

Coming to terms with motor transport and effective information seem to me two essential links in making it tolerable for substantial numbers of visitors to move around a small historic town, to do this in a way that is just not negative or haphazard but which can be fulfilling and creative.

I started this talk on conservation. I stressed that it was not dead or academic but a living thing demanding the involvement of the hearts and minds of the young just as much as the old. My message would be that the development of tourism in a small historic town is of the same characteristic.

I have touched on some of the physical obstacles and suggested a few simple means by which they can be overcome. Indeed, I believe that in most cases most of them can be overcome. But, just as in conservation it is the attitudes of the people which are more determinative, it is those who live in a place who must decide. If they remain convinced that tourism is hostile to their lives, then I would leave sleeping dogs well and truly alone.

In more cases, however, I believe that hostility can be turned by persuasion into participation, that welcome can replace barred or locked gates. Where indeed this is achieved, visitors may find no less enjoyment in the welcome they receive than in the lovely buildings which they have just seen. Indeed it is the former that may be remembered far longer than the latter.

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BOTSWANA

Background

Physical: Botswana, 570,000 sq.km., is entirely landlocked, being adjoined by South Africa, Namibia, the Caprivi Strip, Zambia and Rhodesia. Its mean altitude is 1,000 m. above sea-level, and its annual average rainfall is 450 mm - although this is highly erratic and unevenly distributed. 84 % of the land surface is covered by Kgalagadi sand supporting a low savannah vegetation type. The Okovango and Chobe drainage systems represent the only perennial surface water. 80 % of the de facto population of 574,000 (1971), nevertheless, live in the south east side of the country, in the catchment area of the Limpopo River, where the soils are generally more fertile.

Economy: The few years since independence in 1966 have already brought about profound change. Annual development expenditure has increase fivefold. With the completion of the necessary infrastructure for the mining of diamonds at Orapa and copper/nickel at Pikwe, meat, previously accounting for 75 % of total exports, has been displaced as the country's primary revenue earner. Already 8 % of the population are living in urban centres and the number of vehicles on the road - to take one particularly pertinent example - has doubled.

Settlement History: The earliest known inhabitants were the Bush people. Archaeological evidence suggests that eastern Botswana, with south western Rhodesia and the northern Transvaal, formed part of the 8th to the 15th century Leopard Kopje culture which was closely associated with the mining of gold, copper and tin. Mining was continued by the VuRozwi/Kalanga until the 18th century. There are numerous stone ruins in north eastern Botswana which are of the Zimbabwe (1300-1510) and Khami (from 1450) types. Modern history can be regarded as dating from the settlement of the Bamangwato in the Shoshong Hills around 1790 and, further south, from the displacement by the difaqane of the Sotho-Tswana tribes in the Transvaal in the first half of the 19th century and their consequent migration into today's Botswana.

From these two poles there eventually emerged a new tribal state system in Botswana which was to be the basis of today's pattern of settlement. The formative period of the new tribal states - finally superseded by the attainment of national independence - was responsible for the establishment of all of today's major, indigenous centres. Kanye was settled in 1794, Mochudi in 1871, Ramotswa in 1875, Tlokweng about 1895, Molepolole in 1900 after ten changes of site in the mid-19th century and although there was to be a minor shift in 1936/37, Serowe in 1902, having moved from Old Phalapye, and Shoshong and Maun in 1915. The European Gold Rush period was responsible for Francistown, established by 1866, the colonial period for Lobatse and the nine years since independence for Gaborone, Orapa and Pikwe.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

This was established by Act of Parliament in 1967 and, amongst others, has been financed by the Botswana Government, SIDA, DANIDA and Anglo-American. The Museum aims at being an educational and research centre specialising in the interaction of man and his environment. It has six galleries and another three have recently been completed. It has a staff of ten and is the only functional museum in the country.

THE PROTECTION OF ANCIENT MONUMENTS ACT

This has been on the statute book since 1950 but the remoteness of many sites, the lack of supervisory and technical skills and the absence of tourism has meant that its powers of enforcement have remained somewhat nominal. To an extent, remoteness has helped to protect these sites but cannot now be relied on for very much longer. For this reason, the Government has recently created the post of National Monuments Officer whose responsibilities will revolve around 'the numerous sites and remains of the Iron Age peoples' and the setting up of interpretive services.

THE INDIGENOUS TOWNS

These towns, more aptly regarded as falling within the category of living history and living tradition, represent a completely different set of interests and problems.

While several occupy sites which were previously settled by earlier peoples, none is particularly old. The particular interest and importance of these towns stems not so much from antiquity of establishment, however, as from antiquity of type. Archaeological work in South Africa is producing a growing body of evidence to show that the antecedents of the present Tswana towns - for which our first known description was of Kaditshwene by John Campbell in 1820 - can be traced back for 900 years. It is now certain that Molepolole's move to its present site in 1936/37 will be the last occasion on which a new motse (the town of the Chief) will have been created. History and a particular social and economic system has left modern Botswana with seven of these old tribal capitals, with a smaller number of secondary settlements and a host of minor villages whose physical layout still generally conforms to a distinctive, concentric pattern expressing the detail of social organisation. It is only to be expected, however, that recent social change will be reflected in the changing physical form of these indigenous towns. While traditional leadership still plays an extremely important role in all the Botswana settlements, local government and village organisation has been restructured since 1966 so that it is better able to cope with the vastly more complex problems and needs of today's circumstances. The provision of improved water supply systems, telephones, roads, electricity and so on has already made an inevitably marked physical impact on the traditional centres. It remains to be seen whether changing social conditions and economic and town planning considerations lead to the abandonment of traditional urban forms or whether these will be, or can be, adapted to new needs.

The traditional centres have got to change - about this there can be no argument - and the conservationist has to be extremely careful to avoid being interpreted as wishing to obstruct this. His main opportunity may well arise from the government's increasing responsiveness to the potential for tourist development. This seems likely to stimulate a more extensive process of questioning about the potential economic nature and value of the traditional towns and, hopefully, to deliberate government expenditure on enhancing their marvellous but easily eroded townscape qualities.

Much of this overall townscape quality derives from the use of natural building materials, soil, oxidised clays, grass and timber. Considered individually, however, the family compound or lolwapa is, at its best, a triumph of craftsmanship and design. The message from other parts of Africa indicates very clearly, though, that traditional building of this kind gives way very quickly to cement and corrugated iron. The same pattern of change is already beginning to be evident in Botswana. Very little time is now left for the study of the traditional building.

For this reason it is appropriate to mention here that official approval has recently been given (not least, by the President himself) for such an exercise to be undertaken. Any conference of conservationists, in Europe, especially in Architectural Heritage Year, would surely agree that every country in the world needs to have a documented history of its own building achievement.

Yet with so many competing needs, it is likely that few projects of this kind in Africa could be given a respectable priority rating. Current development needs are overwhelming and knowledge for the sake of knowledge is probably a luxury that cannot be afforded. For this reason, the Botswana project which I hope to start later in the year - given the availability of funds - will survey the changing pattern of rural housing and seek to identify regional variation, current preferences, forms of adaptation and so, and in doing so provide information which can be utilised not least in the planning and implementation of site and service schemes in the genuinely urban centres of the country. Beyond this, however, the project should begin to describe those buildings or groups of buildings, kgotla arrangement, graveyards, wells and the like which are of cultural and/or historic importance but which are currently excluded from the responsibilities of the National Monuments Officer. At minimum, these buildings and sites need to be given some degree of protection which might best be ensured by local, rather than central, government authorities. Personally I am in no doubt about the urgency of this needs. Buildings of very real interest have already been lost and these simply cannot be replaced. Botswana may not be as rich in its building forms as many other countries in Africa but what it has is its own and should be cherished accordingly. Tradition can be developed and built upon, it does not have to be cocooned and protected.

Vilhelm Helander (Finland)

THE WOODEN TOWNS OF SCANDINAVIA

The towns of Scandinavia have had a common feature: until the last decades the towns have been dominated by timberbuilt houses. Right up to the 20th century, brick or stone buildings and multi-storey apartment houses have been a rarity at least in smaller towns. Only Denmark and the Swedish scania form an exception with their more continental brick and half-timbered houses.

To be able to understand the recent development and the problems of preservation in the wooden towns, it is necessary to point out some of their common features. The towns are relatively few and modest in size. The timber-built towns were centres in a farming community, often they partly relied on shipping and fisheries. They were situated in the middle of sparsely populated farming and forest areas.

The tradition of city culture is very thin in Sweden. Norway and especially in Finland, which had for instance only six medieval towns (or rather villages). At the beginning of the 19th century still less than 10 percent of the total population in these countries lived in towns. The building stock is rather new, mostly dating from the 19th and 20th century. Buildings even