

Stamps ... Who Needs Them?

Collecting the Non-Stamped Postal History of Botswana

Why do I collect this stuff

I currently live in Nova Scotia Canada.

I lived in Botswana from 1994 to 2002, where I ran and eventually owned a landscape architecture, environmental consulting, and land use planning company.

My interest in stamp collecting re-ignited in Botswana by receipt of nicely stamped mail from Canada.

I joined local club and started collecting Botswana stamps.

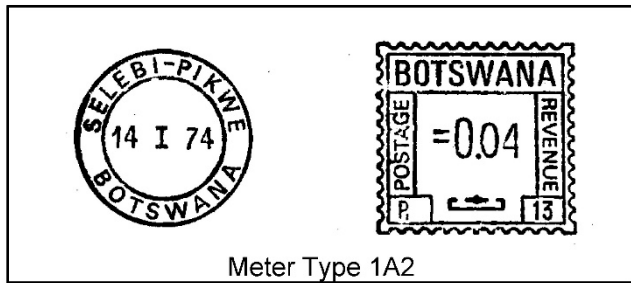
I quickly developed good collection of stamps and started looking for other topics.



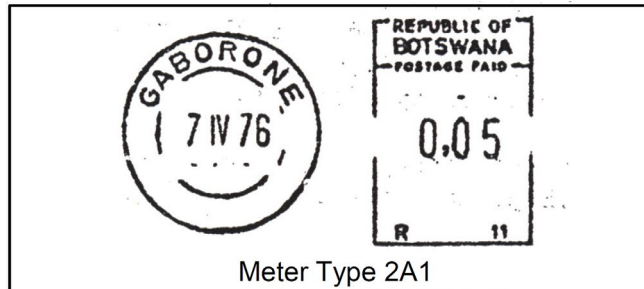
My Collecting Interests – Meter Marks



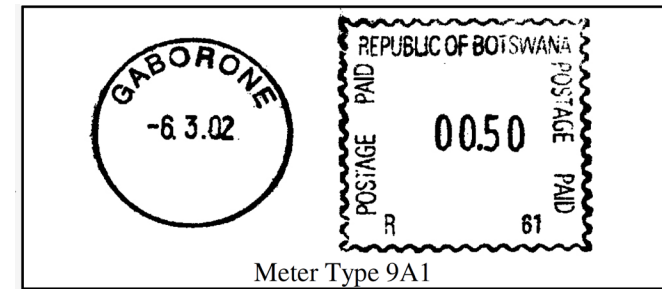
Meters - Typology



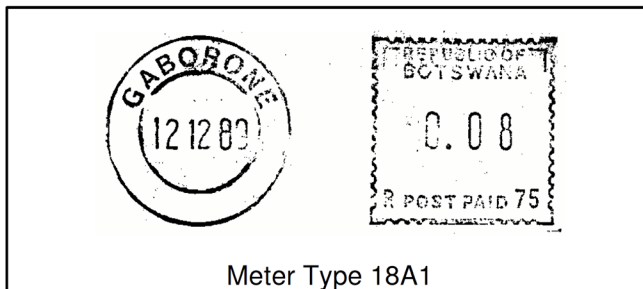
Meter Type 1A2



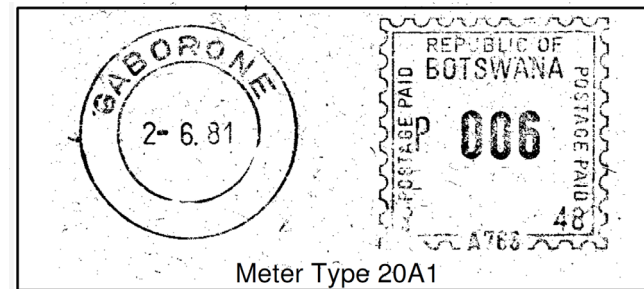
Meter Type 2A1



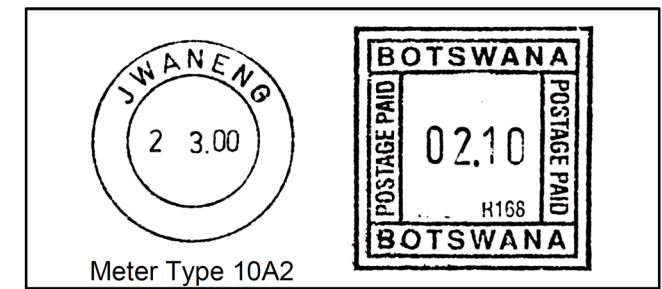
Meter Type 9A1



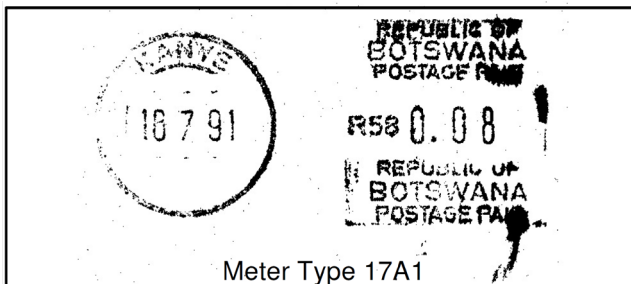
Meter Type 18A1



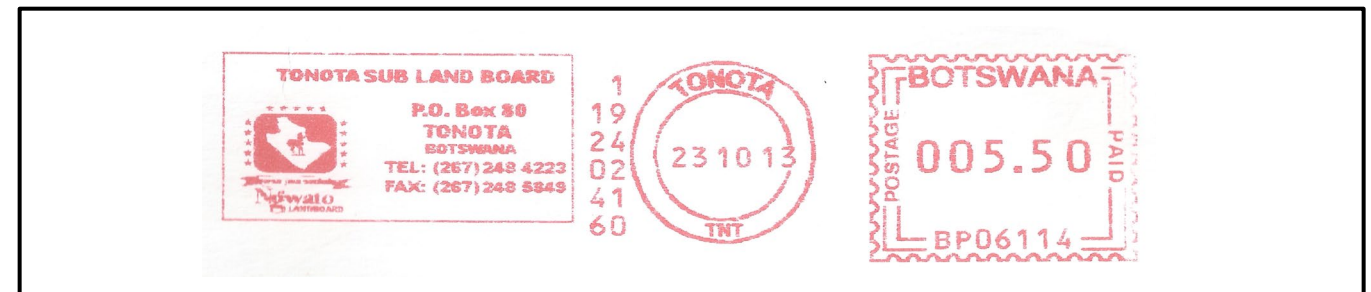
Meter Type 20A1



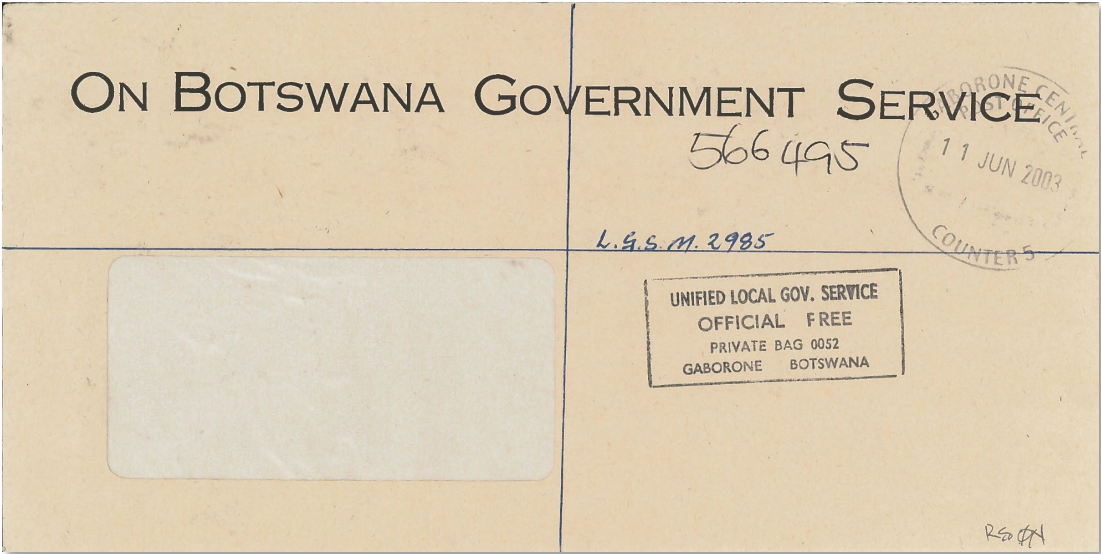
Meter Type 10A2



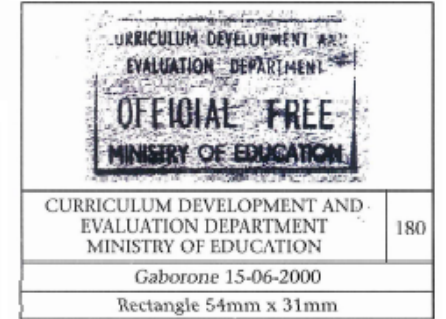
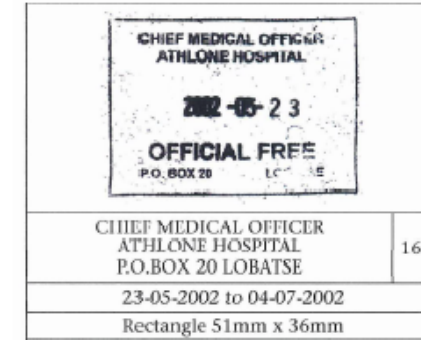
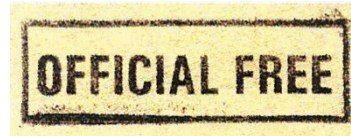
Meter Type 17A1



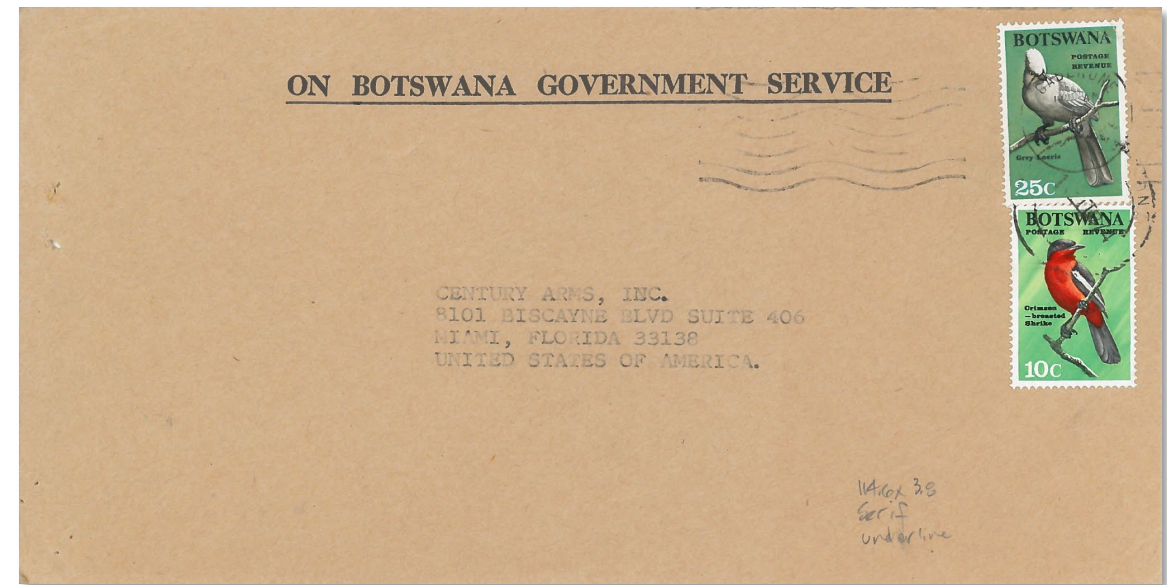
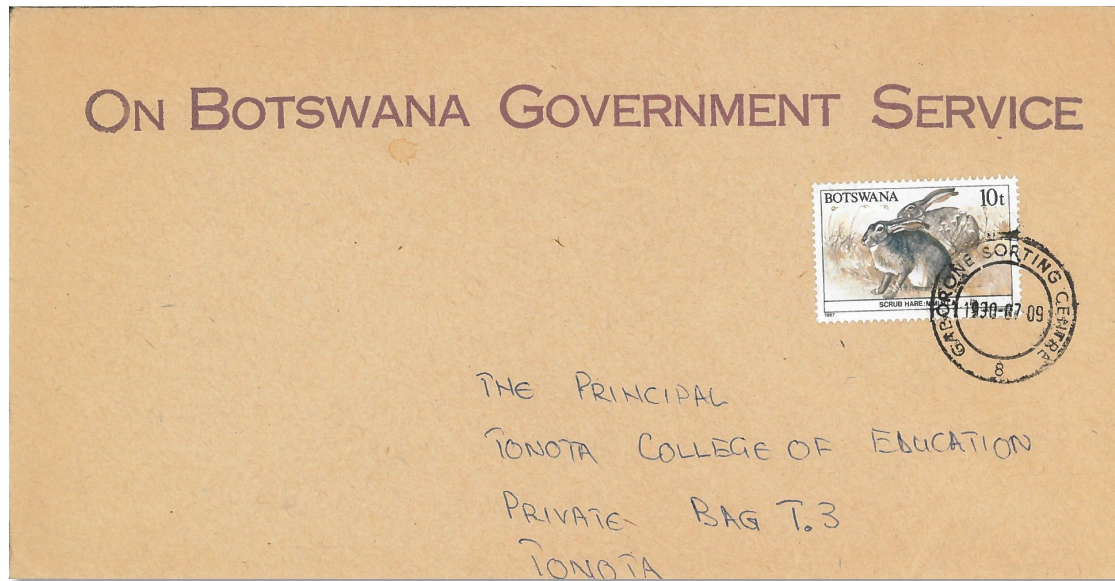
My Collecting Interests – Official Frees



BOFM - Samples



My Collecting Interests – Government Printed Envelopes

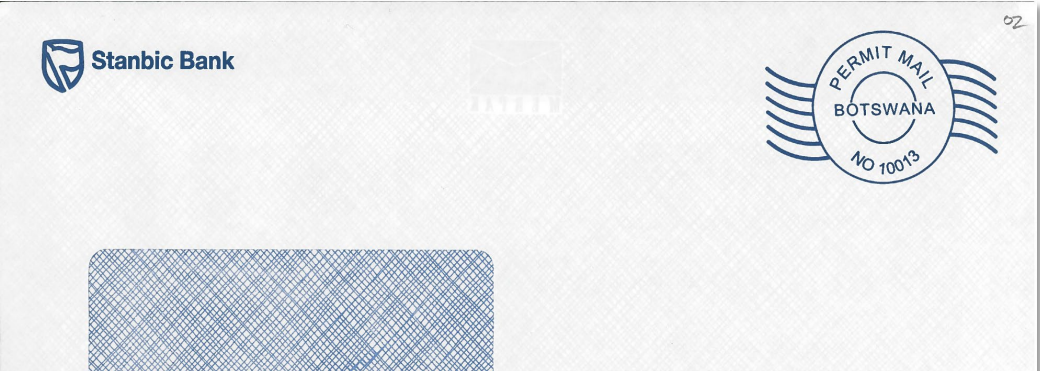


OBGS Covers – Typology Sample

OBGS Type UsS01	
OBGS Type UsS02	
OBGS Type UsS03	

OBGS Type NssU01	
OBGS Type NssU02	
OBGS Type NssU03	
OBGS Type NssU04	

My Collecting Interests – Permit Mail



My Collecting Interests – Registration Labels



Registration Labels – Samples

RL D4D3	RL D4D4	RL D4D5
RL D4E6	RL D4F5	RL D5D3
RL D5D4	RL D5D5	RL D5E6
RL D5F5	RL D5F5 showing variation in location of underline in 'No.'	RL D13D4 (IW D4D4)
RL E4E6	RL E5E6	RL F4E6
RL F5E6	RL G4E6	RL G5E6
RL H8E6	RL H8G6	RL H8G7

Location	Code	Type No.	Illustration	Known Dates
		002		1995/04/25
MOSU	MOSU	001		1993/05/04
Nata	NATA	001		1994/09/19
Ncojane	NCOJ	001		1994/10/27
Nkange (001 = label only)	NKAN	001		n/a
Ntshinoge	NTLH	001	manuscript	1996/06/25
Ntshinoge	NTSH	001		1995/03/24
		002		1996/08/17
Orapa	ORAP	001		2002/12/04

Cataloging

I currently have over 3,000 covers of non-stamped postal history from Botswana.

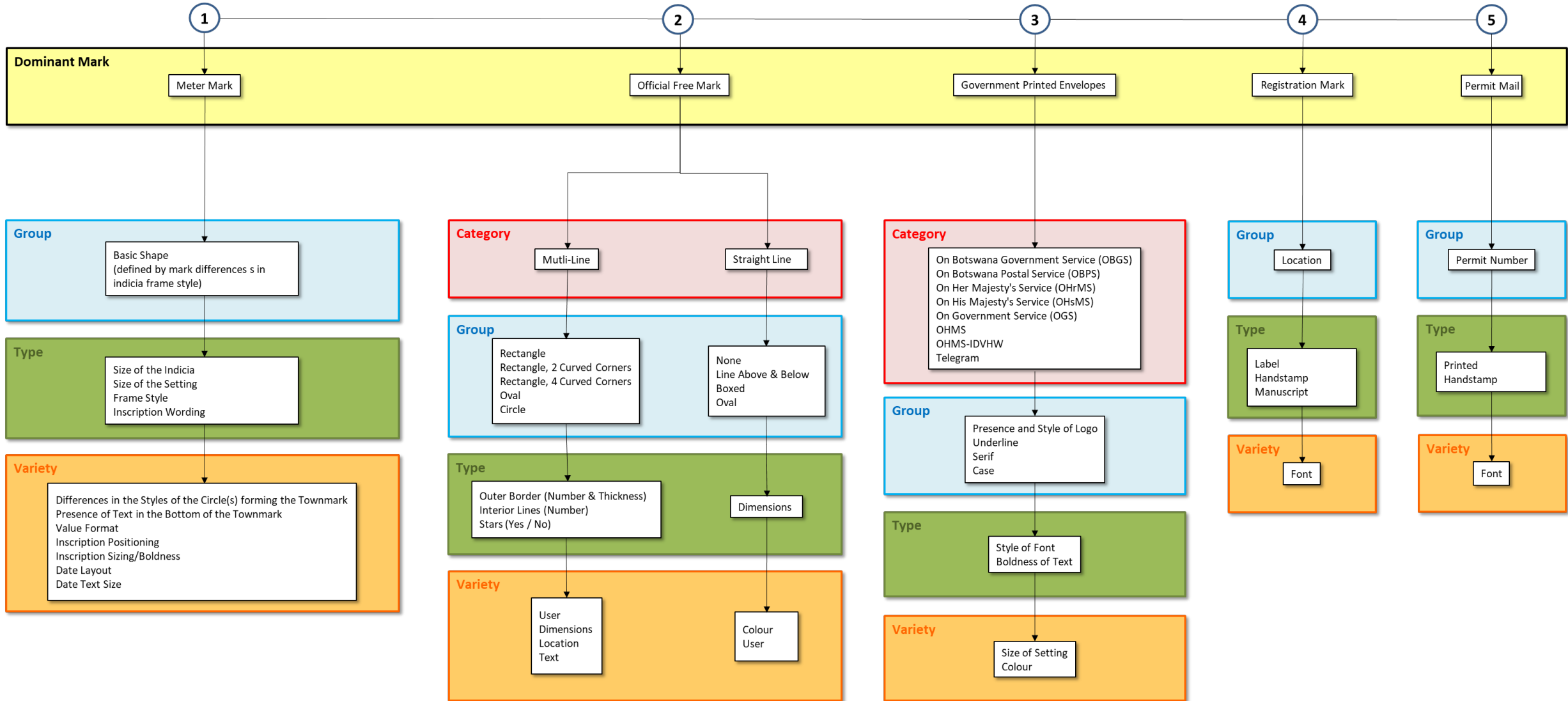
Even in the early days, I was having trouble keeping track of what I owned and was often buying duplicates, so I needed some system to record what I had.

So I started fooling around with Excel, but it wasn't very powerful in allowing me to sort information in different ways depending on questions I had.

I then looked at FileMaker Pro in the early 2000's, an Apple product, but technical support and updates were dwindling.

When I moved back to Canada, I moved from an Apple world to a PC world and MS Access became available to me.

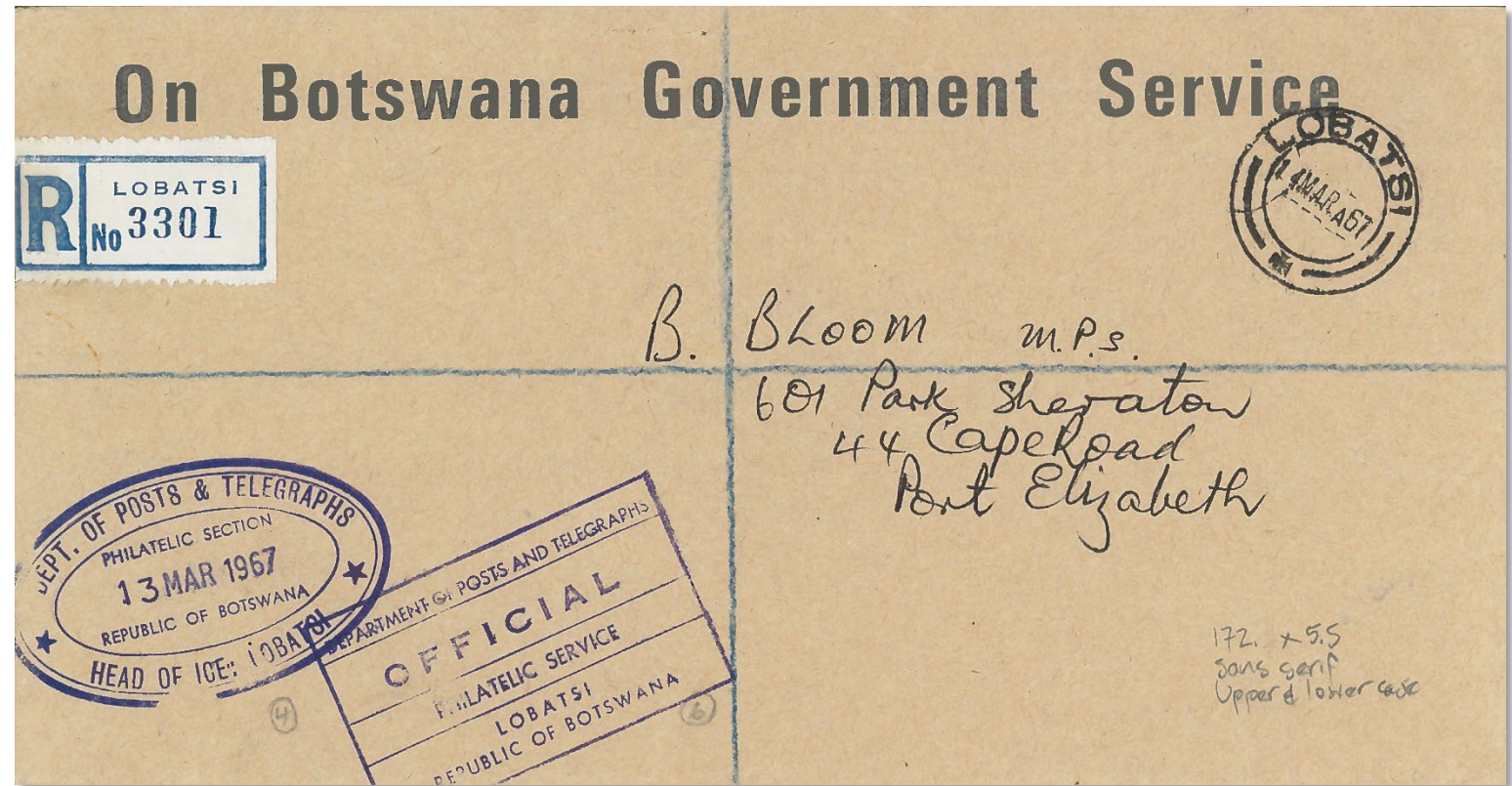
Overall Organization



Conundrum – One Cover, Multiple Marks

One cover may have a number of different aspects in which I am interested.

I had to figure out away to store and retrieve these covers so I could find them easily when I went looking for them.



Accession Numbering

I set priority based on previous table; priority is arbitrary, based on the evolution of my interest.

I then assign a prefix based on the “primary” cover type.

I am still trying to determine how to deal with covers only seen not acquired– I will probably put scan in digital filing system and print of scan in physical system.

Cover Type	Prefix	Accession System	Example
Meters	BMM	Licence number, prefix and date; same dates, add sequential letters	BMM-096R-091222a BMM-06526BP-050109
Official Frees	BOFM	Sequential acquisition number	BOFM0056
Government Printed Envelopes	OBGS	Sequential acquisition number	OBGS0668
Registration Labels	RL	4 letter abbreviation of name and sequential acquisition number	RL-HIBR-001
Permit Mail	PM	Permit number and sequential acquisition number	PM-10012 (30)

Writing

FRANING METER MARKS

Botswana Meter marks: An introduction

by Gordon Smith, Philatelic Society of Greater Southern Africa, the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada, the Postal History Society of Canada, and the New South Wales Club.

Introduction
The public often pays little attention to the stamps on their mail, and even less to meter marks that have helped move the mail, especially since they are less colourful and art-like than stamps. However, most mail in the world now moves by non-stamp means, so it is not surprising that meter marks are used by philatelic collectors, we need to consider the postal history for future collectors, we need to consider the meter marks that allow us to trace through the postal system without the use of postage stamps. Postmarks are viewed by the philatelic community as a vital aspect of postal history collecting and it can be argued that marks denoting payment (not like a stamp) are at least as equally important to understand and record as postmarks.

Neglected even in developed countries, the collecting of non-stamp marks denoting payment is even less common in smaller developing countries, such as Botswana. Given the lack of interest in this material, covers are often quickly relegated to the trash, even by philatelists, making them a collecting circle and challenging to obtain.

Fig. 1. Typical Botswana Meter Mark

The Introduction of Meter Machines to Botswana

Prior to Independence in 1966, Botswana was known as the Bechuanaland Protectorate. While other countries in the region, such as South Africa and the Rhodesias were issuing meter licenses as early as the 1920s, Botswana remained largely undeveloped until the 1950s, thus influencing the lack of demand for franking licenses.

The Number of Meter Licences Issued

There is no evidence that postal franking machines were used in the Protectorate, although a drawing of a frank die from Universal Postal Franks Ltd. in London UK in 1937 indicates that their use was under consideration (Fig. 2). An article by John Ingfield-Watson (1991) states that "It has been reported that in May 1932 the Postmaster of the Protectorate issued only five permits, that cover no machines save for use by the applicants for their construction (meter licenses) on a lease".

In 1959, a similar contacting exercise was undertaken. At that time, licenses not being used were designated for re-assignment. This resulted in 76 old license numbers becoming available for re-use. However, research from Post Office files and secondary sources appears to indicate that a few license numbers changed hands before the Post Office began re-issuing expired numbers in mid-1959.

Including the re-issued number, a total of 327 licenses had been granted by August 1959.

Meter Machines Used

The Post Office did not charge for the use of a meter license nor did it sell meter machines. It only reset the machine on request by the license holder. This may have changed since this information was determined in the early 2000s. So, for at least the first 30 years of postal meter use in Botswana, license holders had to obtain their machines from a private source.

Fig. 2. "Franking Stamp" from Universal Postal Franks Ltd. in London UK in 1937. (Ingfield-Watson, 1991)



The first meter franking apparatus to be meter license no. 1341 issued by Standard Bank of Botswana in Gaborone and dated 13 November 1959 (Fig. 3). This mark was created by a Universal MV "Automa" machine from Universal Postal Franks Ltd. The production of this model of machine is "listed to her" issued in 1959 (Ingfield-Watson, 2011), which in conjunction with the drawing of the frank die noted in Fig. 2 would make the earlier use of meter machines in Botswana seem more likely. Issue dates for the first 10 or so licenses in Botswana are unknown, the only file record from the 1970s and 1980s remaining at Botswana Post is that the original license issue list, which does not contain this information. It is only possible to estimate dates on the basis of earliest seen dates. From commencement, meter licenses were issued automatically as evidenced through the issuing of the following licenses:

- License number 2 to Central District Council in Maseru;
- License number 3 to Botswana Business Machines in Francistown;
- License number 4 to Standard Bank in Maseru;
- License number 6 to Botswana Power Corporation in Francistown; and
- License number 7 was issued to Botswana Game Industries in Francistown.



Fig. 3. Gordon Knowles Botswana Meter Mark Case (1971)

The Number of Meter Licences Issued

By March 1959, a total of 212 licenses numbers had been issued.

In 1962, all license holders were contacted by Botswana Post in order to confirm whether the issued licenses were still in use. While a number responded that either they had never purchased a meter machine or that their machine had ceased functioning, no further action was taken by the Post Office.

In 1999, a similar contacting exercise was undertaken. At that time, licenses not being used were designated for re-assignment. This resulted in 76 old license numbers becoming available for re-use. However, research from Post Office files and secondary sources appears to indicate that a few license numbers changed hands before the Post Office began re-issuing expired numbers in mid-1999.

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The SA Philatelist, June 2022.

Bechuanaland and Botswana Registration Labels An Updated Typology and Listing

Gordon Smith



Philatelic Society for Greater Southern Africa (PSGSA) 2020

Botswana Permit Mail

by Gordon Smith

In the early 2000s, BotswanaPost introduced Permit Mail as an alternative to stamps and meter franks for large volume mailers. This service was first noted in the Bechuanaland and Botswana Society Journal, the Forerunner Post, in August 2001. Additional information, including a portion of a file describing the service, was published in the Forerunner Post in February 2002. Links to these articles can be found at <https://postalhistory.ca/botswana-permit-mail/>.

Permit Mail cannot be placed in regular mailboxes. Mail items must be submitted to BotswanaPost in trays, boxes or bundles. Payment terms are negotiated prior to use at the time of mailing. It is only accepted at the Southern Sort Centre at Poo House, Gaborone, the Free Sort Centre in Polokwane, and the Tloane Sort Centre in Francistown. Permit Mail envelopes may be used as Business Reply envelopes.

To use this service, organizations apply to BotswanaPost for an "Authority Number" that must be included in the Permit Mail impression. This number is permanently assigned to the requesting organization and it is cancelled. The issued Authority Numbers of which I am aware range from 10000 to 10042, so I assume that the numbers start at 10000 and that there are at least 42 permit holders. Figure 1 provides a list of Authority Numbers and the name of the organization holding them of which I am aware.

The Permit Mail Impression (Figure 2) must be designed according to the following specifications and the impression must be pre-printed in upper right corner of the envelope. The impression may be printed in any colour.

While permit impressions can be organized by authority number, this service has been available since the early 2000s and organizations have made multiple printings of envelopes using the same authority number.

To date, permit impressions come in three major types:

1. Professionally printed directly on the envelope
2. Handstamp applied to the envelope
3. Professionally printed on a label which is subsequently stuck on the envelope

These types can be further differentiated based on the following features:

- a. Colour
- b. Flattening characteristics (lines on the side of the circle) (e.g., vertical vs. angular, spacing, boldness)
- c. Overall size of imprint
- d. Font size and boldness

The following list provides examples of various permit impressions organized by types and further differentiated by variety. Various printings can be further distinguished by looking at other aspects of the printing, on the envelope, such as the colour and style

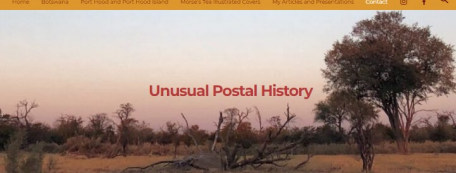
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Authority No.	Holder
1000	BotswanaPost
1001	Botswana Power Corporation
1004	MutiChoice
1005	Botswana Telecommunications Corporation
1006	Water Utilities Corporation
1009	Botswana Life Insurance Limited
1010	Standard Chartered Bank
1011	Orange
1012	Mailing Services PVT Ltd
1013	Stankic Bank
1014	Mascom Wireless
1020	Botswana Courts
1021	Met Knowles, possibly Metknow Services
1028	Met Knowles, possibly Metknow Services
1031	Metknow International
1031	Slip Note
1034	Barclays Bank
1035	Botswana United Insurance Service
1038	Barclays Bank of Botswana Ltd
1039	Price Waterhouse Coopers
1042	Botswana Examinations Council

Figure 1.

Forerunners #102 (Vol. XXXV, No. 1, January-April 2022)

Unusual Postal History



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About

The Philatelic Meanderings of Gordon Smith

Welcome to my website that provides information related to my philatelic interests. I enjoy doing research on items that have moved through the system legally, but do not have postage stamps on them. I particularly enjoy creating systems to organize and describe the variations of the marks that enable this to happen.

I lived in Botswana from 1994 to 2002, hence my interest in the postal history of that country.

I am the first generation of my family not born on a little island off the coast of Cape Breton in Nova Scotia, Canada since 1753, which explains my interest in the postal history of that island and the town of Port Hood.

I have created a several philatelic exhibits and written a number of articles to share my interests, the results of my research, and the pleasure I have pursuing the offering aspects of my hobby. This web site is another way to share this interest.

I hope you enjoy visiting my site and find my research helpful. I am always interested in receiving information and in corresponding with people who share an interest in these types of marks or who have any questions or comments.

Please see this nice shout out my web site received from the Internet Philatelic Dealers Association in February 2021. Their web site can be found at idistamps.com.

This website also received a Large Silver medal at Capex 2022 in Toronto, Canada and a Vermeil medal at the Cape Town 2022 International Stamp Exhibition.

Check out my Instagram account @StampGraphics

Website Topics

- Botswana Meter Marks
- Botswana Official Post Marks
- On Botswana Government Services
- Botswana Registration Labels Typology
- Botswana Permit Mail
- Botswana Postal Rates and Legislation
- Post Hood and Port Hood Island
- Winkla Tap Impressions Covers
- My Articles and Presentations
- Former Post Archives
- Yours
- Instagram
- Facebook



Debeswana's Jwaneng Mine.¹⁰ As a private environmental consultant in Botswana from 1994 to 2002, the author did a number of projects related to the operations of this mine.



Figure 4. Debeers Botswana Mining Company, Orapa, Licence R93

In 1972, De Beers geologists discovered the Jwaneng kimberlite pipe, and the Jwaneng mine was opened in 1982 (Figure 5). Jwaneng has since become the world's richest diamond mine by value, producing an average of 11 million carats per year.



Figure 5. Debeswana Diamond Company (Pty) Ltd., Jwaneng, Licence R51

In 2000, the company's diamond production totalled 24.6 million carats (4,920 kg), approximately 31% of the world's annual production.¹¹ There have been a number of recent finds on very large diamonds in the country including a 1,098.5-carat high-quality gemstone found at Jwaneng Mine in June 2021 (see Figure 6). Other recent finds of large gems include a 1,758-carat stone found at Katwe mine in central Botswana in 2019 and an 1,101-carat diamond found at the same mine in 2015. The high value per weight of diamonds mined by Debeswana has made the company the leading producer of diamonds by value in the world.

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Best Article in Forerunners

Awarded

to

Gordon Smith

for

"Post-Independence Industrial Development of Botswana as Illustrated Through Meter Marks: Large Companies" 2022

Peter Thy, Editor

Tim Barthe, Chair Awards Committee

Philatelic Society for Greater Southern Africa

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