

Botswana Government Printed Envelopes

by Gordon Smith

Official mail in Botswana is usually sent in envelopes with an imprint indicating that the item is being sent “On Botswana Government Service” or “On Botswana Postal Service” (see Figures 1 and 2).

Pre-independence official government covers are further categorized, depending on the monarch reigning at the time, into “On Her Majesty’s Service” and on “On His Majesty’s Service” (see Figures 3 and 4). This text is, with a few exceptions, printed across the top of the envelope.

While it is assumed that transition covers, where for example “On His Majesty’s Service” has been overprinted or manually modified to “On Her Majesty’s Service” or “On Her Majesty’s Service” to “On Botswana Government Service” exist, the author has not seen any examples.

Due to the wide variations observed in the style of the imprints, it appears that the text for Botswana Government printed envelopes was and is printed by private non-bonded or non-security printers unlike registered envelopes and other postal stationery such as aerogrammes. It is likely that the use of non-security printers is possible because the printed indication that the item is official mail does not contain any indicia that denotes that postage has been paid (as would be the case with an aerogramme, for example).

Based on a review of many hundreds of covers, it appears that all official mail within Botswana could be sent for free without the use of postage stamps or other indication of payment of postage. However, an Official Free handstamp must be added for an appropriate organization to receive the free mailing privilege. A sample of such a handstamp can be seen in Figure 5.

While it appears that items marked “On Botswana Postal Service” could be mailed outside Botswana for free, it appears that other official mail, i.e. “On Botswana Government Service”, “On Her Majesty’s Service” and “On His Majesty’s Service” covers, sent to international destinations had to contain

Figure 1.

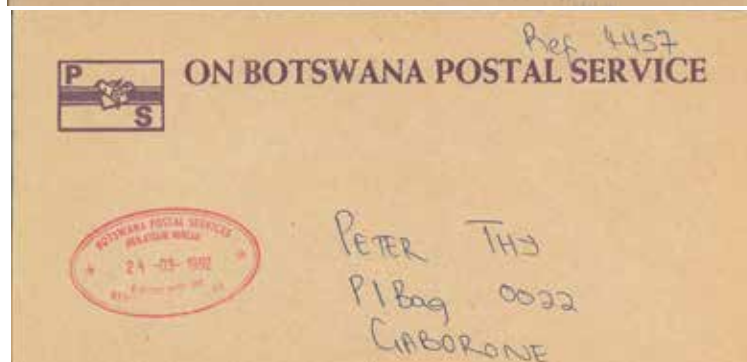


Figure 2.

postage stamps or other indications of postage paid.

As the envelopes are not security-printed, it appears that the government departments may use different printers resulting in a wide range of font styles and sizes. Covers are also found in a wide variety of sizes and types from C6 envelopes (162 mm x 114 mm) to bags used to mail the Government Gazette (approximately 425 mm x 238 mm) (Figure 6).

Most often the envelopes are buff in color with the imprint ranging from black through brown to a purplish hue. A small number of white airmail type envelopes have been seen within the “On Botswana Government Service” types with the text for the message being blue (see Figure 7).

In setting up a classification scheme for the different covers, the first major characteristic for separation establishing the Category is the text indicating whether the envelope is being sent “On Botswana Government Service” (OBGS), “On Botswana Postal Service” (OBPS), “On Her Majesty’s Service” (OHRMS) and on “On His Majesty’s Service” (OHSMS). The differentiation of these groups is indicated by using the first letters of the words in the text. i.e. OBGS, OBPS, OHRMS and OHSMS.

Interestingly, while the “On Botswana Postal Service” covers most often contain text and a logo of a bird carrying an envelope on the front of the cover (see Figure 2), the “On Botswana Government Service”, “On Her Majesty’s Service” and on “On His Majesty’s Service” envelopes only have a coat of



Figure 3

arms printed on the rear flap, if at all (see Figure 8).

This article describes the further differentiation of “On Botswana Government Service” covers. Future articles will examine “On Botswana Postal Service”, “On Her Majesty’s Service” and on “On His Majesty’s Service” covers.

Figure 9 describes the basis for establishing a typology of Botswana Government Printed Envelopes.

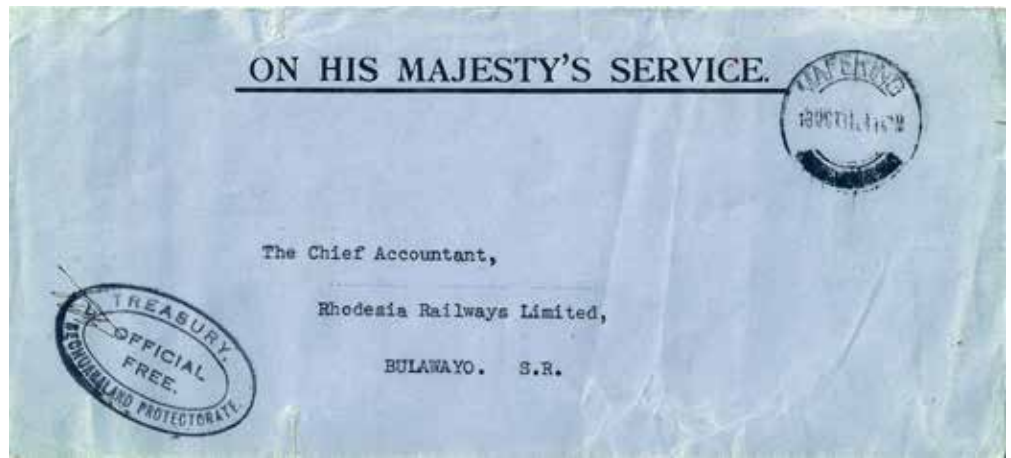


Figure 4

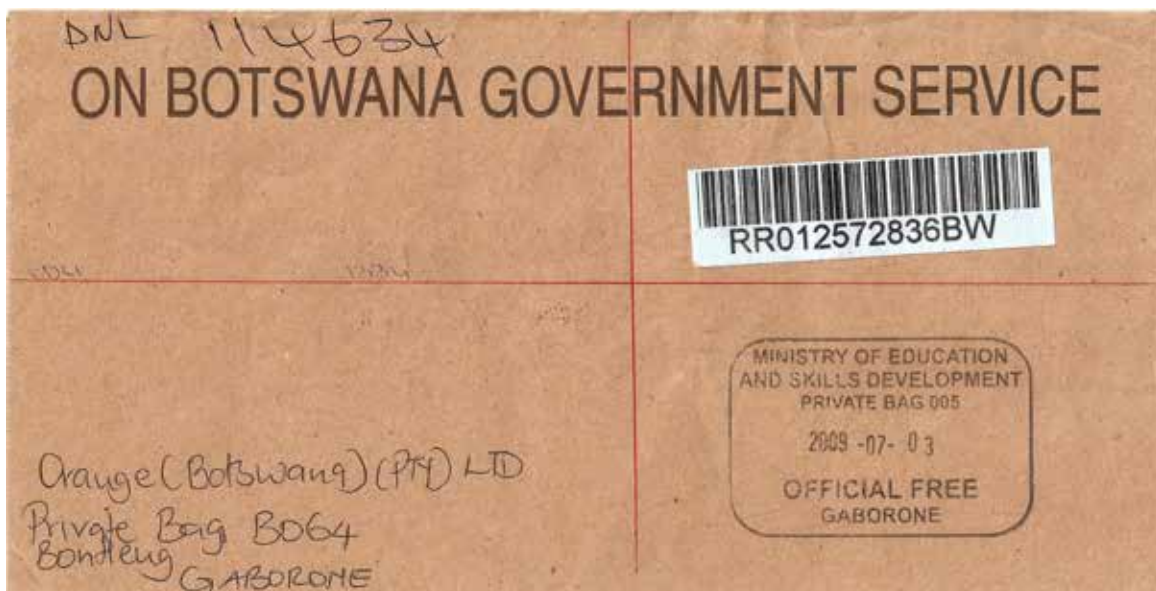


Figure 5

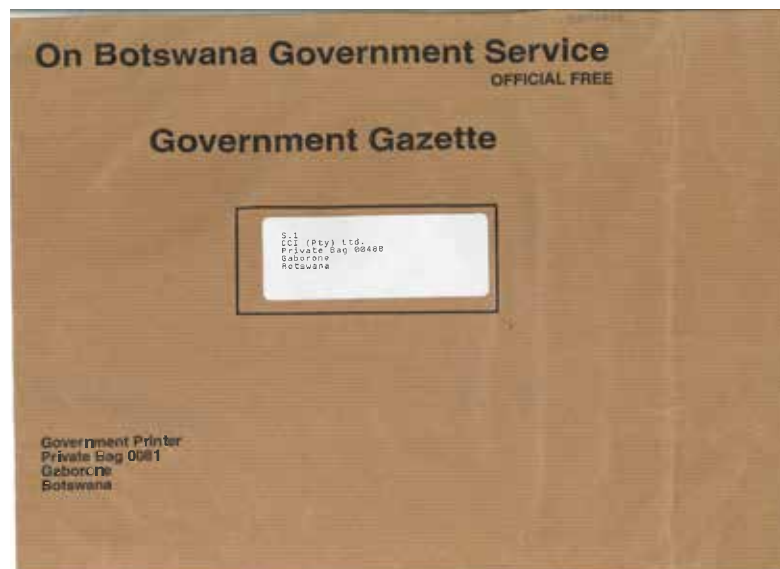


Figure 6. Large envelope use to mail the Government Gazette.

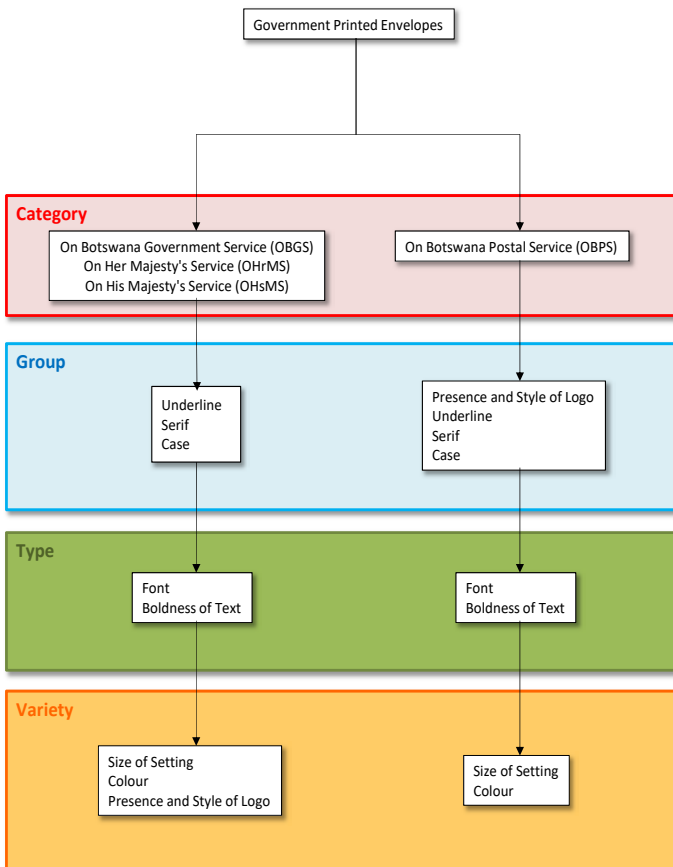


Figure 9: Basis for Establishing a Typology of Botswana Government Printed Envelopes

Classification of “On Botswana Government Service” (OBGS) Envelopes

Grouping of the OBGS envelopes is based on three criteria: 1) whether the text is underlined or not, 2) whether the text is a serif or sans serif font, and 3) the case of the text. Figure 9 describes the criteria used.

1. Underline	U – underlined	N – not underlined	
2. Serif	s – serif	ss – sans serif	
3. Case (capitalization)	U – all upper case	L – lower and upper case	S – small caps

Figure 10: Basis of Grouping for OBGS Covers

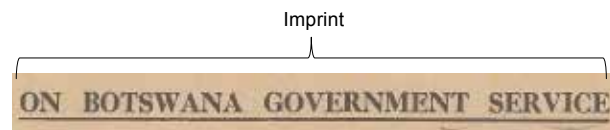


Figure 11: Sample of an OBGS Marking

The groups of OBGS covers are further divided into Types based on the font and boldness of the text. Following this definition, different fonts will be numbered as they are found.

A further challenge within the typology is the wide variety of sizes and colour of the imprints found within each of the Types. These criteria are used to denote the Variety of the imprint. The “On Botswana Government Services” covers can also be further differentiated into Varieties based on the presence and style of a logo on the back of the cover.

Figure 10 provides an example of an OBGS marking. The text is underlined, is a serif font and is all upper case. Therefore, using the criteria in Figure 9 it would be denoted as UsU and as the first type within the grouping (as determined by its font), it is denoted with a 1, making it UsU1.

The setting is sized at 114.5 mm by 3.8 mm and it is in black. Therefore, this particular mark would be denoted as UsU1 114.5x3.8 Black.

Please feel free to provide additional thoughts and information related to the development of this typology. The author, Gordon Smith, can be reached at gs@postalhistory.ca with copy to the Editor.



Figure 7



Figure 8

Typology of “On Botswana Government Service” (OBGS) Envelopes

Using this system, the following typology to the type level is developed. Again, it should be noted that there can be a wide variation in the size and colour of the imprint within each Type.

OBGS Type NsS01	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE
OBGS Type NsS02	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE
OBGS Type NsS03	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE
OBGS Type NsS04	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE

OBGS Type NssL01	On Botswana Government Service
OBGS Type NssL02	On Botswana Government Service
OBGS Type NssL03	On Botswana Government Service

OBGS Type NssU01	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE
OBGS Type NssU02	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE
OBGS Type NssU03	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE
OBGS Type NssU04	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE
OBGS Type NssU05	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE
OBGS Type NssU06	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE
OBGS Type NssU07	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE
OBGS Type NssU08	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE
OBGS Type NssU09	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE
OBGS Type NssU10	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE
OBGS Type NssU11	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICES
OBGS Type NssU12	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE
OBGS Type NssU13	ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE

OBGS Type NsU01	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>
OBGS Type NsU02	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>
OBGS Type NsU03	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>

OBGS Type UsS01	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>
OBGS Type UsS02	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>
OBGS Type UsS03	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>

OBGS Type UssS01	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>
OBGS Type UssS02	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>

OBGS Type UssU01	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>
OBGS Type UssU02	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>
OBGS Type UssU03	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u> 5
OBGS Type UssU04	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>
OBGS Type UssU05	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>
OBGS Type UssU06	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>
OBGS Type UssU07	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>
OBGS Type UssU08	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>

OBGS Type UsU01	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>
OBGS Type UsU02	<u>ON BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT SERVICE</u>



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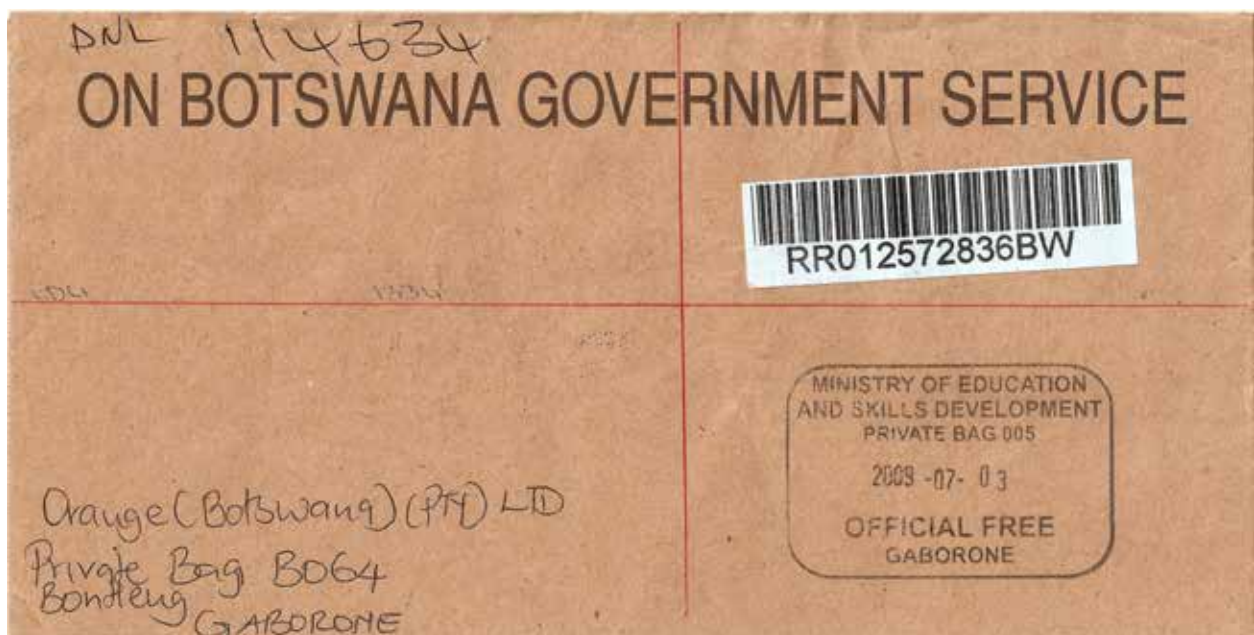
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Official Botswana Government envelope used internally in Gaborone in 2003

Highlights

On Government Service Envelopes
Color Variant of 1880 Cape Stamp
Major John Walter and the Boer War
South African Border War