

The **Runner Post**

THE BECHUANALANDS AND BOTSWANA SOCIETY



Issue 83 Contents

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DIARY OF EVENTS – 2012

26 th -29 th September	Autumn Stampex , Business Design Centre, Islington, London No Society meeting arranged.
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Postal Rates

The cost of postage is going up in both Botswana and the UK, in some cases by a large amount.

From the 1st April 2012 the prices for letters and packets in Botswana increase as shown right (zones and rates). In the UK, from 30th April 2012, rates are increasing by about **20%** (UK), **80%** (Europe) and **60%** (Rest of World - Australia slightly more).

This is likely to have an adverse effect on future Society subscription rates, although PDF subscribers will be unaffected.

ZONES

Zone 1 Local
Botswana

Zone 2 SADC Countries
Angola, DR Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Tanzania, Seychells, Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Zone 3 Rest of Africa

Zone 4 Europe

Zone 5 Rest of the world (North & South America, Middle East, Asia and Oceania)

LETTERS AND PACKETS		ZONE 1	ZONE 2		ZONE 3	ZONE 4	ZONE 5
ITEM	SIZES/WEIGHT	BOTSWANA	SADC REGION		REST OF AFRICA	EUROPE	REST OF THE WORLD
		Surface	Air	Surface	Air/ Surface	Air/ Surface	Air/ Surface
Letters							
Standard	120X235mm	3.20	6.60	6.50	6.70	7.30	7.30
Large	229x324mm	4.90	7.10	6.70	7.70	9.40	9.60
Oversize	Over 229x324mm	6.60	9.20	7.80	11.30	17.40	18.40
Registration		8.10					
Packets							
	Up to 500g	13.50	40.00	28.80	57.10	105.50	113.40
	501 - 1000g	15.00	80.60	57.60	114.20	211.00	226.80
	1001-1500g	16.20	121.00	86.40	171.40	316.50	340.20
	1501 - 2000g	17.60	161.30	115.20	228.50	422.00	453.60

Stow away

by Morris Taber

I am working on a small exhibit dealing with the manifestations of the QV half penny vermilion in the Bechuanalands, with all its various forms of overprints. One of the more interesting items in this exhibit is this cover {below, 80%} and the story of W. Reginald Bray (1879-1939) that goes with it.

Bray used the technique of sending a pre-stamped card in a folded newspaper to an overseas address with the

hope that it would be dropped in the mail and thus get back to him (*The Englishman...* p.97-98).

He posted many other things through the post, after studying the regulations in *The Post Office Guide*, including his Irish Terrier and himself. For more on Bray see John Tingey's book, *The Englishman who Posted Himself and Other Curious Objects*.



SG1-8 covers

by Neville Midwood

The cover of Runner Post #82 illustrated a registered letter bearing 3xSG6. The image was supplied by Peter Thy. In e-mail discussions with Peter and Brian Hurst it was suggested that the total number of items bearing SG1 to SG8 [Cape of Good Hope "Hope" seated

RE4 Registered Envelope bearing 1xSG5 1d and 3xSG7 6d with two BONC 637 cancels, and stamped TAUNGS DE 31 / 87, REGISTERED LONDON 24 JA 88.

On the back there are datestamps - a mostly unreadable 4 JA / 88 and HALLE SAALE '26/1 88' (courtesy P.Thy) [95%]

overprinted "British Bechuanaland"] was very low, probably less than 15. This brings to mind articles such as Alan Drysdall's "Stellaland revisited" (RP#23 p.419-433, etc) and his Anstruther/Sandbach correspondence (RP#51 p.1278-1286). So I've decided, with members help, to illustrate and document as many SG1-8 covers as I can?.

If members can suggest other cover groups which they believe exist in very low numbers – bisects on cover, SG40-50 on cover etc, it may in the future be possible to start up a "Rarer Covers" study similar to the Rarer Stamps study.





Cover from Vryburg to Venterstad bearing a pair of SG5 1d struck with a single BONC '555'.

Front datestamp is VRYBURG - (probably) MR 18.

Rear datestamps are KIMBERLEY MR 21 / 87, BURGHESDORP 23 MAR / 87 and VENTERSTAD MR 23 / 87.

Envelope flap is pre-printed "ROSENBLATT & WESSELS / Attorneys & Notaries, / VRYBURG." (3 lines) . (courtesy B Hurst) [80%]



Cover from Vryburg to Queenstown bearing a single SG6 2d with a BONC '555' cancel.

Front datestamp is VRYBURG JA 28 / 87. Rear datestamp are KIMBERLEY JA 30 / 87 and QUEENSTOWN FE 5 / 87. (courtesy B Hurst) [80%]



Early Bechuanaland Protectorate Mail

by Alan Drysdall

Early missionary mail

The letter illustrated as **Figure 1**, sent by the Rev. Dr Robert Moffat, the doyen of the London Missionary Society (LMS) missionaries in southern Africa, from “Moselikatsi’s Town, Mashona country” – i.e. Bulawayo

in Matabeleland – in August 1854 when he was visiting Mzilikazi, is possibly the earliest surviving letter sent from Matabeleland. The letter is addressed to Moffat’s wife Mary; the first paragraph reads as follows:

As there is the possibility of your receiving this some time before my return I most gladly sit down to write to you... A man belonging to Paulton (Mr Dyer) & a Mr Clarke (at least we think so) are at a neighbouring town and will it is probable not remain long, or ought I to say will not be detained long, and of course must reach Nalito [Motito, a settlement about 30 miles north-east of Kuruman] some time before it is possible for me to do so. At all events they will probably meet with some of the Kuruman hunters at the other side of the Shashe River to whom they can give this letter and most thankful I shall be if you by this means receive unexpected information a month or two sooner than was anticipated...

Moffat’s diary entry for the 15th August, 1854, reads, “Mr Clark kindly engaged to take letters for Kuruman, which I am preparing at intervals...”.

Moffat was in Matabeleland searching for his son-in-law Dr David Livingstone. He failed to find him, but left a parcel of letters in a hut, which – remarkably – was found by Livingstone the following year. Moffat returned to Matabeleland in 1859 with the Rev. William Sykes, the Rev. John Smith Moffat, Robert Moffat’s son, and the Rev. Thomas Morgan Thomas to establish the Matabele Mission at Inyati near the Bembesi River, about 50 miles north-northeast of Bulawayo. Rosenthal and Blum, quoting Wallis¹, record that they brought with them, as a contribution by the Governor of Cape Colony, Sir George Grey, towards the postal service, a dozen donkeys, but they “gave intolerable trouble all along the route, and the scheme came to nothing”. Letters sent by the missionaries at Inyati via the Transvaal, using their runners, represent

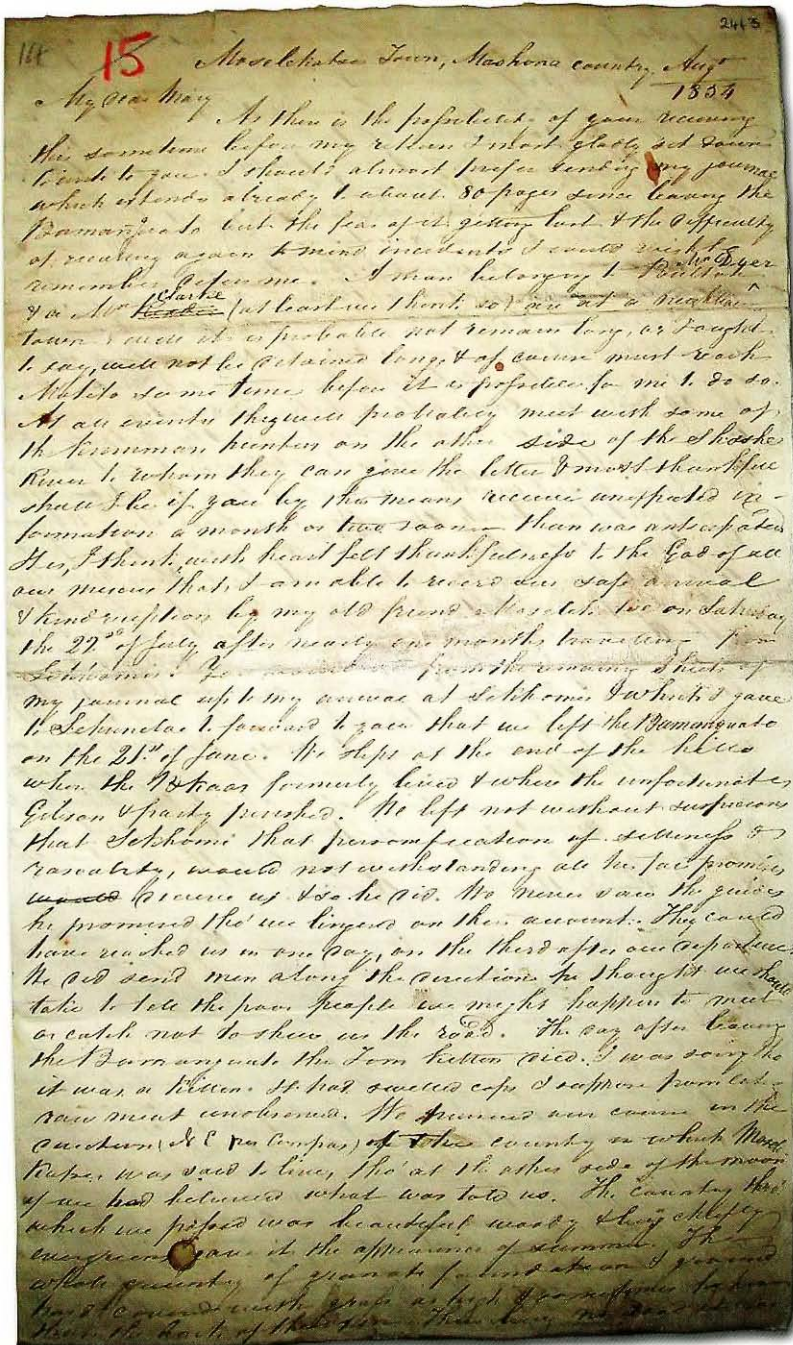


Figure 1 A letter sent by Robert Moffat, from “Moselikatsi’s Town, Mashona country” – Bulawayo, Matabeleland – in August 1854 (National, Archives of Zimbabwe; Landau, Johnstone and Hoffman, 2004)

the first attempt to establish a regular postal link with the outside world. In 1870 a second mission station was established by the Rev. J.H. Thompson at Hope Fountain, near Lobengula's capital at Gubulawayo. In December 1875 Thompson was succeeded by the Rev. C.A. Helm. Rosenthal and Blum² record:

This remarkable clergyman even kept a regular postal account and was prepared to remit money, of which he kept the most scrupulous records. "Letters, at first months apart," wrote his daughter, Mrs Jessie Lovemore ... became fortnightly. As the postal service into the Cape Colony crept further and further north, so also our runners had a lesser distance to travel".

The first postal service *via* and within the Protectorate probably dates from prior to 1860 – Baker³ states "by 1861" – and linked Kuruman, the southern Africa headquarters of the London Missionaries situated in the north of Cape Province, with the missions in Matabeleland, namely Hope Fountain and Inyati. The service, as described by Wright and Drysdall⁴, utilised passing travellers and must therefore have operated on a very irregular ad hoc basis. In a letter dated the 20th July, 1860, addressed to the Colonial Secretary, Cape Town, Robert Moffat refuted the claim of Herman Jeppe, then Postmaster-General of the ZAR (Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek; Transvaal), that a regular post operated by the Republic existed between Kuruman and the Zambezi *via* Lake Ngami and also to Matabeleland. (The correspondence is reproduced in its entirety by Proud in the relevant volume of his 'Postal History' series⁵.)

... We receive the post [from Cape Town via Hopetown] regularly every month at this place [Kuruman], and the letters and papers for the missionaries at Moselekatse [Bulawayo] are either forwarded direct by parties going in that direction or sent to the care of Sechele [at Molepolole] or the Revd. Mr. Schoeder [at Letheyana Mission, Molepolole], who again, instead of sending Post Kafirs, as Mr. Jeppe supposes, embraces opportunities of persons going to Sekhomi

The ZAR Potchefstroom-Tati service

The exploration, development and eventually abandonment of the Tati goldfields is described by Dickson and Drysdall, and summarised by Baxter and Burke as follows⁷:

The area between the Shashi and Ramaquabane [Rivers], known today as the Tati District, was worked extensively for gold in prehistoric times. The first discovery of gold there by Europeans was made in 1866 when Henry Hartley, ivory hunter and trader, and Carl Mauch, German mineralogist, found traces of the metal near the Tati River. As the area was claimed by Msilikazi, who prohibited gold mining in his domains, it was not until after his death in 1868 that this discovery was properly

[Shoshong] and Moselekatze.

Wallis, in his account of the visits of Robert Moffat to Mzilikazi⁶, comments as follows:

The Transvaal official's estimates of times are, as will be at once apparent to any reader of the Moffat or any contemporary records, recklessly under-estimated. It would seem that the Transvaal Republic was most anxious to be taken into the extended system which was developed in the Cape Colony between 1860 and 1864. Jeppe speaks of the weekly Caffre post to the Bamanguato country and to Matabeleland, an institution of which the white settlers at Inyatti knew nothing, though how they, and particularly Mrs J.S. Moffat, would have welcomed it is clear in their correspondence. Even more startling is the calm reference to postal communications between Sekhome, Lake Ngami and the Zambesi, by which vague term is doubtless intended the Makololo town of Linyanti. It would almost appear as if the Transvaal's Postmaster-General's enthusiasm, stimulated by the prospect of a subsidy from the Colonial Government in days when the Republic's exchequer was at a low ebb, imagined as already in operation a system that had existence only in his imagination.

The Under-Colonial Secretary in Cape Town responded to Robert Moffat's letter as follows:

I am instructed by His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor administering the Government to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter, dated the 20th July last, on the subject of postal communication with the Zambesi *via* Potchefstroom, and to inform you, in reply, that it is not his Excellency's intention to disturb the present arrangements.

In respect to donkeys, mentioned in the last paragraph of your letter, I am to acquaint you that, in consequence of Sir George Grey having left the Colony, the question of their disposal must be left open for the moment.

investigated. During the interregnum between Msilikazi's death and the installation of Lobengula as King of the Matabele in February 1870, a number of prospecting parties took advantage of the decline in Matabele authority to visit the territory. Among the expeditions to arrive in 1869 was that of the London and Limpopo Gold Mining Company led by Sir John Swinburne, the only expedition adequately equipped and with sufficient capital at its disposal to undertake the costly operation of extracting gold from quartz. Disappointed in their hope of finding alluvial gold, most of the other diggers left for the Vaal River when diamonds were discovered there and by the middle of 1871 fewer than a dozen

prospectors remained. The first 'Tati Concession' was granted by Lobengula in 1870 to Captain A.L. Levert, a representative of the London and Limpopo Mining Company. Swinburne, however, was unable to obtain sufficient financial support in England and although the Company worked the Blue Jacket and New Zealand Reefs for some time it was forced to abandon the concession when its funds became exhausted.

Mining on a small scale, particularly at the Monarch Mine, continued sporadically under various ownerships, and only finally ceased following dwindling production for some years in 1964.

In the first instance mail was carried to and from the goldfields by travellers and prospectors, the Rev. MacKenzie† at Shoshong acting as unofficial postmaster. The first mention of a ZAR postal service is in a report from "our special correspondent in Potchefstroom" dated the 23rd March, 1868, published in *The Natal Mercury* of the 7th April.

On Thursday evening last [19th March] I attended the public meeting called by A. Forssman and F.W. Reid Esqrs, for the purpose of considering the possibility of at once establishing a postal communication with the goldfields, and the best way of doing it. I must say that a greater unanimity and promptitude of action, could have been shown nowhere, not even in go-ahead Natal. Copies of letters written by the former gentlemen to the missionaries on the route, and already despatched were read to the meeting. It was decided that an outward mail should be made up on the day next following. The Postmaster-General, who was present, signified his readiness to despatch such a mail (for this first time by an express kafur) to Marico [Zeerust] on Friday, at 2 p.m., with instructions for the Postmaster there to forward it to the Rev. Mr Price at Secheli's [Molepolole], who will send it on to the Rev. Mr Mackenzie [MacKenzie], at Sechomo's [Shoshong]; the latter transmitting it to the diggers, and receiving their down mail. In future the regular fortnightly post to Marico will take letters and papers addressed to "the Goldfields Ramakoban" [Ramaquabane River is north of Tati and immediately south of what became the border between the Protectorate and Matabeleland]... The expenses of this postal service are not expected to be heavy; in fact, it is proposed to make it self-supporting by charging a proportionately high postage, as soon as, from the missionaries replies, the amount of expenditure has been ascertained.

On the 18th May, 1868, *The Natal Mercury* published

† This spelling is used by John MacKenzie in his autobiographical account, *Ten years north of the Orange River* (see also the *Dictionary of South African Biography* (v.1, p.487-9). Other authors spell the name in a variety of ways.

the following report:

Last Saturday afternoon we received the first mail from our P.P.P. [Potchefstroom Prospecting Party]. Captain Black's letter is dated Shoshong (alias Matjen's Stadt, alias Sechomo's, alias Bamangwato), 31st March, on which day they arrived at Matjen's...

By the above mentioned mail A Forsseman Esq. received a very hearty communication from the Rev. Mr Price at Pechili's [Sechili's, i.e. Molepolole], in answer to his letter re postal communication, assuring him that Mr P. will do all in his power to assist in the matter, and that the mails will be forwarded with the greatest possible regularity and dispatch, as far as his station is concerned.

The Natal Mercury of the 30th June, 1868, carried the following notice, first published in *The Argus* of the 10th inst.

Post to the Gold Fields

The postmaster general, F. Jeppe Esq., has received a letter from the Rev. John McKenzie [MacKenzie], stationed at Shoshong, in which the Rev. gentleman treats of the postal communication with the Goldfields and Potchefstroom *via* Secheli and Marico [Zeerust], and adds, that no difficulty will be experienced by him in despatching the post from Machin to the gold-fields, and the return post to Secheli. Measures, however, have been taken here some months since to keep open the communication with Secheli.

Four covers addressed to R.N. Acutt, Secretary of the London and Limpopo Mining Co., c/o F.W. Reid, Potchefstroom – consistently misspelt by the writers as Potschstrooom – have been illustrated in *The Transvaal Philatelist*⁸ and three others are known. Two, together with a postal stationery envelope bearing the handstamp of the London and Limpopo Mining Co. on the flap and annotated to record that the reply was addressed to Capt. Echalez – who was probably at Tati – are illustrated by Dickson and Drysdall. Not one of the covers bears a Zeerust transit datestamp, but Zeerust only received its first datestamp – inscribed 'MARICO', the name of the district rather than the name of the settlement – in 1874. Dickson and Drysdall conclude that all these letters were almost certainly carried over the Potchefstroom-Tati route.

There is no evidence that any mail from Bulawayo was ever carried *via* the Tati-Potchefstroom route established by the ZAR, but it is an obvious theoretical possibility to bear in mind. It can be noted that there is no mention in the correspondence quoted here of Linokana, a Protestant mission north of Zeerust that was later to play an important role as a staging post on the route between the Protectorate and the ZAR.

Missionary and explorer mail in 1873-88

The first letter – dated Shoshong, the 30th July, 1873 – sent from Bechuanaland by Frank Oates, a ‘gentleman’ naturalist and explorer who was attempting to reach the Victoria Falls⁹, included the statement, “We arrived here yesterday and find there is a chance of sending a letter... I found that a storekeeper here was going early in the morning to some place where he says the letters will be forwarded.” Five days later, in a letter addressed to his brother Charles, probably enclosed in the same envelope, he wrote, “I am going to get my letters sent to Hepburn [the Rev. Hepburn, an LMS missionary stationed in Shoshong] and any letters of mine written from where I am going, he will forward to England... Mr. Hepburn is even trying to establish a monthly post. The first was sent out a few days ago by a messenger to Secheli’s [Molepolole].” The Rev. Hepburn was evidently successful, as in a letter dated the 16th-17th April, 1874, again from Shoshong, Frank referred to “the monthly mail coming in”. It included a letter from Hepburn, then at Kuruman. A cover that contained a letter written by Frank Oates when he was in Bulawayo in September 1873 is illustrated as **Figure 2**. It may well have been carried south by a trader or

hunter, and forwarded by Hepburn’s missionary post from Shoshong.

The halfway point of the almost 400-mile long ‘Missionary Road’ – which was of course no more than a wagon trail – linking Kuruman and Shoshong was Kanye, northwest of the ZAR township of Zeerust. Linokana, another Protestant mission station on the ZAR side of the western border of the Protectorate, operated a private runner service to Zeerust, the northern limit of an official ZAR postal service operating *via* Lichtenburg to link with the main postal route between Pretoria and Cape Town in Potchefstroom. It would seem likely that the monthly Bechuanaland service was scheduled so that letters from Shoshong, etc., addressed outside the territory could be dropped off at Linokana in time for a service scheduled to reach Zeerust and catch the outgoing weekly official mail. The runners returning from Zeerust would have brought the incoming mail.

Confirmation that a regular postal link between Shoshong and the ZAR was established prior to mid-1875 is provided by Major Henry Stabb of the Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry, who, in the company of Lt.



Figure 2 A cover, addressed by Frank Oates to his mother which contained a letter dated the 25th September, 1873, written when he was at Hope Fountain (“Mr Thompson’s”) waiting for Lobengula’s permission to visit the Falls (which was not forthcoming on this occasion). He noted that, “this letter may have to lie for a while, waiting for a waggon to take it”. The Potchefstroom transit marks are dated ‘JA 5 /74’ (reverse) and ‘JA 9 / 74’ (front), recording when the letter was received there and when it was forwarded. A backstamp records that it was received in Leeds on the 10th March, 1874. It was therefore carried from Cape Town by the Walmer Castle, one of Donald Currie’s ships, sailing from Cape Town on the 10th February and offloading the mails in Dartmouth on the 9th March, 1874. The franking receipts payment of the ZAR inland and interstate rate (6d), the Cape transit rate (4d) and the private ship letter rate (4d). The figure ‘2’ written in red crayon is an accountancy mark recording that the UK GPO was to be credited 2d (courtesy of Colin Hoffman)

James Glascott, also travelled *via* Shoshong, Tati and Matabeleland to the Victoria Falls. In a diary entry dated the 18th June, 1875, he recorded, “McKenzie [MacKenzie] ... acts as postmaster here [Shoshong]... Between this and the Transvaal I found that letters were received and despatched every fortnight, being conveyed through Secheli’s country by Kaffir runners from one missionary post to another, and that beyond Shoshong as far as Gobulawayo [Gubulawayo] there was a monthly post. The postal arrangements are managed principally by the missionaries and supported by annual subscriptions from among the traders and white residents.”¹⁰

Further confirmation is contained in a letter addressed to the Philatelic Society of Rhodesia by the Rev. C.D. Helm, who acted as postmaster at Gubulawayo from about 1875, published in *The Rhodesian Philatelist* in September 1912. He stated that runners from Molepolole, where the resident missionary was then the Rev. Roger Price, carried the mail to Linokana, where the Rev. Thomas Jensen posted it.¹¹ Linokana was the site of an LMS mission near Mabotsa, where David Livingstone established his first mission station.¹² However, from 1859 it was the site of a mission station run by the Evangelische Lutherische Missionanstalt zu Hermansburg, known informally as the Hanoverian Missionaries.¹³ The missionaries would have maintained contact with the nearest official post office – Zeerust – and would have forwarded mail to and from fellow missionaries in the interior. Prior to February 1876, when the Rev. Jensen was formally appointed the ZAR postal agent at Linokana, they would have employed their own runners to carry the mail the 20 miles to Zeerust, where a local trader, a Mr. Hutton, was the official postmaster.¹⁴

The Rev. Helm also recorded that the runners between Gubulawayo and Tati completed the return trip of 252 miles in a week, an extraordinary average of 36 miles a day. (The official runner route of nearly 500 miles between Gubulawayo and Mafeking was scheduled to take 17 days, an average of nearly 30 miles a day.) The runners between Kuruman and Shoshong may therefore have taken only four weeks for a round trip, hence presumably the original monthly service.

Tati, a settlement of fluctuating fortunes, was not an African village and had only a small ‘permanent’ European population – Frank Oates estimated seven. It was sited near the junction of the Westbeech or Hunters’ Road *via* the Protectorate to the Zambezi, the Missionary Road to Gubulawayo, Inyati and Hope Fountain, and the route to the east along the Macloutsie River. It was therefore an important staging post, and was subsequently to play a further role in the development of the postal service.¹⁵ However, the Oates correspondence provides conclusive evidence that there was then no regular postal service north from Shoshong, and includes many references to

letters carried by the occasional wagon sent for supplies or returning from a hunting trip. Major Stabb records that the unofficial postmaster at Tati was Alexander Brown, a local storekeeper; “Brown’s store is used as the local post office, and in it we found a variety of old letters kicking about in various nooks”.¹⁶ (Brown was succeeded by Sam Edwards, a remarkable character who acted as Postmaster during the last years of the private post and the first years of the official Gubulawayo-Mafeking Runner Post.¹⁷)

Frank also acted as postman on occasions. For example, in letters dated the 29th and 30th August, 1873, written in Tati and addressed to his brother Charles he wrote; “I expect to find more friends in the King’s Town [Gubulawayo], especially Mr. Thompson [Thomson], the missionary, for whom I have a letter from Makenzie [MacKenzie] and another from Hepburn. I likewise carry the mail.”

The traders resident in Matabeleland, and travellers occasionally employed runners to carry mail. Frank Oates, referring to a letter from Fairburn, a trader then at Gubulawayo, to be forwarded from Manyami’s, near Mangwe, to Tati, noted, “A letter from Gubuleweyo excites more extortionate demands for payment. Two boys must take it and each have a panniker of powder. Manyami said he must see the powder before he would send the boys.”¹⁸

Frank sent three letters from Hope Fountain and Inyati in September, October and December 1873 during the period he was hunting, having been refused permission by Lobengula to travel further north. The two earlier covers are identified and illustrated by Wright and Drysdall as numbers 2 and 3; the whereabouts of cover no. 4 was not known and no illustration was available at the time they described the correspondence. Cover no. 2 is illustrated as **Figure 2**. All three covers are franked with combinations of ZAR (Transvaal) and Cape stamps, the former – a sixpenny stamp in all three cases – being cancelled with a dumb target-type mark, presumably in Zeerust. (A target-type mark coded ‘8’, which was issued to Zeerust in 1874, was used on some later covers.) The earliest datestamps on all three covers were struck in Potchefstroom. There are therefore no markings to indicate that the covers originated from anywhere except Zeerust, but all three are addressed to Mrs Oates, Frank’s mother Susan, and were originally sold by Robson Lowe as part of the Oates correspondence, which included covers addressed to C.G. and W.E. Oates, Frank’s brothers Charles and William.¹⁹† The transit times of the three covers from where they originated to Potchefstroom ranged from 99 days (from Inyati) to 102 and 111 days (from Hope Fountain) and averaged 104 days.

The mail route to and from Matabeleland was for the most part the route followed by Frank. Mail from Inyati was carried south to Hope Fountain and Bulawayo, and from there *via* Mangwe and Tati to

Shoshong. The letter Frank wrote from Pandamatenga before he set out on foot through fly-infested country to visit the Falls, would have been carried south *via* Bulawayo and Tati to Shoshong. One of the most difficult crossings between Pandamatenga and Gubulawayo would have been the drift across the Matengwe, and it was from here that Selous and Woods returning south carried Frank's penultimate letter, having warned him that travelling during the rainy season, when mosquitos abounded and malaria was rampant, would be to risk his health. Frank chose to ignore the advice of far more experienced travellers and died on the return journey north of Bulawayo; he was only 35. His last letter was written from Pandamatenga before he reached the Falls – on New Year's eve in 1874 – he had “so ardently desired” to see, and his only surviving impressions are captured in two watercolours and a few pencil drawings.

Another traveller and explorer who may well have made use of the route south from the Zambezi *via* the Protectorate and Zeerust for his mail was Dr Emil Holub²⁰. However, the only known surviving cover is annotated to record that the enclosed letter was written on the 21st August, 1875, when Holub was in the “Leshumo Valley”, between Pandamatenga – Westbeeche's trading base – and the Zambezi. He later visited the Falls with a party led by Westbeeche. Westbeeche's recently acquired wife left to return to her family's farm near Zeerust at the same time, and she may well have carried Holub's letter. However, she reached the farm on the 22nd November, 1875, but the cover was only posted in Zeerust on the 17th December.

Wright²¹ records that the Jesuit missionaries who were in what became the Protectorate and Matabeleland had a base at Tati. More than 150 of their letters, compiled and edited by Gelfand²², show that there was an informal postal service operated by the missionaries in which the Rev. Helm in Gubulawayo may well have been involved.

So who paid the ferryman? Mail would have been carried by travellers as a favour to the sender or the

addressee, but once outgoing letters reached Zeerust (or in some cases, Cape Colony) postage would have to be paid. Postage rates were expensive, partly because the ZAR's stamps receipted only the 6d inland half-ounce letter rate and Cape rates were payable for transit through the Colony (4d per half ounce) and ocean postage on mail addressed overseas, 4d per half ounce by private ship – Donald Currie's Castle Line – or 1s per half ounce by Union Line packet. The heaviest of Frank's letters was franked with stamps recording a total payment of 3s 10d[‡]. Frank may well have established an account, probably with the Rev. Hepburn, to pay the postage on letters addressed to his family and charges on incoming mail. The Rev. Helm was later to charge regular users of his runner post an annual subscription of £1 10s to £2 10s, and temporary residents 5s a letter. Any stamps required were presumably charged in addition. Major Stabb also refers to annual subscriptions²³.

Wright quotes a letter from one of the Jesuit missionaries in Gubulawayo dated September 1879 addressed to his Superior in Italy:

There is now a fortnightly post from and to the [Cape] Colony. The Europeans had reduced the post to a monthly one from want of funds. But now the Government gives £100 a year and our party gives 18 guineas a year – three for each priest – so now they are enable to have a fortnightly one.

The Jesuit missionary Father Depelchin, based in Matabeleland, included in his accounts for 1882 the item, “Paid to Helm for three years subscription for me, for five other subscriptions, stamps and parcels – £33”²⁴. In May 1884, when his party was on its way north from Shoshong and heading for Barotseland, Coillard wrote:

The postal service is interrupted now, because of the smallpox which is raging in the direction of Zeerust. Two postmen, who are sent every three weeks, take a fortnight to accomplish the journey, and it costs £3. In order to defray the cost of the service, a tax of £3 10s is imposed upon every European without distinction who makes a stay in the country, and it means therefore £14 for us. But the Europeans of the district have held a consultation, and unanimously decided to make us pay only half that sum²⁵.

The earliest recorded letters originating from Barotseland, with the exception of the letter sent by Coillard in 1887 referred to above, were all sent by the Paris Missionaries *via* Bechuanaland Protectorate – usually Palapye – utilising the official post for onward transmission²⁶, but from 1898 mail, with very few exceptions, was forwarded *via* Bulawayo.

† William was the father of Capt. Lawrence Oates, who achieved immortality when he walked into the blizzard and sacrificed his life in order not to be a burden to his companions on the ill-fated Scott expedition to the South Pole in 1912. Artifacts from that expedition and from Frank Oates expedition to the Victoria Falls are on display in the Oates Museum, financed by the Oates Memorial Trust, in what was Gilbert White's house in Selbourne. Frank Oates' collections of insects and birds are lodged with the Hope Department of Entomology at Oxford and the British Museum respectively.

‡ The equivalent of £13 today using the retail price index, or almost £100 using the average earnings index – see <http://eh.net>.

The Mafeking-Gubulawayo runner post and the replacement by coach services

Why the postal authorities used the name Gubulawayo remained unexplained as far as philatelists were concerned – and is still regarded as a mystery by some philatelists today – until J.E.M. Coch queried the name with G.J. King, Registrar of Deeds and Civil Commissioner, Salisbury. His response, dated the 23rd January, 1923, was included in a short article by Coch published four months later in *The South African Philatelist*²⁷.

- (1) The only official record of the name GUBULAWAYO comes from the Post Office. The datestamp used in 1894 in the Post Office at Bulawayo was GUBULAWAYO. The name, however, is not known to natives and apparently the prefix 'GU' simply means 'at Bulawayo'.
- (2) The first plan of the Township lodged in the Survey Department in June 1894 adopts the spelling BULAWAYO. In the proclamation dated November 14, 1893, a Magistrate is appointed for the BULAWAYO District and on the same date a Government notice is published appointing Major Forbes as Magistrate at BULUWAYO. On January 5, 1894, Capt. Hayman is appointed to act as Magistrate at BULUWAYO. Spelling with a U continues through all the High Commissioner's Proclamations and Notices up to Dec 21, 1894, except in Proclamation No. 5 of 1894 of September 10, 1894, when the word BULAWAYO is used in the 5th section. In 1895 BULAWAYO is generally adopted as the official spelling.

A brief follow-up was published in the same journal in September 1924²⁸. This included some incorrect information, but also recorded that Baxter, the Bechuanaland Postmaster-General, corresponded with John Smith Moffat, described as "his Bulawayo postal

agent", whose letters were always headed 'Gubulawayo. When ordering cancellers for the new agency, Baxter not surprisingly ordered one reading 'GUBULAWAYO / BECHUANALAND'.

Holmes²⁹ describes the establishment of the Mafeking-Gubulawayo runner post as follows:

The Proclamation constituting the territory south of the Molopo River a Crown Colony to be called 'British Bechuanaland' was only one result of Sir Charles Warren's expedition [to occupy the Boer republics of Stellaland and Goshen] of 1885. Another was the establishment, at the request of the native chiefs, of a protectorate over an enormous territory to the north of that river which was given the name 'Bechuanaland Protectorate'. There were, however, disputes between Lobengula, chief of the Matabele ... and Khama, Chief of the Bamangwato ... over the ownership of a tract of country lying south of the Tati River and between the Shashi and Macloutsie Rivers. John Smith Moffat, son of the famous missionary, was therefore sent to Bulawayo in 1887 to try to resolve the differences. While there he kept in touch with Sir Sidney Shippard, the Administrator of British Bechuanaland at Vryburg, by relays of native runners, who carried his reports and dispatches over 500 miles to Mafeking, where they were handed to the post office for further transmission.

The success of this runner service led Mr Moffat to suggest to Sir Sidney the institution of a regular postal service between Bulawayo and Mafeking. The proposal met with the approval of Sir Hercules Robinson, the High Commissioner in Cape Town... Mr Moffat was therefore instructed to make all the arrangements for the organisation of the service; engaging native runners, opening postal agencies ... and the appointment of postmasters... The new service was announced in *The Bechuanaland News* of August 8th, 1888...

"The arrangements which Mr J.S. Moffat, Assistant Commissioner, has during the past month or two been making are now completed, and the 'Protectorate Post' comes into operation forthwith. The former route to the interior, via Zeerust in the Transvaal, has been summarily abandoned, and the post will be conveyed by native runners through Mafeking to Kanya (Gasitsive's), Molepolole (Secheli's), and Shoshong (Khama's) weekly, and from Shoshong to Gubulawayo (Lobengula's) fortnightly. The first post under the new arrangement arrived at Mafeking on Monday... During the time His Honour the Administrator remains in the Protectorate settling the Grobelaar incident, special riders will carry despatches supplementary to the above post."

The Monday in question would have been the 8th

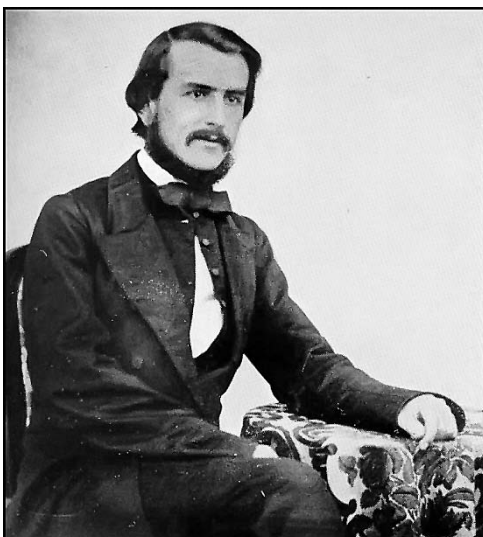


Figure 3 Robert Smith Moffat
(after Baxter and Turner, 1966)

POSTAL NOTICE.

MAILS FOR BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE AND MATABELELAND.

THE following Notice issued by the Acting Postmaster-General of British Bechuanaland, is published for general information. The Post will commence to run from the 9th instant. The Mail service between Zeerust (Transvaal) and the Protectorate has been discontinued.

G. W. ATCHISON, Postmaster-General.

General Post Office, Cape Town, 8th August, 1888.

PROTECTORATE POST.

It is hereby notified for general information, that arrangements will shortly be completed for the establishment of a Postal Service, by Native Runners, between British Bechuanaland and Matabeleland via Bamangwato, when the following Rates of Postage will come into force:—

Correspondence posted within the Protectorate and Trans-Protectorate to be prepaid in British Bechuanaland Stamps over printed with the word "Protectorate."	LETTERS.		For each Newspaper not exceeding 4 oz. and for every additional 4 oz.
	Not exceeding ½ oz.	Every additional ½ oz.	
1.—WHEN POSTED WITHIN THE PRESENT LIMITS OF THE PROTECTORATE—			
(a) Addressed to places within the present limits of the Protectorate ..	2d.	2d.	2d.
(b) Addressed to Offices in Matabeleland, British Bechuanaland, the Cape Colony, and other parts of South Africa ..	4d.	4d.	2½d.
(c) Addressed to the United Kingdom and Foreign Countries.— <i>The Rates specified in the existing convention between the Cape Colony and British Bechuanaland and an additional charge of</i> ..	2d.	2d.	2d.
2.—WHEN POSTED BEYOND THE PRESENT LIMITS OF THE PROTECTORATE—			
(a) Addressed to Places within the Trans-Protectorate ..	2d.	2d.	2d.
(b) Addressed to Offices within the present limits of the Protectorate ..	4d.	4d.	2½d.
(c) Addressed to British Bechuanaland, the Cape Colony, and other parts of South Africa ..	6d.	6d.	4½d.
(d) Addressed to the United Kingdom and Foreign Countries.— <i>The Rates specified in the existing convention between the Cape Colony and British Bechuanaland and an additional charge of</i> ..	4d.	4d.	4d.
3.—CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESSED TO THE PROTECTORATE OR TRANS-PROTECTORATE FROM OTHER PARTS OF SOUTH AFRICA, THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND FOREIGN COUNTRIES SHOULD BE PREPAID AT THE RATES PROVIDED IN THE EXISTING CONVENTION BETWEEN THE CAPE COLONY AND BRITISH BECHUANALAND, and the following additional charges will be payable upon delivery—			
(a) When delivered within the present limits of the Protectorate ..	2d.	2d.	2d.
(b) When delivered beyond the present limits of the Protectorate ..	4d.	4d.	4d.

Postal Agencies are being opened at the undermentioned places:—

A. Within the present limits of the Protectorate at Kanye, Molepolole (Secheli's), and Shoshong (Khamo's).

B. Beyond the present limits of the Protectorate at Tati and Gubulawayo (Lobengula's).

No Articles will be transmitted at Book or Parcels Rates beyond Mafeking in British Bechuanaland so long as the Mails are conveyed by Native Runners.

ERNEST C. BAXTER, Acting Postmaster-General.

Vryburg, British Bechuanaland, July 28th, 1888.

Figure 4 The postal notice relating to the introduction of the Mafeking-Gubulawayo service issued by the Acting Postmaster-General of British Bechuanaland (after Proud, 1997)

August, but that post must have been despatched from Bulawayo several days, possibly a week before that.

Hurst³⁰ quotes an official postal notice dated the 7th August issued by the Acting Postmaster-General in Vryburg stating that the "Native Runner Service has now commenced". He also quotes a Parliamentary Report of the Administrator of British Bechuanaland for the year ending the 30th September, 1888 (p.15), recording that, "on the 1st August last a post by native runners (one post per week each way) was established with the sanction of his Honour the Administrator. These runners have been supplemented by weekly despatch riders from the police [possibly the despatch

riders used following the Grobelaar incident], and so far the mails have been delivered with fair regularity." There would seem to be no reason to doubt that the first post was despatched from Bulawayo on the 1st, August, 1888.

Proud³¹ records that "in a letter dated 22 August 1888 the Cape authorities stated that the post was weekly between Mafeking and Shoshong (via Kanye and Mochudi) and fortnightly between Shoshong and Gubulawayo", and that by October 1888 Molepolole had replaced Mochudi.

The postal notice (see **Figure 4**) stated that correspondence posted in the Protectorate and Trans-



Figure 5 The miniature sheet issued by Botswana on the 21st August, 1888, showing the runner route between Mafeking and Gubulawayo, the post offices on the route, the 'GUBULAWAYO / BECHUANALAND' datestamp, barred-oval cancellations coded '638', a 6d stamp overprinted 'Protectorate' and the runners (courtesy of Brian Fenemore)

Protectorate (Gubulawayo and Tati) had to be prepaid in Bechuanaland stamps overprinted 'Protectorate'. The official reason was that exclusive use of the overprinted stamps on mail carried south would provide an indication of the amount of mail carried and the income, but it has also been suggested that the issue was designed to increase sales of Bechuanaland stamps to collectors. The stipulation that Protectorate stamps had to be used to receipt payment of postage for mail carried over the route was waived with effect from June 1890.

The runner post operated as such for only a brief period. Drysdall and Collis³² record that in 1889 the runners on the Mafeking-Shoshong leg were replaced by a weekly mail and passenger service operated by the Bechuanaland Exploration Co. using mule-drawn Scotch carts. Following Khama's move from Shoshong to Palachwe later the same year, this service was extended to Palachwe. From the 1st January, 1892, the Bechuanaland Exploration Co. was carrying mail over an extended route from Palachwe via Macloutsie – a section they had operated from the 10th March, 1891 – to Tuli.

At the end of 1892, the Bechuanaland Exploration Co. were advised that a lower tender submitted by the Wirsing Brothers for the Mafeking-Macloutsie [via Palachwe] route had been accepted... [A] reduced subsidy was only possible because the contractor was allowed to use oxen, and this inevitably had an adverse effect on the schedule. The Wirsing Brothers took over the route on the 28th March, 1893...

There was public pressure at this time to utilise the faster route via Transvaal, but there was greater political pressure to avoid the Boer republics as far as possible. There were also the inevitable financial considerations; the costs of the Bechuanaland mail contracts were met by the Imperial authorities even after the BSA Co. was receiving revenue from the sale of its own stamps.

A cover addressed to Lobengula sent from Basutoland in February 1893 that would have been carried as far north as Palachwe by the Bechuanaland Exploration Co. is illustrated as **Figure 7**.



Figure 6 The earlier of these two items is a large piece from a cover addressed to Ireland sent from 'Gubulawayo' on 'DE 7 / 89'; the franking, stamps overprinted 'Protectorate', etc., is cancelled with the barred-oval canceller coded '678'.

The cover addressed to Cape Town was posted on 'JU 28 / 91'. In this case the franking, an unoverprinted 6d stamp, was cancelled with the datestamp.

Both items would have been carried by runners to Shoshong and from there by a mule-drawn cart. The later cover passed through Mafeking on the 14th July and was received in Cape Town on the 20th. An annotation, presumably by the addressee, on the back records that the sender was Robert Vavas seur, a grandson of Robert Moffat

(courtesy of Jenifer Barry and Colin Hoffman)

The route to the south

The route *via* Kazungula and Bechuanaland Protectorate

Coillard on a number of occasions in his writings reflects on the importance of the mail in their lives, and how much the missionaries enjoyed receiving letters and newspapers from home. For example on the 15th October, 1884, when he was temporarily based at Leshoma, he wrote³³.

There was a great surprise for us on our return from Shesheke – the post! Yes, the post, which we had not received for over five months. Even I, hardened old African as I am, felt my heart beat quicker on opening a packet of some sixty letters. No newspapers, for the obliging trader who acted as our postman had left Mangwato [Shoshong] on horseback to rejoin the waggon and had not been able to burden himself with a bag full of gazettes and reviews... A letter from Europe is at a premium

when it reaches the Zambesi... Unfortunately, the post goes out again in a few days, so all our letters must be written at once... When shall we get the next post? And later on, how many times in the year? Once or twice? I do not know...

Six weeks later, on the 1st December, while still at Leshoma, he received more letters³⁴.

The post will always be an event at the Zambesi. The very evening before I left [Leshoma for Shesheke] two messengers came from Panda-matenga, bringing us a great packet of letters, which a trader had been so obliging as to bring from Mangwato [Shoshong]; and what was more the good man added that he still had "a whole bag of newspapers and a pile of letters for us, with which he had not been able to load the porters". How tantalising! But



Figure 7 A cover addressed to Lobengula which the enclosed letter records was sent from Basutoland by Chief Jonathan Molapo. The datestamps record a route from Thlotse Heights ('FE 12 / 93'), via Ficksburg (faint incompletely struck datestamp; '21' – presumably '12' transposed – 'FEB / 93'), Bloemfontein ('13 FE / 93'), Midland TPO up ('FE 14 / 93'), Kimberley ('FE 15 / 93') and Vryburg ('FE 18 / 93'). The letter would have been received by Lobengula only eight months before the Mashonaland settlers occupied Matabeleland (National Archives of Zimbabwe; Landau, Johnstone and Hoffman, undated)

never mind; we shall enjoy what we have. Adieu, dinner! Adieu sleep! The silent hours of the night fly by while we listen to the news!

Recording the arrival at Sefula on the 5th August, 1888, of mail forwarded from Shesheke, he notes that this was the first post they had received since September 1887, and that, "The oldest dates are of one year, the most recent of only four months". The post continued to be extremely erratic for some years. On the 21st November, 1892, he wrote³⁵:

At nightfall, I received the post. Among others was quite a packet of letters, dated from the first months of 1891, some of which were discovered by a friend in some forgotten corner of the post-office at Palapye, whilst others returned from a

long journey to Fort Salisbury, and a still longer quarantine there... Our postal service still leaves something to be desired.

There was no improvement in the next two years. On the 2nd May, 1894, when he was at Lealui, he recorded the arrival of a messenger from Sefula with the post³⁶.

I opened the packet, which was not large. Nothing from Europe! I tore open the envelopes from Kazungula, Shesheke and Sefula. My breath was taken away! The whole of our March budget sunk in the Mambova Rapids, and lost for ever! The Adolphe Jallas' correspondence, Mlle. Kiener's and mine, my business letters and cheques, a banknote for £10, my long letter to you my friends – the whole lost, hopelessly lost!

It often happens that our letters from Europe make excursions to Mashona-land, and even to Mozambique and Quilimane! And then after lying forgotten and mildewed in some corner, and after having been sent from pillar to post all over the continent, they reach us, like flotsam, with torn envelopes and addresses covered with obliterated stamps – fortunate if they arrive at all.

Further information concerning the role played by the missionaries in Bechuanaland Protectorate is included in a mention of the post by Coillard in May 1884, when his party had started making their way north from Shoshong³⁷.

I forgot to mention the post. The post! How it makes our hearts beat! A friend of ours, knowing that we were at Marico [Zeerust], had taken the opportunity of sending us a packet of letters. The man to whom they were entrusted proved friendly to the last degree; he spent a whole evening with us, chatting on every conceivable subject – except the post. On arriving at Mangwato [Shoshong], four days after, we learnt that this good man had had our letters! He had quite forgotten to hand them over. We had our compensation though; for beside the express messenger he sent on a fortnight later, Mr. Dawson, when he came to greet us, was followed by a man carrying on his head a large basket full of newspapers and more correspondence...

The earliest known cover sent by Coillard from Barotseland was described in an article by Richard Knight published in The Journal of the Rhodesian Study Circle in December 1999³⁸ (**Figure 8**). The enclosed letter is headed Sefula, the first mission station to be established on the flood plain of the upper

Zambesi, and dated the 27th September 1887. It is addressed to the pastor of a small French village whom Coillard had briefly met during his visit to Europe to raise funds for his 1885 expedition and whose wife had since died. The letter, which is in French, consists mainly of lengthy commiserations, but does include a few sentences that serve to emphasize the uncertainties and dangers the missionaries faced during the early years of Lewanika's reign.

...What is especially hard and painful for me is the continuous feeling of uneasiness as a result of the lack of safety and security. The feeling of uneasiness hangs in the air and everybody breathes it in. One speaks of another revolution and it would seem that Lewanika is doing all he can to provoke it...

Government correspondence files lodged with the Cape Archives include a manuscript copy of a letter written on the 5th September, 1888, by Sir Hercules Robinson, Governor and High Commissioner of the Cape Colony, to Lord Knutsford, the Colonial Secretary, enclosing "a copy of a postal advertisement which has been published [The Cape Argus, 31st August, 1888] notifying the charges on letters and newspapers to and from the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Matabeleland and Mashonaland" (see 'Postage rates and postal stationery; Bechuanaland Protectorate'). The Notice was headed, "Mails for Kanye, Molepolole, Shoshong, Lake Ngami, the Zambesi, Tati River, Matabeleland and Mashonaland" (which presumably should read, "...Zambesi River, Tati", etc.), implying that there was a service north from Shoshong via Lake Ngami to the Zambesi. This was not, however, an official postal route. Jurgens³⁹ records that:

In 1895 besides the regular mail service between



Figure 8 The earliest known cover sent by Coillard from Barotseland (courtesy of Peter Hickman)

Mafeking and Bulawayo a small branch service (controlled by Mr. Moffat) was still carried on by native runners to Lake N'Gami and to Kazemgulu [sic] on the Zambesi River". The Lake N'Gami post was monthly at a cost of £5, which was paid to two native runners, the distance being about 500 miles. The Zambesi Post was once every two months at a cost of £10, which was paid by the British South Africa Company, the distance in this case being greater. This post served the Magistrate and Missionaries at Lake N'Gami, and the French and Methodist Missionaries on the Zambesi river.

The Postal Notice dated the 28th July, 1888, issued by the Acting Postmaster-General of British Bechuanaland setting the rates that would apply to mail posted in or addressed to the Protectorate and Trans-Protectorate, which is reproduced by Proud⁴⁰, lists the "postal agencies that are being opened" and makes no mention of any agencies off the direct route between Mafeking and Gubulawayo. The first paragraph of this Notice states that, "The Post will commence to run from the 9th instant. The Mail service between Zeerust (Transvaal) and the Protectorate has been discontinued". The discontinued service was presumably the service established by the missionaries in the Protectorate to link via Linokana with the official ZAR (Transvaal) postal service at Zeerust (see above) as there was no official post office or agency within the Protectorate prior to the establishment of the Mafeking-Bulawayo runner post. (Linokana became a postal agency on the 3rd February, 1876, with the Rev. Jensen as Postal Agent, but closed sometime after 1884 to reopen on the 1st July, 1890⁴¹.)

Coillard's letter was probably sent courtesy of a hunter or trader or possibly with a member or members of the mission staff, via Shesheke, Kazungula, Pandamatenga and the route crossing the Makarikari Salt Pan to Tati or direct to Shoshong. (It is now possible to drive from Kazungula via Pandamatenga to Francistown, i.e. Tati.) However, it is also possible that it was carried from Kazungula by Moffat's runner post, but it is not known when this service was started. The stamps may well have been affixed by the mission at Shoshong. It would seem that the letter was then carried, presumably via Linokana, to Zeerust, and from there south to Lichtenburg to join the main postal route from Pretoria to Cape Town at Potchefstroom. The only Transvaal datestamp is a First British Occupation type, which records that the letter reached Zeerust on '23 FEB / 88', five months after it was written. The franking, however, was not cancelled until the letter reached Lichtenburg, which used the target-type canceller coded '7'. Other datestamps record that it reached Cape Town on the 3rd March, passed through London on the 28th, was forwarded the same day via Calais, Paris and Toulouse and was received in Vabre-Tarn the following day, a total transit time of six months (184 days). The letter would have been carried from Cape Town by the Union

liner Trojan, sailing on the 8th March, a day late on the orders of the Cape Government, probably because the mail being brought overland from Port Elizabeth was delayed, and reaching Plymouth on the 27th March after calls at St. Helena (13th March), Ascension (16th March) and Madeira (23rd March).

The franking, a total of 9½d, corresponds to the ZAR (South African Republic) inland/interstate rate, 2d per half ounce, plus the Cape packet rate to a destination in Western Europe via London, 7½d per half ounce from the 1st April, 1885. The accountancy marks are '7½' in red crayon, the amount payable to the Cape GPO, and a '2½d' handstamp, the amount payable by the Cape GPO to the UK GPO.

At first sight the cover illustrated as **Figure 9**, although attractive in that it is neatly addressed and franked, is of no special interest. But appearances can deceive and the initials at bottom left make it not just unusual but a veritable treasure. They identify the sender as Elise Kiener, a Swiss woman working as a teacher and nurse with the missionaries then at Sefula. This is the earliest known cover she sent, and another example of the few surviving items of missionary mail sent from Barotseland prior to 1898.

Coillard was certainly no fan of Lobengula, having been refused permission in 1877 to establish a mission among the Banyai (Mashona), who Lobengula regarded as a vassal tribe. There were, however, other reasons why Coillard preferred to avoid Lobengula and the route via Gubulawayo, which would have linked with the runner post to Mafeking. Seretse Khama and Lobengula had conflicting claims over the 'disputed territory' along the northern border of the Protectorate. Lewanika also had good reason to fear the Matabele, who were quite capable of raiding north of the Zambesi. Lewanika and Khama had obvious interests in common, strengthened by their friendship with George Westbeech, a trader based at Pandamatenga, who played an important role promoting the interests of the missionaries with Lewanika in particular. Moreover Seretse Khama was a devout Christian, who had encouraged and supported the missionaries in the Protectorate. Coillard would not have wanted to endanger his relationship with either of them by appearing to be over-friendly with Lobengula. This letter was written in April 1893, when these considerations would have applied, but by the end of the year the situation had changed dramatically; Matabeleland was occupied by Rhodes' forces, Lobengula had fled and was to die in exile, and the post office at Bulawayo provided a possible link – the Bulawayo-Mafeking runner post – with the postal services of British Bechuanaland and Cape Colony. However, various early covers and cards, including those that were in the Holmes Collection (see below), suggest that the Barotse missionaries only started to use the route via Bulawayo sometime between April 1897 and June 1898.



Figure 9 The earliest known cover sent by Elise Kiener. Note the initials 'E. K.' at bottom-left (courtesy of Peter Hickman)

During the first decade the missionaries were in Barotseland they would have used the route running southwest from Kazungula *via* Pandamatenga, the site of Westbeech's store and the base station of the Jesuit missionaries until they withdrew in 1885*, which followed the border between Bechuanaland Protectorate and what became Rhodesia, but in order to avoid Bulawayo and head for Palapye it would have been necessary to fork to the right and travel due south across the edge of Makarikari Salt Pan. We know from what Coillard wrote in his autobiography (see above) that the Barotseland missionaries had an arrangement with the missionaries in the Protectorate to receive and send mail, which would explain why they avoided Tati as there were no missionaries based there. Elise Kiener added her initials to the envelope to identify it as missionary mail from Barotseland and thereby ensure that it would be forwarded. It is certainly possible that the Barotseland missionaries had an account with the Bechuanaland missionaries to ensure that the necessary stamps were affixed.

From 1888 the alternative option would have been the route to Bulawayo to link with the Gubulawayo-Mafeking runner post, but no examples of mail showing Bulawayo transit datestamps sent prior to 1898 are known. Prior to the establishment in about

1897 of the official post linking Mongu-Lealui with the outside world (see below) mail could only have been sent or received on a very irregular basis, and would have been dependent on the missionaries themselves, and occasional travellers such as Selous, Holub and Oates. In 1889 Khama moved his capital from Shoshong to Palapye (formerly Palachwe)⁴², which became an important staging post after the Pioneer Column had passed through in 1890 and occupied Mashonaland. Making use of the missionaries and the post office there was an obvious option. (One missionary known to have been in Palapye at this time was William Charles Willoughby, who was appointed by the London Missionary Society in 1893 to advise Khama, who was appealing the proposed transfer of the Protectorate to the BSA Co.⁴³.)

Elise's letter reached Palapye on 'MY 4 / 93', where the franking was cancelled with a Cape numeral-coded barred-oval canceller. The strikes of the canceller are incomplete, but what is visible is consistent with it being coded '676', the canceller originally issued to Shoshong and later transferred to Palapye. Backstamps record a route south via Vryburg ('MY 15 / 93') and Cape Town (unreadable date). The letter reached London on the 6th June, and was received in Orvin, Switzerland, two days later. It was therefore carried from Cape Town by the Union liner Tartar, sailing on the 20th May, calling at Madeira on 2nd June and off-loading the mails in Plymouth on the 6th June.

The cover illustrated as **Figure 10** is very similar to

* Coillard described 'Pata-matenga' as "a heap of hovels, turned into a farm".



Figure 10 A cover sent by Adolphe Jalla, probably from Lealui, sometime during the first quarter of 1893. Note the initials 'A. J.' left of the address (courtesy of Paul Peggie)

the one sent by Elise Kiener, but in this case the initials 'A. J.' left of the address identify the sender as Adolphe Jalla, an Italian missionary who spent most of the 40 years he was in Barotseland at Lealui. The franking – a total of 7d – is clearly cancelled with the Cape-type barred-oval canceller coded '676', but the Palapye datestamp is incompletely struck, recording only the month and the year (March 1893). However, backstamps record that the letter passed through Vryburg on 'AP 4 / 93' and was received in Pellice, Italy, on '29 / APR / 93', from where it was redirected to Nice in France. (The Weitzeckers assumed responsibility for the mission in Leribe, Basutoland, when the Coillards left for Barotseland⁴⁴.)

H.R. Holmes collection of the Bechuanaland included three covers that were sent via the Protectorate by the missionaries in Barotseland between 1888 and 1897. They were described in the auction catalogue⁴⁵ as:

1888 a cover addressed to France, bearing 1888 ½d., 3d. on 3d. (faulty first 'o' in 'Protectorate'), 6d. on 6d., cancelled '676' in bars, dated 'SHOSHONG JA 1 89' with datestamps of Mafeking, Cape Town, Southampton arrival and Paris and showing red '2½d' accountancy marking...

1895 a cover addressed to France bearing 1887 ½d., 1893-95 2d. single, pair (one showing broken 'ch'), rather unclear '676' cancellations, 'PALACHWE KHAMAS TOWN NO 25 95' datestamp and on reverse Mafeking and Pontarlier datestamps...

1897 cover to Italy bearing 1887 ½d. (9), 1891-94 1d. (2), circular 'PALACHWE KHAMAS TOWN AP 10 97' cancellations and on reverse Italian arrival datestamps...

The earliest of these three covers is now in the Botswana Postal Museum in Gaborone; the present whereabouts of the other two, the later of which is

addressed to L. Jalla, possibly Louise Jalla, the mother of Louis and Adolphe Jalla, is not known. However, it is evident that all three covers were forwarded via Bechuanaland Protectorate rather than Bulawayo.

Two more covers are listed in old auction catalogues. The earliest is a British Bechuanaland postal stationery card, evidence that the missionaries started using such cards during their early years in Barotseland. The catalogue description⁴⁶ reads as under; unfortunately neither the sender nor his whereabouts are identified.

PALACHWE 1897 April 14, 1893 1½d. postcard cancelled PALACHWE KHAMAS TOWN from the Upper Zambesi Mission to Annonay [Ardache, France], c.d.s. of arrival 9 May... Dated at the Upper Zambesi Mission 20 February...

The illustration shows a cancelled manuscript tax mark, '2d T', and an Annonay receiving datestamp misdated '31 9'. There are no transit datestamps. The transit time from where the card originated to Palachwe was 53 days, and the total transit time, 78 days.

The second item is listed in three different auctions⁴⁷, not one of which recognised it for what it was. Piecing together the sparse information to be gleaned from the descriptions and the illustrations, it is evident that this cover – there is no mention of an enclosed letter – is addressed to Mrs Louis Jalla in Italy. It entered the official mails in Palachwe on ‘MR 10 / 97’, where the franking, totalling 6½d, was cancelled. There is no record of transit datestamps, but a backstamp records that the letter was received in Italy on the 5th April. The initials in the bottom-left corner of the envelope and the handwriting identify the sender as Elise Kiener.

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 - 3 Baker, 1983, p.19
 - 4 Wright and Drysdall, 1988, p. 21
 - 5 Proud, 1996, p.255-8
 - 6 Proud, 1996, and Baker, 1983, quoting Wallis, 1945
 - 7 Dickson and Drysdall, 2003; Baxter and Burke, 1970, p.458-9
 - 8 Dickson, 1997, p80-1; Anon, 2001, p.86-7
 - 9 Wright and Drysdall, 1988
 - 10 Tabler, 1967, p.24
 - 11 See also Simpson, 1979, p.95
 - 12 Briggs and Wing, 1970
 - 13 Beach and Fahs, 1926
 - 14 Tabler, 1967, p. 2-3
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 - 18 Oates, 1881, p.55
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 - 24 Gelfand, 1969, p.389
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 - 27 Coch, 1923, p.50
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 - 32 Drysdall and Collis, 1990, p.49 and 51
 - 33 Coillard, 1897, p.153
 - 34 Coillard, 1897, p.156
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 - 42 Wright and Drysdall, 1988; Knight, 1995
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Bechuanaland Postcards - Part 2

by Brian Fenemore, Howard Cook, Neville Midwood

“Published by H.E. Sargent, Vryburg” cards

Card No.	Name of Card
HES-1	General View of Vryburg.
HES-2	Police Camp, Vryburg.
HES-3	Post Office, Vryburg.
HES-4	Railway Station, Vryburg.
HES-5	Town Hall, Vryburg.
HES-6	Vryburg from Dam.
HES-7	Willows and Hospital, Vryburg.
HES-8	Willows, Vryburg.

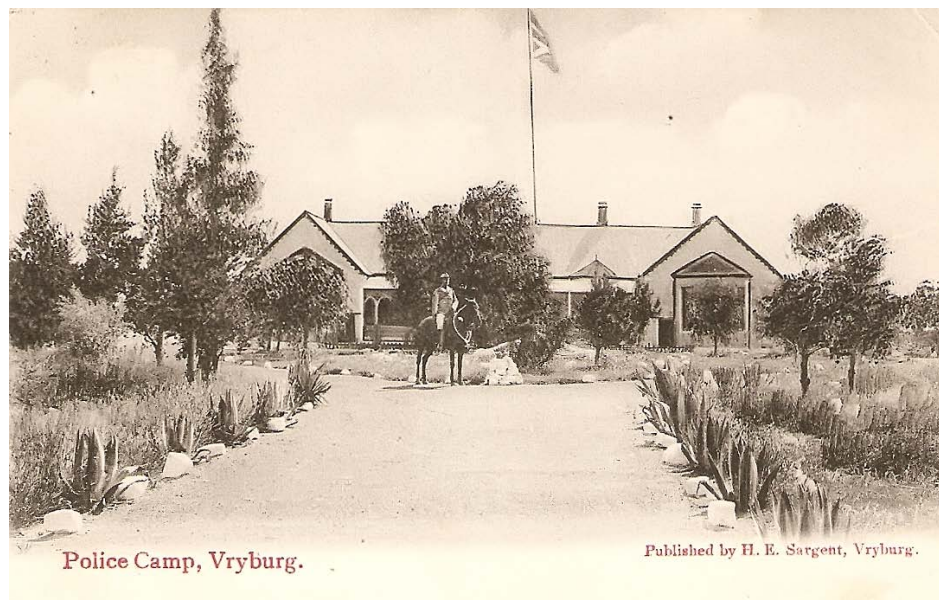
Runner Post #82 detailed the known Townshend's Vignette Postcards. This issue illustrates a few other postcard series printed or depicting places and towns in British Bechuanaland and Bechuanaland Protectorate in the early 20th century.

This issues images of H.E.Sargent and T.D.Ravenscroft cards are courtesy Howard Cook and are scaled to 90%. All but TDR-3 have “divided” backs.

On receipt of *RP#82* Steve Wallace immediately sent in a scan of HES-7 bearing an SG71 Cape 1d, cancelled Vryburg OC 19 10 and addressed to Scotland. He also noted the right-hand building in the X947 photo (*RP#82* p.2060) didn't exist on the ‘Willows and Hospital’ photo.

Another card from Steve, “FIRST AVENUE, RAILWAY CAMP, MAFEKING” (*RP#80* p.1997), is listed on the SAPSCO postcard list (<http://www.martin-nicholson.info/postcardarchive/checklists2.htm>) as O617.

Card HES-1
General View of Vryburg.



Card HES-2
Police Camp, Vryburg.

Vryburg MR 14 10
to Queenstown
1pm MR 16 10 arrival cds



Post Office, Vryburg.

Published by H. E. Sargent, Vryburg.

Card HES-3
Post Office, Vryburg.

Vryburg 2pm AP 8 10
to Queenstown
1pm AP 10 10 arrival cds

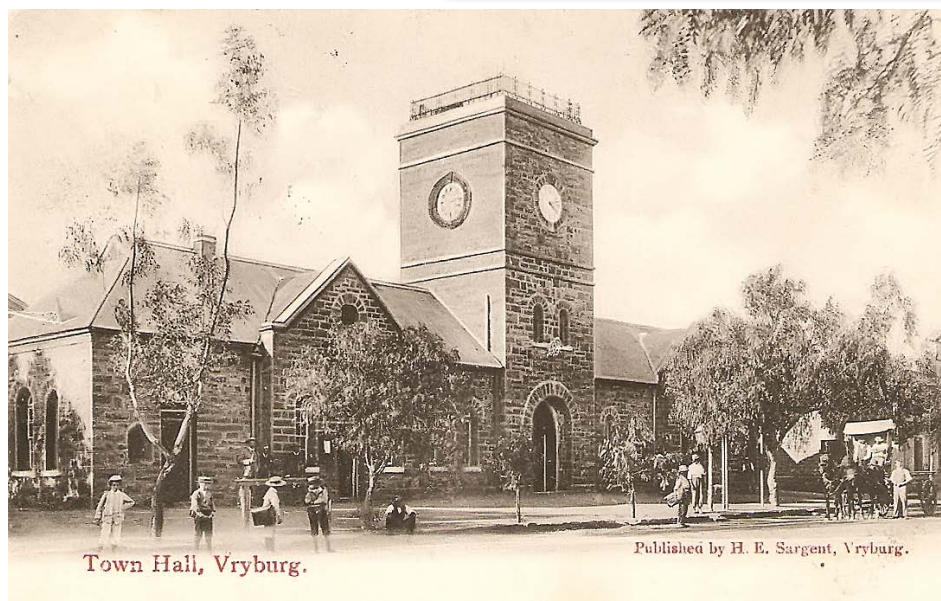


Railway Station, Vryburg.

Published by H. E. Sargent, Vryburg.

Card HES-4
Railway Station, Vryburg.

Pietermaritzburg 11am DE 2 12
to Pietermaritzburg



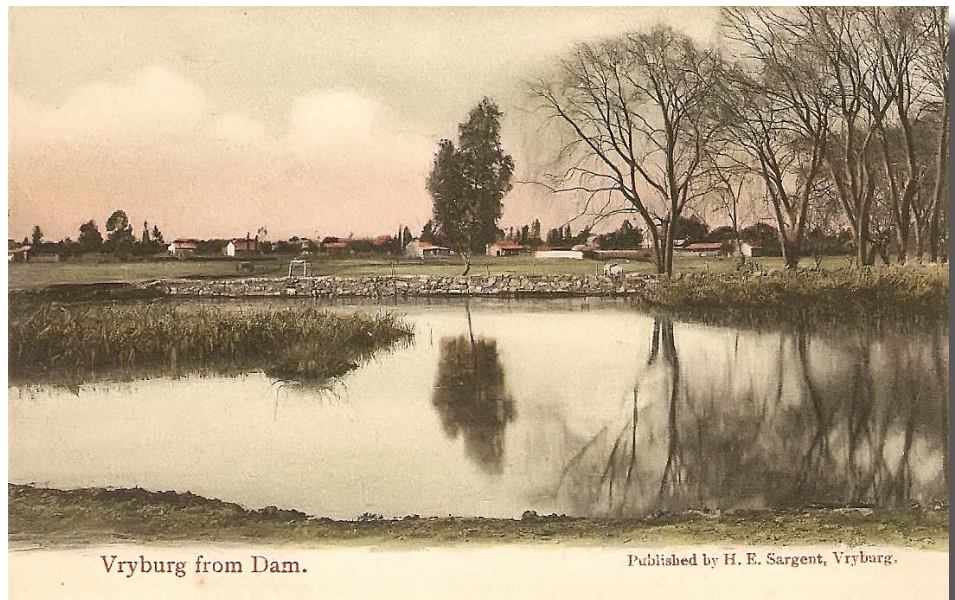
Town Hall, Vryburg.

Published by H. E. Sargent, Vryburg.

Card HES-5
Town Hall, Vryburg.

Pietermaritzburg 1 pm DE 7 11
to Durban
8 pm DE 7 11 arrival cds
(50 miles in 6 hours)

Card HES-6
Vryburg from Dam.



Card HES-7
Willows and Hospital, Vryburg.

Vryburg AP 1 10
to Queenstown
1pm AP 3 10 arrival cds
(same addressee and sender as
HES-2 and HES-3)

Vryburg 1pm OC 19 10
to Beaulieu, Scotland

Card HES-8
Willows, Vryburg.

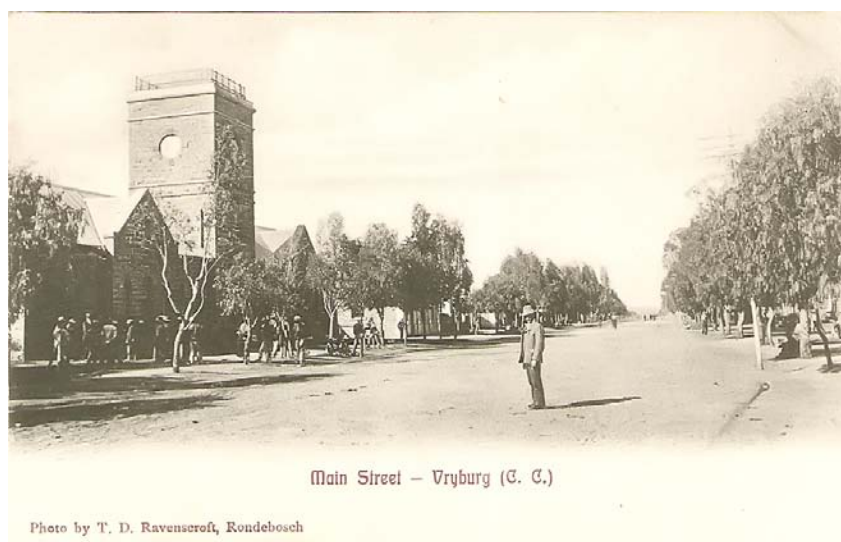
Vryburg SP 28 08
to King Williams Town
7pm SP 30 08 arrival cds



"Photo by T.D.Ravenscroft,Rondebosch" cards

Card No.	Name of Card
TDR-1	Main Street Vryburg (C.C.)
TDR-2	Post Office Vryburg (C.C.)
TDR-3	"Mochudi" Kaffir Town

I found references to a number of non-Bechuanalands Thomas Daniel Ravenscroft (1851-1948) postcards such as "Fish Market, Capetown", "57 Groote Schuur, Rondebosch" and "Howick Falls, 364 ft. high". I found two more on eBay the day I checked. He also produced about half a dozen books of photos published between 1900-1920.



Main Street – Vryburg (C. C.)

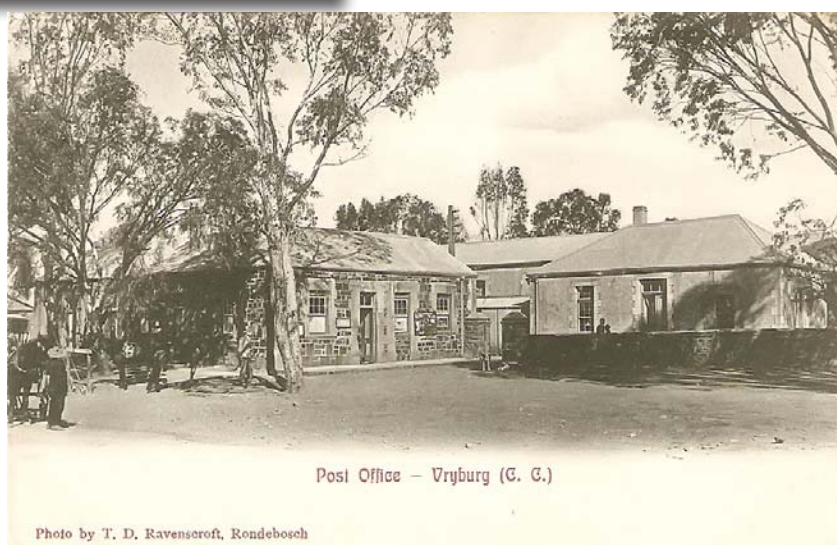
Photo by T. D. Ravenscroft, Rondebosch

Card TDR-1
Main Street Vryburg (C.C.)

Port Elizabeth SP 3 06
to Kingston on Thames

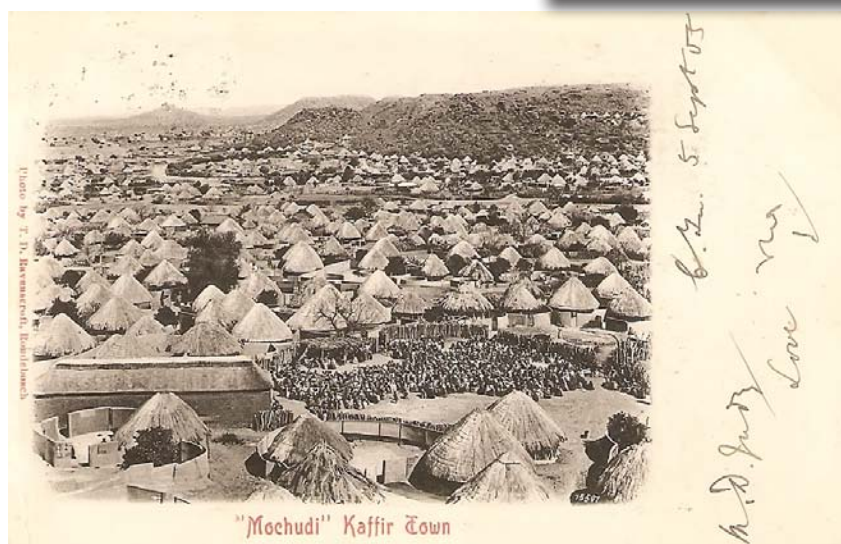
Card TDR-2
Post Office Vryburg (C.C.)

Graaff Reinet 20 ?? 08
to Scotland



Post Office – Vryburg (C. C.)

Photo by T. D. Ravenscroft, Rondebosch



"Mochudi" Kaffir Town

Card TDR-3
"Mochudi" Kaffir Town

Kloof Street Cape Town cds
SP 6 05
to London

RSC Publications

For those members who aren't also Rhodesian Study Circle members here is a list of their publications that might be of interest. Prices to Bechuanaland and Botswana Society members are the same as to members of the Rhodesian Study Circle. To avoid confusion, if you do make an order please indicate you are a Bechuanaland and Botswana Society member.

Handbooks

The Parts listed below provide guides to the literature, are available on request for the cost of P&P.

- Part I Rhodesia: The British South Africa Company 1890 - 1924 (£1.00 p&p)
- Part II Southern Rhodesia to Zimbabwe 1924 - 1998. (£1.00 p&p)
- Part III Northern Rhodesia to Zambia 1924 - 1996; Postal History - Section S (£1.00 p&p each section)
- Part IV B.C.A. and Nyasaland to Malawi 1890 - 1996 (£1.00 p&p)
- Part V Rhodesian Study Circle Journal Cumulative Index 1970 - 1994 (£1.00 p&p)

Memoirs (Handbook Series)

Memoir 23 Letters to and from Bulawayo in 1890 by Alan Drysdall, Keith Harrop and Ian Johnstone, 50 pages with 23 illustrations, photocopied on A4 with card and transparent plastic covers and spiral bound. (£10 surface mail plus £2 airmail)

A fascinating correspondence involving the BSA Co.'s representatives in Bulawayo, Sam Edwards in Tati, Cecil Rhodes, Leander Starr Jameson and Lobengula himself dating from the time the Pioneer Column assembled in Bechuanaland and set out for Salisbury that is described together with letters dating from the same period held by the Zimbabwe National Archives. There was concern that Lobengula might react violently to what he regarded as a large-scale invasion, and the letters describe the apprehension felt by the European residents of Bulawayo and Tati, and the attempts by the Company's representatives to persuade Lobengula not to rescind the Rudd Concession and that the Column was not a threat to Matabeleland.

Memoir 1 The Sitwell Correspondence, Bechuanaland Protectorate and Mashonaland Postage Rates 1890-92 by A.R. Drysdall and J. Catterall; (£5 surface mail plus £3 airmail).

Memoir 2 The Early Postal History of the Mlanje District, British Central Africa by A.R. Drysdall and I. Lane; (£5 surface mail plus £3 airmail).

Memoir 6 The Early Postal History of Central Africa; Two Important Correspondences by A.R. Drysdall; (£15 surface mail plus £5 airmail).

Memoir 7 The KGV Stamps of N. Rhodesia by A.R. Drysdall, I. Lane & J. Cheston; (£15 surface mail plus £5 airmail)

Memoir 8 The Postal Stationery of the British South Africa Company 1880-1924 by C. Wheatley, K. Hanman, C. Hoffman, I Johnstone and edited by A.R. Drysdall; (£10 surface mail plus £3 airmail).

Memoir 9 Early Goldmining In Southern Rhodesia - the Mining Regulations and Revenue Documents of the British South Africa Company 1890-1922 by C. Cooksey; (£10 surface mail plus £3 airmail)

Memoir 11 The Dies and Plates for the Early Stamp Issues of Northern Rhodesia and Highlights of the Collections of the Livingstone Museum by A.R. Drysdall; (£10 surface mail plus £3 airmail)

Memoir 12 Surcharged Mail and the Postage Due Stamps of Northern Rhodesia 1924-64 by A.R. Drysdall and O. Peetoom; (£12 surface mail plus £3 airmail)

Memoir 13 The Postal History of North-Eastern Rhodesia - Alan Drysdall and Anita McCullough (£18 surface mail plus £5 airmail).

Memoir 14 The 'large Falls' Stamps of Southern Rhodesia by A.R. Drysdall; (£12 surface mail plus £3 airmail)

Memoir 15 The Early Postal History of Barotseland; the Role of the Paris Missionaries in N.W. Rhodesia by Sean Burke, Alan Drysdall and Paul Peggie; (£20 surface mail plus £5 airmail)

Memoir 16 Postmarks on the 1910 - 1913 'Doubke-head' issue and their rarity by S. Burke, S. Reah-Johnson and J. Barry; (£18 surface mail plus £5 airmail)

Memoir 17 The postal history of Southern Rhodesia during World War II by C.J. Cooksey and K.G. Harrop; (£18 surface mail plus £5 airmail)

Memoir 18 Cross-Border Mail via Northern Rhodesia - Alan Drysdall and Paul Peggie (£14 surface mail plus £3 airmail)

Memoir 19 The Postal history of Bulawayo to 1923 - Alan Drysdall, with contributions from Jenifer Barry, John Berridge, Sean Burke, Colin Hoffman, Otto Peetoom, Andrew Wilke and Andrew Wilson.

196 pages with almost 200 illustrations, the majority in colour; photocopied on A4 with card and transparent plastic covers and spiral bound; (£22 surface mail plus £8 airmail)

Note: Memoir 19 covers much the same as Alan's articles in this and a future issue of Runner Post.

Other Publications

- South of the Zambezi by Hal Hoyte and Jane Lashbrook; £20 incl. p&p
- The Nyasaland Field Force by A.R. Drysdall; £15 incl. p&p
- First Bulawayo Provisionals by E.K. Wright and C.M. Hoffman; £4 incl. p&p
- Mashonaland-a Postal History 1890-96 by A.R. Drysdall and D. Collis; £28 inland, £29 overseas incl. p&p
- The Postmarks of Nyasaland and Malawi (incl. British Central Africa) (second edition) by A. Banks and N. Roberts; £17 incl. p&p.
- The Oates Correspondence; a Postal History of Frank Oates Travels in Matabeleland and Zambezia 1873-75 by E.K. Wright and A.R. Drysdall; £6.50 incl. p&p.
- The History of the Northern Rhodesia Police by Tim Wright Price £20 incl. p&p inland; add £4 for overseas postage
- The London Philatelist (September 2007) The King George V Silver Jubilee issue and the case of Northern Rhodesia by A.R. Drysdall; £2.25 incl. p&p; add 75p for overseas postage
- The London Philatelist (April 2008) The 1937 King George VI Coronation issue and the case of Northern Rhodesia by A.R. Drysdall; £2.25 incl. p&p; add 75p for overseas postage

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