Bechuanaland Government and Botswana Telegraph Envelopes

by Gordon Smith

This is a continuation of two earlier articles that established a typology for official government envelopes from Botswana and Bechuanaland. The first was about envelopes imprinted with "On Botswana Government Service" (OBGS) (FR # 89). The second was about envelopes imprinted "On Botswana Postal Service" (FR # 90). This article will focus on earlier government printed envelopes from Bechuanaland and Botswana imprinted with a variety of different text.

Classification of the Government Printed Envelopes

The classification of the Government printed envelopes discussed here uses the same criteria as for the "On Botswana Government Service" envelopes as indicated in Figure 1. Readers will note a simplification of this classification system compared to that provided in the previous two articles. In the preceding articles, the "Presence and Style of Logo" was not used to differentiate groups in the OBGS classification as the author had not seen envelopes of this category with logos on them; therefore, for this and its related categories, the criterium was relegated to determining variety, if any were to be found in the future. However, in preparing this article, the author has become aware of telegram envelopes with and without logos. In order to provide consistency in the classification system and to simplify it, the author has decided to make the "Presence and Style of Logo" one of the criteria used to determine groups of all the government printed envelopes.

To determine the classification of a government printed envelopes, they are first sorted into a category based on the text indicating that they are being used for official government or postal business (see Figure 2).

As the postal services in Bechuanaland were provided by South Africa until the 1960's and there is no reason why the South African postal service should not have used their own stationery, it seems likely that many of the envelopes in categories OHrMS, OHsM, OHMS, and OHMS-IDVHW were printed either in South Africa or the United Kingdom.
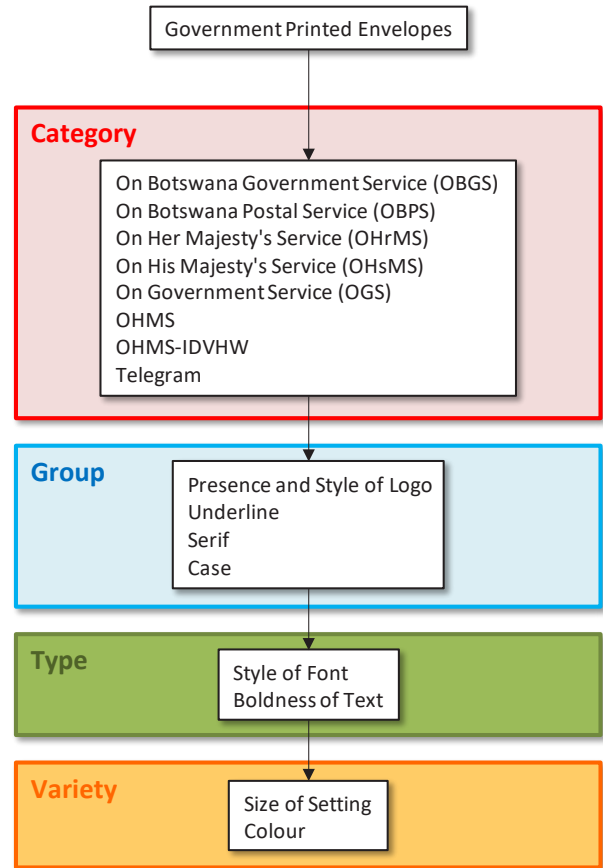

Figure 1: Basis for establishing a typology of Bechuanaland and Botswana Government printed envelopes

The subdivision of categories into groups is based on four criteria: 1) the presence and style of a logo, 2) whether the text is underlined or not, 3) whether the text is a serif or sans serif font, and 4) the case of the text. Figure 3 describes the criteria used. Additional logos styles may be added in the future as they are discovered.

Text found on Envelope	Category
On Botswana Government Service	OBGS
On Botswana Postal Service	OBPS
On Her Majesty's Service	OHrMS
On His Majesty's Service	OHsMS
OHMS (includes O.H.M.S.)	OHMS
OHMS-IDVHW (includes O.H.M.S.−I.D.V.H.W.)	OHMS-IDVHW
On Government Service	OGS
Telegram	TELE

Figure 2: Categorization of Bechuanaland and Botswana Government printed envelopes

1. **Logo**	Style 0- no logo		Style 1 – Botswana Coat of Arms	
2. **Underline**	U – underlined		N – not underlined	
3. **Serif**	s – serif		ss – sans serif	
4. **Case** (capitalization)	U – all upper case	L – lower and upper case	S – small caps	

Figure 3: Basis of grouping for Bechuanaland and Botswana Government printed envelopes

Font Types

The groups of the Government Printed Envelopes are further divided into types based on the style of the font and boldness of the text. Following this definition, different fonts will be numbered as they are found.

Using this system, the following classification to the type level is developed (Figure 4 on the following page). The author is aware of only two telegram covers which are shown in their entirety as there are several visual features that distinguish the different envelopes. As more of these envelopes are discovered, a more refined classification system may need to be developed.

As with the OBGS and OBPS envelopes, a further challenge within the classification is the wide variety in the size of the settings of the text and the colour of the imprints found within each of the types. These criteria are used to denote the variety of the imprint. Measurements of the length of settings vary with each category of mark as per Figure 5 below. The height of the mark is measured on the "H" of the OHrMS, OHsMS, OHMS, and OHMS-IDVHW envelopes, the left side of first "N" on the OGS enveloped and the "T" of the TELE envelopes.

As an example, the designation "OHrMS Type UsL01 79.8 x 4.9" is broken down as follows: "OHrMS" is the category, "Type UsL01" is the type, and "79.8 x 4.9" is the variety.

It is an unusual situation that the government administrative centre for Bechuanaland was located outside the country in Mafeking, South Africa, where the Protectorate post office shared a building with the South African post office. This led to the creation of interesting covers such as the one found in Figure 6, which is an OHMS envelope franked with a Bechuanaland Resident Commission official free mark, but carries a South African stamp. As noted previously, it appears that government printed envelopes allowing free postage are only valid within Bechuanaland / Botswana, so the author wonders if this letter was carried to Mafeking as an in-country letter free of postage and then to allow it to enter the international mail stream, it had South African postage applied. Any thoughts on this theory or other aspects of this study are most welcome.
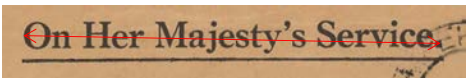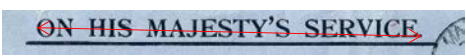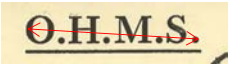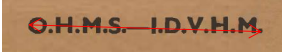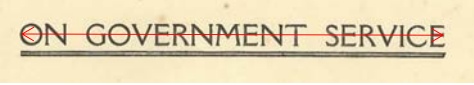
Text found on Envelope	Measurement of Setting	Illustration
OHrMS	from outside left of "O" to right end of middle stroke of "E"	On Her Majesty's Service
OHsMS	from outside left of "O" to right end of middle stroke of "E"	ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE
OHMS	from outside left of "O" to outside right of final period	O.H.M.S.
OHMS-IDVHW	from outside left of "O" to outside right of final period	O.H.M.S. I.D.V.H.M.
OGS	from outside left of "O" to right end of middle stroke of "E"	ON GOVERNMENT SERVICE
TELE	from upper left corner of "T" to lower right corner of "M"	TELEGRAM MOGALA

Figure 5: Method of Measuring Setting

Type	
OHrMS Type UsL02	On Her Majesty's Service.
OHrMS Type UsL03	On Her Majesty's Service.
OHrMS Type UsL04 (slightly less bold and more compressed than OHrMS Type UsL03)	On Her Majesty's Service.

Type	
OHrMS Type UsU01	ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE.
OHrMS Type UsU02	ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE.
OHrMS Type UsU03	ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE
OHrMS Type UsU04	ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE.

Type	
OHsMS Type UsU01	ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE.
OHsMS Type UsU02	ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE.

Type	
OHMS Type UsU01	O.H.M.S.
OHMS Type UsU02	O.H.M.S.
OHMS Type UsU03	O. H. M. S.
OHMS Type UsU04	O. H. M. S.

Type	
OHMS-IDVHM Type NssU01	O.H.M.S.—I.D.V.H.M.

Type	
OGS Type UsU01	ON GOVERNMENT SERVICE

Figure 4. Summary of types. The two types of Telegraph envelopes are shown on the next page

TELE Type 0 UssU01

(Based on text :Botswana Telecommunication)

TELE Type 1 NssU01

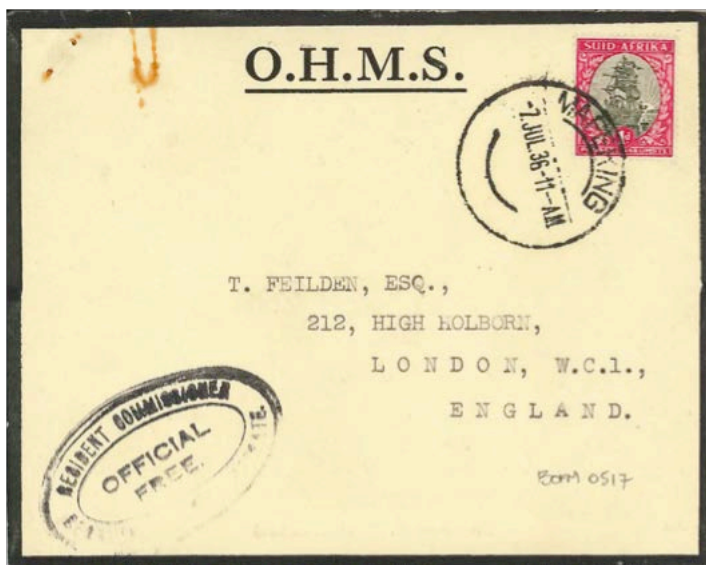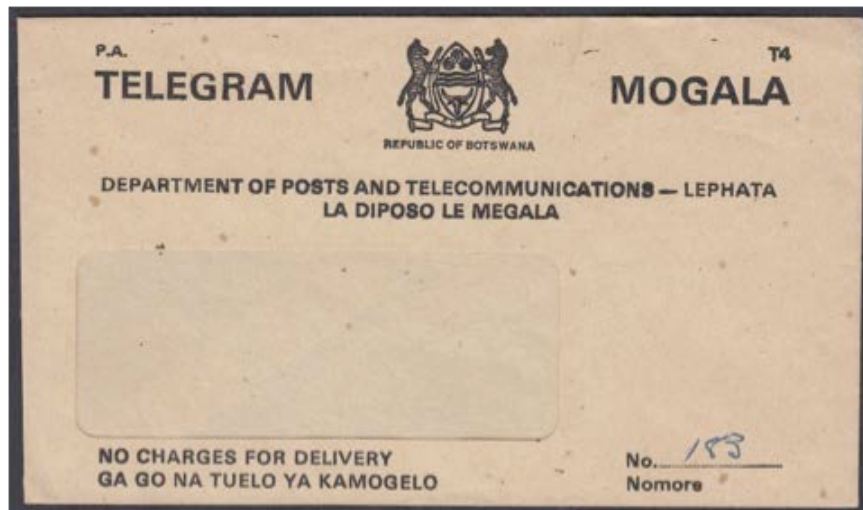(Based on text :Botswana Posts and Telecommunications)

Figure 6: OHMS Mourning Envelope, marked with a Resident Commissioner, Bechuanaland Protectorate, Official Free handstamp, franked with a 1d South African stamp, postmarked Mafeking, 7 July 1936.

This set of stamps was issued in 1973 on the occasion of the *First International Kimberlite Conference* held in Cape Town. The 20c stamp misspells kimberlite.

Highlights

Homelands Postal Orders
Disaster at Nicholson's Nek
Geological Superlatives
Royal Empire Society Specimens
Bechuanaland Government Envelopes
Stellaland Early Usage
Prize Letters

Swaziland is Now eSwatini