

THE RUNNER POST



The Bechuanalands & Botswana Society



- Philatelic Forum
- 1 cent Watermark Variety
- Birds on Stamps
- Awards and Medals
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- 2014 - 17 Catalogue update
- Recent Botswana
- Crocodile Pools





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The Society thanks Graham Edwards (Graphic Designer) for the front cover design

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Editorial

I still have numerous Annual Reports which may fill the pages of this journal, but I thought to leave them out of this issue. The Botswana issues have been updated since the last Stanley Gibbons *Southern and Central Africa* catalogue was published.

Keeping up with the Philatelic Bureau tends to be a bit of a task as they seem to 'forget' to supply certain issues to standing orders. For instance I received the December 2017 Christmas set, but not the October 'Crossing Rivers' which I ended up buying on EBay from a chap in Canada.

I have included several 'domestic' matters in the hope that some of our members will provide input for the next journal.

As a 'milestone' I feel that *The Runner Post* ought to reach its century, thus No 100 is due out in February 2019. What lies beyond that is anybody's guess. Annual membership continues to fall year by year and 'new faces' are not appearing.

I have been collecting annual subscriptions for some thirty years and it is a job that I would dearly like to pass on to someone else. Every year there are always a certain number of people who decline to renew their subscription. Often they do not even respond to reminders, thus I eventually knock them off the list.

I am enjoying the Crocodile Pools update; it is quite amazing how many cancels, either on stamps or on cover, have come out of the woodwork in the last three decades. My all time favourite is the letter from Lt. Harland to his brother...see *Southern Africa Philately* No 6 page 246.



CROCODILE POOLS 3 JAN 00

Near Crocodile Pools



From Fortress Kopje 5.2.1900 - BULAWAYO 7 FEB 00 transit

Bechuanaland Philatelic Forum

5 March 2018 - An email from Alan Biddlecombe

Alan hails from Petersfield in Hampshire and wrote...*Just to let you know, my local philately club appreciated this piece so much, I got first prize in the single entry competition! Rather chuffed as it is my first attempt at exhibiting anything from my collection...*



Congratulations Allan, I wish more people sent in snippets to publish in this journal.

Botswana 1 cent Watermark Variety (SG 220a)

On 22 September 2017 I received an email from Clive Carr in South Africa...*I recently acquired Botswana 1c SG 220a, error in watermark, Maltese Cross. I would dearly like to get more information on this stamp...*

I replied...*Instead of asking me for info, why don't you first of all provide some...where did you get it from, did you ask the seller what he could tell you about it etc. Also send me a jpeg image of it....research always starts with the owner of the item and not a third party...*

Clive replied...*I was unable to get any more info than what was provided in the auction catalogue. I bought the item on a local auction two week ago. I do not have access to any reference material which covers this issue. All I got was what was in the catalogue that it was SG 220a, rare and one of only six known used. I was hoping you would steer me in the right direction of where I would find out more. I thought joining B&B would help me with such information...*



The exchange ended, no images and no response to my request, as the Editor it does not follow that I have the answer to every question that comes my way. In the first instance I have not seen an example of SG 220a and was not aware that six copies are known...does anyone have the answer?

http://www.southafricacollector.com/Southern_Africa_Birds_on_Stamps.html

Promises of Input from the Members

In my previous editorial I mentioned that Bill Latzko in the USA promised a few articles, that was in a 26 December 2017 email, however I have not heard from him since.

7 January 2018 Email from Brian Fenemore... I am a founder member of both *The Overprinter* (G.B. Overprints Society) 1970, and *The Runner Post* (1985) ...two specialist Societies which I have thoroughly enjoyed over the years.

I have done some research recently at the British Bechuanaland Archives, Roeland Street, Cape Town, and have unearthed some interesting information. I will contact you shortly, with some articles and collectibles, which you may perhaps consider worthy for publication in *The Overprinter* for future editions?

How about it Brian? Nothing forthcoming so far...

Editorial Comment

The various email exchanges demonstrates how difficult it has become to source anything from anyone. My number one journal is *The Rhodesian Philatelist* which has been around since July 1993...it is a solo effort and it is written and published by my own hand.

Southern Africa Philately was started in September 2015 and on 20 April I completed issue No 9 (June 2018).

At first there were several articles included, written by third parties, but issue No 9 is once again a solo effort...all 44 pages of it! I simply cannot continue producing nine journals per year which are all published and posted before due date.

The previous editor was already struggling some five years ago with only one edition of *The Runner Post* during 2014.

Besides the above three journals I also contribute articles to other philatelic journals such as *The Springbok* and my wife is of the opinion that I am 'crackers'. Once I have fulfilled my 2018 obligation, which will be the October issues (posted in September) I will be making a decision what 2019 might bring.

Perhaps a four or eight page edition of *The Runner Post* will be all there is or perhaps the Bechuanaland members will be content with only receiving *Southern Africa Philately*? I enjoy producing the foregoing journal, but again if it is to be a 'solo act' 44 pages for each edition cannot be guaranteed.

South and Central African Birds on Stamps

During the latter part of 2018 I took an interest in the above subject and developed a web page with the birds on stamps from the Cape to the Congo. As many of you may know, Botswana is one of the prolific producers of 'birds on stamps'.

During my efforts in producing the above webpage I made contact with someone in the *Bird Stamp Society* and in order to appreciate what they are up to I joined the society and received several editions of their journal called 'Flight'. It soon became apparent that they 'as a society' are also struggling to 'keep things going'...it the age old thing...lack of communication. In their last journal they suggested that they ought to have a new logo, I asked my friend, a graphic designer (who does our outer covers for us) to come up with something. I emailed the result to half a dozen committee members and thus far I have received one reply! From their editor...complete silence...

Bechuanaland Philatelic Forum

The Runner Post No 97 February 2018, page 2387

Under 'Awards and Medals' I noted...

2003 'Stampex' Johannesburg, South Africa

December 2003 SAP *J.H. Harvey Pirie award for Literature* to Brian Trotter and Neville Midwood for *Revenues of Southern Africa Part I* (Published May 2002)

My enquiry regarding this award drew another blank.

I recently gained sight of this publication and on page 37 the following illustration is present.

AWARDS FOR THIS BOOKLET



It indicates that a Large Vermeil was awarded the previous year in Port Elizabeth at ALGOPEX...I don't suppose either party remembers receiving it.

Spring Stampex 2018 - *The Runner Post*

I entered *The Runner Post* into the literature section and received the following email on 19 February...*Your exhibit has been judged and I have a certificate to send to you. You were awarded a large silver...*

The exercise cost £25, but no certificate has been forthcoming.

Membership Matters

Subscriptions not renewed Philip Kaye (UK) Hans-Gunther Blach (Germany) Alan Cawood (South Africa) Shelia Case and Steen Jelgren (Both Botswana) Gordon Smith (Canada) Peter Thy (USA) resigned. No new members have joined.

Thus as it stands we retain the following numbers 34 (UK) 6 (Europe) 4 (Botswana) 15 (South Africa) 1 (Australia) and 10 (North America) Total membership = 70 we had 77 members during 2017 (Nett loss 7)

The Bechuanalands and Botswana Society

Minutes of the AGM held, Friday 17 February 2017 from 11.30 am at the BDC, Islington

Present:

Tony Stanford (Chairman), Otto Peetoom, Brian Trotter and David Bird

1. Apologies for absence were received from Arnold Berman, Alan Biddlecombe and Don Jeffreys

2. Approval of minutes of the AGM held on 19.2.2016

These were unanimously approved

3. Matters arising

The discussion centred on the downscaling of the Society's activities as there were no longer any members who are prepared to do anything.

An amended Constitution (2017) was published in the *The Runner Post* No 94 (page 2341) whereby the Society was to be run and operated by an Administrator. The foregoing 'Amendments' were unanimously approved.

4. Membership Secretary/Treasurer's report

Otto Peetoom presented the 2017 accounts and these were unanimously approved.

Two new members had joined the Society and the overall receipt of 2017 subscriptions is ongoing with a total membership at around 75+.

5. Editor's report - Otto Peetoom confirmed his intention to provide three copies of *The Runner Post* during 2017 together with three copies of the *Southern African Philately* journal. Input for the society journal from members is more or less non-existent and the Editor tends to fill each journal by means of its own efforts.

6. Chairman's Remarks - The Chairman thanked Otto on behalf of the Society for his work in continuing to operate the Society on a sound financial footing and his efforts to continue the affairs of the society.

7. Bechuanaland & Botswana Philately Website

The website is well established and is thought as the principal means of attracting new members.

8. Election of Officers

Otto Peetoom unanimously elected as the Administrator of the Society. Brian Trotter agreed to be a committee member, but stipulated that he was not prepared to actually 'do anything'.

9. Any Other Business

Brian Trotter thanked Tony Stanford, the outgoing Chairman, for his past input.

10. Next meeting

In view of the scaled down activity no date was set for the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 12.25 p.m.

Proposed Amendment to Rules of the Bechuanalands and Botswana Society (Revised 2017)

The Society is no longer in need of a 'so called' Archivist; this position is somewhat alien to most other philatelic societies. Furthermore it seems there is no one else to operate the society. Although Brian Trotter is effectively a committee member, he stipulated that he must not be asked to actually 'do' anything.

Rule 6 amended to

The OFFICERS of the Society, who shall be Honorary, will comprise of an Administrator, a committee member and any others it is deemed necessary to appoint from time to time.

Rule 10 is deleted which read

An Archivist will retain for reference purposes at least one copy of every publication of the Society (either printed or in PDF), together with similar material acquired by the Society in connection with its objects.

Rules 11 and 12 are renumbered 10 and 11

Any objections to the above must be communicated to the Administrator of this society.

Philatelic Sabotage - The sorry tale of the former Archivists

Preamble

The necessity for a Society 'Archivist' is included in the Constitution and is in my opinion an unusual requirement. Having said that I anticipate that there ought to be a list of the society's assets that should be published in the journal from time to time for all to see and be aware of.

When I collated a history of the society 'through the eyes of *The Runner Post*' I became aware of several items that had 'allegedly' disappeared without trace. Worse was to follow...

The previous Archivist resigned in 2016, but made no effort to inform anyone what items belonging to the society he had in his possession. As far as I am aware there was never any exchange of dialogue as to who was to take over and no one consulted me on the matter. The subject was not on the Agenda at the 2017 AGM, thus the position was never ratified or approved. The former archivist was adamant that he ought to receive at least three printed copies of each and every journal.

Vandals at work

During the course of 2017, the 'old' and 'new' archivist got together and set about destroying society property without consulting anyone and without further ceremony these two 'philatelic vandals' dumped all the remaining back copies of the journals in a skip. Allegedly they also discussed other Society items that they intended to 'disappear'.

The reader ought to appreciate that these discussions took place between a 'non-member' (having resigned) and an individual who was not appointed by those who operate the society.

PDF Irregularities

As a service to the members I used to post a PDF of the next journal on the website and send an access link to those entitled to *The Runner Post*. I became aware that members were passing this PDF onto those who had resigned...thus I stopped the PDF availability. Peter Thy, the new 'Archivist', was most insistent that he ought to have the most recent Journals in PDF. Within days he was passing these over to non-members.

When I asked why, I received a defiant... *This is how it is going to be as long as I am in charge...*

More Unsolicited Trouble

A Philatelic society is meant to be 'fun', but once an individual becomes 'Power-crazy' he is likely...in his misguided enthusiasm...to do more harm than good...

Mr 'I'm in charge' had another 'good idea'. In mid December he proposed to have 200 DVD's made that was likely to waste quite a bit of society funds and he was informed not to proceed as my intention was to utilise our website for distribution.

Next he uploaded the entire file on the internet providing access to an unknown number of people. I requested he removes it from the internet and to curtail his activities...this was ignored...I then insisted he comply with the request made and he refused point blank to do so...this left me no other option and on 24 January with immediate effect terminated the position of Archivist as he had declined to cooperate or implement my request.

It also mystified me why he wanted to produce 200 DVD's when we have around 70 members and came to the conclusion that he intended giving them to 'non-members'.

On 3 February everything became 'my fault' and said person resigned.

The Holmes Book does a 'Houdini'

Arrangements were made that all assets of the society still with the UK ex-archivist, ex-member, were to be handed over to me in November 2017 at the *Annual Southern Africa Conference*. Several boxes were loaded into my car and in due course I went through an assortment of papers and books. In particular I was attempting to locate the book presented to the society by H.R. Holmes and signed by the inaugurating members.

This item is undoubtedly the society's most treasured item and...having not seen the light of day for years I was looking forward to include a write up etc in *The Runner Post*...no book!

Enquiries in January finally extracted the truth...he who dumps our journals in a skip and is no longer a member decided he would donate it to the RPSL...he even got a pat on the head for his generosity...he is essentially a very nice man at heart...but his misguided intentions cannot be condoned...either the RPSL returns the property of the society or they ought to put a note on the book...*this book has been mis-appropriated from the Bechuanalands and Botswana Society by Mr..., it is somewhat embarrassing, but we were not aware of the circumstances of its high-jacking!*

H.R. Holmes very kindly presented the society with a copy of his book and it is proper that a Bechuanaland Study circle ought to have such a book...in the event that anyone wishes to propose that the book ought to be donated to a third party. That a matter should be brought to the attention of the members in order to gain their view on the matter...what has taken place is that the book has simply been 'hi-jacked' and given away behind everyone's back...disgraceful!

Sadly we are now a Bechuanaland Study circle who does not even possess a copy of a Holmes book.

Through default I have become the only person who has taken on the responsibility of keeping this society going, when the two 'alleged' former archivists 'did what they did' I felt like throwing in the towel. Societies invest their trust in the people who operate it and do not anticipate that any of their members will indulge in clandestine and/or under-handed deeds.

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We produce comprehensive lists for
The Rhodesias plus Nyasaland www.rhodesianstamps.net
Southern Africa www.southafricanstamps.net
GSWA - South West Africa www.swa-stamps.com
East Africa, KUT www.kut-stamps.com

Botswana Stamp Issues 2014 - 2017 Catalogue update

Stanley Gibbons Southern & Central Africa Catalogue
(2014) 2nd Edition

In *The Runner Post* No 89 (March 2015) on the inside back cover the editor updated the catalogue numbers for the new issues up to SG 1225. The above publication stops with *World Post Day* (9.10.2014) SG 1218 - 1221.

Should you subscribe to *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* you will no doubt be aware that a 'Catalogue Supplement' is published each month and from time to time it features Botswana. Such a listing appeared in the March 2018 GSM and I was pleased to note that my ongoing numbering tallies with SG.

Incorrect Entries in the SG listing (SG 1213/1214)

1.8.2014 - **Domestic Animals**, the catalogue notes
3p.40 Donkey and foal and 3p.50 Cow and calf

The correct entry needs to be

3p.50 Cow and calf and 5p.40 Donkey and foal

Botswana Catalogue Update



27 November 2014
National Flora Symbols
SG 1222 - 1225

Four values 3p.50, 5p.40, 7p.30, 8p.00



10 March 2015
Okavango Delta Wildlife
SG 1226 - 1229 Four values
3p.50, 5p.40, 7p.30, 8p.00



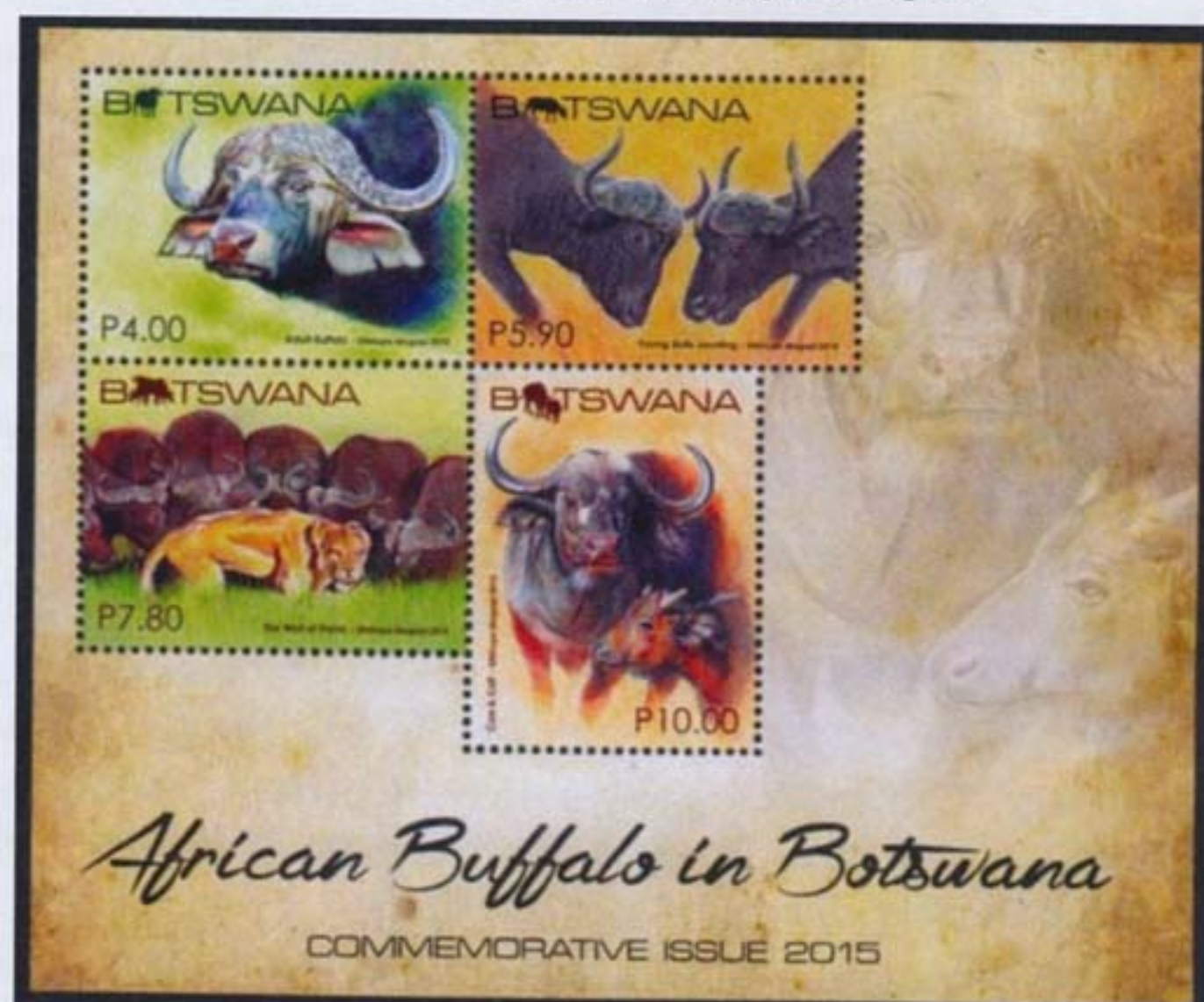
MS 1230



20 May 2015 - **Abstract Art in Botswana**
SG 1231 - 1234 Four values 4p.00, 5p.90, 8p.00, 10p.00



22 July 2015 - **African Buffalo in Botswana**
SG 1235 - 1238 Four values 4p.00, 5p.90, 8p.00, 10p.00



MS 1239



28 September 2015
Save Botswana's Vultures
SG 1240 - 1244
Five values

4p.00, 5p.00, 5p.90, 7p.80, 10p.00



MS 1245

Botswana Stamp Issues 2014 - 2017 Catalogue update



20 November 2015 - Vervet Monkey in Botswana
 SG 1246 - 1249
 Four values 4p.00, 5p.90, 7p.80, 10p.00



MS 1250

20 November 2015
Hong Kong Exhibition
 MS 1251
 Logo overprinted on MS 1250
 (Vervet Monkey)



14 March 2016 - Elephants of Botswana
 SG 1252 - 1255 Four values 4p.00, 5p.90, 7p.80, 10p.00



MS 1256



26 May 2016 - Traditional Dance in Botswana
 SG 1257 - 1260 Four values 4p.00, 5p.90, 7p.80, 10p.00
 The main figures on each stamp are embossed



1 August 2016
Botswana 50 Years of Progress

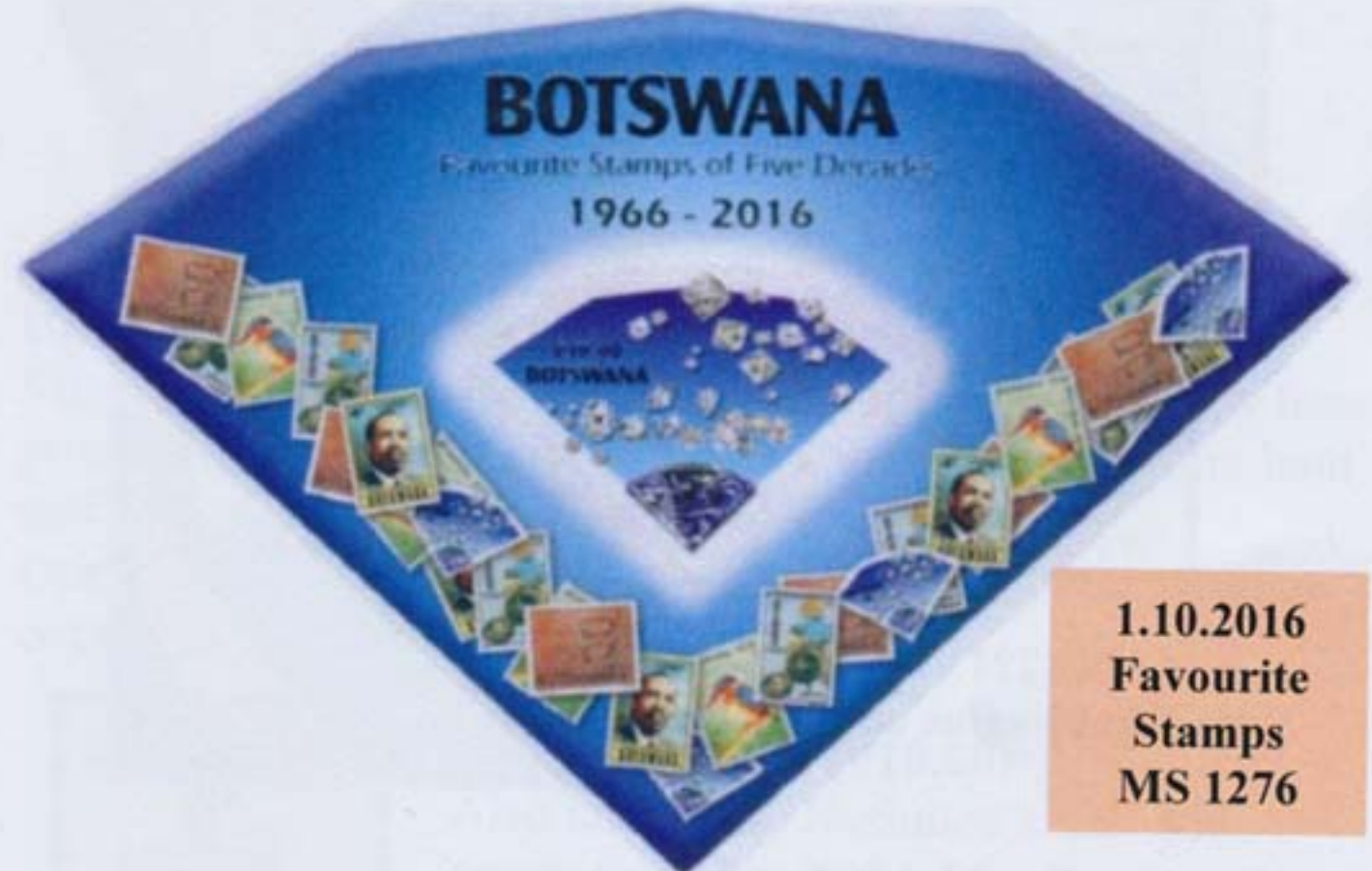
SG 1261 - 1268
 Eight values

30t, 40t, 50t, 4p.00, 5p.00, 5p.90, 7p.80, 10p.00

10 - 15 August 2016
Thailand Stamp Exhibition
 MS 1250 (Vervet Monkey) & 1256 (Elephants)
 Overprinted with Exhibition Logo
 SG MS 1269 & 1270



1 October 2016 - Favourite Stamps of Five Decades
 SG 1271 - 1275 Five values 50t, 4p.00, 5p.90, 7p.80, 10p.00
 plus a diamond shaped MS 1276 with 10p.00 value only



1.10.2016
Favourite Stamps
MS 1276



1 December 2016 - Kgotla Democracy through Dialogue
 SG 1277 - 1280 Four values 0p.50, 4p.00, 5p.90, 10p.00

Botswana Stamp Issues 2014 - 2017 Catalogue update



28 February 2017 - Leopard in Botswana
SG 1281 - 1284 Four values 4p.00, 5p.90, 8p.00, 10p.00



MS 1285 is cut around in the shape of a leopard.



1 May 2017
Netball World Youth Cup
SG 1286 - 1290
Five values
0p.40, 0p.50, 4p.00, 5p.90,
10p.00



MS 1291
With 10p.00 value only



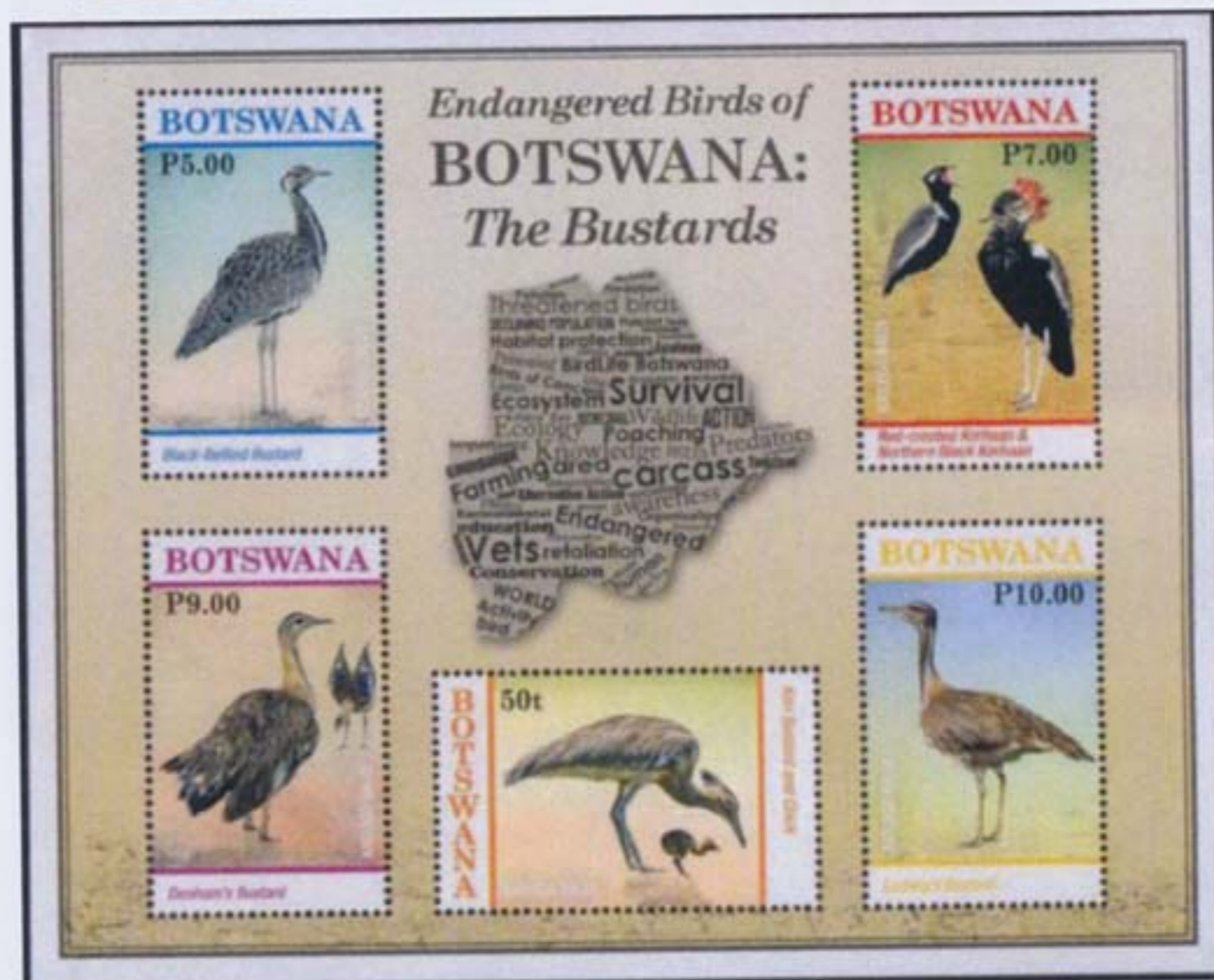
The Runner Post No's 89 to 97
More precise details for SG 1222 to MS 1297 (Bustards) appeared in the above journals. Renumbering became necessary when the November 2015 Hong Kong exhibition miniature sheet appeared out of the woodwork. It appears that the MS sold at various International stamp exhibitions are not distributed by the Philatelic Bureau in Botswana.

The Runner Post No 98



1 August 2017
Bustards of Botswana - SG 1292 - 1296

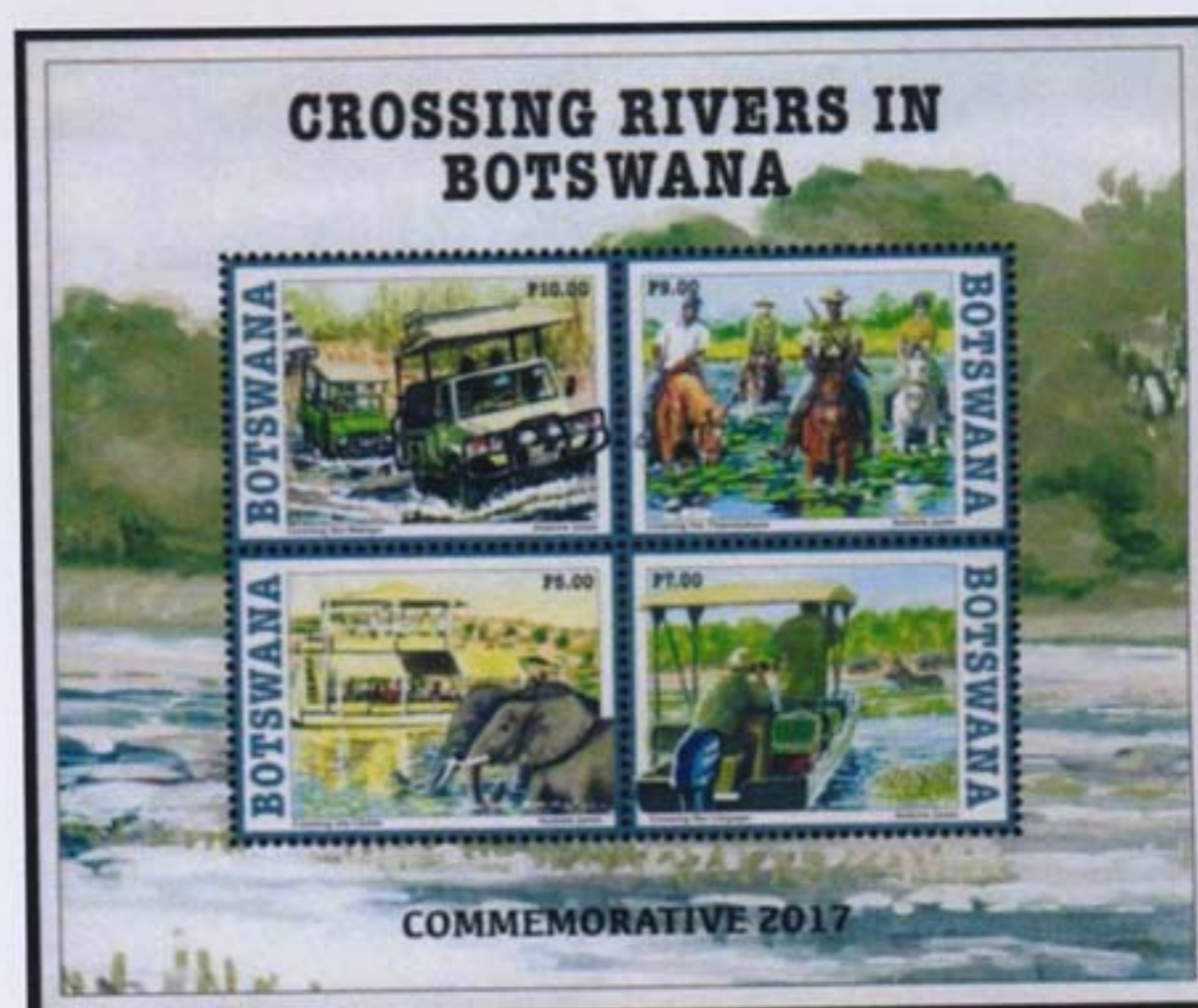
Five values
50t, 5p.00, 7p.00, 9p.00, 10p.00



Miniature sheet MS 1297

Recent Issues

Refilwe Lynn Rantshabeng is currently the Philately Officer and I received a brochure for an issue dated 5 October 2017 being 'Crossing Rivers in Botswana' four values 5p.00, 7p.00, 9p.00, 10p.00 plus a MS. I have a standing order with Nigel Haworth, but this set has as yet not materialized, on the other hand I have received a set of four 'Flowers of the Desert' issued on 5 December 2017 and is for 'Christmas 2017'.



Botswana Christmas Stamps¹

An issue appeared each year from 1968 to 1998, followed by a few erratic sets in 2004, 2005 and 2006, since then no more sets of 'Christmas stamps' were issued. Suddenly, 12 years later we are blessed with a set of 'Flowers for Christmas'.

Note¹ - See *The Runner Post* No 93, page 2323

Recent Botswana Issues

5 October 2017 - Crossing Rivers in Botswana

Four values plus a miniature sheet SG 1298 to 1301, MS 1302

Crossing the Chobe River (P5.00)

The River runs along the northern border of Chobe National Park, in the uppermost region of the country. The river is a major tourist attraction as it flows into the Okavango Delta, which was named the 1000th UNESCO World Heritage site in the World. The waters swell and increase dramatically around November, after rainfall in Angola, flow into the Zambezi River which in turn feeds the Chobe.

The design depicts a common scene on this river, elephants, swimming across the river which delights the tourist on a riverboat tour. Animals, such as buffalo, hippo, crocodiles, zebra and different kinds of water buck are frequently sighted on Chobe riverboat cruises.



Crossing the Limpopo (P7.00)

The Limpopo is Africa's second largest river and flows into the Indian Ocean. The river travels in a great arc, zigzagging north, then north-east, followed by east and finally south-east. For around 640 kms it forms the border between South Africa and Botswana to the southwest plus Zimbabwe to the north. This stamp depicts tourists on a speed boat watching hippos. The Limpopo is a haven for animal-enthusiasts, fishermen and camping safaris.

Thamalakane River (P9.00)

The river is located at the southern end of the Okavango Delta. It does not have a well-defined beginning or clear end. It results from the Thamalakane fault (formed about 2 million years ago). The Thamalakane is considered one of the best places for horseback safaris, enjoying Botswana's wildlife. The riding tours usually include exploring the water banks and riding across the calm waters of the river.

Crossing the Molopo River (P10.00)

The Molopo is one of the main Southern Africa rivers with a length of approximately 960 kms and a 367,201 square km catchment area with Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. Each sharing roughly a third of the basin.



The stamp depicts four-wheel drives on safari, crossing the river in low season and is a popular tourism feature. The river floor density makes it easier for 4x4 car fanatics to cross and enjoy the thrill of testing the limits of their cars and drifting skills as well as the scenic rift of the water as well.

5 December 2017 - Christmas 2017

Flowers of the Kgalagadi desert - In and around the Kalahari region covering some 15,000 square miles. A semi-arid desert which supports a variety of indigenous desert flora that flowers at various times of the year, often during the wet season.

Drimia sanguine (P1.00)

A highly poisonous bulbous plant and grows in open veld and shrubby woodland. Regarded as 'near-threatened' due to its population decline due to harvesting for the medicinal plant trade.



Orbea knobelli (P5.00)

Named after Johan Christian Knobel, a missionary in Molepolole. A rare plant found amongst shrubs in deep sand or on calcrete around pans. Produces showy flowers and is drought resistant. Also grown as an ornamental succulent in pots or in rockeries.



Hibiscus trionum (P7.00)

Known as 'Flower of an hour' as it blooms only for a few hours prior to wilting. Regarded as a 'weed' of crop and vacant land and particularly on disturbed land.

Due to its ornamental value it has been spread to many other countries.



Hoodia gordonii (P10.00)

Also known as 'Bushmen's hat' and grows naturally in the drier Southwest. Thrives in extremely hot conditions. A cactus-like succulent that attains about one meter. Used by the San people to ease hunger and thirst.

Artist/designer - Ann Gollifer

COLLECTOR SEEKS TO BUY

I am seeking to buy a collection or items of Postal History, including the History of the Post Office, relating to the Bechuanaland Protectorate / Botswana

My contact details are:

Andrew Briscoe

c/o Briscoe Attorneys

P.O. Box 402492, Gaborone, Botswana

My email address is

andrew@briscoe.co.bw

ALL REPLIES WILL BE REGARDED AS CONFIDENTIAL

Crocodile Pools Revisited Part I

By Otto Peetoom

The Subject of Crocodile Pools during the Boer War has certainly had its fair share of attention in *The Runner Post*.

Jim Catterall - The first article appeared in Issue No 9 in December 1987. The writer was somewhat baffled by two items, both dated 30 DEC 1899 as the Boer forces had occupied the railway siding in late October 1899.

The Runner Post No 53 Illustrated a cover cancelled Crocodile Pools 30 DEC 1899 with Bulawayo transit 11 JAN 00.

The Runner Post No 28 (September 1992) Dates for Crocodile Pools noted from 30 DEC 1899 to 4 MAY 1900

The date of its actual occupation is also not quite clear and in *The Runner Post* No 33 (December 1993) **David Finlay** stated ...21 October Crocodile Pools Siding evacuated by Imperial Troops... Findlay was of the opinion that the first use of the Crocodile Pools datestamp was 17 March 1900. He further cast doubt on the 30.12.99 card (Reported in issue 9) as being authentic.

Fredrick Lawrence (Issue No 34) took Finlay to task over his comments and pointed out the Colonel Vyvyan (Mafeking correspondence) received Crocodile Pools transit cancellation dated 20 - 31 DEC 1899.

David Finlay (Issue 35) reacted to Lawrence and noted that Andy Andersson had a SG 62 cancelled Crocodile Pools on 11 JAN 1900. Findlay concluded...As the Boer forces were in control of the area of the Crocodile Pools Telegraph Office from 25 October 1899 to approximately 24 February 1900, it is unlikely that the datestamp could have been used at the Crocodile Pools office during this period...

In *The Rhodesian Philatelist* No 7 (March 1995) I wrote my first article on the subject and an update followed in No 11 (April 1996) at that time I was also unsure about the date of occupation and suggested during 25 - 26 October.

Proud in his 1996 publication wrote...When the Boers cut the railway and occupied the area, 21 October 1899...

Southern Africa Philately No's 5 & 6

I wrote a two part article **1899 - 1900 The Boer War in Bechuanaland** and note my source for information as *Rhodesia Served the Queen* (1970) by Colonel A.S. Hickman. Relevant extracts from the foregoing article are

Activity at and around Crocodile Pools

On the 15 October 1899 they found Native Police of the Protectorate at the Metsimasuane Bridge which crosses the river with the same name, a few miles north of Crocodile Pools. Wallis was instructed to remain at Gaberones and await the arrival of Captain Llewellyn with an armoured train that had departed from Bulawayo on that day. Llewellyn arrived on the 16th with fifteen British South Africa Police and 35 railway men plus a .450 Maxim and established his base at Crocodile Pools.

Engagements 951 miles

On 21 October, at 951 miles, Wallis opened fire on a party of Boers and broke up their laager. This engagement took place about two miles south of Crocodile Pools Siding near Mahahabye Kopje. After that he proceeded to Mochudi.

The Runner Post No 98

On 23 October the Boers were laying emplacements for artillery, and on the 24th their earlier body was reinforced by a commando of 500 with three guns. The Rhodesians decided to move all material north to Gaberones station, Mochudi to be the most southerly point, with the base for operations at Mahalapye, which had a good water-supply.

Crocodile Pools evacuated

On Wallis's return to Gaberones he found that Captain Llewellyn had abandoned Crocodile Pools bringing all railway men northwards. The British left the area on the 24th and the Boers, under General Snyman, took over Crocodile Pools siding on 25 October.

Note - It later becomes evident that they took the *Crocodile Pools* datestamp with them and it seems that its location altered along with the movement of the main force.

It was effectively the only 'Military' cancel available in the area and its earliest recorded use is as a transit cancel on mail out of Mafeking circa 20 - 31 December 1899.

Crocodile Pools datestamp used at Mochudi

Two Rhodesian 1d Arms postal stationery cards are known, written by 'Hervey', both addressed to Mrs Prior in Ireland and redirected to London. The first card written on 19 November at Mahalapye and notes...Left Bulawayo Friday & arrived here yesterday... Cancelled MAHALAPYE SIDING NO 20 99, with a BULAWAYO 20 NOV 99 transit.



CROCODILE POOLS 30 DEC 99

The second card is written at Mochudi on 30/12/99...We are still here, very little going on...Cancelled at Crocodile Pools 30 DEC 99, BULAWAYO 11 JAN 00 and DURBAN FE 3 1900 transits.

Another two items - carried in the same mail, both with a BULAWAYO 11 JAN 00 transits are: An envelope with 1/2d x 8 to England postmarked Crocodile Pools 3 JAN 00 (Illustrated on page 2398) and a stampless Crocodile Pools cover to Scotland dated either 6 or 8 JAN 00. The card from Hervey implies that the Crocodile Pools datestamp was still at Mochudi at the end of 1899.

Another Crocodile Pools envelope to Mr & Mrs Harvey with 2d x 2 is dated 10 JAN 00 with Bulawayo 24 JAN transit.

The last recorded Crocodile Pools January 1900 date is 11 JAN on SG 62 (ex Andy Andersson) noted in the previous column.

Crocodile Pools Revisited Part I

Observations on December 1899 & January 1900 usage

There is proof, beyond reasonable doubt, that the British troops abandoned Crocodile Pools on 24 October 1899. Initially they retreated to Gaberones, then to Mochudi and finally as far North as mile 1016 (Artesia). By 8 November the Railwaymen were back at Mochudi and in mid-December they returned to Gaberones, only to retreat back to Mochudi. Finally in mid-January 1900 they once again moved south to Gaberones.

During the above time-span the CROCODILE POOLS datestamp was nowhere near its location and from surviving cancellations its recorded use is from 20 DEC 1899 to 11 JAN 1900. Two items cancelled MAHALAPYE SIDING NO 20 99 are known, yet strange as it may seem, one has a BULAWAYO 20 NOV 99 transit and the other 29 NOV 99. The foregoing suggests that the Crocodile Pools cancel was not used at Mahalapye.

A recorded cover with Crocodile Pools 20 DEC 99 transit and a Rhodesian stationery card cancelled 30 DEC 99 (see previous page) suggest they were both serviced at Mochudi.

At one point the troops retreated further north to Artesia which intimates that the canceller might have been at this location, but there is nothing to substantiate its use at Artesia.

The 'Mail Service' from the South to and via Bulawayo

One individual suggested a 'Military Base Train TPO' existed and another proposed that the Crocodile Pools datestamp was kept on an Armoured Train. In my opinion such options do not appear feasible and I believe the mail went north 'if and when' a train was scheduled to return to Bulawayo.

Having examined a cross section of mail it points to an erratic timetable with intervals of a few days, a week or a fortnight. For example mail cancelled from 30 DEC 99 to 6/8 JAN all have a BULAWAYO 11 JAN 00 transit and items postmarked shortly after that indicate a 24 JAN transit...during April 1900 a letter cancelled Crocodile Pools 20 APR 00 has a 23 APR transit and another dated 25 APR reached Bulawayo on the 30th

Over a period of a fortnight it is likely that a fair volume of mail might build up and suggests that to keep the mail 'safe' it ought to accumulate well clear of any possible enemy action. An Armoured train moving up and down the line was certainly not a safe haven for the all important mail.

Crocodile Pools date stamp - No record of use 12.1.00 - 19.3.00

No Crocodile Pools datestamp

Plumer reached Gaberones on 14 January and whether the Crocodile Pools date stamp remained at Mochudi or migrated to Gaberones cannot be determined.

There are three Harvey to Gosforth envelopes and the third is endorsed *On Active Service - No Stamps Available*. The first cancel is a Bulawayo 24 JAN transit which indicates that the letter was in the same mail as the previous 10 JAN 00 cover, but probably dispatched at a later date.



Third Harvey envelope - Bulawayo 24 JAN 00 transit

Thus no Crocodile Pools cancellations are known during the second half of January and two items of mail were sent during February but not date stamped at the location of dispatch. Both the foregoing covers have a BULAWAYO 7 FEB 00 transit.

A Cover from Fortress Kopje

A stampless envelope from Lt A.S. Chalmers, D squadron SRV Fortress Kopje, Crocodile Pools 5.2.1900. With 'No stamps to be had'. (Illustrated on page 2398) Obviously Chalmers was in action on one of their vantage points while Wallis and his men were trying to repair the 100 foot Metsimasuane Bridge.

On 17 January preparations to repair the bridge began and the armoured trains came under fire whilst unloading materials. On 21 January repairs to the bridge commenced and were completed in 12½ working days.

To be continued in Issue No 99

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