

# DUMELA



Newsletter from Botswana Sweden Friendship Association No 1/2017

## Dear BOTSFA members

**THE DRYING UP OF GABORONE DAM**, the main source of water supply to the capital, generated a social and economic challenge for Botswana for several years. The last time the dam filled up, devastatingly spilling over, was in 1999/2000. The Botswana Defence Force had to ferry people by boat from Gaborone across Notwane River to Tlokweng and vice versa. Would the dam ever fill up to full capacity again from rains? This is a question that had lingered in many people's minds for many years, until two weeks ago.

The dam was dying from thirst and when the level dropped to 2% at the beginning of 2016, all hope was lost. Early this year, the rains had concentrated on filling up the dams in northern Botswana. But then, in mid-February, forecasts of heavy rains turned into reality. Cyclone Dineo, from the Indian Ocean, cruised over the country, bringing rains that filled up the dam in 48 hours and, to everyone's amazement, a spill-over for the first time in 17 years!

I came across a quote on weather by Mark Twain which says, »It is best to read the weather forecast before praying for rain.« Botswana prayed, forecasted and lived on hopes for country-wide

rainfalls for several years. Finally the skies opened, providing the whole country with the much needed rain and water. Botswana is happy and Dumela joins the country in celebrating the good rains. PULA!

In this Dumela, you will read about BOTSFA member Tore Zetterberg's decision to buy a tapestry from Oodi Weavers in 1976, when Botswana celebrated its 10th anniversary. The tapestry carries a history of the country. Sweden's Honorary Consul, Kent Nilsson, updates us on the heavy fall and impact of the much-needed rains in the country and informs Dumela of the coming on board of the new Swedish Ambassador, Cecilia Julin.



### 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](mailto:AndersHj@botsfa.nu) if you have changed contact details or are paying as a new member.

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# The Tshekedi tapestry for a Renault

TEXT and PHOTO Tore Zetterberg

**ON MY WALL** hangs a tapestry from Oodi Weavers in Botswana. It has a history with me since 1976 and pictures a Botswana historic event from the 1930s. The weavers at Oodi often worked from oral history and tried to encapsulate or summarize real life episodes in Botswana. This particular one is about Chief Tshekedi Khama of the Bamangwato, the uncle of Seretse Khama who became Botswana's first president at independence in 1966. The British stopped Seretse from returning to Botswana, following his marriage to Ruth Williams, a British citizen. Pressure from apartheid South Africa resulted in Seretse being barred from returning home. There is a new film about Seretse and Ruth's marriage and its consequences (*A United Kingdom*, 2016, a possible Oscar winner).

Tshekedi ruled from the Bamangwato capital Serowe, a large village in central Botswana, while Seretse was a minor. In Serowe was a shop with a white owner, Mr McIntosh, whose young son Phinehas got known for his drinking and fighting. This generated public complaints over his behaviour. Chief Tshekedi decided in the kgotla (council) that Phinehas be punished by flogging. In the middle of the tapestry Phinehas is seen lying on the ground to be flogged. This happened in 1933, when Bechuanaland was a British protectorate. The flogging of a white man by black men caused strong reactions in South Africa. An army contingent with cavalry and artillery (the gun is seen in the lower right side) was sent to punish the Chief, who was temporarily disposed from the regency to later be reinstated by the colonial government.



Serowe village is seen with huts, people and cattle. The tapestry measures 170 x 138 cm. It was made to hang in Botswana's Parliament building or Bank of Botswana, but that did not happen. I saw it at an exhibition in Phuthadikobo Museum in Mochudi in 1976 and fell in love with it. At that time, I stayed on Tshekedi Crescent in the area of Gaborone that was called New England or Tshaba Ntsha (Beware of the Dog). When leaving to go back to Sweden, I wanted to buy the tapestry. In the end, I exchanged it for my car – a Renault 12. The tapestry has been exhibited in Lund, Sweden, in 1977 and in Copenhagen, Denmark.

During my stay in Botswana, I visited Thabana li Mele in Lesotho where the Gowenius had set up a handicraft cooperative before establishing Oodi Weavers. I also visited Rorke's Drift, the first art and craft centre they started in South Africa under the protection of a Church of Sweden mission. The Gowenius were deported from both countries for radicalism. Peder Gowenius wrote a book with picture strips on the struggle for freedom in southern Africa. A first version was destroyed when his family hut in Oodi was burnt down from a strike by lightning, which hit the metal band that kept the roof straw together.



**PULA!!!**

## Dumelang dear Botsfa members!

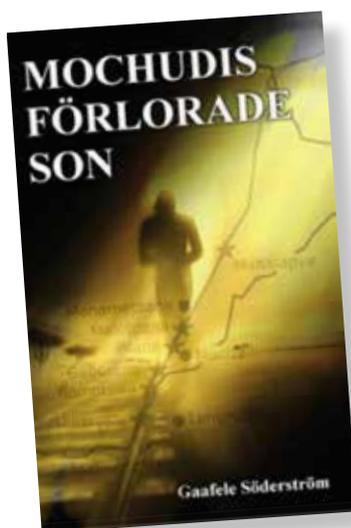
**A**s I'm sure most of you will have picked up by now, we have had lots of rain in Botswana! The combo of La Nina and now last week the effects of cyclone Dineo, that hit Mozambique, has resulted in very strong downpours across the country. All major dams in Botswana are now full with the Gaborone dam spilling over since late Saturday. It's been 17 years since last time! What an amazing sight! I haven't seen the bush this green for a very long time and it

has been an amazing cool summer, especially in contrast to last year's record high temperatures. A year ago we were struggling in Gaborone to secure enough water for basic needs. Parts of Gaborone could be with no water for days or even weeks. The lack of water has affected the economy in general in a bad way. It has been very tough to survive in the Green Industry the last 4 years, from severe water restrictions.

The rains bring with them not only water security but also hope for an improved economy and the well-being of all people here. The livestock is looking fat and healthy and the mind-set of the people will hopefully again be positive, something we are all looking forward to.

Early February Ambassador Cecilia Julin presented her credentials to H.E. The President and in the evening we hosted a cocktail reception for the Swedish community and other guests at our @Linnaeus venue. Some of you already met the Ambassador at the BOTSFA book launch in September. She has promised increased presence in Botswana and, as an introduction to Botswana, I have promised to take her and her husband Anders on a BW trip ASAP. Greetings!

*Kent Nilsson  
Swedish Honorary Consul*



**BOKEN** är en fiktiv historisk roman, som handlar en del om Bakgatla ba ga Kgafelas stamkultur. Den sätter strålkastarljuset på livet i stammen under nittonhundrafemtioalet. På den tiden styrde

kungar över Botswanas olika territorier. De ledde sina stammar på ett utmärkt sätt, utan inblandning utifrån (landet kallades då Bechuanaland).

Under deras ledning utvecklades folket till disciplinerade och ansvarstagande människor. Deras stammar var enade och fred rädde mellan dem.

Boken handlar om en liten pojke som heter Tefo och hans far som var en Botswansk medborgare boende i Sydafrika. Tefo växte upp under fattiga omständigheter i ett illegalt slumområde på landet långt ifrån närmaste planerade samhälle. Där bodde bara de fattiga svarta och invandrare från andra afrikanska länder.

En tragisk situation hände medan de reste till Botswana. Tefo blev hjälpt av ett gammalt par som levde på en farm. Senare blev han transporterad till Botswana för att träffa och lära känna sina släktingar. Hans liv blev förändrat när han kom i kontakt med den traditionella livsstilen i en Botswansk by, vilket i sin tur var nära sammanknutet med boskapsskötsel för pojkar och män. Hans kusin begår långt senare ett brott i Sydafrika. Tefo reser tillbaka till Sydafrika för att ta hand om problemet. Medan han är där möter han en man som väntar på honom med en stor överraskning.

Boken finns på:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/9163907216>

<http://www.adlibris.com/se/bok/mochudis-forlorade-son-9789163907210>

<http://www.bokus.com/bok/9789163907210/mochudis-forlorade-son/>

*For the English version, »The Lost Son of Mochudi«, you may contact the author who has copies available in Botswana.*



The theme for the 2016 competition was »INDEPENDENCE«.

**The 2016 photo competition did not attract any entries. The pleasure seems to have been in the independence celebrations. Watch this space in the next Dumela for this year's theme.**



New Ambassador Cecilia Julin with Swedish Honorary Consul, Kent Nilsson



This year's Annual General Meeting will be held on March 18, 2017 in Bromma.

Members should indicate their interest in attending by **latest March 11.**

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