

OBITUARIES

JACOB OHIA ARWAODO

(13 September 1940 – 27 January 2003)

It is with deep regret that we announce the demise of a long-standing member of the Nigerian Field Society, Jacob Ohia Arwaodo. Ohia (bush) is the name given to a child born when his mother is on the move, usually on her way to market or the farm. Jacob was fondly called "Dr. Bush" by many of his friends, a very apt name for a man who had a deep love and profound knowledge of the flora of Nigeria. His skill as a taxonomist was acknowledged by both national and international bodies for whom he carried out various assignments. These include the Oshun Grove Support Group, the Niger Delta Environmental Survey, the European Economic Commission, the Organisation of African Unity, the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture and the World Bank.

A walk with Jacob was an education for a non-botanist. I remember a trip to Idanre when Nat and I were toiling up the steps in the side of the hill in the company of the energetic "Dr. Bush". From time to time he would dive off into the surrounding vegetation and emerge smiling some minutes later, holding a plant which he would identify, giving its Latin, Igbo and Yoruba names and its uses.

Jacob obtained his first school leaving certificate (Standard VI) from the Methodist Central School, Amawom, in 1957. In 1959 he was employed at the Agricultural Research Station, Umudike, as an assistant to the laboratory technologist attached to the Herbarium. He manifested a keen interest in botany, particularly taxonomy, and was sent for a training course at the Forestry Herbarium, Ibadan, in 1965. In 1967 he married Caroline Uzoma Ejirika, who bore him seven sons and three daughters. In 1970 he transferred his services to the headquarters of the Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria in Ibadan, and took an in-service training course at the Federal School of Forestry in Ibadan in 1975. He rose to the position of Chief Technical Assistant in the Forestry Herbarium before his retirement in 1994. He then took up a contract appointment with the Abia State University where he worked until his death.



Jacob was a staunch Christian and Sunday School Superintendent of the Methodist Church in Ndoro Diocese before he went to Ibadan. Always cheerful, he radiated energy and was never happier than when he was in the forest. Jacob was a devoted father and taught his children that hard work and the fear of God are the keys to success.

The Society extends deepest sympathy to Jacob's widow, children and all the members of his family.

– Pat Oyelola

Plant Taxonomy tends to be a neglected academic subject, despite its importance for biological work in the tropics. For example, in Nigerian natural high forest, between 50 and 150 different species of trees may grow on a single hectare (compared with ten or fewer species for a British forest) not to mention the many shrubs and herbs that grow under the trees. Taxonomic botanists with the requisite skills for identification are few, and this meant that even after retirement Jacob's services continued to be much in demand, and he was helping various projects in Eastern Nigeria and the Delta area. His like will not easily be replaced and he will be greatly missed.

– Joyce & Dick Lowe

A TRIBUTE

ALBERT ADAI ENTI 1921 - 2003

Albert Enti was born in Kumasi, Ghana, in July 1921 and became a distinguished, self-taught forest botanist and Chief Technician at the Ghana Herbarium, Legon.

For some 40 years I have had a great admiration and respect for Enti who came to study with me at Kew Herbarium for several months in 1958-9. His knowledge of tropical African plants, especially those of the forest, was gained by constant field-work coupled with herbarium study. He told me that after his primary schooling in Ashanti he joined the Forest Department as a guard in 1940. During the patrolling and cutting of boundary lines he became so interested in the herbs, shrubs and trees that he collected them for identification in Kumasi Forest Herbarium. Although his schooling was basic, he was a bright pupil and he quickly learned the Latin names of the plants. This, as well as his cheerful personality, endeared him to the British forest officers and he was in demand to help them, with their forest surveys.

In 1956 Enti was appointed forest botanist at Kumasi Forest Herbarium (KUM) where he stayed until 1964. He was then appointed Chief Technician in the Ghana Herbarium, (GH), Legon, where he worked with the well-known field botanist John Bartholomew Hall. Duplicates of his carefully prepared specimens are now in many of the world's herbaria.

Albert Enti remained at GH until his retirement, and even then he used to return to verify plants he had collected in connection with his business called Forestry Enterprises. His expertise was in demand by researchers in Britain and USA who required seeds, bark and other plant material mainly for their medicinal properties. He also published a couple of booklets on traditional plant uses. In my reciprocal visit to Ghana in 1982, Enti enthusiastically showed me many of the forests of southern Ghana, especially Ankasa Forest Reserve. As we approached this splendid reserve his excitement increased, and once inside the forest he demonstrated the trees with personal pride. Another day he explained in detail Bobiri Forest Reserve, which he had surveyed some 30 years before with C.J. Taylor, whose work *Synecology and silviculture in Ghana* (1959), is a classic. However, some forests were a shadow of their former glory and Enti was grieved to see them in decline or transformed into bush. He was always good humoured even when on one trip we were attacked by biting driver ants, necessitating our stripping off; he continued the trek dressed in underpants, walking boots and a large bee-keeper's hat complete with facial gauze.

Albert and Sussanah and their family continued to live near Accra, although he had managed to build two houses in Kumasi to enable his wife to be with her kith and kin after his demise. As a boy he had been brought up in the Methodist Church, becoming a lay preacher, generous supporter and founder of a church at the Kwabenga campus of Ghana University. During several further visits to Kew, Enti's enthusiasm was unbounded. He enjoyed our family Christmas, and at Chatsworth he exclaimed, "If man can make a garden like this, what was God's Garden of Eden like?" In London he found it difficult to believe that the Underground tunnels were not natural caverns. While standing in Parliament Square he became home-sick at the sound of Big Ben whose chimes were so well known to him from the BBC World Service. He attended a meeting of the Nigerian Field Society at Kew and even wanted to start a similar society in Ghana. As a Fellow of the Linnean Society he was thrilled to be given the right hand of admittance and always displayed his FLS with pride. After suffering several strokes, Albert Adai Enti died in Accra on 21 January 2003. He will be sorely missed.

– F. Nigel Hepper

Although Albert Enti was not a member of the Nigerian Field Society, this tribute is being published to recognise his contribution to botanical knowledge in West Africa. His career was, in many respects, similar to that of our own Jacob Ariwaodo (1940-2003).

– The Editor

KEITH WHITTARD NICKLIN (1946-2002)

Keith Nicklin was born on the 2nd September 1946. He read Anthropology at University College, London, and after his first degree gained a Master of Philosophy in Material Culture Studies. For most of the 1970s he was an ethnographer with the National Commission for Museums and Monuments in Nigeria. Subsequently, he was Curator of the Powell-Cotton Museum at Birchington, Kent, and from 1982-94 Keeper of Ethnography at the Horniman Museum, London. He then became Visiting Curator to the Horniman, which he combined with consultancies, lecturing and writing.



While in Nigeria, he was responsible for ethnographic research, field collection and museum development in Cross River State. In 1970 he rehabilitated the National Museum at Oron, which had been destroyed during the Nigerian Civil War. He was involved in training programmes in various parts of the country, and created a new national museum documentation system.

Although a specialist in the arts and material culture of the Cross River region of southeast Nigeria and southwest Cameroun, his interests extended into adjoining areas of the Niger Delta and Rio del Rey, and also into Ogoniland and Yorubaland. During his tenure at the Horniman Museum, and afterwards, he conducted fieldwork in West Africa, Kenya and Brazil.

He was a member of the Nigerian Field Society and served on the UK Branch Committee from 1993-96. In October 1995, he organised an excellent Branch Symposium on Arts and Crafts, held in the Horniman's Conservatory, where the speakers displayed their collections and handiwork (see *Niger. Fld.* 61: 72-73). Among his many publications are a number of articles in *The Nigerian Field* (listed below).

Keith died after a short illness on the 2nd September 2002, his 56th birthday. We send our sincere condolences to his wife, the anthropologist, Jill Salmons, and to their two sons.

– Joyce Lowe, 464a Bradgate Road, Newtown Linford, Leics, UK.

Keith Nicklin's publications in *The Nigerian Field*:

- 1973. Abang Isong, the Ibibio ceremonial wine-pot. **38**: 180-189.
- 1974. Review of "Nigerian Pottery" by S.Leith-Ross. **39**: 90-91.
- 1975. Agiloh, the giant Mbube xylophone. **40**: 148-158.
- 1976. Border incidents, 1914. **41**: 175-184.
- 1982. Fred G. Merfield and the Powell-Cotton Museum. **47**: 108-109.
- 1982. (with V. Ekpo) New archaeological sites in the Lower Cross River region. **47**: 45-51.
- 1983. No condition is permanent: cultural dialogue in the Cross River Region. **48**: 66-79.



Dr. I.I. Ero, Chairman of the Benin Branch, welcomes N.F.S. members to the A.B.M.