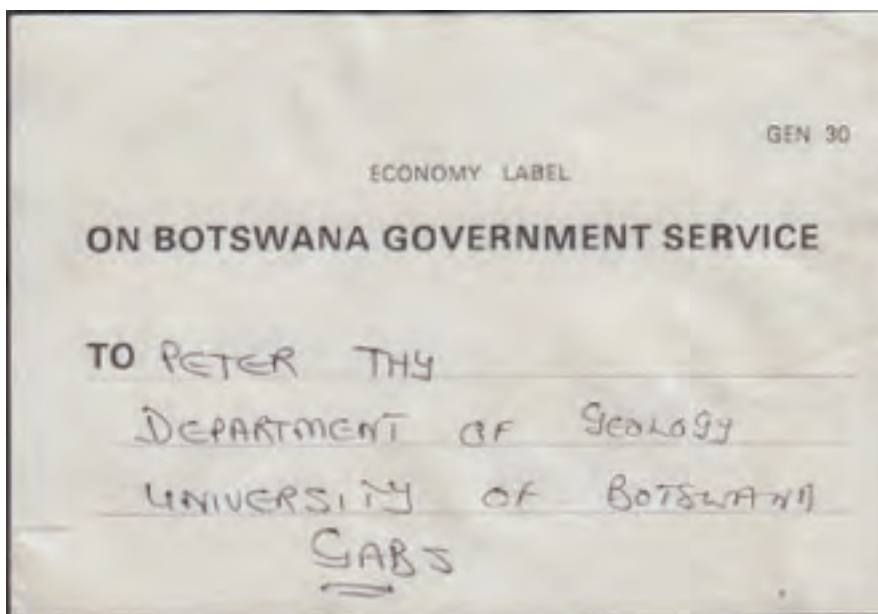


# A Botswana Economy Label

by Gordon Smith

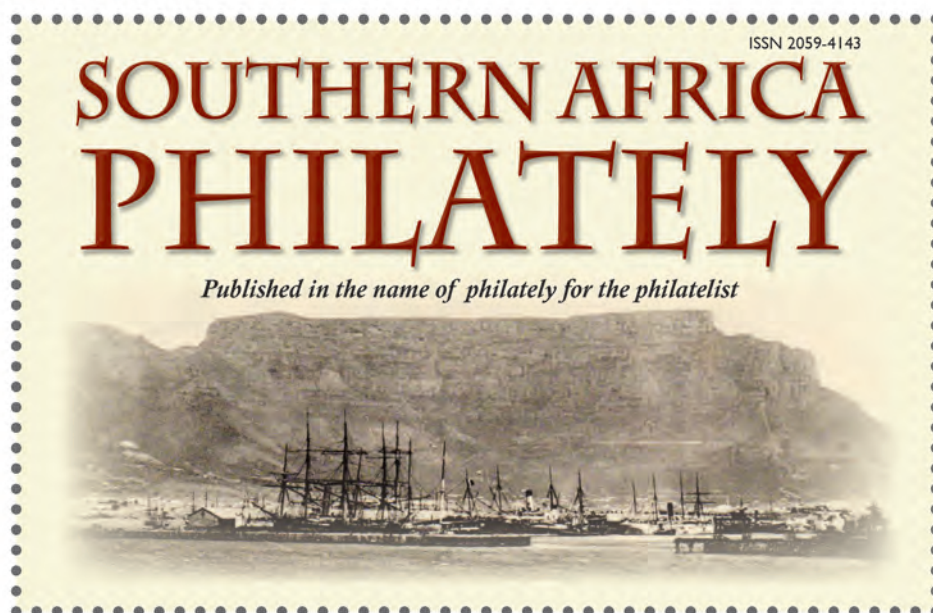
This is an interesting label using the term “On Botswana Government Service” This term is typically printed directly on envelopes used by Botswana government departments, but is accompanied by a hand stamp that provides the name and address of the department sending the item, the date and the words “Official Free” that allows the item to be sent through the mails free of charge (see “Botswana Government Printed Envelopes” in Forerunners #89).

Economy labels are typically used on covers that have been refolded and reused as a paper saving exercise, especially during times of war when there are strict rations on materials. Peter Thy received this item while he worked at the University of Botswana in the period 1989 to 1992 and suspects that it was originally on a packet from the Geological Survey Department. While Botswana was the third poorest country in the world when it achieved independence in 1966, by the early 1990’s it had one of the fastest growing economies in the world thanks to the discovery of very rich diamond deposit and careful management of this mineral wealth by the government. It is therefore interesting that in this time of relative plenty that the government would be re-using envelopes. However, this frugality, perhaps a holdover from the tighter economy only a few decades earlier, was still noticeable during the author’s stay in Botswana through the mid-1990’s until the early 2000’s.



The labelling of this item makes it clear that it is an economy label and the identification number “GEN 30” indicates that it was part of a system of serialized printing by the government. Given the term “GEN” in the serial number and the lack of any indications of a department, one could surmise that the label was a general one intended for use across all departments of government.

If anyone has further information on these types of labels, please contact the author, Gordon Smith at [gs@postalhistory.ca](mailto:gs@postalhistory.ca) or the editor.



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Memorial stamp design to the victims of the South African War 1899-1902. Equally appropriate as a remembrance to those lost to the current pandemic

## **Highlights**

Bechuanaland Telephone  
Natal Used Zululand and Orange Free State  
Waterlow Rhodesia Map  
African Wrappers  
Economy Label  
Apartheid and Post Office

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