



DUMELA

Newsletter from Botswana Sweden Friendship Association

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By Nelly Kabomo-Hogård, BOTSFA, Chairperson

Dear BOTSFA Members and Dumela readers!



Let me welcome you in the year 2022! BOTSFA editorial team starts the year with publishing this short and one of the most important and interesting articles from Peter Johansson. In addition, there is a very nice article by Mike Main for you to read about Self Drive Safari. Enjoy reading while having a cup of strong Swedish winter coffee. And stay safe out of Corona virus.

I'm looking forward to seeing you soon at our Annual General Meeting

May all of us enjoy reading our newsletter

Pula

Dumelang dear BOTSFA members!

by Kent Nilsson
Swedish Honorary Consul

Let's start with the compulsory Covid update.

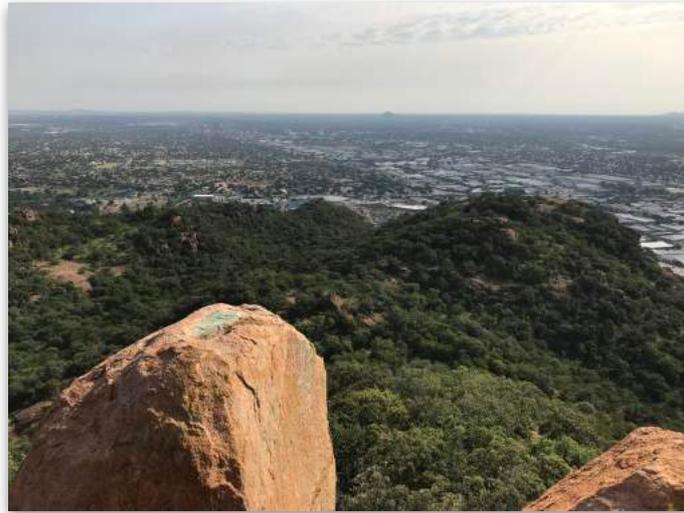
As the 'source' of the latest Covid variant, Botswana gained a bit of fame on the big news channels. However, very soon this variant became a South African variant before it was renamed Omicron. Travel restrictions imposed by Europe and the rest of the world quickly crushed the hoped rebound for the travel industry in this part of the world. Botswana now seems to have passed the peak of this wave and the curve is thankfully heading down again. Since a few weeks, age group 12-18 can now get vaccinated and boosters are also on offer. We still follow strict mask wearing and you would never see anyone trying to enter any premises like a shop or restaurant without a mask. I have never, during the last two years, seen anyone arguing about wearing a mask.

Sunday morning I decided to hike up Kgale Hill. Haven't done this since pre-Covid times. It turned out to be a great idea. Everything is green and beautiful

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after the good rains we have had. Once at the top, our little big city' is laid out in front, right next to the Gaborone dam. The dam is currently 55% and filling. We are all so dependant on the dam level as an indicator, even though most of the water used in Gaborone comes from the dams in the northeast via pipelines. A well-filled dam gives us hope and courage to venture forward. At the moment a lot of water infrastructure is being installed around the country to improve water security. The city road network is also being upgraded. Gaborone is growing and we have had a rapid growth of traffic during the last decade, much due to cheap 2nd hand imports from mainly Japan and Singapore. Our roads are crowded and everybody seems to start and finish work at the same time and many are commuting by car from villages outside Gaborone due to high rents in town.



View from Kgalale Hill

Currently three existing roundabouts are being upgraded to flyovers along the western bypass. A number of roads are being upgraded from two-lane to three-lane roads all to speed up traffic. A Spanish company has upgraded the city traffic light system and it will soon be synced to create the best traffic flow all around town. Busses bring people from the surrounding villages to the main buss rank for them then to switch to our famous combies, that operate according to their own rules, to move around within town. We still have no organised public transport like city busses or commuter trains with timetables. I have been told that the population in Gaborone will not sustain a commuter train system due to low population. The power grid will probably also not sustain an electric commuter train. I have over the last ten years, whenever I have had a chance, lobbied for Scania's Rapid Transport System that is versatile in many ways and could be very suitable for Gaborone. Busses could be privately owned and could be powered in many ways (electric, bio gas, bio diesel etc.). A great opportunity would be to transform our waste into fuel for a transport system, like done in Swedish cities. Sweden has all the knowhow for this and more. Maybe one day.

Wishing you all a continued white beautiful Swedish winter. Hoping to go to Åre in April. Stay safe!

Charles John Andersson - a Swedish explorer and and zoologist in 19th century Southern Africa

by Peter Johansson

When Charles John Andersson died in July 1867 just north of today's border between Namibia and Angola it was the end of a long journey – a geographical journey from Sweden to southern Africa and a social journey from a small cottage as son of a poor maid to Royal Geographic Society, Swedish and British publishers, international zoological museums and libraries and receiver of a royal medal.

The life of Charles John (Carl Johan) Andersson began in 1827 in the parish of Norra Råda in Värmland, Sweden, where he was born in the small cottage, Lapptorp. His mother was the maid Brita Cajsa Andersdotter and his father the British zoologist, author and hunter Llewellyn Lloyd – almost a living legend already at the time of the birth of his son. Lloyd was born in a wealthy family in London where his grandfather was the founder of Lloyd's Bank. When he came to Sweden in the early 1820's Lloyd was fascinated by the Swedish nature and fauna, both as a zoologist and a hunter. He came to stay in Sweden for the rest of his life and acted almost as an explorer of Sweden for the British public when he during the 1830's to 1860's published several richly illustrated books about the Swedish nature, fauna and culture.

When Andersson was about 3-4 years old Lloyd left Brita Cajsa and Värmland for the town Vänersborg in south western Sweden. Andersson followed his father and grew up in Vänersborg with his three half-sisters who were born there. Another side of Lloyds character was his complicated family life as father of 6-7 children with 3-4 different women who he never married.

During his childhood in Vänersborg Andersson used to follow his father on hunting and fishing trips and developed an interest in zoology with special focus on ornithology. As his father once did when he left London for the Swedish forests, Andersson started to dream about the possibility to explore a nature different from the one where he was born and with a fauna little or not at all known for the European science. After one term at Lund University and some practice at the Museum of Gothenburg and with the taxidermist August Wilhelm Malm, Andersson left Sweden for Britain 1849. His plans were to find a fishing boat that could take him from Britain to Iceland where he could make ornithological research.



Charles John Andersson hunting elephants at a waterhole on his way to lake Ngami 1853. (From the book *Lake Ngami*, 1856).

In Britain Andersson made contacts with some of the most experienced zoologists at the time, and at a private reception he had the fortune to meet Sir Francis Galton a wealthy polymath who was planning a journey to southern Africa. As he recently had heard about David Livingstone's report on lake Ngami in today's northern Botswana, a lake not earlier known to Europeans, Galton now wanted to try to reach the lake for geographical studies and hunting. When Andersson was asked if he would follow Galton as his assistant, a dream came true for Andersson. Since his childhood he had dreamt of southern Africa but thought that it could only be a dream as his father's poor economic situation never could finance an expedition to such a geographical distant continent.

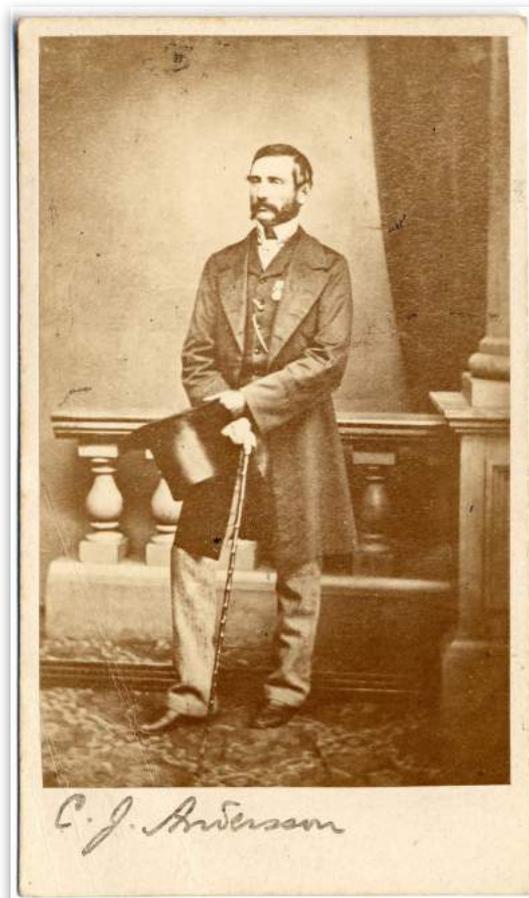
In 1850 Andersson and Galton arrived at Cape Town and started to plan for an expedition to reach Ngami from the west, through today's Namibia. Shortly after Andersson and Galton had arrived at Walvis Bay at the southwestern African coast, they changed plans and decided to go to the north, to Ovamboland as the first Europeans travelling in this region. Their plan was to reach the Cunene river, but they were hindered to do this by the chief of Ovamboland. On their way back Andersson and Galton got information that it would be possible to reach Ngami from the west but that it was a high-risk project as they had to travel through extremely dry areas. As Ngami never had been especially important for Galton, who was satisfied with what he had done so far, he decided to return to Europe. For Andersson Ngami was a dream that he wouldn't give up, and he decided therefore to stay.

After returning to Cape Town Andersson made up plans for a new expedition to reach Ngami from the west. In 1853 he managed to reach the lake after a long expedition through the dry areas of Namib desert and the Kalahari. He was far from the first European to see the lake but the first European who had reached the area from the west coast. At Ngami Andersson met the chief, or kgosi, Letsholathebe who gave him permission to travel further to the north along the Thaoge river and the Okavango delta to reach a place called Libebe, today's Andara. As Andersson failed to get permissions from the other chiefs along the river he had to return.



Andersson's expedition on the Thaoge river, north of lake Ngami 1853.
(From the book *Lake Ngami*, 1856).

In May 1854 Andersson returned to Cape Town and after a few weeks he was on a ship on his way to Europe. His plans were to publish a manuscript of his experiences and geographical and zoological research from his two expeditions and to visit his family and friends. Back in Britain Andersson presented his experiences in several speeches and was rewarded by the Royal Geographical Society. He also made contract with a publisher for his first book – *Lake Ngami*. After some months in Britain Andersson went to Sweden and Vänersborg where he met his father and sisters. In Sweden he was now a



Portrait of Charles John Andersson wearing the medal Illis Quorum received by the Swedish king.
(Photo: Moritz Fürst, Göteborg, probably 1855 or 1856).

well-known person and was rewarded with the medal Illis Quorum by the king and got a contract with the publisher Albert Bonnier for a Swedish translation of his book – *Sjön Ngami*.

In 1856 Andersson returned to Cape Town where he was employed by the Walfish Bay Mining Company (WBMC) as their director at the Matchless Coppermine close to today Namibian capital Windhoek. The year as director at the mine was a year full of problems and conflicts with both the staff at the mine and the owners. When Andersson's contract with WBMC ended in 1858 he could start to plan for his next expedition, the expedition to the river Okavango.

During his earlier expeditions Andersson had heard about a great river running from the area north of lake Ngami to the Atlantic Ocean. If this information was correct the river, which was unknown to Europeans, could be used for transport of trading goods between the interior and the coast. The expedition started in March 1858 and Andersson should not be back in Cape Town until June 1860. The expedition to the unknown river in the north costed Andersson and his employees a lot of sufferings and in some cases also life. In the thirst fields the whole expedition was close to death because of the lack of water and shortly after reaching the river Okavango in March 1859 most of the men, Andersson included, was so severely ill with malaria that some of the expedition members died. The expedition was also a disappointment in that the river was running to the east, into the great Okavango delta and could therefore not be used as a trading route. In another way the expedition was a success because of the great number of zoological collects Andersson brought back, mainly birds and insects, that were later sent to Swedish and other European museums. Also, this expedition was presented in a travel narrative – *The Okavango River*, in 1861.



Charles John Andersson crossing the Omaruru river on his way to the Okavango river 1858.
(From the book *The Okavango River 1861*).

When Andersson came back to Cape Town in June 1860, he married Sarah Aitchison, a woman he met for the first time already in 1852 when he rented a room at Sarah's mother's place. With the marriage Andersson left his life as an explorer to become a family father and trader. Shortly after the marriage Andersson and Sarah left for Otjimbingue along the Swakop river, in today's central Namibia, where Andersson had bought some buildings from the mining company WBMC. In Otjimbingue he started a trading station for trading with cattle, ivory, ostrich feathers and European goods.

Not long after starting his trading business in Otjimbingue he became involved in local conflicts between herero and oorlam-nama groups. The severe conflicts had been going on for some years and resulted in deadly raids where the oorlam-nama was the stronger and dominating group. As the conflict involved cattle and cattle trade also Andersson became involved, and in 1864 he made the herero leaders his allied in a way to protect his own trading interests. As leader of an army of 3 000 men, mainly hereros, Andersson met the army of the oorlam-nama leader Jan Jonker Afrikaner at a battle at Gam Gams in June 1864. Andersson's army won the battle, but as Andersson was severely wounded in his leg by a bullet during the battle, he had to leave Otjimbingue and sell the trading station to the Rhenish Missionary Society and go to Cape Town for medical treatment.

Even if both Andersson's life and leg were saved his health was broken. He could never more walk without a stick and he suffered from sickness in his eyes and stomach. When an assistant, Axel Eriksson from Andersson's hometown Vänersborg, arrived at Cape Town in October 1865 Andersson's condition was better but he was far from rehabilitated. Sarah, who was pregnant with their fourth child, therefore became furious when Andersson presented the idea of a new expedition. This time he planned to try to go back to Ovamboland, cross the river Cunene and open a trading route to the Angolan town and harbour Mossamedes.

Andersson borrowed money to invest in the new expedition and left Cape Town, together with Axel Eriksson in May 1866. As the expedition went on from Walvis Bay to Ovamboland Andersson felt weaker with severe stomach pain and fever but decided to continue as planned. After reaching the shores of Cunene Andersson and Eriksson did not manage to find anyone willing to offer them transport to the other side of the river. Shortly after leaving Cunene Andersson died on the 6th of July 1867 and was buried by Eriksson.

Charles John Andersson had many roles during his years in southern Africa, the role of an explorer, zoologist, geographer, hunter, trader, military leader, husband and father. Many of these roles affected the history and nature of Namibia and Botswana in many ways. The opening of trading routes and a trading station and the construction of maps of the area opened way for colonialism during the generation after Andersson, and the game hunt and import of modern weapons was the start of a pressure on the fauna that has pushed several animal species to the limit of extinction. But in Andersson's role as a zoologist and geographer he has left us invaluable information about the fauna in Namibia and Botswana in the mid-1800s, information that can be used today to study climate and environmental changes. His descriptions of the people, societies and cultures he met during his expeditions was in many cases the first information of this kind from this area that reached Europe. Andersson also made some of the earliest maps of parts of Namibia and Botswana, maps that give us today information about roads, waterholes, villages and places that has been long since forgotten. A copy of one of these maps, the original at the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences, was presented by the Swedish king Carl XVI Gustaf as the official gift to Botswana at the state visit in 2011.

The life of Charles John Anderson is a remarkable story and a part of the history of Namibia and Botswana. In February 2022 this story will be presented in a richly illustrated biography, *Charles John Andersson, Zoolog och upptäcktsresande*, by Peter Johansson, director at Vänersborg museum. The biography is published by Carlsson Bokförlag in Stockholm.

A self-drive safari - that sounds like fun: but what is it?

by Mike Main

It comes to my mind immediately that there are two kinds of such safaris. The first involves a hired 4X4 with hired equipment following well-established tourist routes, visiting game reserves and National Parks and staying at pre-arranged lodges or hotels. Incredibly exciting, especially for 'first timers' and something that will unquestionably add up to an unforgettable experience. Absolutely to be recommended, no question about that, and heartedly endorsed by me: but it is not for me.



The second kind of self-drive safari is much more my cup of tea: it's not unlike a piece of string – it has a start and an end but what happens in the middle is a bit up to chance. "Let's try driving down the Namibian border from Tsodilo?", or "What about the north-east side of the Okavango?" or "What about the western shores of Ntswetwe Pan". The point is that in Botswana, unlike many other

parts of the world, you can camp more or less anywhere you like - though one stays away from villages because of curious people and a lack of firewood.

My wife and I have actually done some trips like this – in fact we have done some of the very routes I've mentioned – and I venture to suggest that they are great fun especially because much of what you encounter is totally unexpected. I guess there are certain prerequisites and caveats though.

You have to have done enough game drives to (almost) yawn at the site of another Impala or another lion, because going into the largely unexplored parts of Botswana brings no guarantee of seeing any game at all let alone something as exotic as the "Big Five": so you are not on such a trip to see game. (Part of the excitement is, of course, that you MAY see game, and you have no idea what its going to be!)



If you are travelling with another vehicle you need to know each other well and to be of like minds: calamities can happen and you need to be sure that all of the party have the temperament to deal with whatever comes along.

You can never carry everything you might need for every emergency you might encounter – if you try to do so, you may never get anywhere: anticipate the obvious and be prepared. Practical skills, like map reading and using a compass are useful as is some vehicular knowledge. I have very little of the latter (but then I drive a Toyota, not a Land Rover, so I don't need it! That's a joke, Land Rover lovers, we've been teasing each other for decades!)



A supply of tea is important – even if you don't drink it! I mean that in a metaphorical sense because there is one human trait that can be dangerous. In these circumstances, more prevalent in men than women, funnily enough: it is the tendency to instantly act with a surge of frantic, almost overpowering energy when something goes wrong – like getting stuck in mud or sand or discovering one is lost. Of course, there are circumstances when urgent action is required – fire, for example. But, by and large, once something has gone wrong, instant action without thought is not likely to help: my experience is that it often makes matters worse. Hence I try always to say to people: “Stop and make a cup of tea”. I don't mean it literally but I do mean stop, take the time to think things through together, make a plan together and follow it through.



I recall a fellow driving through Makgadikgadi for the first time. His wife and 6 month-old were in the pick-up with him but they were otherwise alone. The centuries-old track across the bare pan was wet from recent rain. Inexperience told him to avoid the rain-filled ruts: he turned off the road. Within a few kilometres off the track, his vehicle went down to the chassis in the glutinous mud of the pan. Panic stricken, his immediate use of a hi-lift jack served only to drive the jack into the soft mud without moving the vehicle a centimeter. The spare wheel was under the chassis, under the vehicle. To get it out he dug a huge hole under the rear of the truck, crawled into the water and mud that quickly filled it and, groping in the evil saline fluid, eventually got the spare wheel out. Using it as a base he managed to lift the rear of the vehicle. But panic driven haste caused him to raise the vehicle too high. The jack bowed and jammed so that

too high. The jack bowed and jammed so that he could not lower it. The truck was now on its two front wheels with the two rear wheels raised in the air.

Four hours had passed, there was no shade, nothing to reduce the October temperature. They were now out of water, the wife was terrified, the baby was stressed and crying, the husband was now a physical wreck. They were hopelessly stuck, out of sight of the track and any passing help (this was before cellphones and even now there would be no reception). In a moment of desperation the man leaned against the side of the truck towards the back. His weight caused it to tip off the jack but it fell onto all four wheels and, thankfully, though it did not tip onto its side, it had moved sideways by about a metre. By repeating this exercise exhaustively many times he was able to get the vehicle out of the mud and, eventually return to the lake shore. No lives lost and a good lesson learned but he might have done better if he had thought things through a little.



Good friend 'Kath' was driving her modern Pajero around the Khwai area and she was quicker off the mark. She was on her way to a formal campsite and had two rivers yet to cross to get there. Kath knew to check rivers on foot by walking through them but her Canadian companion was tired and there was a need to get her settled quickly. Kath stopped at the first river, saw tracks entering and emerging on the other side, assumed it was safe and crossed. No problem. At the second river she saw the same thing and drove into the water, again without checking. The Pajero has a low clearance. The modern vehicle with all its wonderful waterproofing floated and started to drift down the river, out of control. It is difficult

to waterproof a vehicle that well and slowly, it began to fill and sink. As it drifted down river it eventually lodged on a sand bank: but now it was half full of water with the level rising still. They were going to drown. "Open the windows and doors and let's get out". Alas: it was a modern car with electric doors and windows. Shorted out by the water they would not open.

Fortunately, Kath is a smart cookie and she kept her head. Climbing over the seats into the back she found the hammer for striking in tent pegs and used it to smash the windows. They both got out in time. Smart cookie! Events have a knack of cascading from trivial to disaster. Kath was lucky.

I think of the Kalahari in particular as being beguilingly seductive. It beckons one ever onwards and yet a simple error can trigger a cascade of events that can lead to disaster, loss of vehicle and even loss of life.

An acquaintance, driving through the southern Kalahari in a Toyota Land Cruiser pick-up failed to occasionally to check under the vehicle for grass accumulating against the exhaust. He also failed to notice the smell of burning as he was driving along. He did not fail to see the flames, however, and managed to get out of the vehicle in time but was not able to save it from being totally destroyed by fire (and he had a long walk home).

In any self-drive safari of this sort there has to be a frisson of danger, a level of risk beyond the ordinary. I don't mean that one deliberately provokes a challenge: I tend to have a rough plan and I want it to work but this is the real world and plans don't always pan out the way you expect so I want to be ready for any challenge. I want to feel the excitement of knowing that more or less anything that can happen to me is within my skill set to deal with: I might not deal with it professionally or conventionally, but I'll get there! When it's all over and you get home the rush of achievement can be euphoric and addictive.



You are on your own, in the bush. You are possibly many hundreds of kilometres away from anyone you know. Time is governed by the sun: there is no hurry. Let the whole environment envelop you – that is what you came here for. No tapes, no radio, no music – there is enough of an orchestra out there already – you just have to learn to listen to it. Watch, listen, learn, be aware, think. Its great therapy for the 21st Century!

Five Favourite camping areas: no facilities

1. Boteti River 25 km north of Rakops. Giant Acacia frame stunning sun sets over old lake bed. I imagine creaking wagons and harness of Livingstone, Holub, Chapman, Baines who all passed this way.
2. Western Delta, drive in north-east off the main road anywhere between Nokaneng to Etsha 6. Follow your nose 'till you hit water. You are in the Okavango, all round you is yours. No tourists!
3. West of Khawa on the track to Trans Kgalagadi Park gate. Splendid bare red sand dunes. Amazing desert scenery.
4. Makgadikgadi south of Sowa Spit. No tourists. The whole pan all to yourself.
5. Great grasslands between Boteti and Ntwetwe Pan. Stunning views. Cattle country but still some game. Beautiful!

Self drive tips

1. Listen to your vehicle, smell the air. React immediately when you hear or smell something different.
2. Going into wilderness on your own. Tell a friend where and when returning: its too late to do it when you are dying of thirst!
3. Drive your vehicle with care: it is not a tank and you might end up needing it!
4. In dealing with a problem: stop and think – you may have only one chance to get it right!
5. Anticipate obvious problems, have some solutions and know how to implement them/.
6. River crossings MUST be investigated on foot (send the wife or a friend – take photographs)
7. Cell phones DO NOT work everywhere and mostly not when you really need them.

NOTES

Owe Nygren died on December 27, 2021. Together with his wife Gunilla, headed the Swedish school in Gaborone during 1988 -1991.

