

## KAY WILLIAMSON EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION (KWEF)

**Roger Blench**

### **What I have been doing**

Following Kay's death I went to Nigeria to sort out her papers and books. These were packed as far as possible into tin trunks (at least the most valuable ones) and selected items as per her will were shipped to Prof. Alagoa, Chinyere Ohiri-Aniche and myself. I then spent some time during this visit try to sort out the most important unpublished documents Kay left. I also cleared Kay's house in Kaiama of any documents of importance, though it turned out that these were mostly minor. As you may know, the Egberipou family, to whom Kay left the house, decided they didn't want it and it has been returned to the University. The problem is that it is now in a different State from UPH.

As you will be aware there is a long running saga concerning the ultimate fate of Kay's books and papers in Nigeria. One reason for packing up the books was the uncertainty about Mekuri being allowed to keep the house where they are stored. It seems that his *de facto* possession has worked out. However, the books are not easily accessed, which is clearly unsatisfactory. Whether the much-touted library will ever come about I doubt.

During the following months I converted all the files to a standard modernised format and identified all the outstanding gaps. The conclusion I reached is that none of her major works can be published without further field data collection, something Kay was aware of. We have agreed that these works should be published to international academic standards. This is a complex task and my first hope was that this could be done by Kay's former colleagues.

I then returned to Nigeria in July, and contacted all the various individuals with Kay had been working with and gave them printouts and computer files of all the documents I had been working on. I advanced money to some individuals and assured others that money would be forthcoming once work was under way.

I then came back to Nigeria again in December; a disappointing experience. With the sole exception of Barau Kato, there had been no progress on any projects. This is not uncommon in Nigeria; people work with people and they don't really work on abstract ideas. I spent more time going around trying to ginger people up.

I was back in August this year and made a further round with increasing despair. No progress.

I have since put up on a fledgling website as much of the draft materials as possible and have people around the globe thanking me for doing this. But none of them has actually put in any helpful work.

I have now concluded that the only way to get this done is to physically go to Port Harcourt, sit in town, set up a mini-office and work directly with the various committees, individuals etc. and make actual trips to the relevant villages. This is less than ideal but I'm afraid nothing else will work.