

SOCIETY REPORTS

ABEOKUTA BRANCH

Officers of the branch

Mr. A. A. Lawal	—	Chairman
Mr. J.O. Fatokun	—	Secretary
Mrs. N.B. Ogunbowale	—	Treasurer
Dr. M.A.O. Sotayo	—	Financial Secretary
Dr. (Mrs.) M.O. Dipeolu	—	Publicity Secretary
Mr. M.O.O. Oyatogun	—	Programme Manager

The membership strength of Abeokuta branch remained as reported at the last ABM, that is forty, although a lot of people indicated their interest in joining the Society.

Meetings

The Branch met thrice only after the last ABM and ever since then all efforts made to hold our normal regular meetings proved abortive. This was due to the tight schedule of some of the key officers of the society.

Excursions

The branch planned to visit Erin-Ijesha Waterfalls (Osun state), Idanre Hill (Ondo state) and Erinjiyan-Ekiti Sacred Fish Pond and Ikogosi Cold & Warm Water-spring (Ekiti state). The visit was scheduled for Friday, 8th–Saturday, 9th October, 2004 but we could not embark on the trip due to the mechanical fault developed by our hired vehicle. We therefore resolved to visit some places of interest in our locality. The places visited include:

1. A private Art Gallery at Ijemo, Abeokuta
2. Leventis Memorial Centre of Learning, Abeokuta
3. Oke-Itoku Spiritual Pond, Abeokuta

Misfortune

A notable member of the Branch, (Mr. Dara Adebimpe, OGTV) lost all his household property in a fire disaster that occurred overnight in the month of December, 2004. Even though nothing could be salvaged, we thank God for sparing the lives of all the family.

—J.O. Fatokun,
Secretary

BENIN BRANCH

Executive Committee

Dr. I.I. Ero	—	Chairman
Dr. M. Obazee	—	Vice Chairman
Dr. W.W. Modugu	—	Programme Officer
Mr. O.T. Aremu	—	Financial Officer
Dr. J.F. Bamidele	—	Secretary

Membership

Interest in the Society has continued to grow. The financial membership of the branch for the year is 43. Membership has been drawn from various backgrounds, viz. academia, the legal profession, medicine, the civil service, etc.

Activities

Activities for the year commenced in January with a well attended lecture titled "Bee keeping enterprise in Edo State" delivered by Chief Emosiogbai I. Edaewor of the Technology Incubation Center, Benin City. This was followed by a visit in February to one of the most modern Coca-Cola bottling plants, located in Benin City. In March, we visited the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Benin. We were conducted round the various units in the Department including Ceramics, Industrial Arts, Textile Design and Sculpture.

Our branch was well represented at the annual business meeting of the Society held in Lagos between 12th-14th March, 2004. This was followed by a lull in activities. We however went on an excursion to Songhai farm in Amukpe, Delta State in October. Songhai farm is an integrated rural development and entrepreneurship centre which offers training in the following areas: 1) fishing, (2) piggery, (3) poultry, (4) food processing, (5) snail rearing, (6) welding and fabrication, (7) animal feed formulation, (8) computer training and (9) hotel management.

Meetings

Our meetings are held in the Board Room, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Benin, Benin City on the third Thursday of each month at 2 p.m.

Journals

Members and non-members of the Society have continued to show great interest in the Nigerian Field Journal including back issues.

—Dr. J.F. Bamidele, Branch Secretary

LAGOS BRANCH

The Lagos Branch grew in terms of scope in 2004. Our goals have always been to help our members enjoy the nature and culture of West Africa, and to help sustain the Society beyond Lagos. To this we added a third goal which is to help foster eco-tourism near to Lagos. We made a direct donation to Okomu National Park to improve their trails within the forest. By upgrading the facilities and introducing our large membership as potential visitors to the Park, we hope to see growth in the number of tourists traveling there.

In respect of our second goal, it was our pleasure this year to host the Annual Business Meeting. With large numbers from Benin, Ibadan and Abeokuta, together with our own membership, we made up more than one hundred and twenty people on a cruise in Lagos harbour. We have also continued to host the Nigerian Field Society web site with pages for all of the Branches.

Under local one-day trips we started the year with a small group enjoying the Ileya festival in nearby Ijebu-Ode. We visited Abeokuta in July (35 participants). We had 49 on the Isashi canoe trip, and 21 made it all the way to Ikeja to hear Lagbaja perform through the night in Motherlan'.

For adventure there was our trip to Kajuru Castle Southeast of Kaduna, when half of the group had to lie down in front of the plane to prevent it from taking off without them! In October we took 10 members for three days of hiking deep into the Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park. Over Easter a group of twenty three made it driving across the Northeastern border to Waza National Park in Cameroon, with a side trip to Rumsiki in the Mandara Mountains

Between these two extremes can be counted a trip up North in May to seek the remote forest at Yartsamiya (sadly its best part is now gone). We had a long weekend touring Jos plateau taking in Vom, Kura Falls and Amurum Forest. In June we took twenty one members to IITA near Ibadan: everyone talks about the sundowners down by the lake on that trip. Then in November we maintained our annual visit to the Katsina and Kano Durbars (21 members). The final trip of the year saw eleven visit our partnered Eco-tourism location, Okomu National Park

We attracted 41 members to our AGM, and 39 to our annual Christmas party. Our talks were very popular with 28 at Hazel Chapman's talk on Montane Forests, 50 to hear Romeo Barberopoulos share his love for the Nomadic Fulani, and 92 to enjoy Pamela Watson's *Alone Across Africa on a Bicycle*

With all this on offer perhaps it was no surprise that we also grew in terms of size in 2004. Membership rose for the third successive year, reaching 150 at year end.

Robert Warren
Chairman

IBADAN BRANCH**Executive Committee**

Engr. John Morakinyo	—	Chairperson
Dr. E. Ekpo	—	Vice Chairperson
Mr. J. M. Usman	—	Executive Secretary
Mr. Steve Odidi	—	Treasurer
Mrs. Chris Bankole	—	Ex-Officio Member & Acting Program Secretary
Mr. E. Donatus	—	Assistant Secretary
Mr. A.A.A. Adesope	—	Membership Secretary
Mr. Chris Ajao	—	Ex-Officio Member

The financial membership of Ibadan Branch as at 31 December 2004 was 60.

Activities		Attendance
21 February	Annual General Meeting, election of Executives & dinner	18
24 June	Video show (Secret of the Pyramid)	12
29 June	Lecture: Termite infestation and control in forest and buildings by Elder E.M. Bayode	27
8 July	Lecture: Intersection, the careers of three West Indian women in colonial Nigeria, by LaRay Denzer (Northwestern University)	48
5 August	Lecture: Osun Yeyeo, Gender, power, history and cultural biography of the Yoruba Goddess, by Dr. Akinwumi Ogundiran (Florida)	55
19 August	Lecture: Nigeria—a developing or underdeveloping nation— Environmental archaeology, by Prof. Bisi Showumi (U.I.)	58
29 December	Annual end-of-the-year party and video show	20
8 January 2005	Video show	6

—Michael J. Usman
Branch Secretary

UK BRANCH

The UK Branch continues to flourish with a membership of 133. We would, however welcome new and particularly, younger members; those coming to the UK or returning who wish to keep in touch with the Society should contact the secretary. Application forms should also be with the secretaries of local branches in Nigeria.

2003

The spring meeting and AGM in Oxford was celebrated at the Mitre Inn with more recorded memories from members of their service in Nigeria. In June 31 members gathered in the Highlands at Balmoral where the Estate Forester, John Dobson, formerly a forest officer in Western Nigeria was our host. In September the Symposium on Nigerian Arts and Crafts at the British and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol was well attended. The lectures on this occasion have been published in the Journal. These events are usually beyond the purse strings of a branch and we are grateful to the Museum for providing the venue free of charge and to Dr Gibbs for his generous donation towards the cost of the seminar. The year was sadly overshadowed by the sudden and untimely death of our chairman Paul Tuley whose obituary appeared in the April 2004 Journal.

2004

The spring meeting started at Down House in Kent, the former home of Charles Darwin, now owned by English Heritage. This was followed by the AGM held in the local Golf Club. Members elected Liz Moloney to the chair and Sheila Everard as secretary after a minute's silence in memory of Paul Tuley. The summer meeting included a visit to St Alban's Cathedral and the museum containing remains from the Roman City of Verulamium. In September, 42 members and friends gathered in Rhayader at the Elan valley Visitors' centre. The ranger Phil Ward gave a talk on the Estate, bought by Birmingham City Council to supply water to the city; this included a spectacular walk into the narrow, dark, wet passage of the dam. After lunch, the group moved on to the Red Kite feeding centre at Gigrin Farm. On Sunday some stayed to visit the farm of Jo and Terry Mills who worked in Nigeria in the late seventies.

Future Events

AGM and Spring Meeting 7th/8th May 2005 Thorp Perrow Arboretum near Bedale North Yorks.

Summer Meeting 2nd/3rd July 05 - Eastbourne Sussex.

Autumn Meeting 26th September 05 - Derby.

AGM and Spring Meeting 22nd/23rd April 2006 Barnes Wildlife and Wetland Centre - London.

Summer Meeting June/July 06 - Chichester harbour.

Autumn Meeting September 06 - Bletchley Park.