

Supper with the President - Synopsis

Supper with the President is an anthology of nine different African stories recorded in Ian Mathie's notebooks during his years working in the dark continent as a rural development officer. The selection includes four rather unusual meals with different presidents - Moussa Traoré, Leopold Senghor, Etienne Eyadema and Mobutu Sese Seko.

Together with these exceptional encounters, he tells of a dramatic train ride where he acquired a one eyed goat. There was a sorcerer who followed him and a colleague in real time down the length of a whole country without any visible means of transport.

His friend Godfrey Akempula was a man who raised a herd of tame elephants and made them work to help Ian build reservoirs in their game park home. The collection also includes the tale of how an Australian named Bruce helped save the day when Ian rescued a fellow commonwealth citizen, whilst the British Embassy were preoccupied with parties to celebrate the Queen's birthday.

Finally, there is a journey to the Taoudéni salt mines, deep in the Sahara, with a camel train manned largely by slaves who were more than content with their lot.

This is a fruit salad of different tales from across West and Central Africa which brings to life a bygone era, with people little known outside their own countries, and places and events now fading into the mists of history. The imagery is vivid, the events and people are exciting and best of all, the events all happened.