

The Oxford and Cambridge Club of Nigeria

President's Report AGM 2016

The Metropolitan Club, Victoria Island
Wednesday 24 February 2016 at 6:30pm

Distinguished Past Presidents, Past Officers and Ordinary Members of our great Club, a warm welcome to each of you here present at the Club's 2016 Annual General Meeting held today, 24 February 2016 at the prestigious Metropolitan Club, Victoria Island, Lagos.

With profound humility, it is once again my turn to present to you the President's Report and on this occasion, I present the report for the years 2014 and 2015.

I am pleased to address you on the second year anniversary of the Election of the 2014 Executive Committee. The Term, on the whole, turned out to be remarkable years for our Club. With the enthusiasm of the Executive Committee, the support of the Members and acceptance by the Public at large, we were able to continue the good work of previous years and put Oxbridge Nigeria firmly on the map again!

Membership Update

The Membership continues to grow and remains strong. Over the two years, the Club has been able to further re-ignite interests from former members and also attracted new ones. We have currently on record approx. 230 active and verified members (up from approximately 186 as at end of 2013).

Further, the Club's thorough and vigorous membership screening process has kept our Membership Secretary, Ms Adeola Egbeyemi, very busy over the last two years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms Egbeyemi for our patience and diligence in ensuring that our Database is not only upto date but reflects the true status of our membership.

In this regard, it is perhaps no coincidence that we are seeing a number of our members occupying public office and are happy to associate with the Club. I am pleased to report that a number of our alumni have been appointed by the President of Nigeria to significant posts within the new Administration. Kindly join me once again in congratulating the following distinguished members and wishing them all the very best in their new appointments:

- Alhaji Abba Kyari (Wolfson College, Cambridge) – Chief of Staff to the President;

- Mr Geoffrey Onyeama (St John's College, Cambridge) – Minister for Foreign Affairs
- Senator Udoma Udo Udoma (St. Catherine's College, Oxford) – Hon Minister for Budget and National Planning;
- Professor Mahmood Yakubu (Wolfson College, Cambridge and University of Oxford) – Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Subscriptions

I would like to highlight the fact that subscription payments are very much on the increase (even if we take into account the new rates) with over N1,350,000 paid in 2014 and N1,425,000 paid in 2015. Notwithstanding this encouraging trend, I still would like to put on record that it is necessary for Members to pay up promptly to help meet our funding demands.

Update 2014 and 2015

2014 saw the Club stage two Oxbridge Business Fora with Mrs Yewande Zacchaeus (CEO, Eventful) and Mr Charles Conn (CEO and Warden of Rhodes Trust) respectively, The May Ball with Bashorun J.K. Randle CFR as the Guest of Honour and we rounded off the year with a Garden Party hosted by Prof Fidelis Oditah QC, SAN at his residence in Ikoyi, Lagos.

2015 was certainly a remarkable year for our Club. We started the year with the inaugural Oxbridge Debate held in March and chaired by Professor Bolaji Akinyemi CFR, followed by the May Ball with Mrs Oby Ezekwesili as the Guest of Honour and we ended the year with two great events in December – the Cocktail Reception hosted by the British Deputy High Commissioner, Mr Ray Kyles, at his residence in Ikoyi, Lagos and the end of year Garden Party hosted by Dr Wale Babalakin SAN at his residence in Victoria Island, Lagos.

The Oxbridge Debate

The Club successfully held its inaugural Oxbridge Debate on Tuesday 24 March 2015 at the Muson Centre (Agip Recital Hall) Onikan, Lagos.

Chaired by former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prof. Bolaji Akinyemi CFR, the event witnessed an impressive turn out as the attendance comprised notable members of the public, students from the University of Lagos (UNILAG), members of Oxbridge Club of Nigeria and the media.

Professor Akinyemi ably set the scene with his Paper – ***'Where Are The Social Scientists?'***, which generated a separate debate in the media in its own right! The Oxbridge Debate allowed pertinent issues concerning Nigeria to be brought to the fore with some of the

country's erudite lawyers and economists debated on "***Nigeria, Democracy and the Economy.***" The debaters were Dr. Bright Okogu, DG, Budget Office of the Federation; Mr. Demola Akinrele (SAN), Senior Partner, FO Akinrele & Co; Dr. Ayo Teriba, CEO, Economic Associates and Prof. Fidelis Oditah (QC, SAN), Senior Partner, Oditah & Co., whilst the moderator was Prof. Konyin Ajayi (SAN), Managing Partner of Olaniwun Ajayi LP, all members of the club.

I sincerely hope that The Oxbridge Debate will be the last limb of the trilogy of events (in addition to The Spring Lecture and The May Ball) which defines The Oxford and Cambridge Club of Nigeria.

BDHC Cocktail Reception

The newly appointed British Deputy High Commissioner to Nigeria, Mr Ray Kyles, hosted the Club to a Cocktail Reception on 4 December 2015 at his residence in Ikoyi, Lagos. The well attended event presented an opportunity for members of The Oxford and Cambridge Club of Nigeria to meet Mr Kyles and also engage with him in an interactive session.

In addition to members of the Executive Committee, notable Alumni who attended the event included Prof Bolaji Akinyemi CFR, Dr Greg Ero, Prof. Bomi Ogedengbe,

Prof Fidelis Oditah QC, SAN and Prof. Chimele Abengowe (all Oxford) and Dr Patrick Dele Cole OFR, Prof. Osato Giwa- Osagie, Dr Bolu Akin-Olugbade, Mr Demola Akinrele SAN together with two former Club presidents, Dr Eyimofe Atake SAN and Mr Lawrence Fubara Anga (all Cambridge).

On behalf of the Club, I had the honour of welcoming the Deputy High Commissioner to Nigeria and also introduced him to the activities of the Club. Mr Kyles, in response, expressed his profound appreciation to the Club for honouring his invitation and very much looks forward to continuing the excellent relationship between BDHC and Oxbridge Nigeria.

May Ball

With excellent coordination by the May Ball Committee, chaired by Mr Kunle Adebisi, we held two successful May Balls in June (as tradition dictates) at The Metropolitan Club, Victoria Island, Lagos.

The 2014 May Ball, in celebration of the 100 years of the creation of Nigeria and tagged the '***Unity Ball***', was held on 21 June 2014 whilst the 2015 May Ball tagged '***Highlife***' was held on 6 June 2015.

The May Ball was well received by members and guests alike with both events fully sold-out. Bashorun J.K. Randle CFR, renowned Accountant and Political Commentator,

was the Guest of Honour in 2014 and Mrs Obiageli Ezekwesili, former Minister for Education, was the Guest of Honour in 2015.

In his Toast to the Club, Bashorun J.K. Randle, took us down memory lane giving us a thorough account of Oxbridge alumni of yesteryears and their invaluable contribution to the development of Nigeria. Mrs Ezekwesili, who in her Address, gave a first-hand account of the plight of the Chibok Girls and also took the opportunity to remind us all not to neglect our civic responsibilities to our beloved Nation and to ourselves.

Mr Kunle Adebisi, with his most capable sub-committee members, comprising Ms Enoho Paul-Ebiai, Ms Bie Cookey, Mr Onazi Aboh, Mr Lanre Fatimilehin and Mr Uche Okoli in 2015 and in 2014, Mr Uche and Mrs Folake Elias-Adebowale, did the Club very proud on two successive years and I take this opportunity to thank each of them for their tireless work.

Relationship with Oxbridge Alumni Group

During the course of the last two years, we have been able to establish strong ties with the Alumni offices of Oxford University and Cambridge University.

Cambridge University has extended an invitation to the Group for its Alumni Weekend held in September of every

year. Ms Sesu Tilley-Gyado and I honoured the invitation in 2014 and met with Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, the Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University.

Community Projects

The Executive Committee has sought to formalize the Club's social responsibility initiatives by focussing on Education.

The Club continued to support the British International School, Lekki Careers Forum initiative. On 13 March 2014 and 18 March 2015 respectively, members of the Executive Committee participated in the School's Careers Forum Day mentoring secondary school students.

End of Year Garden Party

Continuing the tradition of holding the Garden Party as an end of year event, Professor and Mrs Fidelis Oditah QC, SAN hosted members of the Club at the 2014 end of year Garden Party which was held on 20 December 2014. The Oditahs, who generously opened their Ikoyi home to us, entertained members of the Club with copious amount to eat and drink well into the night. This was a most wonderful Garden Party in one of the most picturesque and beautiful garden in Ikoyi!

The 2015 Garden Party provided a great ambiance for family, friends and spouses of members of the Club to come together to make merry, unwind and enjoy good music along with delicious food and drink. Held on 19 December 2015, the Garden Party was hosted by Dr. & Mrs. Wale Babalakin SAN at their residence in Victoria Island, Lagos (actually, no stones were left unturned by our Hosts!).

Gone too Soon...

Sadly, we also bid farewell to the following members of the Club during the period:

- (a) Mr Peter Carter - 2 April 2014***
- (b) Professor O. Adewoye – 20 May 2015***
- (c) Professor Emeritus Olumiyiwa Awe – 3 May 2015***
- (d) Dr (Mrs) O. Abisogun-Alo – 13 June 2015***

To other members whose passing during 2014 and 2015 which we are not aware of, our thoughts are with their respective families as well.

May all their souls rest in perfect peace, Amen.

Social Media/Website/Newsletter

We now live in the age of social media and you can follow us on Twitter, look us up on LinkedIn and, perhaps the best stats of all, 81 people Like Us on Facebook!

In addition to the upto date information on our website, www.oxbridgenigeria.com, our Editor, Mr Michael Orimobi, published a newsletter in October 2014.

Sponsors/Partners

Over the period, we were very fortunate to establish strong partnerships with leading organizations in Nigeria and through which, we were able to stage the various events. I thank StanbicBTC, Airtel, FBN Capital, First Bank and Sovereign Trust for their generous support of the Club over the years.

Looking Ahead...

At the 2014 AGM, I recommended three major milestones to the Membership for consideration and, perhaps, also a challenge for the future! I am pleased to report that we managed to achieve two out of the three goals set:

- (a) New Constitution - led by both VPs, Dr. Timi Austen-Peters and Mr. Uche Okoli, I am pleased to report that significant work has been done to draw up a New Constitution reflecting the current aspirations of our Members and also providing a platform for ensuring a pipeline of future leaders of our Club. Draft of the constitution will be shared with members for deliberations and hopefully adoption in due course;
- (b) Funding structure for the Club - traditionally, and as most of you will recall, the Club has been funded through membership subscriptions and largely from members' donation. I pleased to report that the Club has added another layer of funding through unobtrusive corporate sponsorships. In the last few years, we have been able to generate in the region of N10,000,000 to support the Club's activities.

As always, we need to set ourselves goals to ensure the Club continues to grow. In this regard, I am again putting on the Table the following key initiatives which

I believe the Club needs to focus on over the coming years:

- (a) Permanent Clubhouse/Premises;
- (b) Deepen our Community based Projects;
- (c) Deepen our relationships with the two Great Universities and other Alumni Groups in Africa and beyond;
- (d) Implement a structured Scholarship program to enable Nigerians study at Oxford University and Cambridge University; and
- (e) Ensuring that the Club continues to be the platform for Thought Leadership within Nigeria.

Thank you

Finally, before I close, I really must thank the entire Executive Committee – Mr Uche Okoli, Dr Timi Austen-Peters, Mr Michael Orimobi, Mr Ike Chioke, Ms Adeola Egbeyemi, Mr Kunle Adebisi, Prof Bomi Ogedengbe, Ms Nkiru Asika and Ms Sesu Tilley-Gyado, for putting up with the relentless pursuit of excellence and, of course, their belief in the vision – without you, we would not have been able to achieve anything.

I also thank the entire membership for their continued support, kindness and trust reposed in me. It is not possible to list all individuals by name however, it is important that I say a special thank you to a few people nevertheless who have shown great support and wise counsel during the Term (I emphasize in no particular order) – Prof Theo Ogunbiyi, Prof Anya O. Anya, Prof. O. Fafowora, Dr Mofe Atake SAN, Prof Bolaji Akinyemi CFR, Dr Greg Ero, Prof O.O. Giwa-Osagie, Dr (Prince) Bolu Akin-Olugbade, Mr Demola Akinrele SAN, Mr Sola Abudu, Mr Dele Martins, Mrs Folake Elias-Adebowale, Dr Gbolahan Elias SAN, Mrs Yewande Zaccheaus, Dr Bola Kalejaiye, Mrs Sola Fagbure, Mrs Yemi Anyanechi and Prof Fidelis Oditah QC, SAN.

I Thank You.

Akinfela Akoni

President

24 February 2016