

SOCIETY REPORTS

ABEOKUTA

Report not available.

ABUJA BRANCH

In June of 2006, the Abuja branch of the NFS formally came into existence. There was great excitement and we had abundant attendance at our first meetings. The club jelled very quickly.

We were able to put on our calendar several events, including in June a trip to Nok – the site of the 2000 year-old civilization, a trip to several craft markets in the area in July, a walk around famous Aso Rock in August, and a trip to the Cure Salee festival in Niger in September. We also joined the Lagos branch on the trip to the Osun festival in August.

At the same time, I put together our web site and started planning further events. Unfortunately, my health failed me, and I had to return to the States where I underwent treatment for a number of ailments in the fall of the year. Along with my illness, and the then upcoming Christmas and other holidays, our chapter went through a bit of a quiet period.

In the winter of this year, however, we emerged anew and were able to put 3 events on our calendar in March, including a hiking and camping trip in the Shere Hills near Jos, a Full Moon walk on the evening of the lunar eclipse, and a trip to Bida for Nupe handicrafts.

On March 20, we had our quarterly meeting, but because of a lack of quorum, we were not able to elect officers of our club. And, for this and other reasons, we are not able to send a representative to Ile-Ife, for which we are surely sorry. We will try to hold officer elections again at our next meeting, on the 12th of June 2007.

In the meantime, we have plans to put on our calendar events which include, Discovering SCUBA, a presentation on Namibia, and others, and we will welcome the Lagos club members who will come to Abuja in the middle of May – we are very excited to have you!

Our chapter is new and faces a number of challenges: a relatively small membership of about 30, a very high rate of turnover of persons in Abuja – the usual stint here is about 2 to 3 years, and the fact that as people visit a place and because of their relatively short time here they usually do not wish to go back to a place - they would rather visit a new place.

To overcome some of these issues, we have “liberalized” our event leading rules to allow

novice members to lead events with which they may have no experience as long as they state so – in NFS jargon, a reccy. And, we have placed on our calendar some events which fit the NFS ideals, but might not be led by an NFS member. Lastly, we encourage membership participation with a program of co-event leadership.

We are still a very young chapter, and Abuja is growing by leaps and bounds, and so we are optimistic about our future. We regret that we cannot join our friends in Ile-Ife, and wish you a wonderful time!

—Roman Szlam

BENIN BRANCH

The members of the executive committee of the branch include the following:

Dr. I.I.Ero	— Chairman
Dr. M.Obazee	— Vice-Chairman
Dr P.C. Kalu	— Programme Officer
Dr. O.T.Aremu	— Financial Secretary
Dr. J.F.Bamidele	— Secretary

The number of members in the branch remains stable but the monthly meetings were not regular. Most of the members are from the Universities and Research Institutes in Benin City environ. We are pleased to report that one of our members Miss. Lovina Onochie (now Mrs. Lovina Onwuakpa) wedded on the 12th of August, 2006; the Financial Secretary and the Programme Officer got their doctorate degrees during the year while the branch Secretary went to the University of Sussex, UK, on sabbatical.

Although a number of activities were planned for the year, we have decided to defer them till next year. These include Lectures by eminent personalities, visits to Iyayi Plywood Industry, Ososo Hill and Delta Glass Factory at Ughelli.

—Dr. J.F.Bamidele
Branch Secretary

IBADAN BRANCH

The members of executive committee of Ibadan branch include the following:

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

Annual Business Meeting (A.B.M.) was held on 18 March 2006 at Abeokuta and 8 members of Ibadan Branch attended, including four Ibadan members and four members of Councils.

A field trip was organized on Wednesday March 29 2006 to Federal College of Forestry, Ibadan, football field in order to sight and watch the great total eclipse of the sun which traversed half the earth. A member of the NFS Ibadan Branch, Mr. Chris Ajao, arranged with the Oyo State Ministry of Science and Technology to supply the Society some pairs of goggles to be used in viewing the sun. The Ministry gave us 30 pairs while members bought more because of the large turnout to sight the "August visitor". A total of 235 were present.

There was a video show titled "world's most successful predator" on Thursday 22 May, 2006 at Mrs. Chris Bankole's house, Bodija, Ibadan. Fifteen people attended. It was a very interesting and educating video.

The year was not that eventful, but we strongly hope that 2007 year will be more eventful and successful. On behalf of Ibadan Branch, I wish NFS a successful and fruitful deliberation at the Ife 2007 ABM.

—Usman J. Michael
Branch Secretary

ILE-IFE BRANCH

Membership

The financial membership of the Branch as at the last count was fifty-seven. It comprised the usual members and four new ones. The composition in terms of spread remained more or less as before, comprising mostly academic staff mainly from three Departments in the Faculty of Science (Zoology, Botany, and Natural History Museum), and the Departments of Fine Arts and Architecture. The catchment also includes the College of Education at Ila, and Bowen University, Iwo.

The Executive Committee remained the same, except for the the Treasurer.

Activities

On the whole, the activity level of the Branch was rather low. The main reason for this is the fact that many of the older members are retiring, while some others wer away on one leave or anoter, including many of our officials. However we succeeded in having a number of talks and outings.

The Branch suffered a great loss on May 2006 in the passing to glory of one of our most dedicated and consistent officers, Prof. (Mrs.) A.B. Durotoye, who was our Treasurer for over a decade.

—I.F. Adeniyi
Branch Secretary

LAGOS BRANCH

The Lagos Branch Committee

The Lagos Branch Committee is composed of 13 NFS members: the Campbells (Hugh and Robin, Co-Chairs); Robert Warren (Past Chairperson), the Van Triers (Wil and Paulette, Past Co-Chairpersons), Bob Griffith (Treasurer), Mike Newton (Membership Secretary), the Platas (Mario and Fatima, Web-master), the Barberopoulos (Romeo and Irene), the Barkers (John and Lade), Betti O, the Halls (Phil and Carolyn), Prof. Emmanuel Obot, the Snoxells (Veronica and Mark) and Matthias Wolandt.

In addition to the Committee, other members have played an important role in leading trips this year, including Vicky Baker, Lindie Rudover and Barbara and Andre DeLeebeck. The Committee hopes to continue to involve more members who are experienced travelers in Nigeria to lead trips.

We also are most grateful to the British High Commissioner for generously offering his residence for NFS talks, as well as to the Canadian Deputy High Commission and the Lagos

Yacht Club for the use of their facilities.

The Lagos Branch Program

In 2006 the Lagos Branch organized 38 trips, 35 of which were within Nigeria and three in neighbouring Ghana, Niger and Equatorial Guinea. In designing the program the Committee tried to appeal to a wide variety of interests, including nature and conservation (eg. Yankari National Park, hiking in Cross River, Okomo Forest), culture (eg. Fulani villages along the Niger River, the Osun festival in Osogbo; Stilt village) and sport and entertainment (eg. Lagos Polo Finals, Femi Kuti at the Shrine; Short Film Festival). There were also 7 talks/evening events by resident experts including Wole Soyinka, Jimi Solanke, John Barker and Robert Warren.

This year the Branch forged working partnerships with The Goethe Institute, Legacy, the African Book Group, and the Nigerian Conservation Foundation.

Membership

The membership grew by 39% last year for a total of 240 members, which represents approximately 400 people.

Finances

All the activities of the NFS are run on a break even basis, with the costs of trips divided equally amongst the participants. Committee members and Trip Leaders who plan and lead trips/events do so on a voluntary basis, so our overhead is very low. The fee per family per year is 2000 Naira, most of which goes towards supporting the National Council and its publication The Nigerian Field.

Priorities

The Committee has established six key strategic priorities for 2007, including:

- To continue to serve our members through a strong program of talks, trips, and experiences that include a balance of environmental interests as well as traditional and contemporary culture;
- To recruit additional people to coordinate and lead events and to assist with the website;
- To upgrade the NFS website, thereby providing information and promoting the exploration and study of the culture and environment of Nigeria and West Africa amongst people within Nigeria and around the world;
- To work with other Branches of the NFS, where possible, to strengthen their presence in their local communities;
- To encourage the contribution of articles to The Nigerian Field by our members;

- To support the work of organizations whose aims are consistent with the Mission of the NFS by building awareness through our website and other NFS activities.

UK BRANCH

Officers

- Ms Elizabeth Moloney — Chair until 2007
- Professor Rob Oldham — Vice-Chair (proposed chair from 2007)
- Ms Sheila Everard — Secretary
- Mrs Evelyn Murphy — Treasurer until 2007 (Geoff Partridge proposed from 2007)

The UK Branch activities began with a weekend in Barnes London on the 22nd/23rd April 06 where 27 members met for the AGM. This was followed by lunch at the nearby Wetland Centre, one of several in England begun at Slimbridge by the naturalist Sir Peter Scott, whose life sized statue graces the entrance.

We were blessed by a lovely warm Spring day and our visit to the various hides with their 'green' roofs included the display of a pair of great crested grebes engrossed in a ritual courting dance. An artificial sandbank has been created to encourage sand martins and this condominium was crowded with breeding pairs. Other areas recreate the wetland habitats of diverse regions around the world and are stocked with birds found naturally in these areas.

On Sunday, the group were led by our organiser, Nigel Hepper around the Isabella Plantation in Richmond Park. Originally enclosed by Charles Ist for deer, the park has acres of rolling grassland with extensive views over London. The Isabella Plantation is a twentieth century woodland garden from which deer are excluded. Beneath the oaks are spectacular banks of azaleas and rhododendrons; a stream and ponds attract waterfowl. We are grateful to Nigel Hepper for organising such a pleasant and interesting weekend.

The Summer meeting at East Head near Chichester west Sussex took place on 17th June 2006. Thirty five members gathered at the Harbour Chalet café at East Head car park before meeting our guide and National Trust warden Andrew Lawrence for a stroll of 2 miles around this site of special scientific interest (SSSI). Saved from development as a Butlins holiday camp by residents of West Wittering in 1952, this sandy spur is home to many rare creatures, including silver spiny digger wasps. Constantly moving as the sea pounds the shore the dunes are now at right angles to the position recorded in 1786.

After a well earned lunch the party moved north to the Roman Place at Fishbourne where excavations have revealed the largest domestic Roman building unearthed in Britain so far. A protective building has been erected over the north wing where visitors can view the

spectacular mosaics in comfort. A museum displays Roman objects found during excavations and includes a sculpted marble head, possibly of a one time owner of the palace, King Togidubnus and a beautiful onyx cameo with an image of a racehorse. Outside formal gardens have been planted to show plants which may have been grown in the palace.

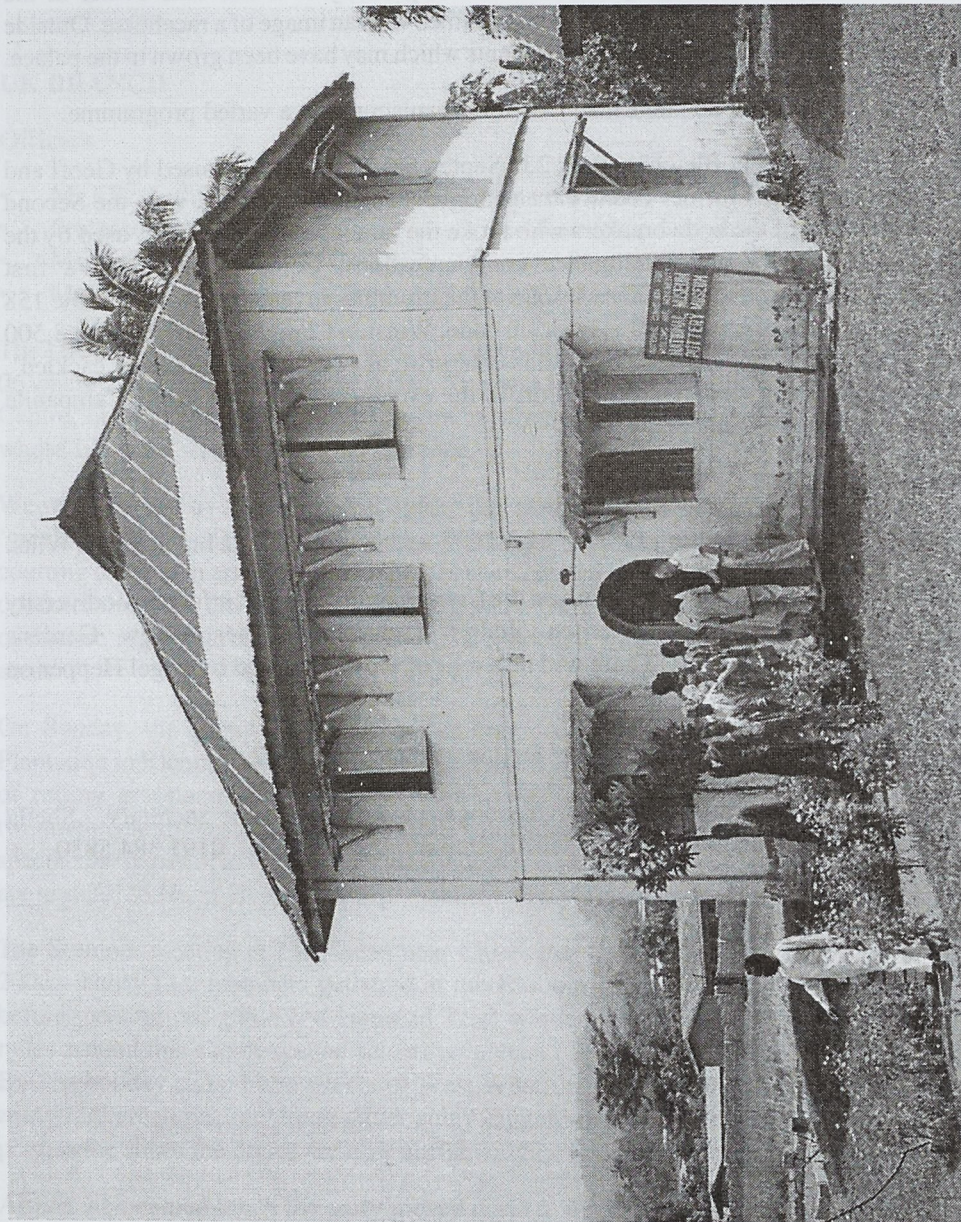
Our thanks go to Raymond and Lilian Coe for organising such a varied programme.

The Autumn Meeting at Bletchley Park 23rd September 2006 was organised by Geoff and Dinah Partridge. This former country mansion—codenamed Station X was the Second World War home of the code breakers who broke the famous Enigma cypher, used by the Germans for military and intelligence communications. Colossus, the world's first programmable electronic computer was one of the machines invented to overcome the 158 million to 1 chance of breaking this intricate code. Winston Churchill described the 8,500 people working in complete secrecy on this enterprise as 'The geese who never cackled'. This most interesting day was rounded off in the evening by a dinner at the Campanile Hotel attended by 29 members.

Programme for 2007

- AGM and Spring meeting 19th/20th May 2007- at the Spread Eagle Inn Stourton Wilts.
- Summer Meeting – A Symposium on the Conservation of the Rainforest Biodiversity in SE Nigeria and SW Cameroon. Jodrell Bank Lecture Theatre Kew Gardens Saturday 23rd June 2007. There will be a tour of the gardens led by Nigel Hepper on Sunday.
- Autumn Meeting – Sheffield Park, Sussex – 6th October 2007.

For information about membership or meetings, please contact the secretary, Sheila Everard at 3, Hill Meadows, High Shincliffe, Durham DH1 2PE Tel. 0191 384 5830



19 Nov 1989 A.B.M. at life. Visit to the Pottery Museum. Photo: Dick Lowe

NIGERIAN FIELD SOCIETY

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ending 31st December 2006

RECEIPTS

2005.		2006
£		£
1,556.	Ordinary subscriptions, and donations	1,385
200.	2005 Corporate subscriptions	210
475.	2006 Corporate subscriptions	510
126.	Sale of back numbers	23
63.	Tax refund	—
30.	Advertisements	—
<u>422.</u>	Interest	<u>380</u>
<u>2,872.</u>		<u>2,508</u>

PAYMENTS

429.	Postage	235
99.	Stationery, photocopies & computer media	1
2,000.	Printing	1,750
22.	U.K. Branch subscriptions	25
<u>10.</u>	Refunds	<u>10</u>
<u>2,560.</u>		<u>2,021</u>
<u>312.</u>	Excess of Receipts over Payments	<u>487</u>

BALANCES as at 31st DECEMBER 2006

STATEMENT OF FUNDS

21,181.	Opening balances at beginning of year	21,493
<u>312.</u>	Excess of Receipts over Payments	<u>487</u>
<u>21,493.</u>		<u>21,980</u>

CASH AT BANKS

National Westminster Bank:		
2,418.	Current Account	2,525
Halifax plc:		
16,211.	Main Fund	16,570
<u>2,864.</u>	Prize Fund	<u>2,885</u>
<u>21,493.</u>		<u>21,980</u>

Notes: Income was less than last year, but payments were also less, because only one issue of the journal was distributed in 2006, (the second issue of 2005). As a result, excess of receipts over payments was higher than last year. It is expected that postage will be correspondingly more next year.

—Dr Joyce Lowe, Council Member Resident in U.K.

THE NIGERIAN ACCOUNT
January to December 2006

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Opening balance as at January 2006	495,348
INCOME	
Branch subscriptions	
Ife for 60 @ ₦600	36,000
Lagos for 260 @ ₦500	120,000
Abeokuta for 20 @ ₦600	12,000
Abuja for 21 @ ₦500	10,500
Ibadan (2005)	4,700
Individuals	3,000
Corporate subscriptions	6,000
Journal sales	11,900
Cards	900
Transfer £1750 @ ₦220	385,000
Subtotal	590,000
EXPENDITURE	
Oluben Printers for 700 of vol. 71 (1 & 2 together)	117,700
Lawyer (50% part payment)	20,000
Idea Konsult, transparencies	3,600
Editor's miscellaneous expenses	660
Editor's Honorarium	25,000
Typesetting (Secretary)	14,000
President's Imprest	10,000
Secretary's Imprest	10,000
Editor's Imprest	10,000
Contribution to Ife Branc	10,000
Bank charges	5,000
Total	225,960
SUMMARY	
Opening balance	495,348
Income	590,000
Expenditure	225,960
Balance	859,388

— Modupe Ladipo, National Treasurer