

THE JOHN NEWTON PROJECT

Two years ago Nigel Pond introduced me to John Langlois, a senior elected member of the government in Guernsey, Channel Islands, and his wife Pat at the Cowper & Newton Museum's Cowper Bicentenary Service. Now, a comparatively short time later, The John Newton Project is being established as a Christian charity under John's chairmanship, with a special focus on 2007, the bicentenary of Newton's death.

We want to use this to publicise the works of Newton and the considerable contribution he made towards the reformation of society. Chiefly, we long to see a similar transformation of values in church and state come about in our lifetime and feel that the writings and example of Newton's very practical outworking of his faith could be a catalyst in achieving this.

We want to get Newton's story and rich spiritual insights more widely known through all forms of media. We are making plans to do this through literature, street drama, theatre, CDs and tapes, local and national events, radio, TV, films and, if at all possible, a blockbuster.

As part of this project I am transcribing *The Complete Works of John Newton*, which is expected to run into perhaps 15 volumes and will contain much previously unpublished material as well as annotations to the original and much shorter *Works*. We're looking for a suitable publisher for this.

Some of the material will also be going into individual books - for instance, extracts from sermons and hymns as thoughts for the day, into *365 Days with Newton*, for Day One Publications and *The Letters of John Newton to William Wilberforce*, for Joshua Press, Canada (whose Editorial Director, Professor Michael Haykin, wrote the biography of Newton and Cowper's contemporary John Sutcliff of Olney, *One Heart and One Soul*).

Also in line for publication is a pocket-sized information-packed book, *Travel with Newton*, complete with pictures, maps, tourist information and brief biography. This is being prepared for Day One's new series of light-reading travel guides and should be proof-ready next year. The series editor is Brian Edwards, author of the recently updated Newton biography *Through Many Dangers*.

The John Newton Project already has links with some two hundred interested people in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, South Africa and Sierra Leone. We distribute both a general update on the project's progress and, more frequently, a bi-monthly prayer letter. If you would like to receive either of these, or simply want to know more about the project, please do contact me at The Hill Lodge, Warwick Road, Stratford-on-Avon, CV37 0NP, tel 01789 298174, email MarylynnKR@aol.com. Our website will soon be in action - details of this will be given in the next issue of the Cowper and Newton Bulletin.

Quoting from a manuscript owned by the Cowper & Newton Museum, John Newton to William Cowper, November 1780:

"I wish to do something for the cause of Him who does all for me."

Marylynn Rouse