

DUMELA



Newsletter from Botswana Sweden Friendship Association No 2/2017

Dear BOTSFA members

BOTSFA's ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING came and went, leaving us to focus on other demands for our time for the rest of the year. Sweden is getting ready for summer, which seems to be dragging its feet, while Botswana is happily harvesting the crops that came as a result of the heavy rains that fell at the beginning of the year. I was in Botswana in April and could not get over the happiness that the rains had brought to the people. I came back to a slow evolving spring weather in Sweden. If there was a magic one could do for my two home countries, I would choose rain for Botswana and many more days of sunny summer for Sweden.

I am writing this at a time when my spirits are low. The loss of two BOTSFA members and Botswana friends, Ulla Odqvist and Ove Andersson, left many of us who have known them deeply saddened.



Thanks to Honorary Consul Kent Nilsson and the visit by author



Alexander McCall Smith to Stockholm, this issue of Dumela has some lighter readings.



From Annual General Meeting 2017



Welcome to BOTSFA!

MEMBERSHIP FEES

- Individual: SEK 175
- Family: SEK 300 (incl. children up to 15)
- Student: SEK 100
- Institution: SEK 500

Plusgiro 85 10 39-8, or Bankgiro 428-6472

For an update of records, please send an e-mail to AndersHj@botsfa.nu if you have changed contact details or are paying as a new member.

visit us on www.botsfa.nu



A dear friend of Botswana passes on ...

On April 5, 2017, Ulla Odqvist, longstanding member of BOTSFA and former chairperson of the association passed away, aged 70.

Ulla was a career diplomat whose assignments took her to China, Angola, Thailand and Botswana, among other countries. She is survived by her two daughters, Charlotte and Karin, two grandchildren, three sisters and their families.

In 2011, Ulla published a book »Min UD-Krönika« –*My Foreign Affairs Chronicle*, in which she has a chapter on the country that she loved, Botswana. The following is a translation (from Swedish) of an extract from her 15 pages' chapter on Botswana. She documented part of her stay in the country as follows:

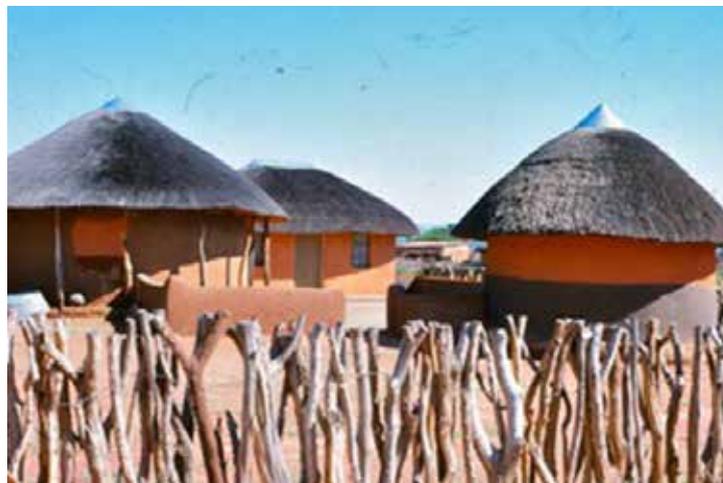
During the time in Botswana I gained significant personal development, both in relation to my work and socially. I managed to balance between my work and being a single mother. Gladys and Anna [house-helpers], of course, ensured that the household worked well and that Charlotte was picked up from the day-care. The help at home also made entertainment more manageable.

Small embassies tend to demand that one takes care of everything. The Ambassador gave me significant responsibility and let me take part in the reporting to the Swedish Foreign Ministry. He was a great mentor. There were times though when it was tough not to have anyone to consult with or refer to in emergency situations. I experienced that when Swedish residents in Lesotho, where Ambassador K-G Engström was accredited, phoned to request an evacuation as a result of rumours of an expected invasion from South Africa. I contacted the Foreign Ministry in Stockholm but got the response that—it was we on the ground that had a better judgement of the situation. So it was only to hold the bull by the horns! I encouraged the Swedes to maintain a close and tight contact with the other Nordic representatives in Maseru and, of course,

with me in Gaborone. There was in the end, no evacuation and I could take a deep breath.

Development assistance to Botswana was being handled by the embassy's SIDA department, its staff, in case of need, were of great help to me. Consular matters were few, except for renewals of passports. Swedes were in Botswana to work, not on holidays, and none lost his/her passport, there weren't any accidents, but I remember one person who rapidly had to go to Pretoria for medical treatment by a special plane, which was arranged by the Embassy. Administrative matters were taken care of by the Embassy assistants, Elizabeth Åkesson and later her successor Eva Benckert. I participated, with pleasure, in the short wave radio communications with the Foreign Ministry. All staff

posted to the Embassy and SIDA office took turns to go on courier errands to Pretoria in South Africa. I took Charlotte with me on one of the trips, which raised curiosity and surprise among white people. How could I as white be walking around with a dark-skinned child? Two elderly white women were so curious that they actually came forward to ask whose



child it was. I could see that they couldn't digest or believe me when I answered clearly that she was mine. At the passport control on the South African side, there was similar curiosity – who is the mother. I responded by saying that they should ask Charlotte. We were then allowed to pass.

I learnt to know many Batswana, the people in Botswana. They were natural, friendly, generous and happy. There was never a problem to socialize. Trips to the bush exposed me to nature and I learnt to have enormous respect for nature from the experience with the elephants, buffaloes and other wild animals, in a world where nature's law rules. But maybe I could have learned something, even of lions had I only had the luck to meet them!

Ove Andersson 1934 – 2017

BY Sixten Larsson



Our dear friend Ove Andersson has passed on after a period of health problems.

We, Ove's former physical planning colleagues, are privileged to have known Ove and to have worked with him in Botswana. He was an excellent architect, a town planner and an inspiring leader. We will also remember him for

his great sense of humour both as a colleague and among family and friends.

Ove was born in Stockholm and grew up on Älgö in Saltsjöbaden. Ove's mother was from a fisherman family from Älgö. His father was a builder and Ove soon picked up the skills in construction and carpentry. He studied Building Engineering in Stockholm. He then left for the USA where he studied architecture at Berkley, California, and was awarded a Degree in Architecture in 1963. Following some years as an architect in Stockholm he was recruited by UNDP as urban planner and stationed on the British Virgin Islands, West Indies, in 1969. In 1976 he moved to Botswana assigned by Sida as Principal Planner to the Department of Town and Regional Planning (DTRP).

Ove spent eight years in Botswana, ending his assignment as Director of DTRP. As Director, he was successful in promoting a more active role of the department in establishing a training program for Botswana trainees. His methods and approaches were both creative and progressive. By the time Ove left Botswana in 1984 the staff of DTRP consisted mainly of graduate planners of Botswana origin and a large number of planning students. Returning to Sweden, Ove continued to be involved in planning projects in Botswana through his position as Director for Swedeplan, and in that way he significantly contributed to bringing localization of the planning profession in Botswana to completion in 1994.

Ove's professional achievements are admirable, but his contributions included much more. He was a skillful musician. He started a successful jazz band »Gaborone Village Stompers« which entertained in bars and restaurants. He wrote many short stories for the Sida Newsletter, in which he philosophized about the absurdities of the life of Swedish expatriates.

We are many colleagues and friends that will remember Ove with appreciation and gratitude. We are grateful for the good example he provided us in life and at work.

Dumelang dear Botsfa members!

Botswana autumn has arrived after the most pleasant summer in a long time. The rains brought cool weather and this year the summer has been enjoyable with temperatures below or around 30°C. It has also been amazing to see the recovery of the bush after years of extreme drought.

In April I was fortunate to do a two week road trip to northern Botswana. First a visit to Guma Lagoon on the north western part of the delta. It is always spectacular to experience the beautiful delta from a boat, with crystal clear water in papyrus-clad channels with clusters of wild date palms. Add an amazing birdlife, crocodiles and grunting hippos and you have a real Okavango experience! Beautiful sunrises and sunsets make that morning cup of rooibos and sun-downer beer taste extra good.

A few days were spent with family and friends on the Thamalakane river just north of Maun with long walks along the beautiful river. Maun has a very special vibe and I always enjoy visiting. We ended the trip with a stopover at Khama Rhino Sanctuary outside Serowe. It feels very encouraging to visit this Rhino success story. Botswana prioritises wildlife conservation and takes anti poaching strategies very seriously. It is an amazing feeling to see these majestic creatures up close.



In a few weeks I will be hosting the Swedish National Day for the sixth time. The Swedish/Scandinavian community, Swedish business reps and other Sweden friends will be invited. We normally end up with around 100 guests. Traditional Swedish treats like *smörgåstårter* will be served and, thanks to the visiting BOTSFA members in September, we still have good stock levels of Swedish delicatessen and snaps. Thank you again for those the precious gifts! The day normally ends with a few »late leavers« enjoying a hot wood-fired *bastu*, cold beer and a dip in the »freezing« pool. *Heja Sverige!*

I wish you all a wonderful Swedish summer.

Kent Nilsson
Swedish Honorary Consul



REAL TERRIBLE THINGS TO HAPPEN!



Professor Alexander McCall Smith will be visiting Stockholm for a performance with his music orchestra, The Real Terrible Orchestra. Dumela Newsletter got an exclusive interview with the author and bassoon player.

TEXT and PHOTO Mats Ögren Wanger

Is the rumour really true that you are coming to Stockholm with a whole orchestra?

– Yes, the rumour is true! »The Really Terrible Orchestra« will be performing at Musikaliska in Stockholm on Saturday 3rd June.

Is there something terrible about the orchestra that we should know before buying tickets to the concert?

– The name of the orchestra is a good description. It was set up twenty years ago to cater for musically challenged people who would never be able to join a proper orchestra. We have regular rehearsals but never show any signs of improvement! The members of the orchestra do, however, have a great deal of fun and we hope that the audience will

also enjoy the performance (although ear plugs are recommended!)

The Real Terrible Orchestra will challenge the best genius young musicians in Sweden. Is that really wise?

– We are very fortunate to have the involvement of pupils from the Lilla Akademien, which is an excellent music school in Stockholm. Their musical skills will be far superior to those of the members of The Really Terrible Orchestra and we certainly hope to learn from them.

Can you reveal something from the repertoire – is it pop, rock, punk or maybe even something as unserious as classical music?

– The orchestra will be playing a variety of numbers, but mostly classical.

Finally – talking about your new No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency book »Precious and Grace«, Dumela has heard that Mma Makutsi is putting some pressure on Mma Ramotswa to modernise her office. Does this mean that the office may be getting a new fax machine?

– One of these days I might have to introduce Mma Ramotswa to computers. I haven't done that yet, but will think about it.

**3 June at 6 pm at »Musikaliska«, music hall
Alexander McCall Smith will perform with his
»The Real Terrible Orchestra«.
There will be a mingle reception before the concert with
drinks at 5 pm. Tickets available at
<http://www.musikaliska.se/forestalling/real-terrible-orchestra-lilla-akademien>**

NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Christina Malmius

I went to Botswana in 1981 with my parents Eva and Karl-Göran (K-G) Engström, formerly ambassador. During my stay, I went to Maru-a-Pula Secondary School and the

Swedish School in Gaborone. I am an employee of Ericsson where I am currently internal auditor. I also spent some years in Japan where I studied and worked and have recently worked for a few years in Kenya. I was part of the BOTSFA group that travelled to Botswana to celebrate the 50th independence anniversary.



Mebi Hermansson

I went to Botswana in 1980 with my mother and sister. My mother Siv Hermansson worked at the Development Cooperation Office at the Swedish Embassy 1980–1984.

My sister and I went to the Swedish School in Gaborone. Today I work at The City Hall of Stockholm as a security coordinator and the curator. I have two adult daughters. I went back to Botswana 2016 for the 50th independence celebrations.

BOTSFA INDEPENDENCE CRUISE 2017

BOTSFA is planning a 22-hour (overnight) cruise with Birka Line from Stockholm to Åland.

DEPARTURE: Sunday 1 October at 18:00 **RETURN:** Monday 2 October at 15:45

COST: Standard cabin (no windows), 1–4 persons 175 kr per cabin.
Seaview cabin (with windows), 1–4 persons 500 kr per cabin
Dinner (smörgåsbord) 325 kr per person
Breakfast 99 kr per person

The program for the overnight cruise is under consideration and will include food, dance, social activities (with access to a conference room), etc. Birka Cruises has bus connections from more than 80 places with pickups in Jönköping in the south, Karlstad in the west and Sundsvall in the north.



**The theme for the
2017 BOTSFA Photo
Competition is »FOOD«.**

Visit www.botsfa.nu for details.