

This river, the Notwani, is most of the year just a sand bed about fifty yards across but after the heavy rains it comes down in flood in parts is nearly half a mile wide. There is a terrific flow bringing down trees, cattle etc but in a short while again it is empty and only a few large pools are left in which one finds barbels - a mud fish. Where it comes from I don't know.

It must be remembered that at this time the Anglo Boer war was still on and at night the men slept in the large fort in case of a raid. Patrols had to be carried out by the Basset Police on horseback and the armoured train. It was on one of these patrols that a Basuto policeman, Cheri, was shot. He is buried next to the railway line and marked by a cross. Gaborones is of course only a very short distance from the Transvaal border. Only a matter of a couple of miles across the Notwani which passed within a mile of our house.

We eventually moved into our house down among the miniature stone kopjes which harboured snakes, leguans, dassies etc. Further along among the kopjes lived the Fieldings, he was a police officer, and their two daughters and son. So with these three and Vivian Ellenberger, who eventually married my youngest sister, we once again had companions to play with. We boys used to go round with our air guns shooting birds and did not give much thought to reptiles as they always did their best to get out of ones way, for they are not normally the aggressors. During the mating season a snake like the Black Mamba can be very dangerous and liable to attack anyone upsetting his lovemaking. It was some years later that I was pottering about the kopjes with my B.S.A. airgun, a powerful weapon, when I spotted a Black Mamba which I shot. When I got home I told my Dad and as he seemed to doubt my story I went back and brought back the snake which was nearly ten feet long. I had a snap taken and sent to the B.S.A. people from whom I had a very nice letter of thanks. As I have mentioned, just below the house was the Notwani river, normally a river of sand. On one occasion I well remember a couple of policemen were visiting friends across the river which they did normally when off duty. On this occasion the river came down suddenly and they were not able to get back. As there was no bridge the question next day was how they were to get back to camp. Someone came up with the bright idea of swimming a horse across the main channel and by a shuttle service the men could be helped across by the horse. The water up to the main channel was only two or three feet deep and so the horse was led to the river. We were accompanied by a couple of policemen one of whom volunteered to mount and swim across. Unfortunately, having mounted the horse bareback, he could not retain his seat and slid off, the horse took fright and the strong current soon separated man and horse. The horse returned to the bank but the poor policeman who was no swimmer was carried downstream and would most certainly have been drowned had he not been caught by the branch of one of the large trees which was overhanging into the water. I ran down the river bank and soon came on the poor man who was in a terrible state of fright, and seemed too scared to move. He called out and I

climbed/