** The fellowship at Mortimer West End Chapel continues prayerfully to seek the Lord's leading as they consider an appointment to the pastorate. A shortlisted candidate was successfully interviewed by representatives of the Ministry Panel and was approved by the Trustees.

Although the Chapel offered the position, the Candidate was unable to confirm his acceptance of the post due to very difficult personal circumstances. At the time of writing conversations were continuing with the applicant.

**New Connexions High Barns;** Just before Christmas 2019 there was considerable press and media publicity about the stance taken by Pastor Keith Waters in relation to Gay Pride Marches. The Trustees shared Keith's concern about children potentially being exposed to nudity and overt sexual behaviour at Pride events. The feedback from the Connexion's Ministers in response to a consultation paper sent to them on behalf of the Trustees by Rev. Ben Quant confirmed that they too shared this concern.

Given the considerable national publicity around these matters and the differing capacities of Connexion Churches to handle such controversy if approached for comment, the Trustees felt unable to post this media coverage onto the Connexion website because of its links to other external organisations over whom they had no influence. In the Trustees' view it was deplorable that Keith was targeted so viciously for expressing his views and it highlighted that most regrettable feature of social media: where honest thoughts shared in good faith can be distorted, exaggerated and turned against the originator. It was because of this uncontrollable and unpredictable nature of internet and social media sharing that that the Trustees felt the Connexion, as a charity, must tread cautiously even though they deeply sympathised with and supported Pastor Waters' right to express his views.

**Shoreham:** The fellowship continued to be supported by Rev. Simon Allaby and Glynn Phillips as well as continuing to receive support from the Worthing Tabernacle, At the time of writing a candidate had been interviewed and was under consideration for appointment to the Pastorate.

**Cheshunt Foundation:** It is pleasing to report that we have continued to support ministerial training through the funds received from the Cheshunt Foundation. This year the main beneficiaries to be awarded support were:

1. Catherine Allen, Ely, Ridley Hall. Certificate in Theology (3/3years)
2. Dawn MacLure, Ely. B.A. Theology, London School of Theology (1/3 years)
3. Andrew Greenaway, Turners Hill, Diploma in Intercultural Studies (WEC), (1/1 years)

4. Simon Allaby, Bolney, Annual Evangelists' Retreat.

5. Jean Guerrero, New Connexions High Barns  
Kings Divinity School - Knowing Your Bible Course

During the year £24,962 was received from the Cheshunt Foundation, of which £12,000 was passed to the Sierra Leone Mission as a grant for Ministerial training. The Trust Deed of the Foundation states that grants are to be applied towards theological and related training and is open to applications for funding for the coming year.

A grant was awarded towards training for Ministerial Support and for the Ministers' and Trustees' gathering in November 2019. A grant was also awarded to help fund speakers at Conference and an ongoing grant to help Dr Paul Woodbridge provide one to one support for our ministers.

We also support Ben Quant (Wormley) – D. Min, at Spurgeon's College from Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion funding as they are Directors of the Cheshunt Foundation and therefore cannot be funded from Cheshunt Foundation grants.

As in previous years, should anyone wish to apply for funding we would encourage them to contact Rev. Ben Quant for an application form. The Cheshunt Foundation discusses grants for the coming academic year at their Trustees' meetings in May and September, so applications requesting funding for the academic year ahead must be received no later 1st June each year to give time for them to be assessed. This deadline is important because the Connexion's budget submission to the Cheshunt Foundation detailing the total grant to be requested for the entire year ahead must be prepared and approved in time for the Foundation's May Meeting. Applications submitted after the deadline are unlikely to receive funding for the coming academic year.

**Compliance:** Health and Safety. In February under the leadership of Glyn Phillips we issued an updated Connexion Health and Safety policy document. We thank Glynn for his work on these matters.

**Safeguarding:** Safeguarding guidance and advice continued to be offered under the guidance of Rev. Bethany Green and all churches are urged to ensure they monitor the actual implementation of their safeguarding policies.

**Finance and Governance:** The financial affairs of the Connexion continued under the leadership of our Treasurer Graham Squibbs. Yet again we are in his debt for the extraordinary dedication he brings to this task on behalf of us all and acknowledge his

exceptional grasp of the Connexion's finances and its legal complexities.

**Property:** As Trustee with oversight for property matters, we are grateful to Glynn Phillips for his time and expertise given to these often complicated matters during the year.

**Communication:** At the time of writing another editor for Voice was still being sought. The Connexion's website [www.cofhconnexion.org.uk](http://www.cofhconnexion.org.uk) continues to develop with increasing traffic and it is proving to be a useful and valuable means of helping the Connexion come together. Monitoring returns during the year again show a steadily increasing number of hits and return users.

**President:** Rev. Ken Hart has now completed his first year in office as President. (See his report) Ken along with Marion has been diligent in visiting churches and representing the Trustees. We thank both of them for their dedication and faithfulness in travelling to churches, for their constant encouragement and for their representation of the Connexion at other events. We pray God's continuing blessing on them as Ken enters the second year of his Presidency.

**Sierra Leone Mission:** The Trustees again note with thanks the dedication of all those on the SLM committee who worked for the success of the mission on our behalf under the leadership of their joint chair Ian Denyer and Tim Wells. We thank all who served on the SLM Committee.

**Archives:** Over the past year, the search for a permanent home for the Connexion's archival material was ongoing with the aim of securing a long-term home for these valuable historical records. This task continues. An opportunity arose with the East Sussex Archive which already hold a substantial amount of the Connexion's archives and had stated they would be willing to add complementary East Sussex materials from the Connexion to it early in 2020 and such materials from Margaret Staplehurst's house will be deposited there with other materials being transferred to the archive in Hailsham.

The Trustees wish to place on record their thanks and the debt of gratitude owed to Margaret who has cared for and administered this archive material in her home for very many years.

**On behalf of the Trustees:** Rev Simon Allaby, Rev Bethany Green, Mr David Lockett, Rev Ben Quant, Mr Rob Shotliff, Mr Graham Squibbs.

## Youth Conference, with a difference!

Since we were unable to meet at conference this year, we had a Youth Conference meetup on zoom. It was great to be able to catch up with friends from Rosedale, Wormley, St Ives and Turners Hill and unlike normal youth conference we were even joined by a pet dog! As well as being able to chat for a bit about what we were all doing during lockdown and playing a game of charades, Robson led us in a prayer and Bible study session on the theme of identity, looking at Genesis 1: 27 and 1 Samuel 16: 7. We're looking forward to when we can meet in person later in the year, but in the mean time it was great to see each other from our own homes.

Thanks,

**Charlotte Quant**

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*Kono School with their shoe bags*

## Interview with Sia Lovetta M'bayo 22nd June 2019



**Gordon:** What was your first impression of the UK?

**Sia:** My first impression was the quietness of travelling, you could not hear lots of people speaking when travelling and when you park, you pay directly to a machine and not to a human being. And having put the money into the machine, that money goes directly to the coffers of the government, that is the answer. We are tax payers in our country I don't really know what is going on, in our country prices are lifted up. In our country we manufacture palm oil in lots of different villages the price still increases, the seeds cost much, whereas you have to import it. Although we have to import rice. Cost of living in Sierra Leone is very expensive

**Gordon:** What do you think of English food?

**Sia:** English food, it is good, but not for me like sitting here, I am not used to English food.

**Gordon:** Not spicy enough for you?

**Sia:** I am not too comfortable with it but I manage it because I have something good come out of it.

**Gordon:** So you know what it is like when I come to Sierra Leone. I am used to English food but I have Sierra Leone food which is a little bit different.

**Sia:** Yes, I know. Even when you come over to us you accommodate us. When I come here they are friendly. In my school at Hastings Community College I have got used to most of the details as if I have been here for quite a long time. They are friendly and accommodating it is only the children, they are secondary school but after a few days I see smiles on their faces like maybe they want to accommodate me. Maybe they are afraid or they are shy they don't talk especially as that was going to be my last day at that school. Everyone was waving to me saying that they liked my dress, my dress is fine. Asking when will I be coming back. In the class rooms the differences are great.

Your technology is far above ours. All the materials necessary for the education you have here, because we are just managing. Although the private schools they have their facilities that is why their fees are much more than the government assisted schools. The government is trying but change takes time. Change cannot take place immediately it is going to be a gradual process and we pray for the reforms in Sierra Leone, and we, the Sierra Leonians are the only ones who can do it. If we can accept change then change will take place and that is always my prayer. We the Sierra Leonians need to change, everything is politicised by some people. They will see it through or they won't see it. If you take something that does not belong to you, you have to be accountable for it or it is a crime.

We need our core subject text books from first term to third term, this has to be supplied in the schools. Books should not be taken home, they are not your personal property, but we are to collect the books at the end of the term so that they can be used again. We make sure that we collect all books and keep them safe for the coming year. This is a five year programme.

**Gordon:** Is there something that you are going to take home with you in your head that you will be able to take to your school?

**Sia:** Of course, that is why we are here. Something that will bring change in your school, as well as your community. Then also the community will be developed. I want to give you an example: Those who went to us in February they took this management project, not that you have to go to the shop and buy those big baskets or buckets to be used as dustbins. Do you know what they told us, we use this five gallon tin shape if you have two different ones, you have the one for the papers and then you have another one, each class has two. We are taught that you go to my school at Allen Town as you enter the gate you will see by the class rooms everybody has their own waste management bins seated at the door post and as I have come here I have learnt that the children will be 'au fait' with what is going on in the entire world and not just what is happening in their community. They also teach psychology, it is used so that those children who have quicker thinking will come out with a solution, that I learnt in that school.

They ring bell for lunch and everybody goes into the queue, nobody will go standing in front of the next man. Even the Principle, I was really impressed, He too was in the queue, he waited for his turn until he was served and after eating everybody knows where to take their dishes. So when I went to the canteen I sat at the back and was observing this. After eating I follow suit, you are well organised, we have much to do back home.

**Gordon:** Today we are in Hastings in Sussex which is by the sea, did you have a swim in the sea?

**Sia:** No, we are not allowed to!

**Gordon:** Sia, God Bless, you will be able to read this in the Voice magazine.



*Sia Lovetta M'bayo*

## S.L.M. Golf Day 2019

Friday 20th September saw the 15th annual S.L.M. Golf Day and 20 players turned up at Horne Park Golf Club in Surrey to take part.

The overall winner was Kevin Borrett (2nd from left on photo) with 43 points. Second was Marcus Phillips with Trevor Hamilton third.

A thoroughly good day was had by all, the weather was perfect, the sun shone and £360 (just over Le4m) was raised for the Sierra Leone Mission.



## Reflections of a President in Isolation

In common with the majority of you, Marion and I have been in isolation since late in March. We've made the most of our enforced break by catching up on tasks in the garden and the house that we have promised ourselves for ages to carry out.

In addition there has been the weekly news and worship leaflet [including a quiz] for the members of Cradley Chapel – most of whom would be lost with the concepts of virtual church and Zoom

conferences. Steve Rickard and I alternate in producing a sermonette for the week.

As I have to check on the security of the building weekly, I do that on Saturday mornings, then visit our people with the leaflet – at a safe distance – and have a chat with each of them. When I first started this on March 21st, I was back in just over an



hour. As time has passed, the conversations have lengthened, and I'm back in time for lunch.

Don't get me wrong. I'm happy to have longer talks, and the conversations cover a range of topics. As far as possible I don't talk too much about the pandemic – they have enough of that on the television or radio – but, as the advert said "It's good to talk". I also notice that

several of them have taken on speaking to each other on the phone. I'm sure that strengthens the sense of fellowship and community.

I've also been reflecting on my first year of Presidency. It's been a year of alternating busy schedules

and quiet periods. Obviously, with the relaxing of restrictions very much up for debate at the moment, I've no idea which bookings for the rest of 2020 will be fulfilled as planned, but I thought you might like to know about the visits Marion and I made between May last year and this March.

It began with a double header weekend in May, arranged by Gordon Hamilton. We visited Wivelsfield on a Saturday for their anniversary, and then Cophorne on the Sunday. I preached on Saturday from the pulpit used by George Whitefield. That was an interesting experience, but the mantle of George didn't fall on Ken. We then moved on to Cophorne. We didn't realise how far removed the church building is from the town. In both places we had good conversations, and Gordon and Sue looked after us well.

In June we visited Eastbourne for the weekend their anniversary. We had the pleasure of staying with Dave and Phyllis Sweetman, but unfortunately were unable to meet with David Batchelor who was indisposed all weekend. We did meet with Elaine and the rest of the family though. A church lunch had been organised which again gave us the chance of meeting with and getting to know a number of the members. The journey back via the coast road was less memorable thanks to many areas of roadworks, but at least we spent a few hours in the New Forest before heading home.

November saw us running the gauntlet of the M5 to Manchester and our church at Middleton. I lost all sympathy with the idea of smart motorways, as we took an incredible time to get from the motorway to our destination. We arrived in time for evening meal by the narrowest of margins. Graham Squibbs and his family provided the hospitality for the weekend. Friday night was spent preparing things for the induction service on the Saturday afternoon. The building was filled for that occasion and there was a substantial tea afterwards, the gateaux also appearing for the annual quiz in the evening, and again after morning worship.

In January we made our shortest trip to Ebley Chapel in Stroud, and the care of Clive and Sandra Dale. We have been to this welcoming group several times over the years, so in many ways it was picking up from our visits. Once again we thoroughly enjoyed our time there and were glad to encourage the people in their life and witness.

March was the month of our most recent trip – the long haul to St. Ives in Cornwall. It's quite a thought that it's quicker as the crow flies from Malvern to St. Ives than it is by road – but it would be a good deal wetter.

We arrived on the Friday in preparation for a busy but fascinating weekend. After lunch on the Saturday with Tim Dennick and his family we went with them and a number of the members on a tour of their area of Cornwall, visiting churches to pray with and encourage them. We also drove to little towns and villages without an evangelical witness to pray for the Lord's intervention as He has done before in Cornwall. On the way back Janet O'Shea gave us a tour of that whole south western corner of the county which gave us a great overview of the beauty, the history and the needs of the area.

I preached on the Sunday morning and we really appreciated the time of worship. This was followed by a lunch of Cornish pasties – what else?

We travelled home on the Monday, looking forward to the three bookings we had already agreed for later in the year. Then, a week later came the lockdown, and we now – like you – are waiting in patience for what the Lord has prepared for us to do.

May the Lord bless you at all times and in every way – even if much of it seems to be restricted, it's never wasted time when surrendered to Him.



*Children enjoying some bread after Chapel service at Mile 91*

## **The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion**

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