

Introduction to a Special Issue on *Botswana Notes and Records'* Golden Jubilee Volume in Honour of Sir Ketumile Masire

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We are quite pleased and proud to be able to produce the momentous volume 50 of the *Botswana Notes and Records* (BNR) which is the country's longest surviving indigenous journal. As the title of this introductory piece indicates, the production of the volume serves two purposes. Firstly, the volume celebrates the journal's golden jubilee. Since its inception in 1968 when the first volume appeared it has continuously published one volume yearly without failure. Even during the very challenging times when its mother body, The Botswana Society, teetered on the brink of collapse at the turn of the new millennium owing to dire financial straits, the BNR, kept appearing.

The BNR has had many editors over the past 50 years. Among these was Reverend Derek Jones. In his obituary for Reverend Jones, Sandy Grant notes that 'When the Botswana Society ran short of an editor, he accepted the challenge and published three volumes of its remarkable, long standing Botswana Notes and Records series. In 2005-2007 I like to believe that the two of us saved the Botswana Society which was teetering on the edge' (Grant 2013). Challenges continued for the BNR particularly in terms of printing hard copies for distribution. Rescue came in the form of the University of Botswana (UB) hosting the journal alongside UB-based journals on its online journal systems (OJS). This has been the lifeline for the BNR and also enabled it to be accessed freely worldwide. The development has enabled the BNR to be compliant to one of the Pillars of the country's Vision 2016 namely that Botswana should be an 'Educated and Informed Nation' (Republic of Botswana 1997). This national roadmap or ambition has since been replaced by 'Vision 2036' which seeks to guide the development of Botswana towards 2036 when the country would be celebrating 70 years of independence (Republic of Botswana 2016). Both the Botswana Society and the BNR also subscribe to the ideals of Vision 2036.

The origins of the Botswana Society and BNR are discussed in this volume by Pierre Landell-Mills – one of the pioneers of the organisation. Therefore, there is no need to discuss the genesis of the Society and the BNR in this introductory note.

The second purpose of this volume is to honour the late Sir Ketumile Masire, Botswana first Vice President from 1966 to 1980, and then President from 1980-1998 when he retired. He was also closely associated with the Society until his death in June 2017. However, volume 50 does not only focus on Masire but other aspects of the development of Botswana not necessarily associated with him. In a way the volume is also a general one. The reason is that a lot has already been written on Masire and his contribution to the development of this country. Masire himself penned his memoirs which appeared in 2006 with the title *Very Brave or Very Foolish*. Historians Jeff Ramsay and Barry Morton had already published a small book *The Making of a President* on Masire's early years. Already Barry Morton is working on Masire's biography.

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Figure 1: Sir Ketumile Masire and Professor Fred Morton at a Botswana Society public seminar held at Livingstone Kolobeng College in Gaborone



Source: Photograph by Christian John Makgala

As is tradition this volume being a general one there are sections for full length articles, notes, a book review and an obituary. There is a good mix of Botswana based scholars and writers as well as those from outside the country in terms of contributions to the volume. In some articles or notes sets of writers collaborate. The articles section starts with Bruce Bennett's 'Intercalation in the Traditional Setswana Calendar'. Bennett observes that the precolonial Southern African farming societies used lunisolar calendars. He says that the details of this phenomenon have largely been lost since these calendars were abandoned in favour of the Gregorian calendar. Therefore, his article seeks to investigate possible reconstructions of the Setswana calendar, especially in terms of intercalation. Emmanuel Botlhale addresses Masire's role in the development of Botswana through what some scholars and observers have described the 'African Miracle'. This was impressive economic growth the country experienced during Masire's presidency with Botswana having been one of the poorest nations on earth when it attained independence in 1966. Botlhale also notes the challenges such as persistent poverty and economic inequality which accompanied or spoiled Botswana's 'miracle' economic growth. There is collaboration between Pheny Thebe, Anne Griffiths, Goitseone Molatlhegi, Edwin Wilmsen and David Killick who focus on the people, history and material involved in the production of clay pots in the Tswapong village of Manaledi.

Another collaborative effort is between Batlang Seabo and Bontle Masilo who address the social cleavages and political party alignment in the context of the debate on the long running Botswana's dominant party system. Bongani Gumbo focuses on the dynamics of cattle farming, disease and state

intervention in the Ngamiland from the time of independence to the turn of the new millennium. He 'points out how modernising institutions created by the post-independence government transformed the industry and how, conversely, this development trajectory impacted on the small holder farmers, contributing to widening the enduring class disparities between cattle barons and subsistence cattle farmers in the area'. Another paper on animals but this time looking at camels in Tshabong is a collaboration between Katsane Kgaudi, Eyassu Seifu and Demel Teketay. Specifically, these authors assess the milk production potential of camels as well as identifying their major browse species in Tshabong Ecotourism Camel Park. This is an important discussion because while Botswana is a major producer of beef, the country continues to import huge amount of milk mainly from South Africa.

Mark Nyandoro's contribution looks into the state and corporate undertaking in the country's water supply and management from the time of independence to 2014. This is a very critical discussion given the fact that Botswana is a water stressed country where, as it were, every rain drop needs to be preserved and used diligently. Turning the country's water challenges into opportunities is what Nyandoro argues for in his paper. Another paper on water conservation and utilisation is by Isaac Mazonde who looks at the comparative dynamics of water sharing of transboundary waterways. He does this by drawing important lessons from international projects such as the Nile River, Lesotho Highlands Water Project and Botswana's Okavango River Basin. Raban Chanda, Bothepha Moseleli, Saniso Sakuringwa and Moemedi Makwato's collaborative effort also focuses on water. Specifically, they address the water situation in Gaborone Dam which gets its water from the Notwane River. The authors tell us that

'There has been heightened debate in recent years as to what extent the failure of the Gaborone Dam late in 2014 was due to the small agricultural dams found upstream in the Notwane River catchment which is the source of its water'. Their contribution is by highlighting 'the legitimacy and livelihood significance of both the large and small dams and presents a more holistic explanation of the desiccation of the Gaborone Dam in the 2000s'.

Boga Manatsha's focus is on international relations as he unpacks the geopolitical context within which President Sir Seretse Khama made a state visit to North Korea, an adversary of the United States of America, in 1974 during the Cold War. He also elaborates on cooperation between Botswana and North Korea from 1974 to the early 1980s which otherwise did not amount to much strategic developments between the two countries. A similar theme is discussed by Christian John Makgala, David Norris and Gaimelwe Goitseman who look at the shooting of President Masire's jet over Angola in August 1988. Their focus is primarily on the geopolitical context of the accident, experience as well as response in Botswana and internationally. It is noted here that the shooting of Masire's presidential jet was the second incident of that kind in a space of two years in the Southern African region. The first having claimed the life of Mozambican President Samora Machel in 1986.

HIV/AIDS has been a major socio-economic theme in the development of Botswana since the mid-1980s when Masire was still the President of the Republic. Huge financial commitment has gone into the fight against HIV/AIDS in the country. In a collaborative effort Thabo Seleke and Mokaloba Mokaloba discuss the role and dynamics of donor funding in the struggle against the disease and whether this has been able to alter the country's HIV/AIDS policy agenda over the years. Their conclusion is 'that since Botswana is going through an epidemiological transition and experiencing HIV/AIDS fatigue, new innovative health financing methods needs to be introduced'.

Setumile Morapedi's article is on the important personal ethic or trait of *Botho* or proper and

acceptable human behaviour which is strongly encouraged at the national level. Her research was on a group of unemployed or ‘unemployable’ secondary school leavers or dropouts who loitered in Moshupa and becoming a problem to the community. By instilling and emphasising the ethos of *Botho* in the youth the researcher and the Moshupa community were able to turn the youth into well-behaved and productive members of their community and society. A similar project of imparting skills and proper attitudes on the trainers and learners is the focus of a collaborative work by Stephanie Hanranhan and Tshepang Tshube. They deal with a train-the-trainer version of LifeMatters which is a programme combining games and mental skills to influence the competence, confidence, connections, character, or caring for teachers/coaches in Botswana.

Botswana’s economic development during Masire’s presidency was fuelled by revenue from diamond mining in the country and this has been a focus of many studies and publications (e.g. see Gapa 2016; Magang 2015; and Siphambe *et al.* 2013). Whereas Botswana is one of the largest producers of diamonds globally, and the world leading producer of diamonds per value, it was only in 2015 that a diamond from Botswana caught the world’s attention. This was the discovery of a 1,109-carat rough stone by the Canadian Lucara company at its Karowe mine in Botswana. The diamond came to be known as ‘Lesedi La Rona’. This became the second biggest diamond discovered in the world after 110 years. The largest diamond was a 3,106-carat stone discovered near Pretoria in South Africa in 1905. The story of Lesedi La Rona, its discovery, global promotion, its failure to sell at a hyped auction in London and the politics of its marketing is the focus of discussion in an article by Christian John Makgala and Maitseo Bolaane.

The notes section also consists of interesting and informative papers. The first is Muhammed Haron’s profile and evaluation of the dynamic Muslim community in Botswana from 1966 to the present time. He examines the development of the community in terms of individuals or groups which contributed to the growth of Islam, and the development of Botswana in all walks of life. Oatlhokwa Nkomazana, Thabo Mokoena, Edward Maganu, and Loeto Mazhani provide an account of the reasons, challenges and opportunities that arose in the training of doctors in various medical fields in Botswana from 1966 to 2017. Their account ends with the discussion on the establishment of Medical School at the University of Botswana (UB) in 2009. The discussion is continued by Keikantse Matlhagela, Ludo Badlangana, Keromeng Johnson, Japhter Masunge and Thabo Mokoena who chronicle events leading to the establishment and functioning of UB’s Medical School as well as the challenges met on the way. One of the key aspects of the two related papers is the training of local medical experts to address the problem of acute shortage of citizen doctors in Botswana. These were previously trained outside the country at huge and unsustainable financial costs to the government of Botswana.

Robert Molebatsi and Nelson Sello’s contribution focuses on an aspect of presidency or leadership style of Botswana’s fourth President, Ian Khama (2008-2018). Their argument is that his administration was characterised by reversing the previous administrations’ devolution of services to centralisation. This approach led to Khama’s administration running parallel government structures with programmes that were personalised much to the disadvantage or marginalisation of long existing structures for service delivery, the two authors argue.

For some years now the Batlokwa had complained that the nearby Ruretse freehold property had eaten too deep into their original tribal land which left them too squeezed in Tlokweg, and with no room for expansion. This claim forms the basis of Fred Morton’s brief contribution in which he provides deep historical background behind the existence of Tlokweg and Ruretse. His argument is that

the Batlokwa's argument has no historical basis and empirical evidence to sustain it. Another historical note is provided by Bojosi Otlhogile who examines the role played by Quett Masire, who represented his Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), in the drafting of the constitution of Botswana locally and at Marlborough House in London. Other key players such as representatives of *Dikgosi*, other political parties and the colonial government officials as well as the issues they raised are looked into.

In another historical piece, David Magang, the developer of Phakalane suburb or township next to Ruretse, provides an account of the original wording or meaning of President Seretse Khama's famous but much modified quotation: 'A People Without a Past is a People Without a Soul'. He situates the quotation within a discussion or context of what Seretse Khama had perceived to be the vision for the development of Botswana. Magang also decries the decline of the teaching of history of Botswana in the country's education system and makes a strong case for the introduction of the country's history in the school system.

Former South African President, Thabo Mbeki (1999-2008), provides a congratulatory piece for the establishment of the Sir Ketumile Masire Foundation which promotes development in Botswana. Mbeki points out that by so doing Sir Ketumile Masire followed a well-trodden path of other former African heads of state. He provides the critical role colonial Botswana, and independent Botswana played in supporting the South African liberation struggle. Mbeki also credits Masire for the role he played at the continental level following his retirement from the presidency. Derek Hudson, one of the expatriate (and later citizen) experts and pioneers of development Botswana in the area of economics, statistics and financial or monetary independence provides a brief note on his recollection of the introduction of the country's Pula currency on 23 August 1976.

John Holm's brief note is on the origins and development of the Democracy Research Project (RDP) at UB which he played a critical role in its establishment in 1987 having been advised to do so by the late Professor Thomas Tlou, UB Vice Chancellor at the time. Holm was at UB as a visiting scholar on sabbatical leave from his home university of Cleveland State, Ohio in the United States, and left a lasting legacy. The RDP would continue to play an important role on research and publication of aspects of Botswana's democracy. The entity was also involved in running or handling elections, a very sensitive mandate with controversy never far away, for the country's political parties and trade unions among others. One of the landmark publications of the RDP is the book *Democracy in Botswana* (1989) edited by Holm and Patrick Molutsi. As Holm notes this was a product of the proceedings of a hugely successful conference on the country's democracy that was held in 1988 in collaboration with the Botswana Society. Contributors included academics and politicians among others.

1988 was the same year that saw Pope John Paul II visit Botswana in September as part of his tour of some countries in the Southern African region. Following the Pontiff's customary kissing the ground of the country during his first visit, he gave a very brief speech at the Sir Seretse Khama International Airport addressed to President Masire and the people of Botswana. His speech, in which he described Botswana 'as an Island of Peace in a Troubled Sea' is included in the notes section here.

The biographers of Seretse Khama tell us that up until about the early 1980s the country's civil service was arguably the most efficient on the whole of the African continent (Parsons *et al.* 1995). At that time the head of the civil service, who was also Permanent Secretary to the President (PSP), was Phillip Steenkamp. He is credited for the efficiency of the civil service at the time. He had also worked in the country's colonial service as a District Commissioner. Bashi Letsididi provides us with an interview with Steenkamp who reminisces about the good old days of the efficient civil service and decries the

current civil service which is said to be characterised by poor work ethic and poor service delivery. He also ascribes the same problem to the country's private sector. With this interview having been done in 2007 a lot of developments have since happened or changed particularly in regard to developments in Zimbabwe which Steenkamp gave his opinion on.

Derek Hudson devotes another piece focusing on the career and role of Quill Hermans in the development of Botswana. He starts by providing a brief background of Hermans' origin in South Africa and studies at Trinity College, Cambridge University. Hudson outlines the critical role Hermans played in the creation of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning starting in Mahikeng (South Africa) and later to Gaborone. This involves the establishment of Bank of Botswana and the country's monetary policy.

Botsalo Ntuane provides two notes. In the first note he chronicles the life story of one of the country's longest serving parliamentarians and cabinet ministers, Daniel Kwelagobe. Ntuane's second note, the latter part of which overlaps with the first note, he explains the origins and dynamics of the long standing and divisive faction strife in the ruling BDP, and how this led to Festus Mogae emerging to succeed Masire as President in 1998 over the heads of ambitious operators of rival factions.

Sandy Grant provides a brief life story of George Winstanley who was a colonial government official and also became an expatriate in Botswana after independence. Pierre Landell-Mills gives a fascinating account of the origins and early days of the Botswana Society and the BNR. He tells us that 'the Botswana Society sprang to life at a well-attended meeting held in the British High Commission Reading Room on 10 June 1969 chaired by the then Vice-President of Botswana, Dr Quett Ketumile Joni Masire'. Landell-Mills was among the pioneers of the Society and he attended the meeting he mentions. His piece focuses on the challenging but exciting times they faced when starting the Society and its relations with the National Museum and Art Gallery pioneered by Alec Campbell. Landell-Mills also takes advantage of his note to make corrections to another note published by Campbell in the BNR volume 44 (2012) on the relationship between the Museum and the Botswana Society.

A note by Ditiro Motlhabane focuses on the colossus and influential Johnson Motshwarakgole whose name is synonymous with the militant labour movement in Botswana. His role in the country's political landscape and judicial issues among others is looked into.

The notes section concludes with a piece by Masire's biographer, Barry Morton, who is currently working on a biography commissioned by the late President's family. Morton shares with the readers his experience of conducting research for Masire's biography.

The Book Reviews section has only one book review which is Christian John Makgala's review of Masire's 2006 memoirs *Very Brave or Very Foolish*. This was originally published in the BNR volume 44 (2012). It is being republished in this special issue in order to provide balance to Barry Morton's piece on his biography project.

Finally, the obituary section of this volume has a piece by Key Dingake in the form of a tribute to the late Gobe Matenge. Dingake focuses on Matenge's role in the development of Botswana. However, two paragraphs are added by the journal editor at the end Dingake's piece to reflect Matenge's role as Chairman of the Botswana Society. Matenge's tenure was the period when the Society was at its most productive years. This includes the time when the Botswana Society collaborated with John Holm's DRP to hold the 'Democracy in Botswana' project mentioned above. As Chairman of the Society Matenge made welcome remarks which also appear in the book *Democracy in Botswana*.

The second tribute is on Sylvia Cooke by Sandy Grant. As indicated in the previous note on Gobe

Matenge, Cooke played a key role in recruiting Matenge into the leadership of the Botswana Society. Sandy Grant indicates that alongside Alec Campbell and Matenge, Cooke played a pivotal role in the Botswana Society during its heyday in the 1980s.

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