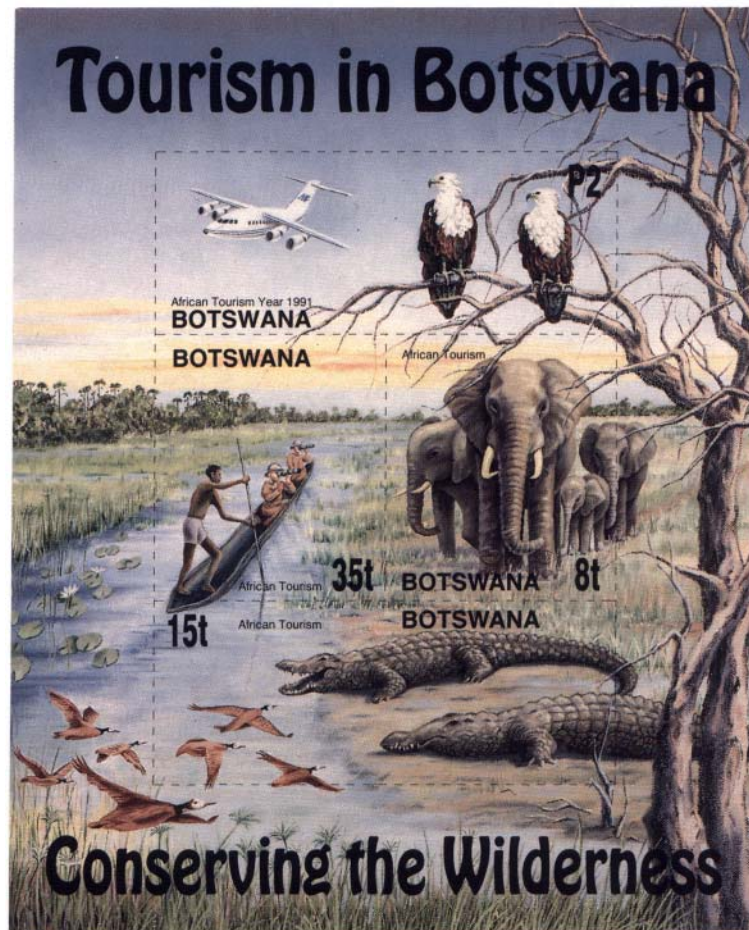


Rejected - Accepted: Life of a Botswana Stamp Designer

Peter Lodoen



Krone Publications
PSGSA

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Rejected- Accepted: Life of a Botswana Stamp Designer
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List of Contents

Chapter		Page
	The Stamp Designer	1
1	Two to None to Four: The Papal Visit, 1988	3
2	Four to Naught: 25 Years of Railways in Botswana, 1991	7
3	Miniature Sheet in Miniature: Tourism Year, 1991	11
4	“What About My Blue Train?” The Luxury Train 1992	15
5	Four of Nine: Steam Trains Issue 1993	19
6	Baobabs Don’t Grow in Salt Water: Makgadikgadi Pans 1994	23
7	Localization not Globalization: Radio Communications 1996	27
8	Four to Six: Railway Centenary 1997	31
9	Snakes and Snakes 2002	35
10	Letters Mingle Souls: World Post Day 2004	41
11	The Stamp Designer’s Dream	47
	Introducing the Artist	53

The Stamp Designer

The stamp collector, otherwise known as the philatelist, is a conservative and a liberal put together in one. He reveres the oldest of the old and treasures the rarest of the rare, while he races off to the post office to purchase the newest of the new.
For him a Second Day Cover simply will not do.

Postal authorities are practical people who concern themselves with moving the mails and paying salaries of postal staff.
To them philatelists are a curious group of people who pay good money for stamps simply because they look nice, or because they might, in a hundred years, become valuable.

The printer, keeper of a time-honoured profession, is most at home in the traditional world of black print on white paper.
Nowadays he accepts his new role in the world of bright colours and produces the pretty little vignettes that delight the stamp collector.

At the bottom of it all stands the stamp designer, a human pretzel tied in loops in his endeavours to please philatelists, postal authorities and printers alike.
The designer's original paintings, his works of art, gradually transform themselves into postage stamps, and finally arrive at the post office counter.
Whereupon they are licked and cancelled and stuffed into mail bags, or, hallelujah, purchased and prized by a few loving collectors.

For better than a decade I have been involved in the design of postage stamps for the Republic of Botswana.
This is the story of the issues I have helped to create.

Chapter 1

Two to None to Four: The Papal Visit 1988

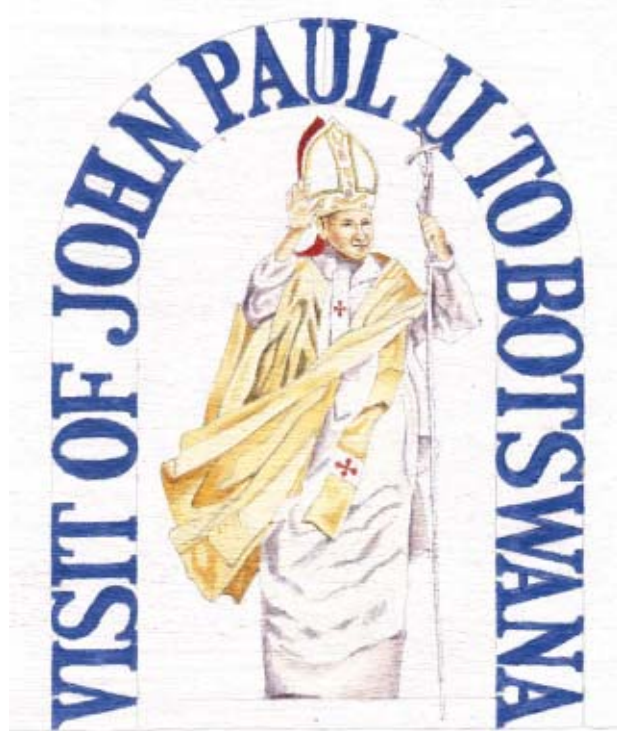
In the not too distant past, about August 1987, the ever-reliable British Broadcasting Corporation reported that Pope John Paul II would visit Botswana the following September. The papal itinerary would include five southern African nations, though the then-extant homelands and South Africa were to be bypassed.

Botswana postal authorities realized that here was an opportunity of historical importance. Too little time remained to issue a postage stamp, but a commemorative cover would be possible if a portrait painter

could timeously be located. I was thus 'discovered,' through my long connection to the Botswana Philatelic Society, and within a few days I began work on an oil-on-canvas portrait of the Pope. I portrayed the affable John Paul II, tonsure upon his pate and gold chain and crucifix around his neck, and soon His Holiness was ready for the printing press.

At that point, however, it was learned that the Pope was to visit Botswana not that September, but the following September, 1988. With an entire year at hand a postage stamp issue became a clear possibility, and shortly thereafter I received my first commission as a postage stamp designer.

Two stamp designs were requested by the Botswana Postal Services, for the papal visit would be a two-day event, September 13 and 14, 1988. In addition to the original facial portrait, I created a design of the Pontiff attired in white robe and red cape, with his hands spread palms upward in blessing. I completed the second painting in January 1988 in Minnesota, my home state in the USA, and shipped it on the coldest day of the winter to Botswana.



The original oil sketch for the Pope First Day Cover.

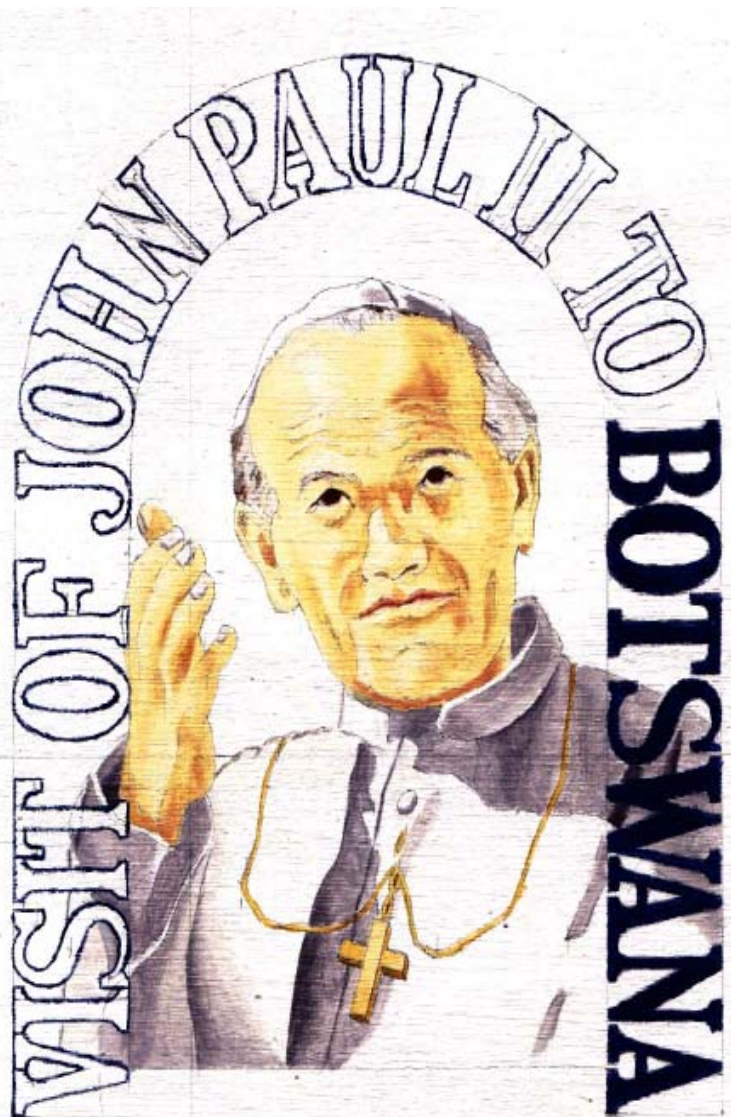
A member of the Lutheran Church myself, I have Roman Catholic friends who leaked the story to the press that a local Minnesotan was painting the Pope for publication as a postage stamp in Africa. That was hot news, apparently, for the newspaper, the radio, the TV, and even *Linn's Stamp News* wrote me up. (You will also find the story in certain Norwegian newspapers, though that is another matter.)

I was a bit embarrassed by all the clatter, though I doubt the Pope even took notice. My face turned a further shade of red when about July 1988, after returning to Botswana, I was informed that the entire stamp issue was to be cancelled. The Pontiff's visit was deemed, naturally enough, more a religious event than an affair of state. My first designs seemed rather destined for the postal reject archives than the pages of the Stanley Gibbons catalogue of world postage stamps.

Destiny smiled upon me as Botswana government authorities reconsidered. Vice President Peter Mmusi, a devoted Roman Catholic, suggested that the Pope did indeed represent the Vatican, a postage stamp issuing nation in its own right. Furthermore, Vice President Mmusi argued that the Holy Father should be given full four-stamp honours. Two new stamps were thus created, being close-ups of the first two designs, and the four-stamp set on First Day Cover appeared exactly as the papal aircraft landed at Sir Seretse Khama Airport outside Gaborone on the 13th of September.

The First Day Cover canceller I designed using the silver and gold keys of St. Peter, the first Pope. It is the only time I have 'drawn' that assignment. A very discriminating collector will also note that I myself lettered the First Day Cover. A printer would not have printed the 'u' in 'Paul' backwards, as I did. Of all my cover and stamp designs I still consider the Pope FDC the best.

From two designs, first accepted but then rejected, came eventually the four stamps that stand catalogued in Stanley Gibbons. And for my debut in the area of stamp design I now add my name to those who live in gratitude to the Holy Father in Rome.



The very first design included lettering around the Pope.

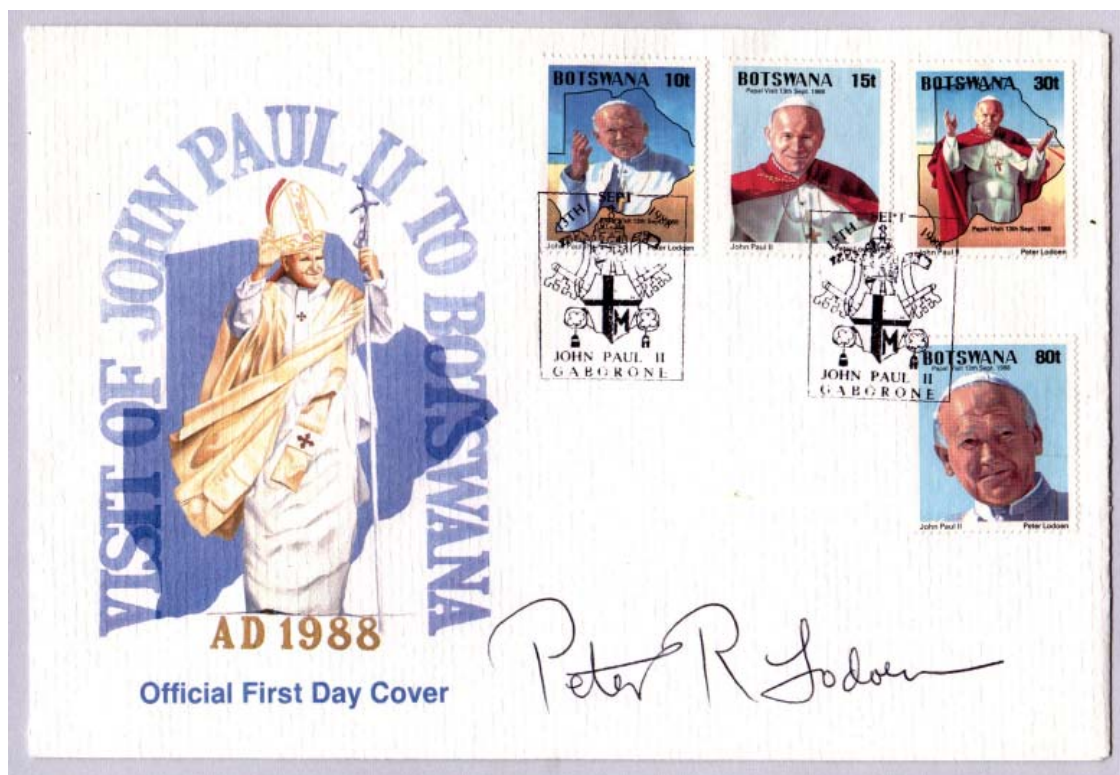




The second of two initial sketches was used for both the 15t and 30t stamps.



Stamps issued September 13, 1988.

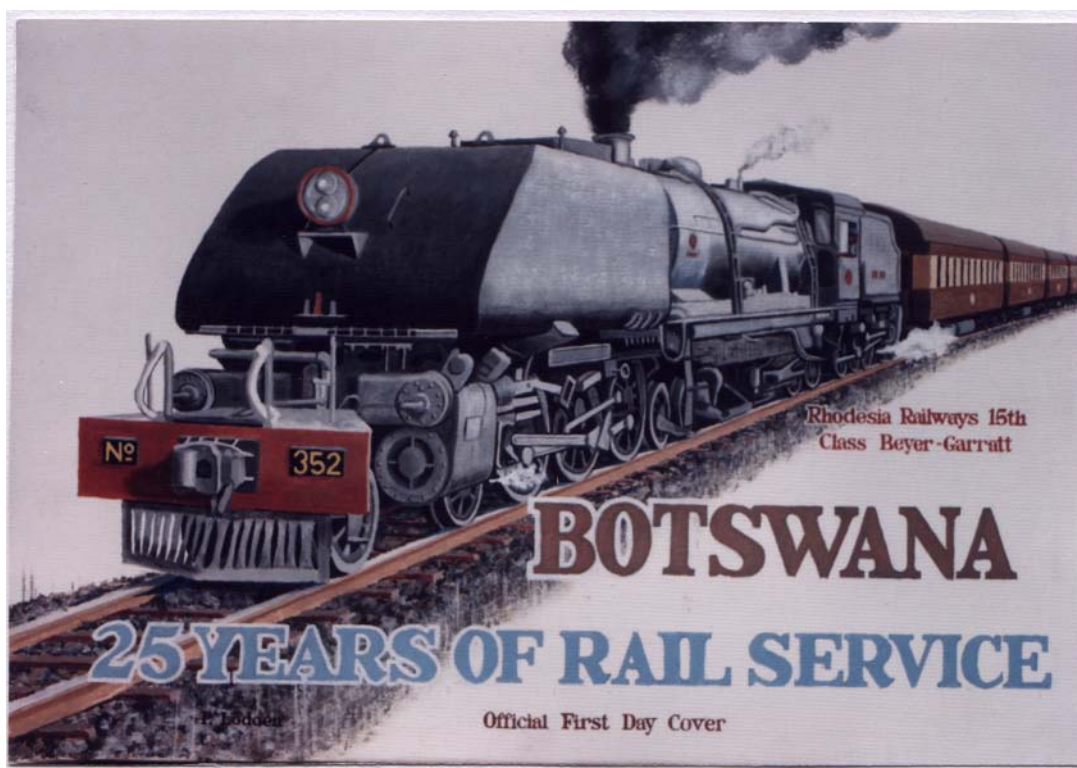


Official First Day Cover with the designer's signature.

Chapter 2

Four to Naught: 25 Years of Railways in Botswana 1991

For many years a steam locomotive numbered 256 stood at Gaborone Station. Though it was never fired up, No. 256 was well cared for and eventually fenced in by the Botswana Railways authorities. A bronze-and-red plaque toward the forward end of the loco's great boiler identified it as belonging to the motive stock of the former Rhodesia Railways. A bit of research turned up the information that No. 256 was a 12th-class 4-8-2, which, along with its 'sister ship' No. 255, worked from 1940 to 1964 along the so-called



The articulated Beyer-Garratt was painted for use on the First Day Cover.

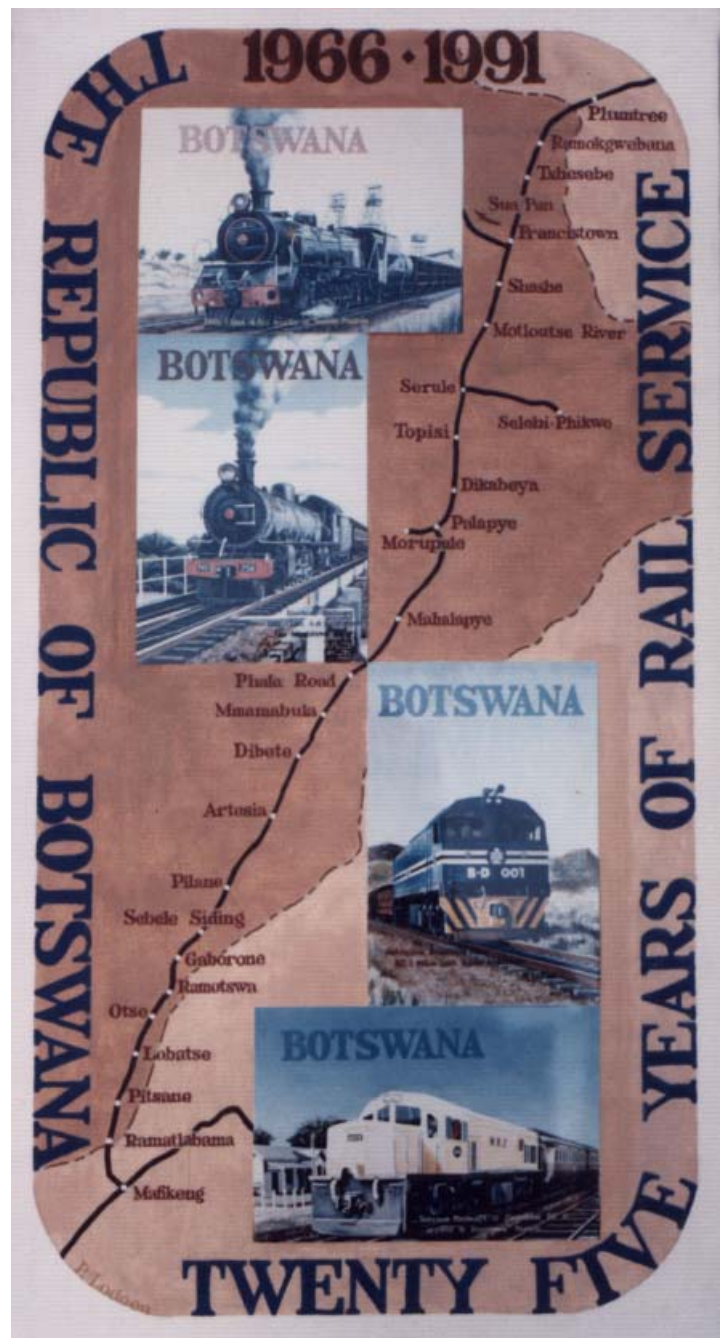
southern line that ran through the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Bechuanaland, being the home of the Bechuana or Tswana people, became the independent Republic of Botswana in 1966.

Old No. 256, proud and ageless in its retirement, and highly visible to the public, seemed an obvious choice to be portrayed on a Botswana postage stamp. But the loco turned out to be the sticking point in the proposed issue of a 1991 trains series.

Approached by postal authorities to design a four stamp railway set, I began research, consultation and consideration. The Botswana Postal Services kindly sent me to the Raylton Museum in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, there to view the various locomotive types that had worked in Bechuanaland. The museum itself surpassed my expectations (though the Waverly Hotel, where I stayed, fell considerably short). But the real excitement of the trip was my early morning visit to the locomotive sheds, where an impressive row of steam-and-smoke breathing Beyer-Garratts were being stoked up for the day's work. Powered by two sets of drive wheels and watered by tenders front and rear, the Garretts were Africa's longest and strongest locomotives. One of them, a 15th-class 4-6-4 + 4-6-4 numbered 421, was to haul the mid-day passenger train from Bulawayo to the Botswana border. This information I gathered from the station master, who suggested I ask the driver, or engineer as we say in America, for a lift. I did, and was warmly welcomed aboard by the driver and the fireman, who took me for a ride on the footplate that would surpass the greatest dream of any rail enthusiast. An identical 15th-class, No. 352, still stands on display at the Francistown Station in Botswana.

Another type of old Rhodesia locomotive continues to work in Botswana, this the 19th-class that hauls ore for the Bamangwato Concessions Ltd mines. I took a further trip to Selebi-Phikwe to photograph the 4-8-2 steam engines, still painted in red-and-black livery with BCL in white on their long torpedo tenders.

Three choices for an upcoming stamp issue thus seemed set: a 12th-class, a 15th-class and a 19th-class from the Rhodesia Railways days. In more recent times, two additional locomotive types were seen on Botswana rails. Diesels of the National Railways of Zimbabwe, in green-and-yellow livery, worked from 1980 to 1987, and were



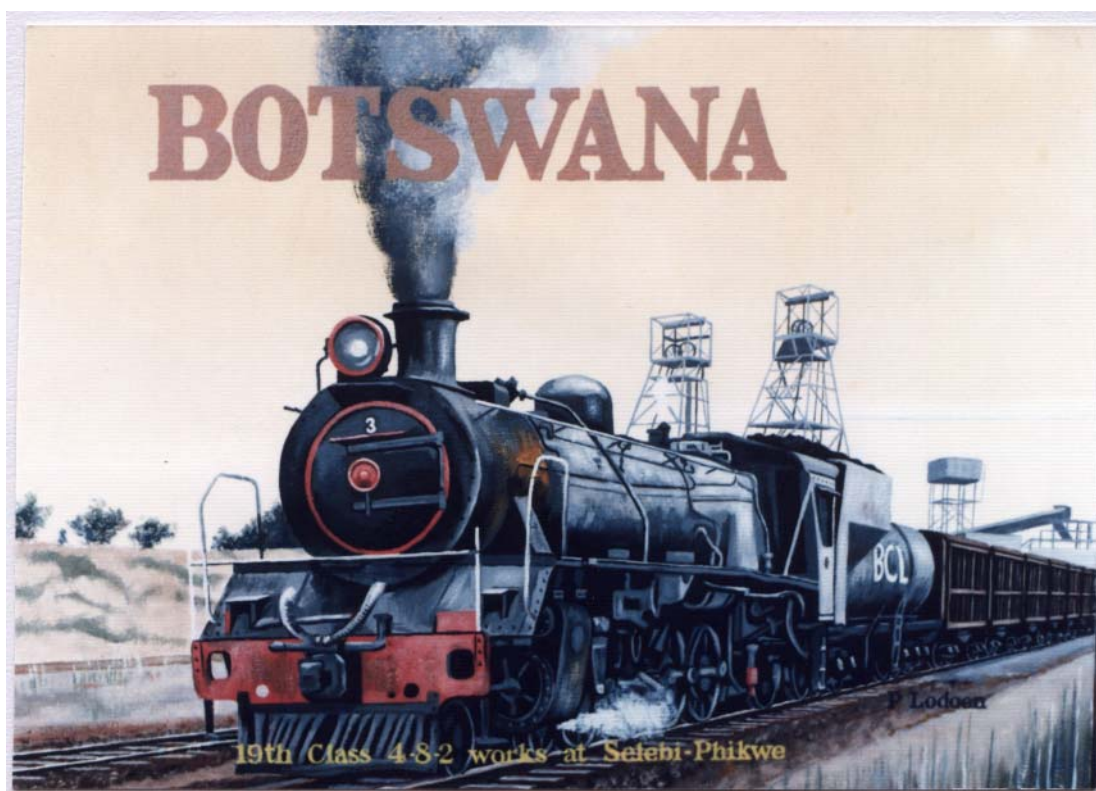
The intended miniature sheet showed locomotives of four different railways.

replaced by Botswana Railways own blue, black and white diesel-electric engines. The stamp issue designs were thus decided, with the mile-long Garratt being headed for the First Day Cover.

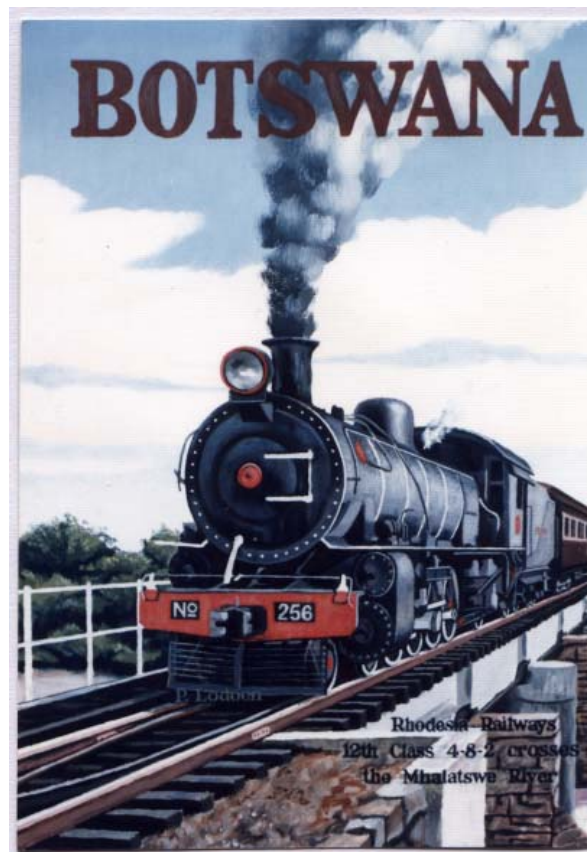
I worked many hard long hours painting piston valves and drive wheel spokes with tiny brushes and finally I submitted the designs to the Philatelic Advisory Committee. I added, by request, a miniature sheet worked out to the smallest detail, placing two stamps to the northwest of the long Mafeking to Bulawayo line, and two stamps to the southeast. I was pleased with my first full set of stamp designs.

The Philatelic Advisory Committee was also pleased, except for one important detail. Long-time Francistown resident, the Honourable Jimmy Haskins, then a committee member, was so enamoured of the Rhodesia Railways 10th-class 4-8-2, for five decades the workhorse of the Bechuanaland rails, that he insisted it be included in the stamp set. The issue was thus delayed, and before the matter could be resolved, Mr. Haskins had to undergo a serious operation in Johannesburg. As 1991 moved on towards 1992 his health continued to deteriorate until, at last, the great rail fan and philatelist, and provider of hardware and building materials to the nation, passed on.

The train issue was never to be printed as I had designed it, though the designs did not definitively die away. Four of the designs would eventually be resurrected and printed as postage stamps, but those are stories for another chapter.



At the Selebi-Phikwe copper-nickel mines, old 19th class Rhodesia Railways steam engines haul ore.



Number 256 now stands at the Botswana Railways headquarters in Mahalapye.



After Zimbabwe became independent in 1990, its diesel-electric engines worked in Botswana.

Chapter 3

Miniature Sheet in Miniature: Tourism Year 1991

The preliminary design for a Tourism Year issue came into my possession about mid-1990. It was a sketchy but well conceived pen-and-ink drawing of ducks, elephants and eagles in their Okavango habitat. Its designer, Alec Campbell, proposed a painting of an Okavango Delta ecosystem, with a double pair of se-tenant stamps carefully worked into its interior. Such a miniature sheet would be a first among Botswana issues, the design from the selvage blending in with the stamps themselves.

At that time I had not yet become a wildlife artist, but, I thought, painting elephants' wrinkles and eagles' feathers could not be more difficult than painting steam engines' pistons and drive gear. So I put brush to canvas and easily established a comprehensive design: sky at the top, reeds left, trees right and water below. The placement of the four stamps, without perforations running through elephants' trunks and birds' beaks, was the difficult part. The upper stamp pictured two fish eagles perched and one in flight. The lower stamp portrayed a kudu bull, looking the observer in the face, in front of a flock of white-faced ducks. At center right a vertical stamp showed elephants nearing the water's edge. At center left a dugout canoe with its polesman held nattily attired tourists pointing their long-lens Nikons at the elephants.

With wee scissors, I cut out tiny ducks and miniature elephants to fit them into the 30 x 35 and 80 x 24 millimetre strictures of the stamps. At last the small canvas was covered, and I submitted the work to the Philatelic Advisory Committee.

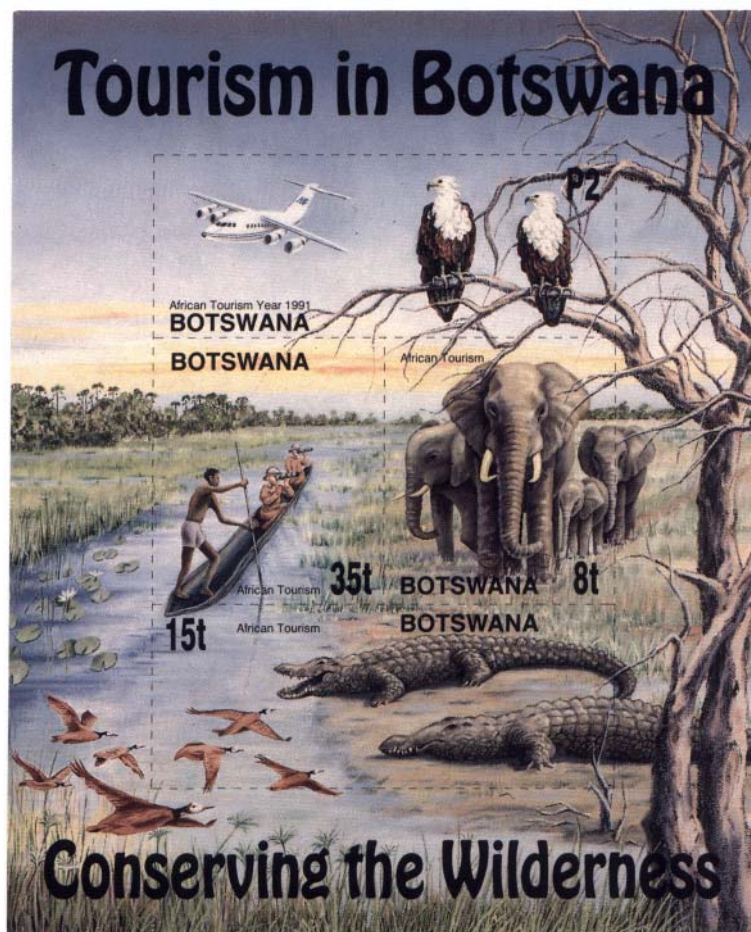
The committee approved, in essence, but requested several improvements, chief among which were crocodile in place of the kudu, and a Botswana Airways aircraft in place of the airborne fish eagle. Imperforated preliminary proofs of the miniature sheet were produced, and smartly lettered according to Alec Campbell's original instructions: 'Tourism in Botswana' above, and 'Conserving the Wilderness' below. Even I will admit that the miniature sheet looked very good.

It looked a little too good, apparently, for the printers' quotes were higher than Poso House, Botswana Postal Headquarters, was willing to pay. Time passed and as the issue date of 30 September 1991 approached, the miniature sheet idea had regrettably to be scrapped.

At the last minute Andy Andersson, chairman of the Botswana Philatelic Society, stepped to the front and saved the day. By telephone conversation with Pretoria, Andy described dimensions for three 36 x 20 millimetre horizontal stamps, and a jumbo-size 26 x 43 millimetre design that encompassed the designs of the first three. It became, in its state of issue, a miniature sheet in miniature that was subsequently chosen by *Stamp and Coin Mart International*, a leading British philatelic journal, as the stamp of the month.



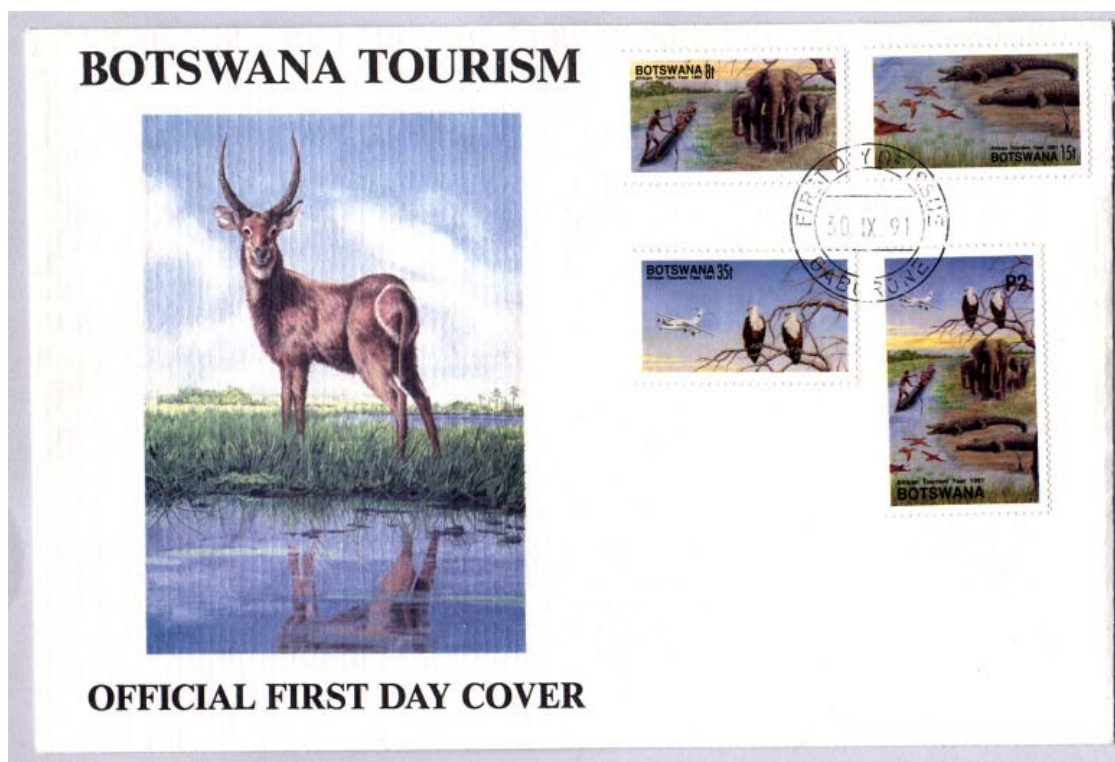
The very first oil sketch showed a kudu and an eagle in flight that were later replaced.



The printers proof showed the reworked design. Stamp denominations, perforation lines, and lettering are included.



Stamps issued September 30, 1991.



Official First Day Cover.

Chapter 4

'What About My Blue Train?' The Luxury Train 1992

The Philatelic Bureau of the Botswana Postal Services has seen itself relocated several times through some 40 years of Botswana history. Originally, the bureau was found at the picturesque post office in Lobatse. Later it was moved to Gaborone, where it was first situated above a grocer's shop, then removed to dusty and dimly lit chambers above the main post office. Finally, about 1991, the beautiful new Poso House in Khama Crescent was completed, and the philatelic staff was accorded new air-conditioned quarters.



The First Day Cover design showed steam of the past and diesel of the present.

As Poso House was opened, so was a Museum of Postal History established in the ground floor of the house. The museum displayed postal artifacts, postage stamps, covers, and, not insignificantly, original artwork of many Botswana postal issues.

In attendance at the official inauguration of the Poso House museum were the Head of State, Sir Ketumile Masire and, naturally, the first curator of the museum, Andy Andersson. When President Masire saw the steam locomotive designs that had originally been intended for a 1991 railway issue, he apparently was impressed by the idea of trains on stamps.

"What about my Blue Train?" he asked, referring to the air-conditioned coaches especially painted in blue livery for Botswana Railways. The coaches were, at that time, still quite new on the rails.

"That will be taken care of, sir," replied Andy, ever the opportunist, and thus brought into being Botswana's first proper railroad issue.

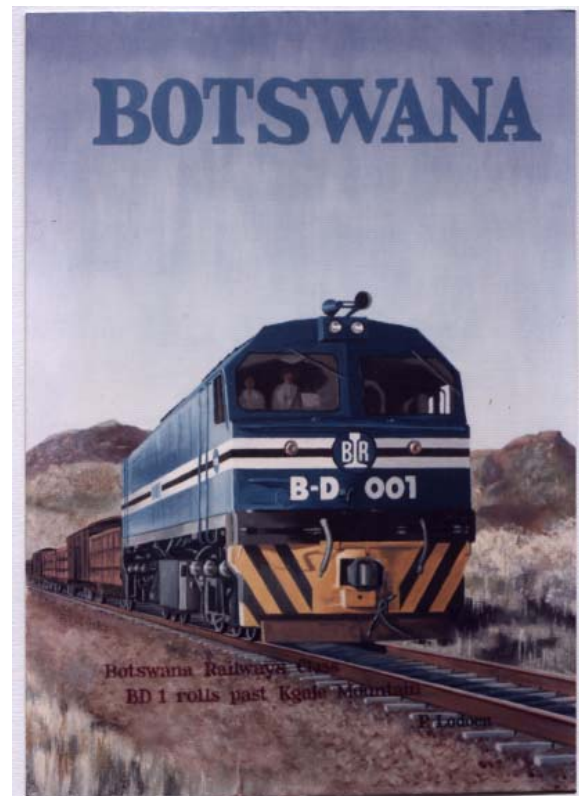
Upon receiving the Blue Train commission, I took up my Nikon FG-20 and quickly re-assumed the role of rail fan and photographer. I drove my Honda motorcycle south toward the stop known as Notwane Siding, parked atop a nearby summit, and descended a steep embankment to photograph the evening passenger train as it rolled north toward Gaborone.

No sooner had I readied myself for the photograph than a southbound goods train, hauled by old faithful BD1, approached from my rear. As I turned and shot, I thought it a fitting omen that BD1, denied its place on a 1991 postage stamp, should now be first in the Blue Train issue. I repainted the BD1 design replacing goods cars with deluxe blue coaches, and, on June 29, 1992, it appeared as the 25-thebe value.

The deluxe blue coaches were generally pulled by a BD2 loco in those days. And the BD2 (No. BD 028) I duly portrayed on the two-pula horizontal stamp. An ideally air-conditioned coach came not only to grace the standard letter rate 10-thebe value, but also to my surprise a 15-thebe aerogramme. The fourth stamp, 40 thebe, showed the elegant interior of a luxury coach and the pretty little station at Ramotswa.

Harrison and Sons of London had offered to print a special miniature sheet for the Botswana philatelic authorities. The sheet pictured all four stamps with the Botswana Railways logo in the centre, and an entire luxury train working its way south from Gaborone past Kgale Mountain.

On the First Day Cover I pictured steam and diesel power side by side, not a 'trompe l'oeuil' but a daily reality. Each Francistown-bound passenger train passed by No. 256, the 12th-class 4-8-2 steam engine that stood on the platform at Gaborone station. The old No. 256 was another locomotive that should have become a stamp in 1991, but was not seen on Botswana letters until 1993.



Deluxe blue coaches replaced freight cars in the reworked design.





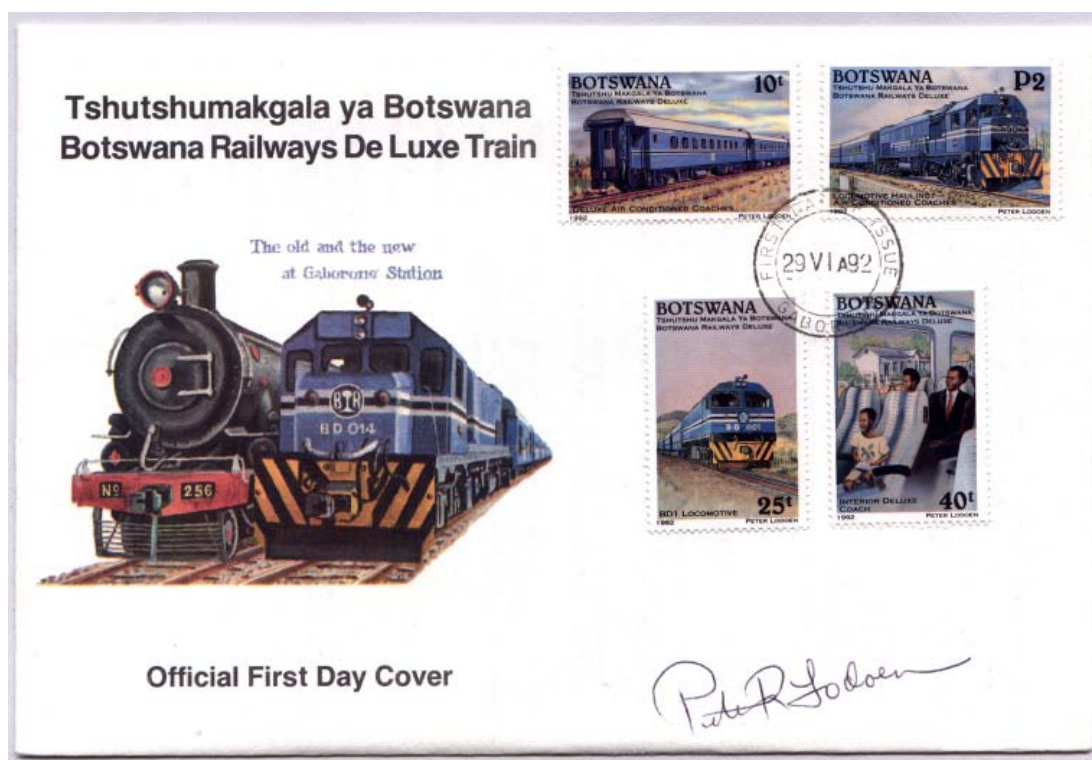
Stamps issued July 29, 1992.



The miniature sheet shows the luxury train's Ramatlabama to Ramokgwebane route.



The aerogramme issued on May 10, 1994, pictures Botswana's national and railway symbols.



The Luxury Train issue showed both types of Botswana Railways diesels in use in 1992.

Chapter 5

Four of Nine: Steam Trains Issue 1993

Bechuanaland railway history proved so rich and colourful that I submitted no less than nine locomotive paintings to the Philatelic Advisory Committee for a Railway Centenary Issue in 1993. They ranged from the first locomotive decorated in Bechuanaland Railway Co. livery to the marvelous Garratt that was painted in royal blue at the time of the Royal Visit in 1947. Each painting was a labour of love, I might say, involving me endlessly in detailed wheel configurations and steamy valve gear. The designs had to be exactly right, for railway stamp collectors are as discerning as they are numerous.



The Rhodesia Railways 10th class 4-8-2 was not accepted as a stamp design.

No locomotives were more intriguing than the very first three that rolled out of the Neilson and Co. workshops in Glasgow. These locos were built to a standard 4-6-0 configuration, and they were serially numbered 1, 2, and 3. They arrived in Cape Town in 1897 at a moment of flux in Bechuanaland's tenuous history. Though the Protectorate had scarcely celebrated its tenth anniversary, it seemed destined, along with British Bechuanaland, to be reabsorbed into the Cape of Good Hope. Moreover, the Bechuanaland Railway was given its ephemeral title only until Rhodesia was established as a crown colony in 1899.

Manufacturer's 1890-era photos show a splendid and gleaming Bechuanaland Railway Co. No. 1. For a Botswana stamp I painted the locomotive in mythical green, its workshop colors being unknown. The Cape Government Railways soon repainted it black as a Cape rook and renumbered it 582. The loco was designated for assignment as CGR 6th class, and never came to Bechuanaland.

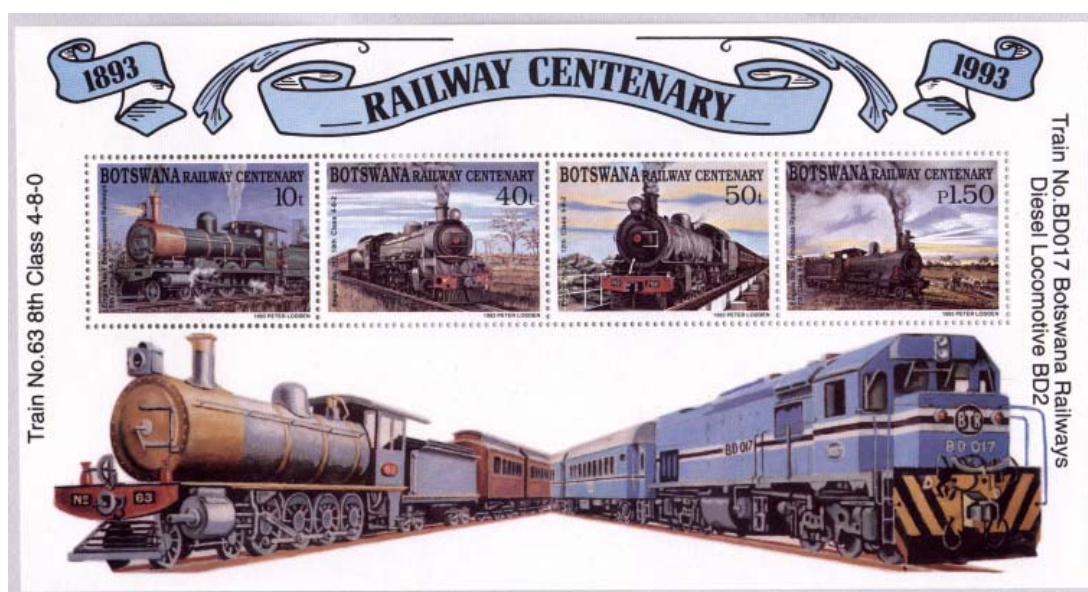
Though locomotives 1, 2, and 3 quickly went out of existence as part of Bechuanaland Railways' motive stock, other steam engines worked on in Botswana a century later. At the great open pit mine at Selebi-Phikwe, four of the old Rhodesia Railways 19th class chugged daily and dutifully to haul copper and nickel-bearing ore to the mine's headgear. I traveled to the BCL (Bamangwato Concessions Limited) to photograph the once grand 19th class giants, and I noticed that their original numbers of the line - 316 to 335 - had been reduced to a simple 1 to 4. They remained clean, vigorous and stately, and still hauled their 'Vanderbilt' torpedo tenders. It was sad to see other 19th class locomotives being cannibalized at Selebi-Phikwe, but their parts were needed to keep the supply of ore flowing.

The BCL locos were not the only ones I photographed under live steam. In Zimbabwe I had captured on film 14th, 15th and 16th class Garratts, as fiery and alive as ever they had been. At Bulawayo's Raylton Museum I had also taken still-life pictures of the old Rhodesia Railways 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th classes. At the station in Francistown I photographed No. 352, a 4-6-4 + 4-6-4 Garratt, and at Gaborone Station I shot No. 256, a 4-8-4 12th class.

Armed with a stack of bright new snapshots, I set to work on painting after painting, determined to bring all the impressive old steam engines back to life.



The 12th class No. 256 was repainted as 10th class No. 103 and pictured on the First Day Cover.



Railway Centenary miniature sheet.

My submissions to the Philatelic Advisory Committee numbered nine paintings, all in oil on canvas, and I left the final decisions to those who had commissioned the stamps in the first place. They chose a 6th and 7th class, which resemble each other closely, and they chose a 12th and a 19th class, both 4-8-2 mountain types. To my disappointment they left out the Garratts - in black, blue, and green liveries - altogether. A 10th class, Jimmy Haskin's old favourite, landed on the First Day Cover, and an 8th class 4-8-0 paired with a modern diesel-electric on a belatedly ordered miniature sheet.

A perceptive philatelist will notice that, on all stamps of the steam trains issue, my name is spelled Peter Lodden. I think we can ascribe blame for the error to Harrison and Sons of London, for the year previous Harrison had printed for Botswana a train issue designed by Peter Lodoen.

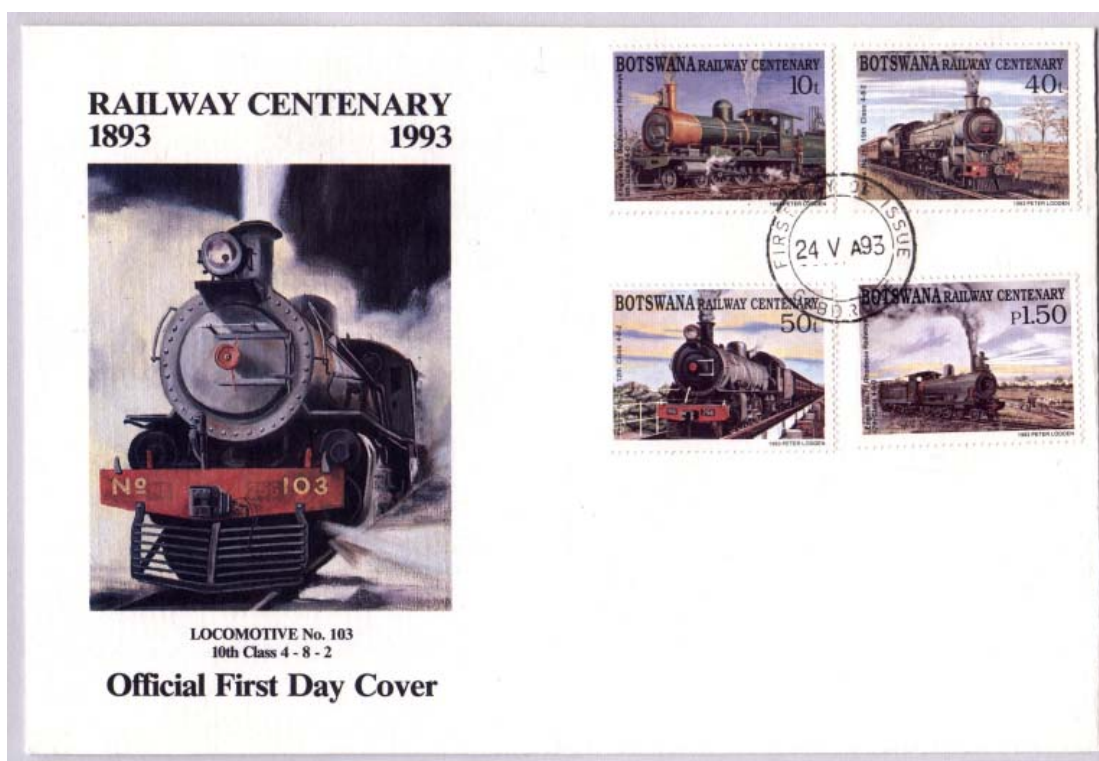
The Railway Centenary issue may well have served to pin down a date that remained somewhat nebulous in Bechuanaland history, the date being the birth of its railway. The day chosen as the first day of issue represents a legal event in London: the May 24, 1893, formation of the Bechuanaland Railway Co. The date May 10, 1893, has been published as the day when construction began northwards from Vryburg. Work continued north of Mafeking in August 1894, and the railroad shot straight through to Bulawayo. No stations were planned through the entire Protectorate. Francistown belatedly came into the picture, being incorporated as a town in April 1897, only a few months before the railroad arrived (note Botswana stamp issue of 21 April 1997). Whistle stops were, in those days, true bush stops, and passengers came from villages - Ramoutsa, Mochuli, Magalapye, Tati - that lay miles away from the line.

The stamps celebrate a signing, rather than a doing, for Bechuanaland in 1893 had neither set borders nor train stations. The signers of the documents that founded the railway, though they could hardly have dreamed it, laid the foundation for the formation of the nation which became Botswana in 1966.





Stamps issued May 29, 1993.



Official First Day Cover.

Chapter 6

Baobabs Don't Grow in Salt Water: Makgadikgadi Pans 1994

During the early 1990's a dignified and loquacious lady named Nancy Sejoe worked as director of the Philatelic Bureau in Gaborone. She was a Mokgatla, hailing from the environs of Mochudi, and I came to know her quite well through the design process of the steam trains issue.

Mrs. Sejoe, Mma Sejoe as she was respectfully known by the philatelic staff, conveyed to me the thought that Botswana Postal Services desired an environmental issue. The concept, remaining quite undefined at that point, was thus brought forward to me as prospective designer. Seldom has such a practical and forthright concept held the potential to produce so much rancour.

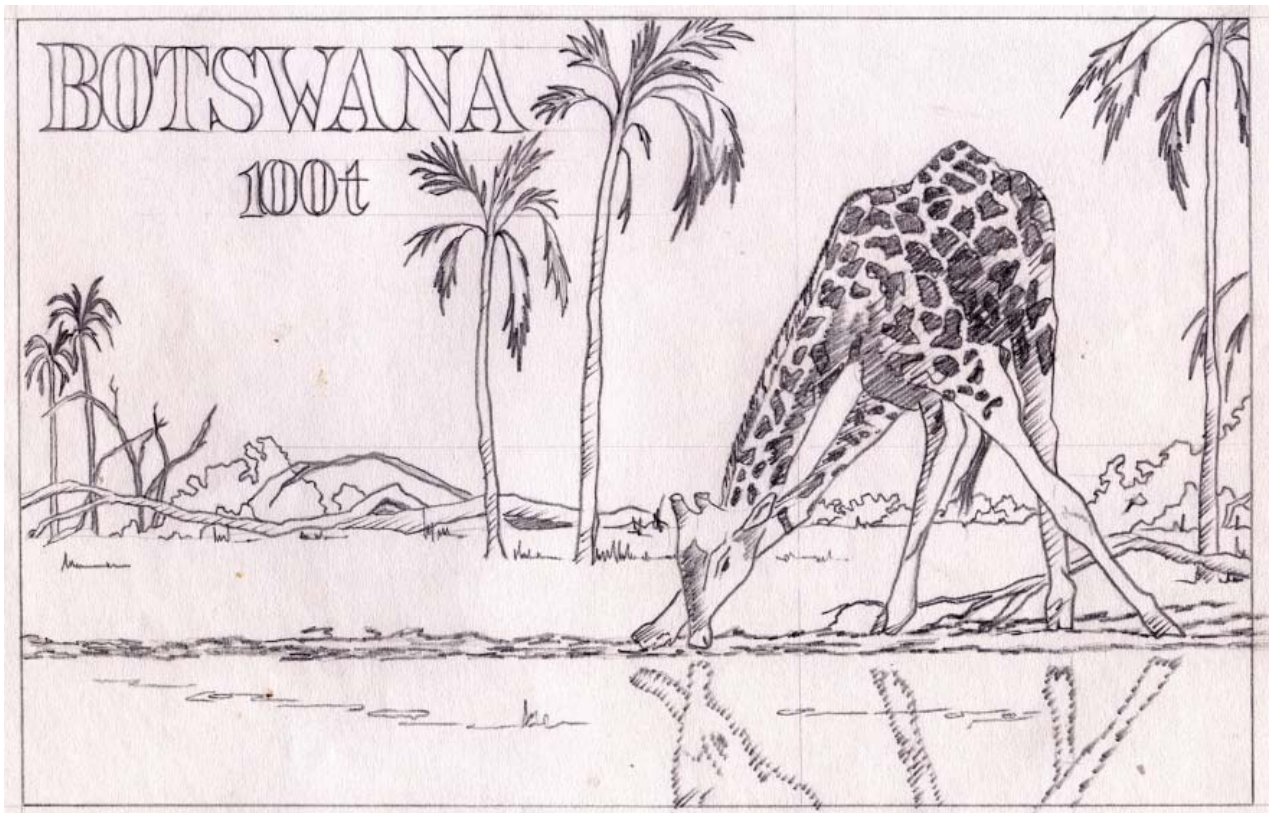
The great land of Botswana, keeper of the Kalahari and its many jewels, is blessed of an astounding variety of topographical forms. I employed this environmental diversity to produce a set of 14 pencil drawings, each depicting an animal in its natural surroundings: a gemsbok before the sand dunes of the Kalahari; a giraffe drinking splayed-legged from an Okavango stream; a vervet monkey climbing the rock koppies of the southeast. My hope was that some of the sketches would solidify ideas and concepts in the minds of the Philatelic Advisory Committee, and that I could then proceed into colour sketches and final designs.

One sketch seemed to strike a note of accord among Philatelic Bureau and Stamp Advisory personnel alike: that of baobab trees on the Makgadikgadi Pans. I had, in fact, sketched rocks in the shapes of hippopotamus and placed them under the typical juvenile baobabs of the infinite Makgadikgadi Pans, comprising the 90-kilometer long Sua Pan and the 120-kilometer wide Ntwetwe Pan.

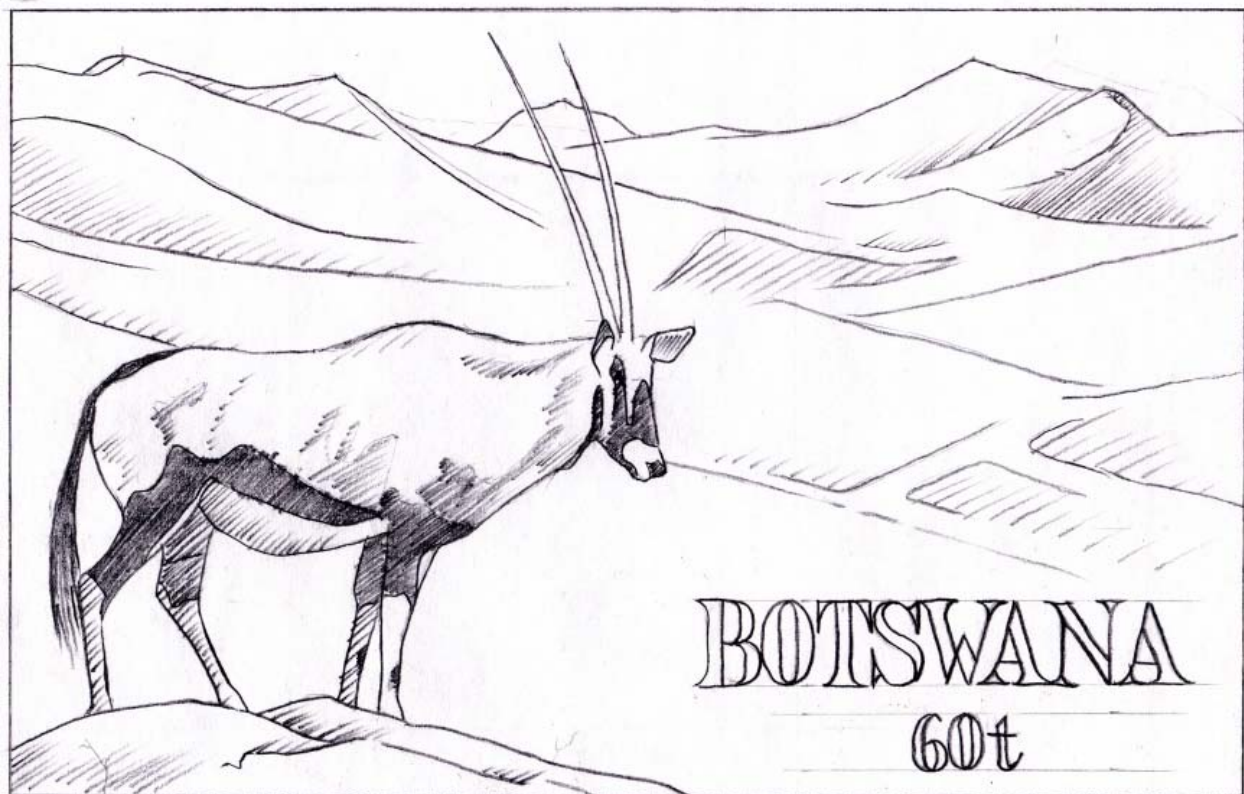
The design attracted committee members' interests for different, and opposing, reasons. Firstly, there were those who favoured trees, baobab or otherwise, as postage stamps. Conservationists had empirically recorded that Botswana's trees were being used up faster than they were being replaced. Postage stamps could be an effective means by which to promote conservation of trees, in particular, and flora, in general.

Secondly, there were committee members whose interest lay in the massive new salt and soda ash factory, indeed entire new town, that had been developed at Sowa. The Sowa plant epitomized a vigorous young nation under full development, producing tons of salt and soda ash, and transporting the produce to international markets along a sparkling new 175-kilometer railway line.

When I produced preliminary art work, my designs were at once warmly and coldly received. Some stamp people could not conceive picturing trees - after all, nothing but firewood in the vertical - on postage



A giraffe in the Okavango Delta, a possible environmental issue design.



A lone gemsbok, or oryx, in the dunes of the southwest Kalahari Desert.

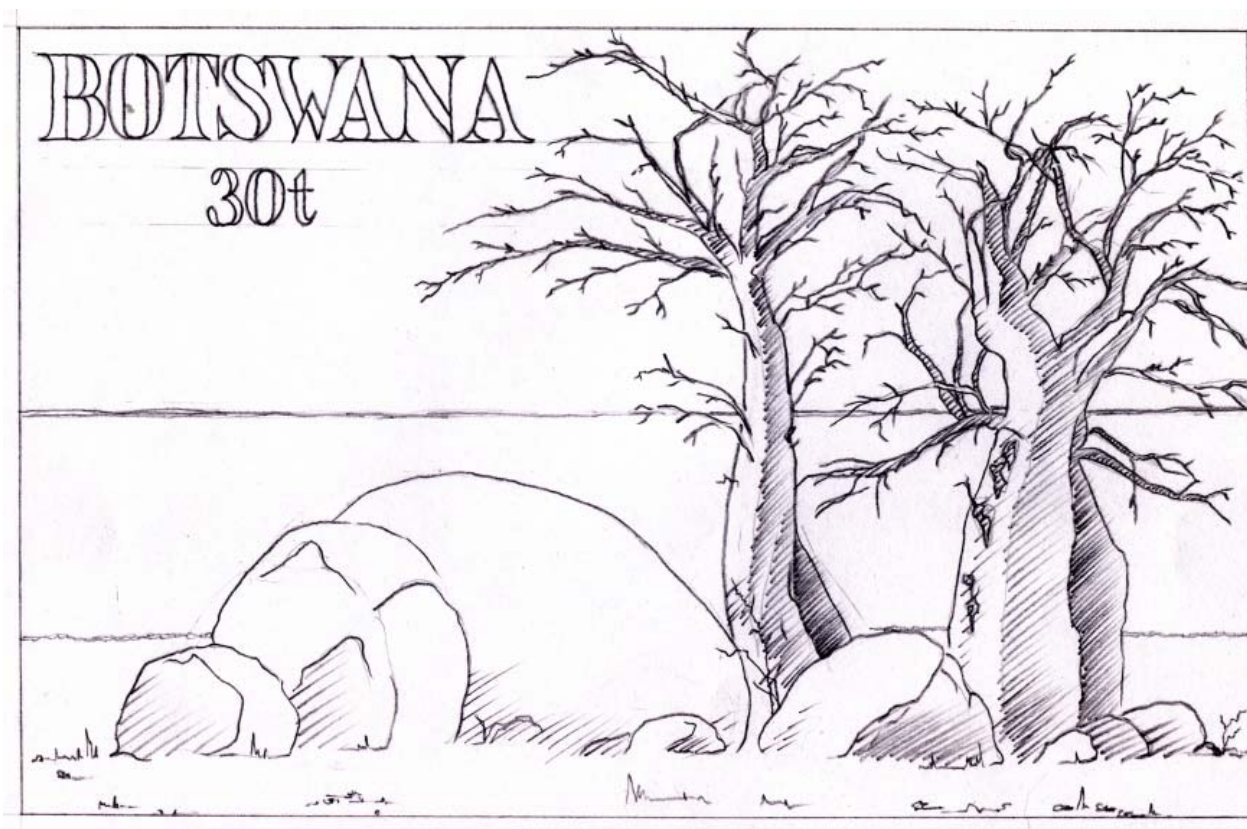
stamps, whereas others could not conceive placing a salt factory - a blight on the pristine Makgadikgadi environment - on postage stamps. An impasse, quickly reached, seemed to preclude the issue.

Nevertheless, I had created better than a dozen pencil sketches and a half dozen oil designs, and I felt, at that point, that since I was in for a dime, I might as well be in for a dollar. I thus summoned all my diplomatic reserve, and worked patiently between Mma Sejoie of the Philatelic Bureau, Alec Campbell of the Botswana Conservation Society, and Andy Andersson of the Philatelic Advisory Committee, asking each in turn what I could do to make the designs better.

As regarded the designs themselves, the flamingos on Sua Pan at sunset were deemed acceptable. The zebra design stood tall, and was approved with added palms in the background. The trees design I drew, and drew again and again, and it was probably printed to nobody's satisfaction, including my own.

The great bone of contention was the new salt plant, which was destined neither for philatelic nor financial fame. The factory was relegated to the First Day Cover envelope, and replaced on the two-pula stamp by a map of the entire Makgadikgadi area. I suppose there were some difficult negotiations behind the decision to reject the salt plant stamp, but when the Sowa factory failed economically a short time later, all concerned were somewhat relieved that a financial flop had not been published as a postal success.

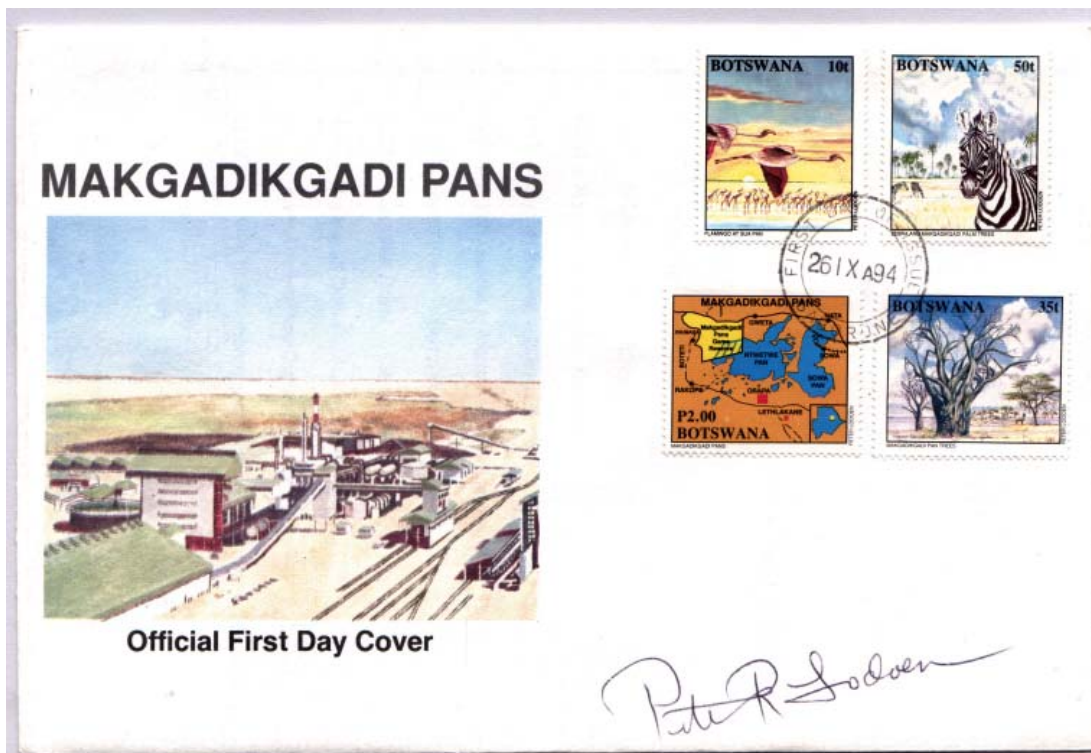
The Makgadikgadi Pans issue reached Botswana post office counters on the 26th of September, 1994. It was not destined to be the most popular of issues, for it was hardly produced as intended, but it is listed in Scott and in Stanley Gibbons, and, for the record, holds a significant catalogue value of two pounds and fifty pence.



Massive hippo-like boulders at Kubu Island in the Makgadikgadi Pans.



Stamps issued September 26, 1994.



Official First Day Cover showing the now failed Sowa salt factory.

Chapter 7

Localization not Globalization: Radio Communications 1996

Most of those of us who live in Africa have no access to a daily newspaper. And many of us who do would be unable to read it if we did. We do, however, have the radio, the mainstay of Africa's informational rigging, and we listen incessantly. Only dead batteries can stop us from tuning in.

I do not know if the city of Bologna, Italy, had this in mind when it sent a letter to Botswana Postal Services in 1995. The letter, in fact, covered an informational packet on Bologna's native son Guglielmo Marconi. The idea behind the letter was that Botswana should issue stamps commemorating Marconi's invention of the wireless radio 100 years ago.

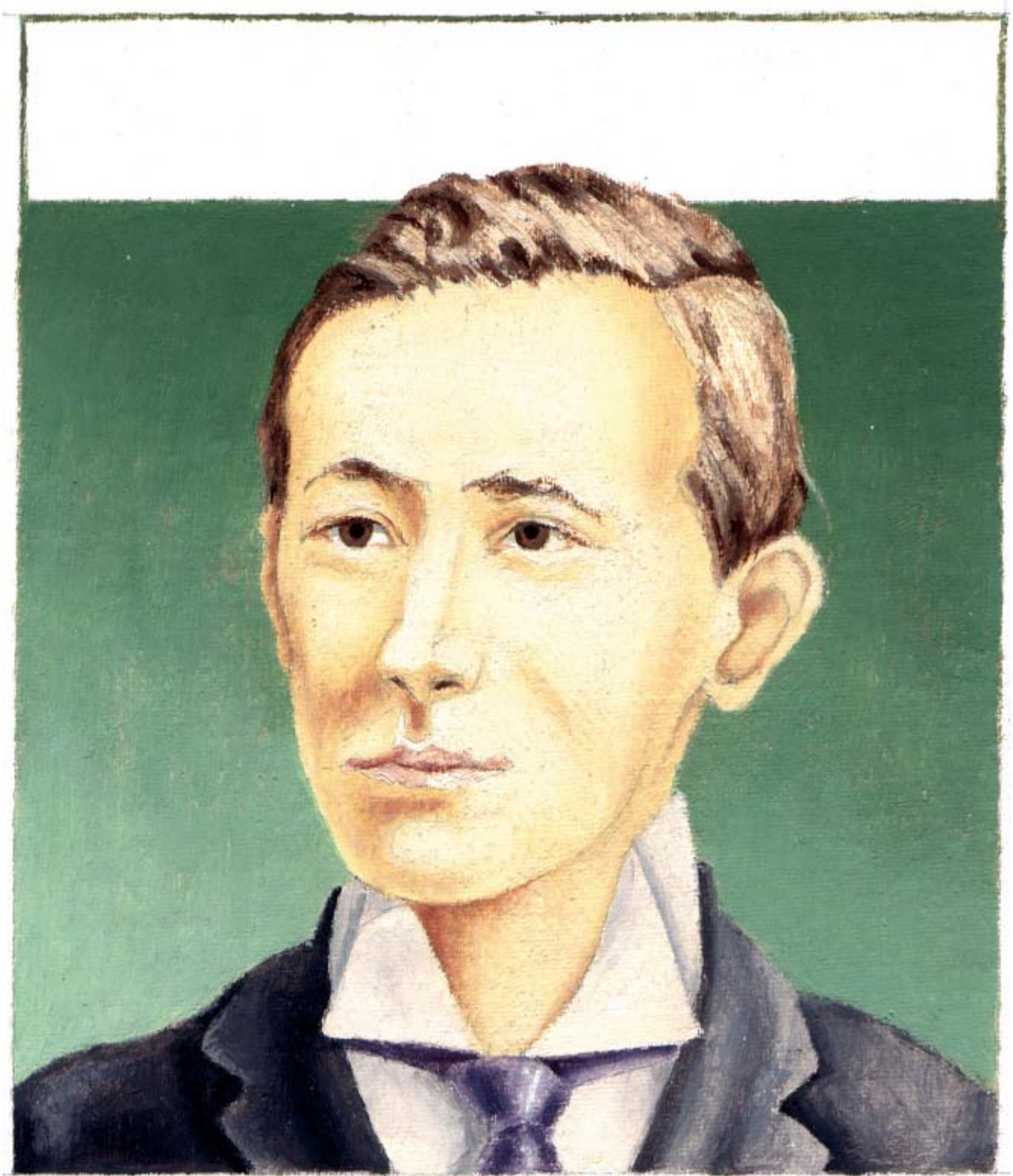
Mrs. Sejoe of the Philatelic Bureau thought it a splendid idea, for her philatelic perceptions coincided perfectly with the means by which her life, and the lives of her fellow Botswana citizens, were informed. She subsequently proposed to me the idea of a set of postage stamps showing the development of radio communications. Emphasizing the concept of development, Mrs. Sejoe enthusiastically paged through the packet from Bologna, and pointed out important events from the birth of radio in Italy to the birth of radio in Botswana. She said that four, five, even six designs might be necessary.

I literally started from square one, sketching Marconi and the apparatus with which he conducted his first backyard experiments at Pontecchio near Bologna. And I continued to square 64, as it were, picturing the modern transmitter and mobile broadcasting unit of present-day Radio Botswana. My initial search for subject material led me to the Gaborone offices of Radio Botswana, and an interview with director Ted Phenyio Makgekgenene, and to Radio Botswana's transmitter and aerial field at Sebele, nine kilometers north of Gaborone.

I submitted five oil-on-canvas designs: 1) Marconi as a young man; he was only 22 when he was granted his first patent in 1896; 2) Marconi's rudimentary apparatus and his first international radio transmission across the channel from England to France in 1899; 3) Empire Service transmissions from London to English-speaking Africa beginning in 1932; 4) the birth of Radio Botswana in 1966; and 5) the Radio Botswana mobile unit in front of the transmitter at Sebele. Only the last two designs were accepted and eventually became the 10t and 50t stamps, respectively.

The Philatelic Advisory Committee reviewed the designs, and opted for a localized rather than a globalized issue. The committee requested designs showing the daily use of radio in Botswana.

Given this redefined mandate, I took my camera to work in my own village of Takatokwane. I took photos and made sketches at the police station, clinic and *kgotla*, and from these I prepared designs featur-

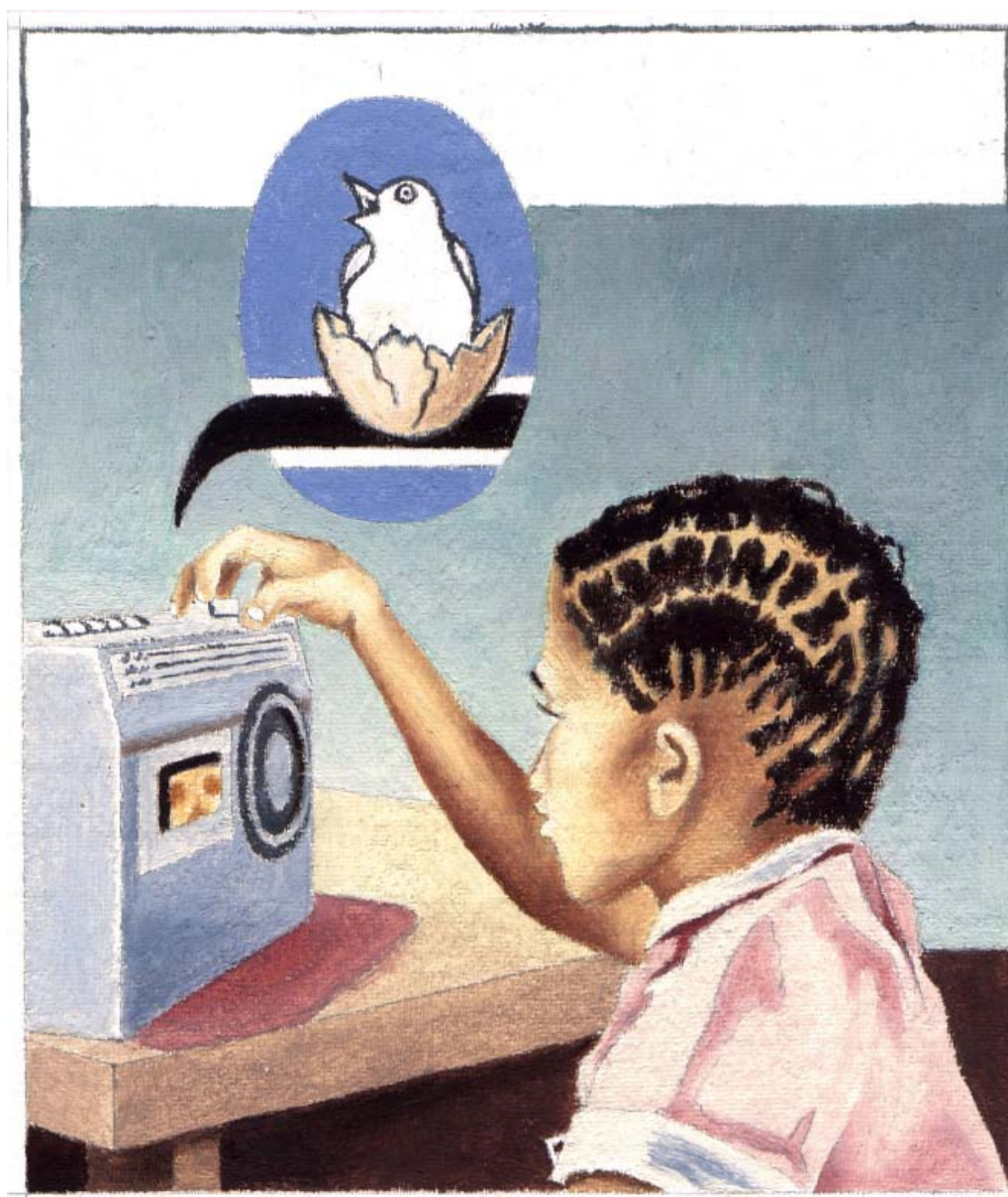


Guglielmo Marconi (1874-1937), a design not accepted for the Radio Communications issue.

ing the Botswana local police - which eventually became the 80t stamp - and the chief and his assistants at the *kgotla* - which became the P1 stamp.

The original concept of development of radio communications through the century was rather lost in the process, yet I was pleased to picture some of the aspects and personalities of everyday life in my village.

The stamps were printed by Natprint, Harare, and despite my specific requests for blue, violet, and red lettering, all stamps were lettered in black. The coloured portions of the designs were printed unequal in size, and the printing itself did not rise to the standard of Harrison & Sons. These kinds of shortcomings were eventually to lead to the deletion of Natprint from the list of printers employed by Botswana Postal Services. But for 1996 the radio communications stamps were truly an issue for Botswana; they portrayed in postal format the life that the radio gives to this vast land.



The original design showed the symbol of Radio Botswana hatching from an egg.



Stamps issued June 3, 1996.

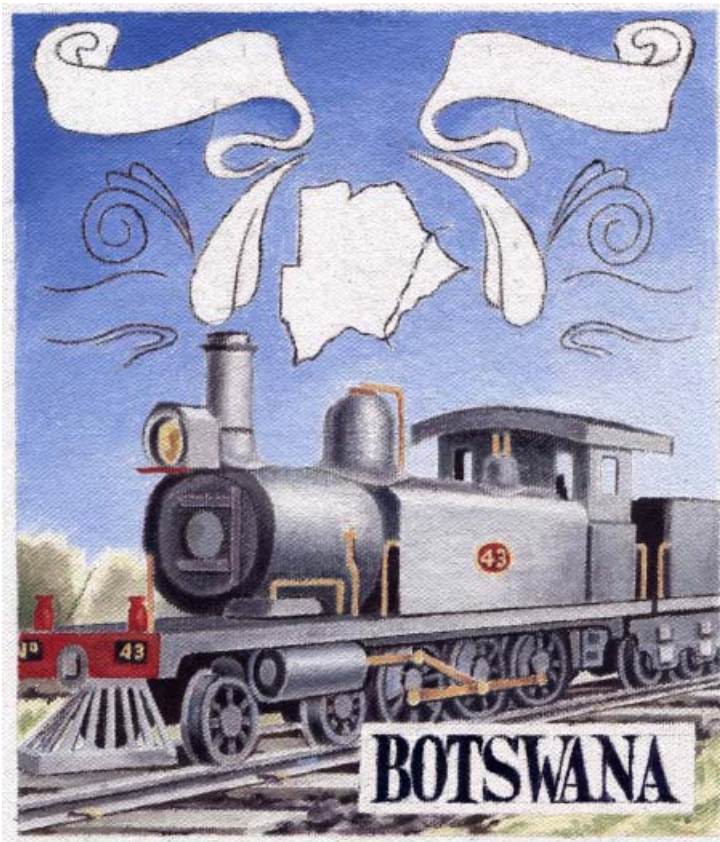


This unofficial first day envelope was posted in Gaborone and sent to the village where the stamps were created, Takatokwane.

Chapter 8

Four to Six: Railway Centenary 1997

According to Cecil Rhodes' biographers, he was unable to attend the event which had for decades consumed his dreams: the celebration at Bulawayo in 1897 of the completion of the railway line from Cape Town. Rhodes had fallen from his horse the year previous, and his already weak heart had begun seriously to impair his movements.



The 4-6-0 tank engine, with coal tender and period coach, eventually appeared on the 35t stamp.

Rhodes did not attend his own party, nor did he fulfill his own destiny as builder of an empire that stretched from Cape Town to Cairo. But he did map out many of Bechuanaland's borders, he did solidify the Protectorate's existence, and he did give me, a hundred years later, the opportunity to paint his railway on a set of Botswana postage stamps. Thank you, Cecil.

The date of the celebration in Bulawayo was November 4, 1897. The line was actually completed to Bulawayo on October 19, 1897, and it had reached Francistown on October 1, 1897. These three dates, then, were the possibilities for a true railway centenary issue. However, the reader will be intrigued to note that the railway stamps received a 12 July 1997 first day cancellation. This is how that came to pass.

In mid-1996 I was asked to submit preliminary artwork for a railway centenary issue. I completed four, not six, pencil sketches and discussed them with Andy Andersson of the Advisory Committee. He accorded me a provisional go-ahead so that I might proceed with designs in full color. By October 1996 I had finished and submitted four



The preliminary sketch was reworked to show the driver oiling his 4-6-4 + 4-6-4 15th-class Garratt.

oil paintings: 1) a 6th-class 4-6-0; 2) a 4th-class 4-6-0 tank engine; 3) a 15th-class Garratt; and 4) a 7th-class 4-8-0 showing elephants on the tracks.

Time passed. Months passes, in fact, without any word from the stamp advisors. Finally, after several inquiries on my part, the designs were accepted. I made minor changes after I ascertained that the first loco to breach Bechuanaland's borders was a Cape Government Railways 4th class. I then entered into discussions concerning the date of issue. October 20, 1997, being a Monday one century and one day after the Bechuanaland line reached Bulawayo, was selected.

One last detail remained, that being a once again belatedly requested miniature sheet. For the sheet I reconstructed cancellations of 1897 Bechuanaland whistle stops, and placed them apposed to 1997 versions of the same cancels: Gaberones/Gaborone; Ramoutsa/Ramotswa Station; Mochuli/Mochudi Village; Palachwe/Palapye. I added pen-and-ink drawings of the oldest loco to work in Bechuanaland - CGR 4th-class - and the newest - Botswana Railways BD3 diesel. All designs, together with invoice, I duly submitted, and was paid for my work in March. The artwork was signed, sealed and delivered, and remained only to be printed into postage stamps by the release date of October 20.

At that point Botswana Railways quite unexpectedly steamed into the picture. By then the month was March 1997, yet the Railways phoned the Philatelic Bureau to request a tenth anniversary set of stamps to be issued on June 1, 1997. Informed that such a last-minute request could not possibly be honoured, the railways people nonetheless blustered and demanded, and they were granted their wish in the form of two stamps picturing the modern Botswana Railways at work. The stamps were to replace two of the stamps of the Railway Centenary issue.

I was therefore asked to submit two new designs - in all possible haste - and I was asked to decide which two of the original designs would be deleted. When I eliminated my tank engine, I sighed, and when I crossed my elephants right off the tracks, I cried, for all that remained were a Cape Railways 4-6-0 and a Rhodesian Railways Garratt.

Wiping a tear from my eye, I rushed off with my Nikon to Gaborone Station to do some preparatory work for the new designs. I remember it well, for as I bent down to photograph an incoming BD3, I perceived a great vulture impaled on the front of the blue locomotive. The driver calmly carried the dead bird away. "Happens all the time," he told me.

The BD3 became the subject of one new stamp, and a Fantuzzi the subject of a second, a Fantuzzi container stacker, that is. In real life the Fantuzzi is elephantine and gigantic, capable of lifting 38 tons, but on a postage stamp it looked like a forklift.

I rushed the designs into the Philatelic Bureau, rushed them back again after amendments to the Fantuzzi. And finally, in May, I left on home leave thinking the four stamps and miniature sheet designs were, at last, headed for the printing presses.

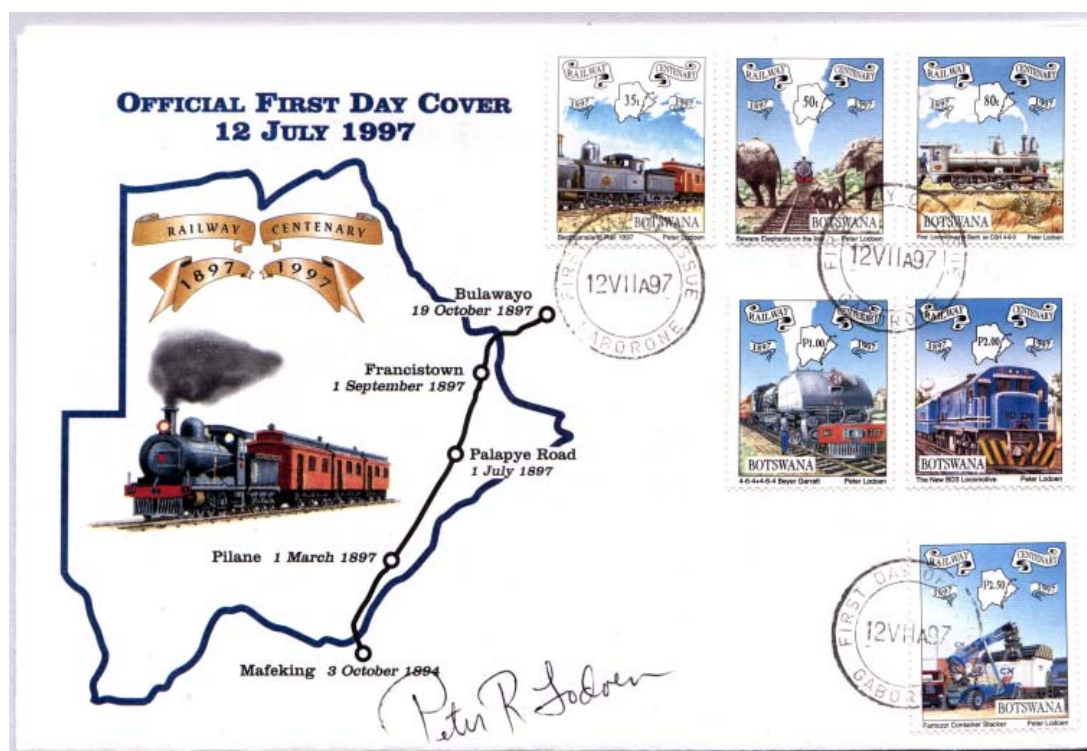
All Botswana stamp collectors, indeed all Botswana postage stamp users, saw the new train stamps beginning July 12th, whereas I, the designer, did not see them until I returned to Botswana in August. The new release date came as a complete surprise to me.

I, like Cecil Rhodes, missed out on my First Day party. Moreover, I hardly recognized my stamps. The original sky colours - ultramarine, cobalt and cerulean blue, and violet - had been transmuted to a uniform ultramarine. The scroll work had been reworked, and new postal rates had been instituted, so the six values ranged from an unwieldy 35 thebe to an incongruous two pula fifty.

Despite all, I was happy to see my elephants back on the tracks. I cannot say that I have been pleased with all the stamps credited to my name, but I like that one: fifty thebe Railway Centenary issue; multicolored; Stanley Gibbons No. 847; catalogue value 30 pence. The stamp is a tiny vignette that portrays the giants of the past.



Stamps originally scheduled for issue on October 20,
but appeared on July 12, 1997.



The First Day Cover shows the type of train that carried Henry Morton Stanley to Bulawayo.

Chapter 9

Snakes and Snakes 2002

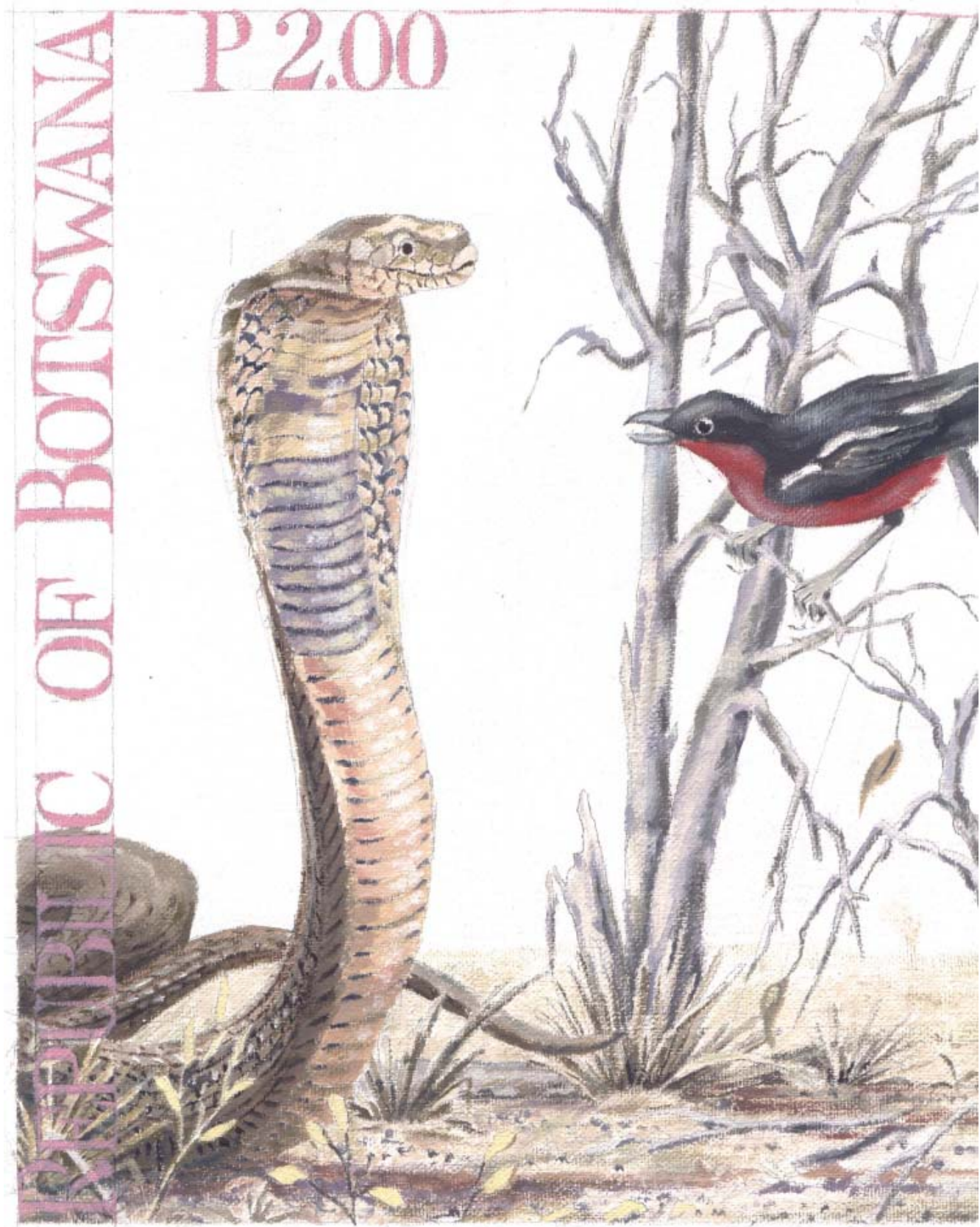
Never certain as to whether snakes should be termed venomous or poisonous, we tend to forget that the huge majority of snakes are neither. They are, in fact, constrictors which grasp their prey with needle-like fangs and coil themselves deftly around their victims, and gently squeeze the life out of them before swallowing them whole.

A man who lives in no fear of being swallowed whole, Barrie Forrester-Smith, brought the suggestion of snake stamps forward at the February 2001 meeting of the Botswana Philatelic Society. The snake-stamp proposal was included in a long list of ideas, and though it was entered into the society newsletter, no one gave serious consideration to adders and mambas on letters, until four months later when Botswana Post placed an ad in a Gaborone newspaper. The ad requested sketches and paintings which might be used for stamp designs.

With our February list conveniently in hand, philatelic society members and I chose out the two most presentable ideas: first, snakes and second, the big five. The latter - a set of stamps portraying the lion, the leopard, the rhino, the buffalo and the elephant - was another Forrester-Smith suggestion.



The Egyptian cobra, common in Botswana, did not appear on a stamp.



The Mozambique spitting cobra frequently feeds upon birds eggs, and is challenged by irate mother birds.

Lene Bay and Jodi Anderson, long-time BPS members, helped me select the serpents that might appear on a four-stamp set. From the outset the four most frightening snakes - mamba, cobra, puff adder and boomslang - were not hard to specify, and I began to sketch, thinking the whole project folly, for what people, postal authorities or otherwise, would be attracted to the idea of licking poisonous snakes?

The second proposal, the big five, had been taken as a stamp theme by South Africa that very year, so I decided to transform it into an issue of lions, and only lions. Employing a selection of splendid photographs taken by northern-swamps pilot Brian Wilson, I painted four oil designs, which were eventually to be rejected because the philatelic authorities had already commissioned a wildlife issue for late 2001.

As an erstwhile biology teacher, I thought it would be good to show the symbiotic relationships between the snakes and their prey. Thus, into each original oil sketch I painted victims as well as predators: mamba-hare, boomslang-weaver, puff adder-mouse, cobra-shrike. Working in haste on ice-cold July weekends, I delivered rough work for the snake and lion stamp designs, eight A-4 size paintings in all, on the deadline date 31.07.01.

Margaret Ruda of the Botswana Post Philatelic Bureau accepted the portfolio of sketches, though she resolutely refused even to peek at the snake designs. She took the paintings with delicate and frightened fingers, and promised to pass them on to the Stamp Advisory Committee.

After a month's leave in the U. S. A. I stopped in at Mrs Ruda's office on the 11th of September, 2001. Good omen or bad, she informed me that the proposal of snakes on postage stamps had been approved. Hallelujah! Who ever thought that the letter-sending public would be sticking cobras and adders on envelopes.

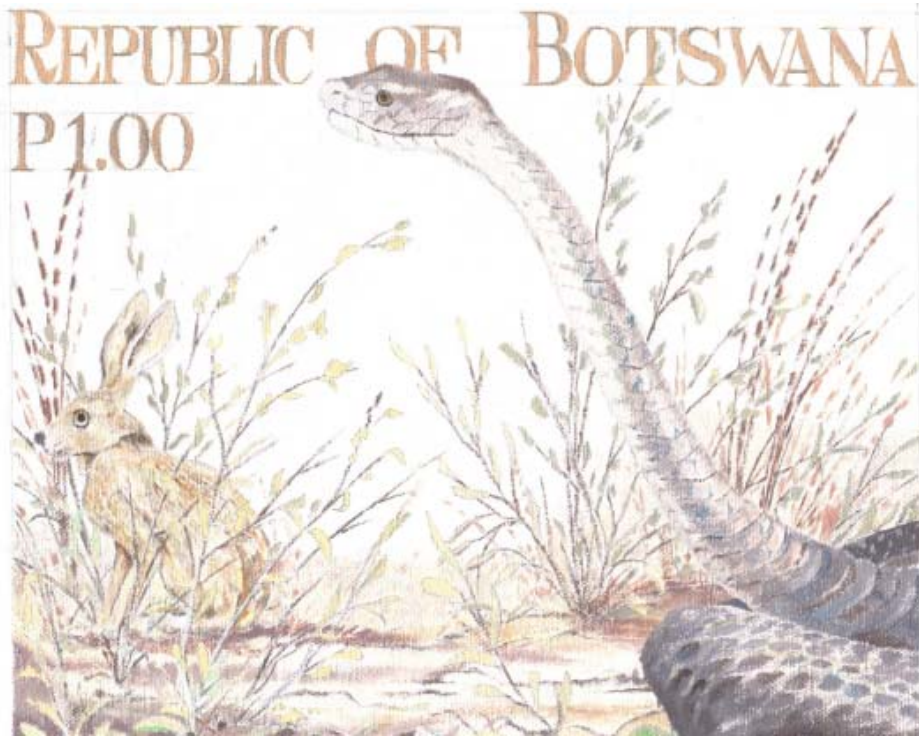
Mrs Ruda gave me a few brief notes from the Stamp Advisory Committee, hastily scribbled on a scrap of paper. None were helpful, saying only that the designs should be done as soon as possible, and that the little animals should be taken out of each of the designs.

Without delay I started collecting pictures and information about poisonous snakes. My first stop in a search for information was the Wildlife Department in Molepolole. The agents there seemed to want to have nothing to do with snakes, and referred me to the Snake Unit of the Botswana Defence Force, under the leadership of Captain B. Motsu in Mogoditshane. I phoned the captain, who seemed immediately pleased with the idea of snake stamps, for to him snakes were both beautiful and fascinating, and well worthy of being painted. He informed me of the 20-year existence of a serpentarium at the Mogoditshane camp. He also put me in touch with a snake handler, who answered my numerous questions about the chosen four.

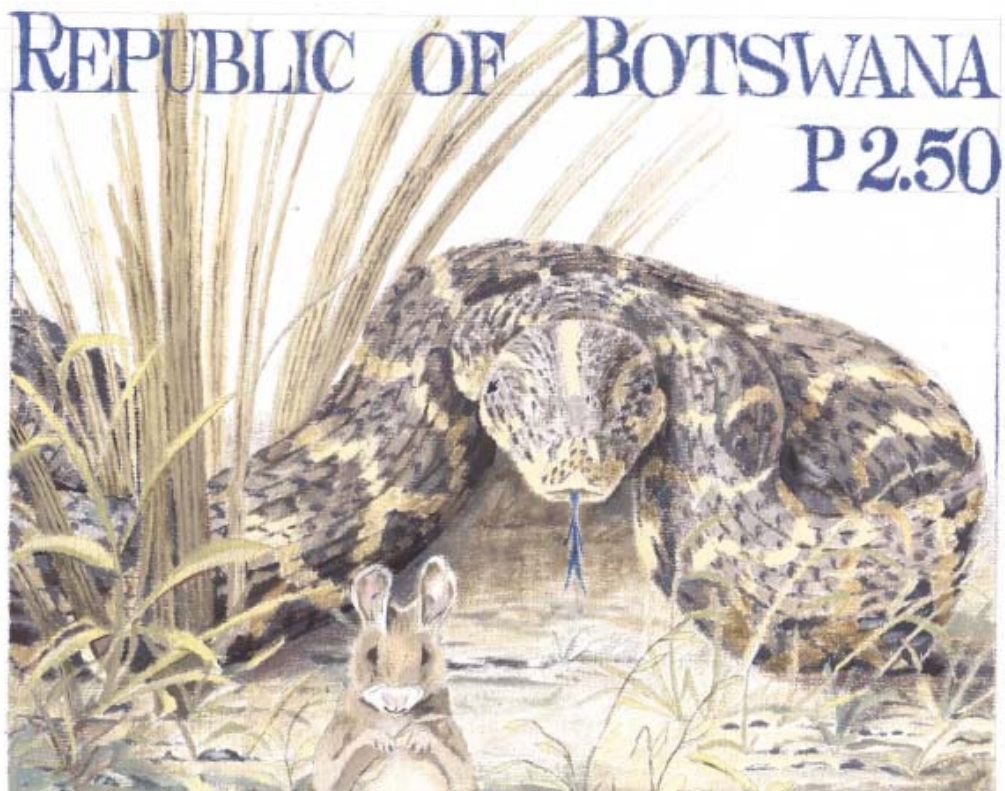
After a seemingly endless process of reworking the original designs and of re-painting snake scales, I felt that the snake stamp artwork was ready. The redoubtable rock python, thanks to its unequalled length, I chose to be the first day cover serpent. While the Advisory Committee mulled over the designs, I wrote the text for the pamphlet which accompanies the First Day Cover, and sent a copy off to Captain Motsu. The



The rock python in this first oil sketch appeared too thin.



The black mamba is unique in its ability to hunt on the move, with its head raised and ready to strike.

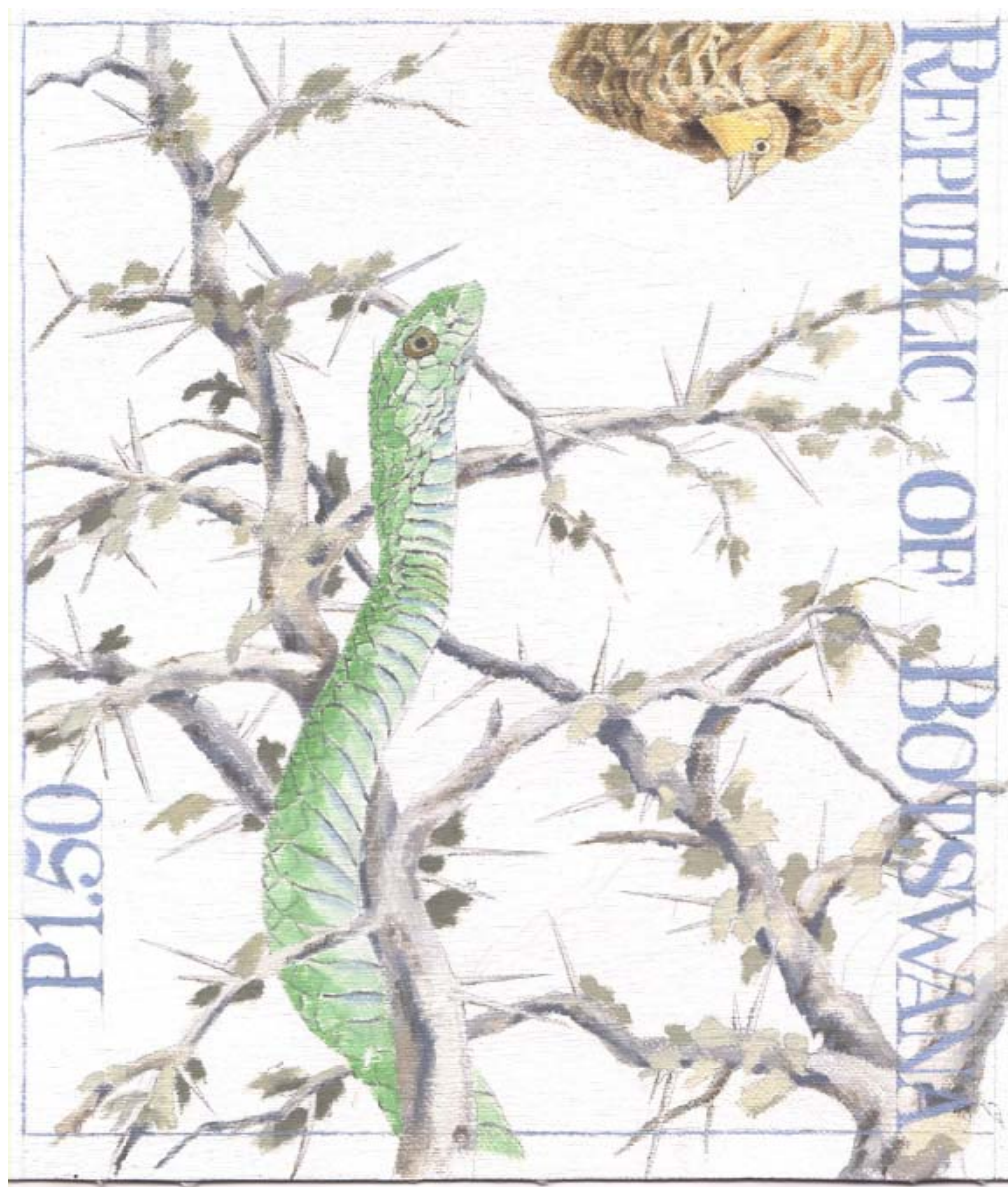


This first sketch of a puff adder, ready to take a mouse, shows the serpent's eyes in the wrong position.

captain again very appreciative, returned a few helpful additions - that snakes are fond of eating each other, for example, or that puff adders bear their little baby adders alive, and by the dozens.

With the usual last-minute changes completed, the month of January 2002 saw all parts of the stamp designs ready for submission: five paintings, pamphlet text, instructions to the printer, and invoice to Botswana Post. The issue date was set for 22 March 2002; the venerable Dutch printer Joh Enschede was chosen to produce the stamps.

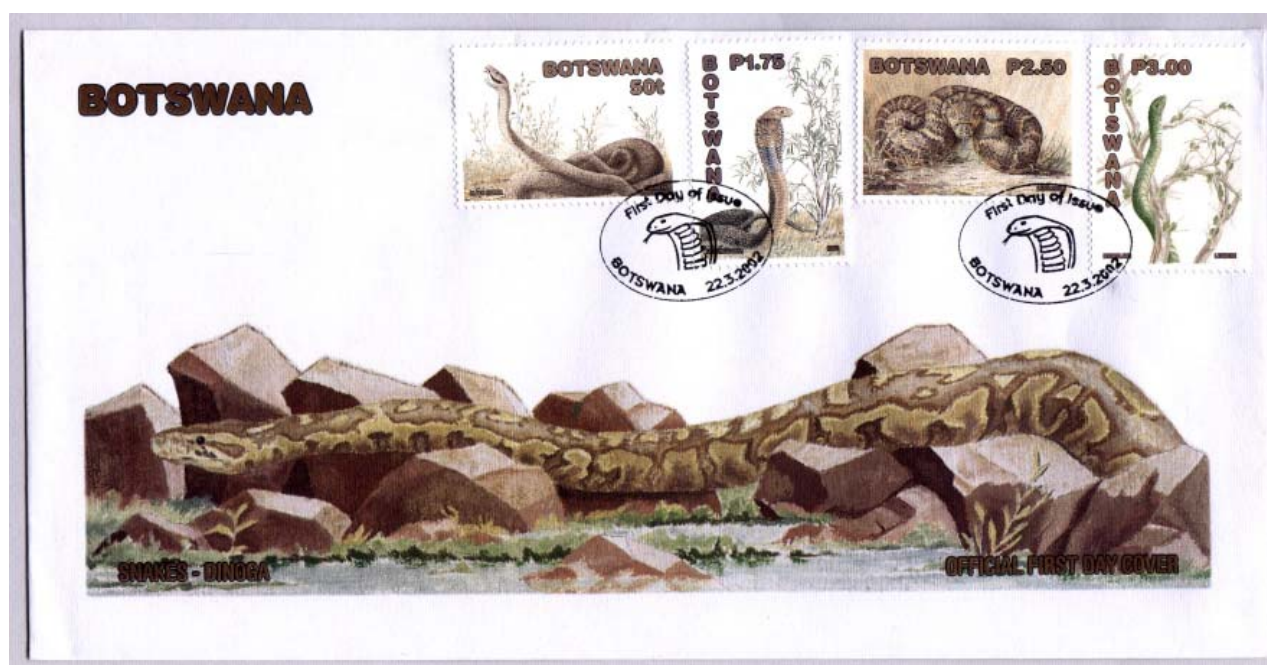
Though the stamp poster was beautifully printed, with colours true to the paintings, the stamps themselves all appeared a bit indistinct and greenish. The names of the snakes were printed in near microscopic letters, practically invisible to the naked eye. But at last our snakes were out, and these quiet and shy reptiles have made their way to the far corners of the globe. “When you go,” said Jesus as he sent his disciples to the extremities of the ancient world, “be harmless as doves, and wary as serpents.”



The boomslang and the weaver bird are arboreal adversaries.



Stamps issued 22 March 2002.



The “Big Five” of the snake world appeared on the First Day Cover.

Chapter 10

Letters Mingle Souls: World Post Day 2004

I thought that my stamp designer's dreams were complete when I painted Africa's most venomous and evil reptiles for a 2002 snake series. But no. A self-propelling industry has grown up around the production of new postage stamps in Botswana, and I have become part of it.

The phone rang unpretentiously one fair January morning. It was Mrs Sebego from Botswana Post's philatelic division. She has now replaced Mrs Ruda upon her retirement, who replaced Mrs Sejoie upon her retirement, who replaced Andy Andersson upon his retirement. And that tells you how long I have been at this stamp design game.

Mrs Sebego, one of those implacably kind individuals who you could never imagine being harsh and critical, informed me that I had been chosen to design stamps for World Post Day. The assignment had come down from the ephemeral Philatelic Advisory Committee.

The committee relayed the message that I could do "anything I wanted," though I sensed that eventually what I wanted would not be what the committee wanted. Future considerations aside, I now had to deal with the all-encompassing theme of a post day for the entire planet. I had little clue as to where to begin.

John Donne helped me. Though I have read little of the famous preacher and poet's writing, I remembered Donne's simple words printed on several American postage stamps issued in 1974. "Letters mingle souls," said the stamps, and pictured paintings by Raphael, Terborch and Gainsborough.

I determined to paint a letter at the centre of each of several designs, and try to show the different ways in which a piece of paper, a written message, an envelope and a postage stamp can link two people together. Through writing, receiving or posting, through delivering, sorting or cancelling, letters involve people in purposeful action. Through messages of condolence, congratulation or joy, letters do mingle souls in a way that phone calls, text messages, faxes and e-mail cannot quite do. Can you imagine decorating a Christmas tree with faxes and e-mails?

From John Donne's 17th-century postulation I derived my own expressions of postal symbiosis. Under the title "Letters bring news" I painted an African grandmother intently reading a funeral announcement that had come by post. The "Letters make friends" design showed two young ladies, one handing a letter to the other. The "Letters connect continents" stamp portrayed a little girl on her tiptoes, putting a letter into a big red posting box.

The remaining titles - "Letters keep order," "Letters bring joy" and "Letters say thanks" - ended up on the reject list.

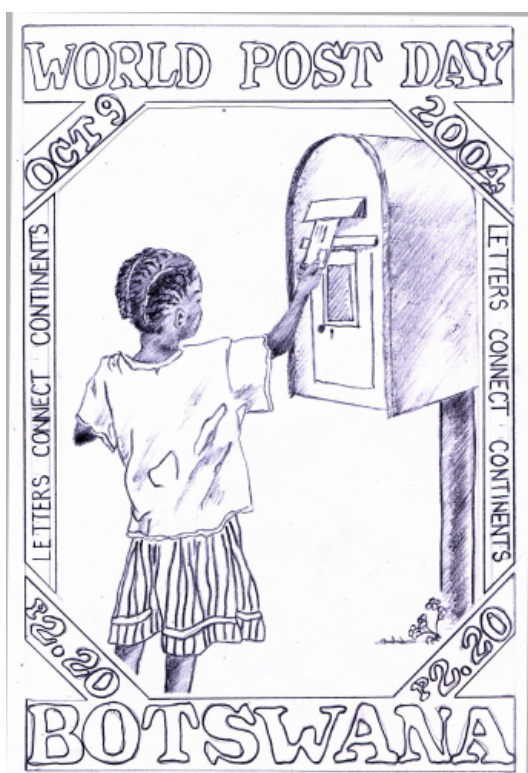
The committee requested for the fourth design a male presence. Of the further three designs I submitted, a postal employee was chosen. He was pictured emerging from his red and yellow Botswana Post vehicle



Accepted design as originally submitted to Botswana Post.



Accepted design as originally submitted to Botswana Post.



Original pencil sketches and accepted designs.

and delivering a handful of letters.

Once all the designs were accepted, the committee performed its usual last-minute turn-around, deciding that the titles on the stamps were not desirable. Not mentioning the fact that the committee had seen the stamp designs with titles numerous times since January, it is hard to imagine what might be objectionable about the words “Letters bring news.” Nonetheless, I spent two long evenings restructuring the lettering and denominations of the stamps, and reworking the First Day Cover. Even at that the printer changed colours and lettering of his own.

At present I have had a hand in creating 38 Botswana postage stamps. The total number of Botswana postal issues has now surpassed 800. The standard letter rate has reached 80 thebe in 2004, as compared to 2 1/2 cents in 1966 on the eve of independence. The number of Botswana’s postal agencies has risen from 64 to 171.

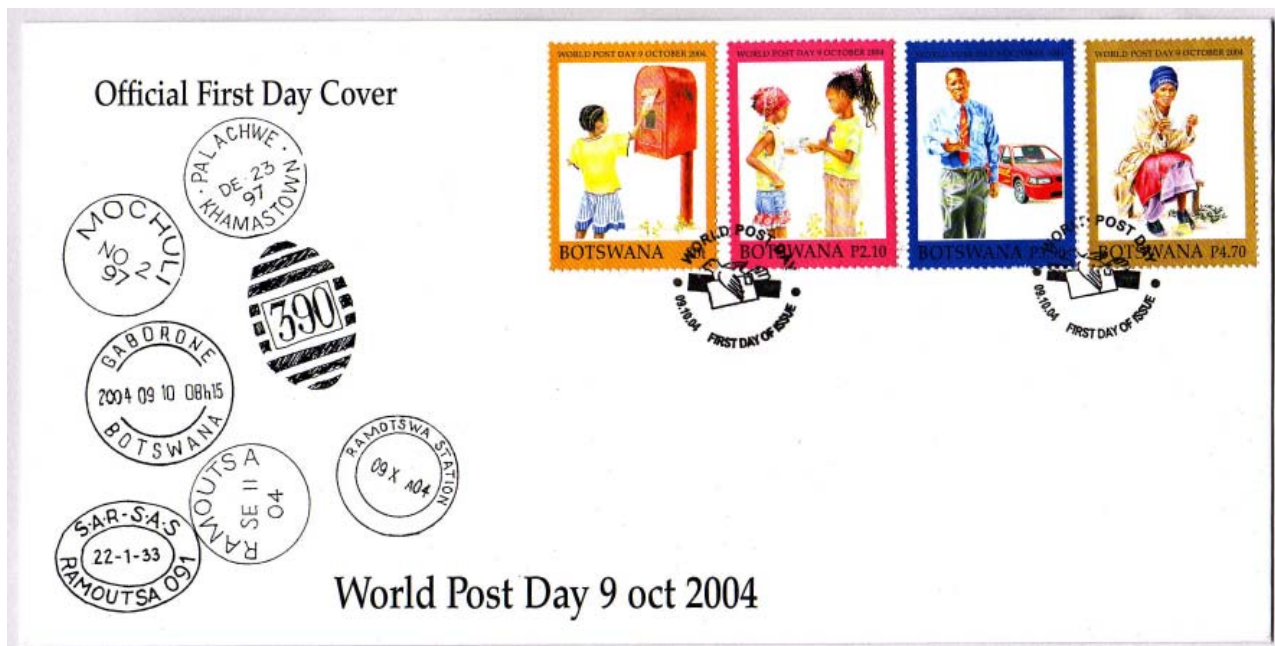
Times have changed for this dry and sunny land, and Botswana Post has kept pace. Its efficient network of postal offices and routes continue to bring news, keep friends together, and mingle souls.



Pencil sketches of rejected designs as originally submitted to Botswana Post.



Stamps issued 9 October, 2004.



Bechuanaland and Botswana postmarks appeared on the First Day Cover.

Chapter 11

The Stamp Designer's Dream

The year 1998 saw Botswana stamp issuing authorities turn wholeheartedly to the photograph, and produce some excellent results. Three consecutive issues - Tourism, Princess Diana and Botswana Weavers - featured photos on all denominations.

The coincidence of postage stamp and photograph is the culmination of a series of events that began almost 165 years ago when Rowland Hill, on the side of the British, and Louis Daguerre, on the side of the French, launched their revolutionary inventions into the main stream.

They were inventions that shot like wildfire through the general population, and within the twinkling of a historical eyelash everyone was having photographs taken and sending them off to loved ones in envelopes franked with adhesive stamps.

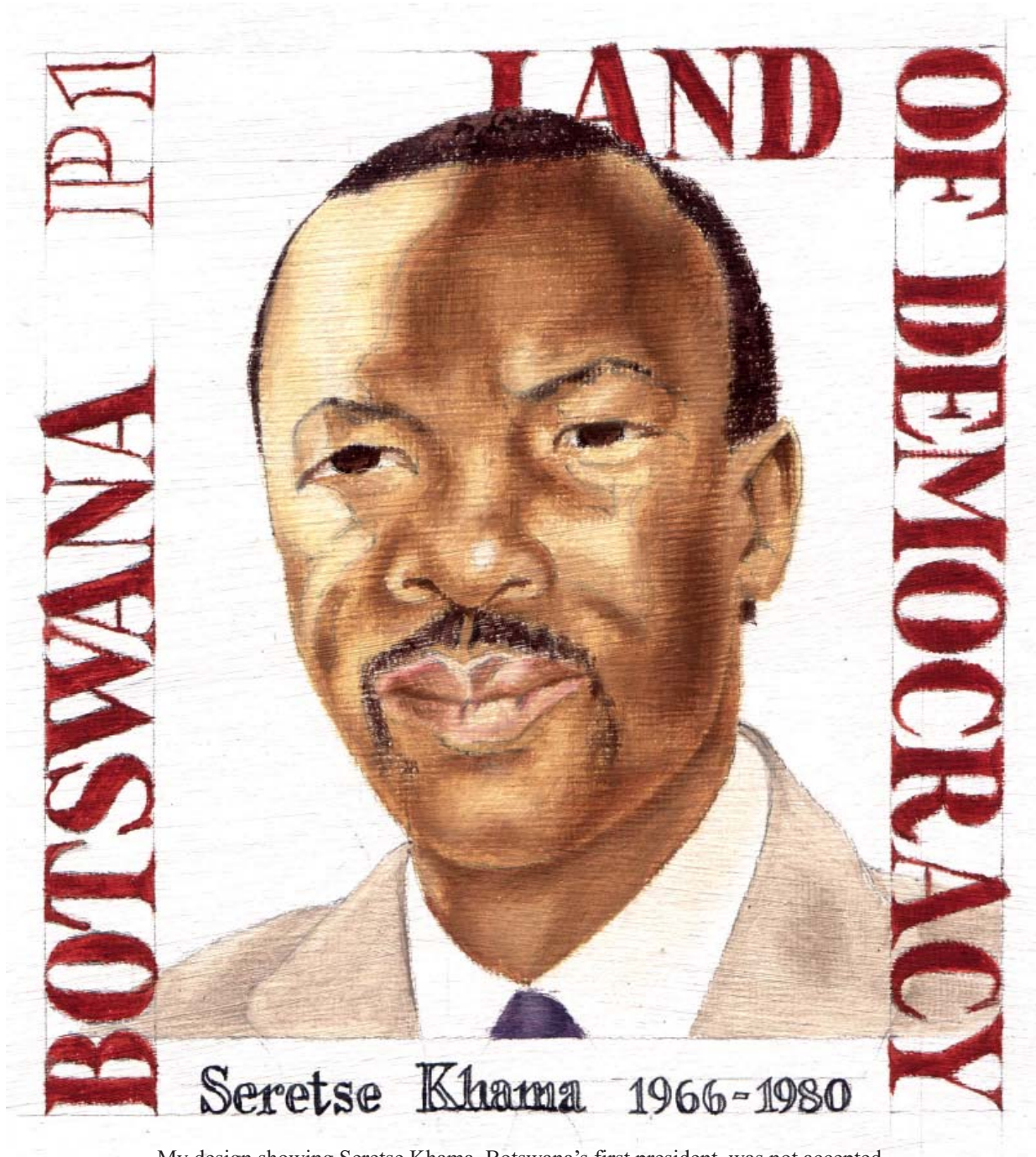
Collections of photos and of postage stamps soon developed, and within two years of the issue of the first stamps, which pictured Queen Victoria, collectors in London showed 'more anxiety to treasure Queen's heads than Henry the Eighth did to get rid of them' (*Punch*, 1842).

The Queen's heads were as painstakingly engraved as they were highly prized. The engraved or intaglio printing method, known in stamp catalogues as recess, carried the industry of postage stamp production for a century and more. But in the 1960's the bright and lavish colours of lithography and photogravure seemed universally to take the stamp market away from the engravers.

As bright and beautiful as the 'new' stamps are, they have one serious drawback. The lettering on the stamp is generally done separately, on an overlay, and hence is not integrated into the design of the stamp either in terms of colour or of shape.

Certainly, it is my greatest disappointment that I, as designer, have not been allowed to incorporate lettering into the design format of my stamps. Every stamp of nearly every issue that I have had a hand in creating has been besmirched by black lettering. No matter which printer - Natprint, Harrison, or Pretoria - no matter what theme - Pope, tourism, trains, or radio - no matter what colours of lettering I have requested, all lettering has always been straight, horizontal, and black. Only the Papal Visit First Day Cover, which I did before knowing what I was not allowed to do, shows a work of art complete in terms of colour, shape and design.

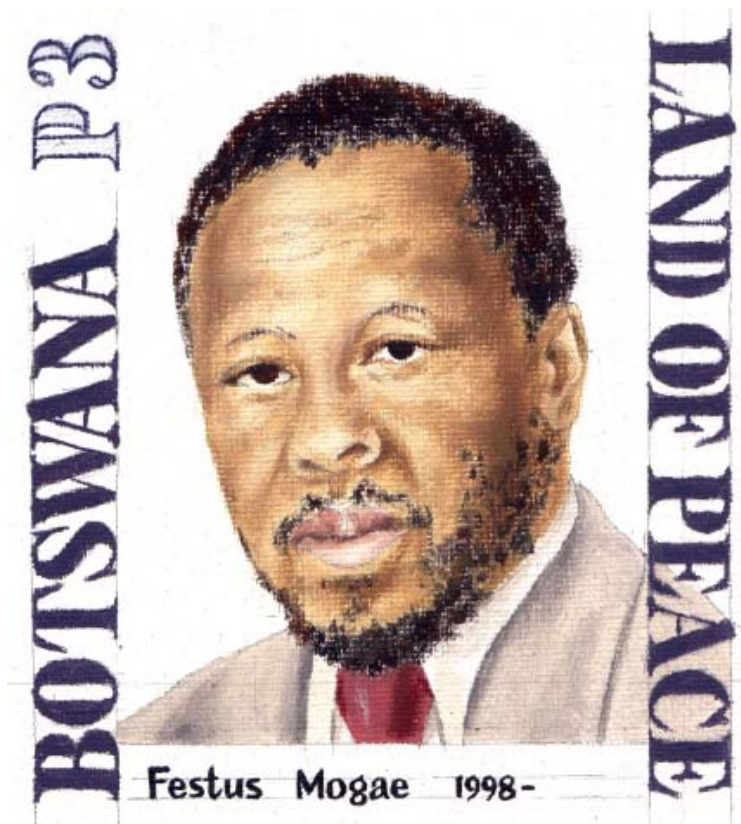
I have had, however, dreams of creating one issue in black. I have dreamt of designing a set of engraved steam trains, complete with engraved lettering and scrollwork, each stamp presented in one solid colour around a black vignette. I have pictured in my mind the stamps' listings in Stanley Gibbons - ultramarine and black, carmine and black, violet and black - as stamps of the good old days were described. And



My design showing Seretse Khama, Botswana's first president, was not accepted.



Though my suggestion was re-buffed, Ketumile Masire and Fetus Mogae were later featured on the “Chiefs and Presidents” issue of 2000.



I have dreamt the ultimate stamp collector's dream: a little 'a' under the catalogue number, reading 'inverted center' and followed by an astronomical catalogue value. Think, £5,000 or more for a copy of a stamp I designed!

But that kind of dream was long ago short-circuited by the demise of intaglio printing that has not been seen here since the Bechuanaland days. More and more, four-colour printings of computer-scanned images, finished with acetate overlays, carry the philatelic day.

Were I so fortunate as to be asked to return to the drawing board and design stamps for Botswana's future, there are three issues I would bring to life:

- Botswana's Presidents,
- The Districts of Botswana (definitive), and
- The Triangle of Life in Botswana.

Botswana has drawn from its own traditions, and has followed a course of democracy since independence in 1966. In its inclusion of the people's voice in the government, and in the government's concern for the health and welfare of its citizens, Botswana is practically unique in modern-day Africa. Essential to the country's peace and stability were its first president, Sir Seretse Khama, and his successors Sir Ketumile Masire and Festus Mogae. They, the presidents, are worthy of a stamp issue.

Botswana's definitive issues have centered on the country's birds, animals and minerals. I should like to see a definitive series based on the the nation itself, that is Botswana's ten districts. To make a series of



This idea for a definitive series was added to my growing list of rejects.

20, each district would be allocated two stamps, featuring in the foreground a bird, animal or person, and in the background a scene typical of the district.

Having lived in the village of Takatokwane for the last seven years, I have had my feet, my hands and my mind immersed in the life of Botswana's people. Their lives, far from being simple, are divided upon their villages, their farmlands, and their cattle posts.

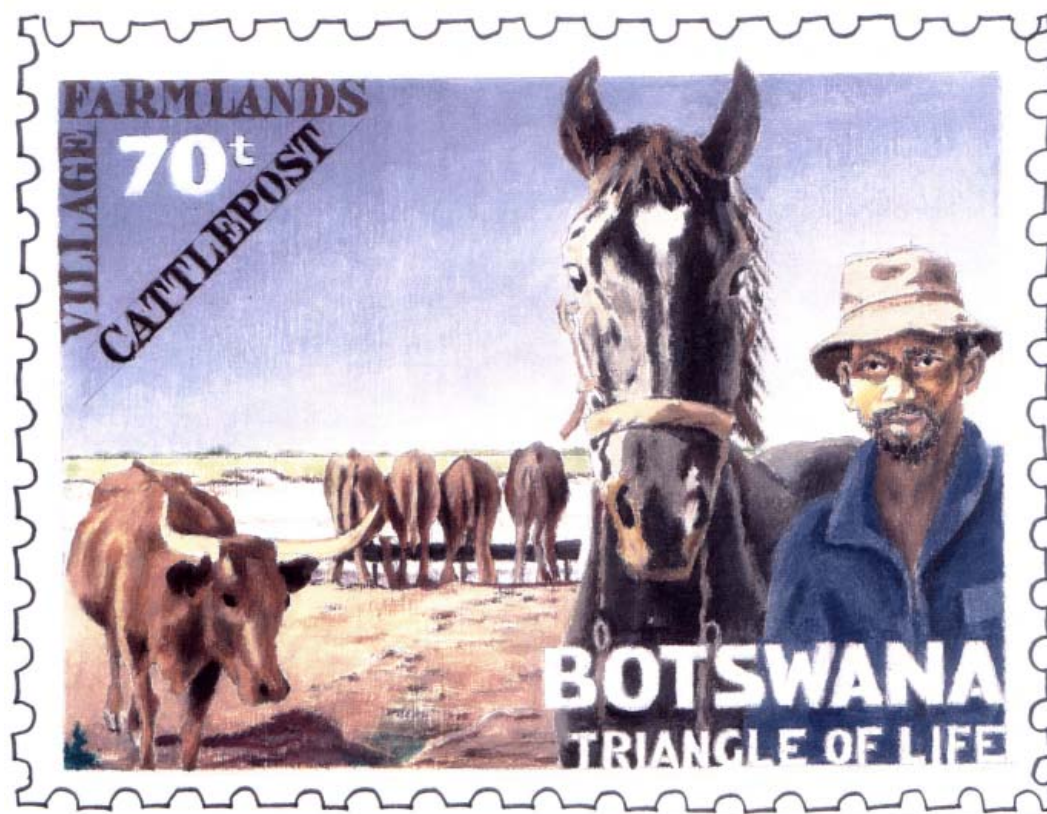
The village provides the necessities of modern life: schools, clinics, shops, bars, and, dare I forget, churches. They provide big sisters who care for infant children, and the villages teach the roles that modern life tends to neglect: what it is to be a child, to be a woman, to be a man.

The farmlands provide a source of livelihood - of maize, beans and melons - but more so they give to their people a sense of stability and identity. Each Botswana citizen is tied to his or her home lands by the very dialect he or she speaks.

The cattle posts are home to Botswana's pride - its steers and cows and calves - and just as philatelists are dazzled by the beauty of rare stamps, so are the people of this arid land dazzled by the beauty of their cattle. Cattle are paid as bride price in marriage, they are slaughtered in tribute for funerals, and, economically, they are Botswana's second greatest export behind diamonds.

The triangular character of life in Botswana has developed through the centuries, and is unique to the country. No stamps could present the life of the land better than a set depicting the village, the farm, and the cattle post.

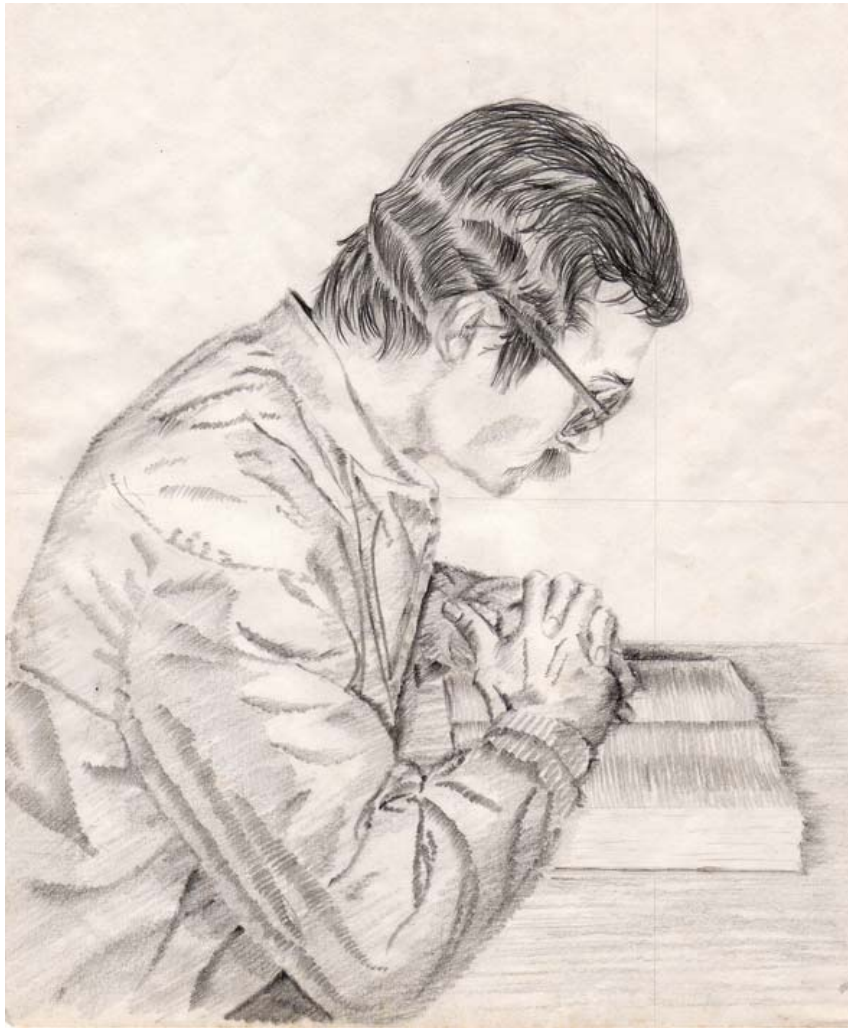
Botswana has created its philatelic name by producing its own postage stamps, and in doing so has told the world about a country that could easily have been forgotten in the endless sands of the Kalahari Desert. Through my paintings and my pictures, I have come to feel part of the land, and have, perhaps, helped to send a bit of Kalahari sunshine to the far corners of the earth.



The cattleposts of Botswana grasslands hold the nation's wealth.



Though both villages and farm lands are integral to Botswana life,
they were not accepted for postage stamp issues.



Introducing the Artist

Peter Lodoen first came to Africa as a United States Peace Corps volunteer in 1973 and worked as a science teacher in Molepolole, Botswana. Village life in Africa was pleasant, but very quiet, so without television, radio or camera, he took up a pencil and began to sketch. Among his very first works was Livingstone's Tree in Manyana. Later in Nigeria, while waiting for a work permit, Peter started painting in oil. Nigerians' love for their family members caused them to request portraits, and to this day the portrait remains the staple of his artistic life. In 1988 he was asked by the Botswana postal authorities to design postage stamps for the Papal Visit. This resulted in the first of nine sets of stamps he has designed over the years for Botswana Postal Services. After serving as a Lutheran pastor in Takatokwane for many years, Peter has now returned to Molepolole and the teaching profession.

British Southern Africa Monographs

“Rejected - Accepted: Life of a Botswana Stamp Designer” by Peter Lodoen. The volume chronicles the authors adventures as a stamp designer for Botswana Post during the past 15 years. The story behind the designs and their approval is told. Many designs are shown in full color. The booklet is 53 pages long. Price in full color \$25. Available in pdf format.

“Snake Stamp Designs” by Peter Lodoen. The booklet reproduces the complete proposal submitted by the author in 2001 to Botswana Post of a stamp issue featuring Botswana snakes. All the designs are given in full color. The booklet is 10 pages long. Available in pdf format.

“Philatelic Atlas of the Bechuanalands and Botswana” by Peter Lodoen. Detailed atlas of postal office and agencies of the Bechuanalands and Botswana. The volume contains 13 maps and explanatory text. The volume is 26 pages. Distributed by Krone Publications by arrangement with Bay Publishers, Gaborone, Botswana.

“The Development of Postal Rates in Southern Africa: Annual Reports of the Postmaster-General, Cape of Good Hope, 1882-1909” This volume is in preparation and is expected during the fall of 2001. It contains extracts from the Postmaster-General’s annual reports to the Cape of Good Hope Parliament as they related to the development of rates in southern Africa. The volume is approximately 100 pages and is planned to include an introduction. A preprint without the introduction is available in pdf format.

“Postal Orders of Bechuanaland and Botswana. One-Frame Exhibit” by Peter Thy. The booklet reproduces an award winning exhibit in full colors of this extremely rare type of postal stationery. It is reasonable to say that the exhibit is the largest collection of Bechuanaland postal orders ever assembled. The volume is 16 pages long. Available in pdf format.

“A Century’s Record. Historical Sketch of the Progress of the Cape of Good Hope Post Office to 1907” reproduces a narrative presumably written by the S.R. French, Postmaster-General of the Cape between 1892 and 1907. The detailed advances of postal and telegraph development together with major rate changes are presented. The volume is 14 pages long. Available in pdf format.

“The Northern Mails and Telegraphs: Bechuanaland and Rhodesia in the Annual Reports of the Postmaster-General, Cape of Good Hope, 1885-1909” This volume is the first in a series that will contain basic source material for the postal historian of southern Africa. This first volume has been extracted from the Postmaster-General’s annual reports to the Cape of Good Hope Parliament. The volume details the critical years of the development of the postal and telegraph services of the northern frontiers of southern Africa. The volume is 42 pages long. Available in pdf version.

“The Macloutsie Post Office and its Postmaster, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1892” provides an important source text to the early postal history of Bechuanaland and Mashonaland. The central part of the booklet (30 pages) is a reprint of the contemporaneous writings of the last postmaster of Macloutsie post office detailing his duties and travels. The Editor has provided a general introduction placing the Post Office into a postal history context. A second edition is available in pdf format. “.. try the ‘Macloutsi Post Office’ by JE Symons whose adventures in reaching this remote border police station are chronicled with easy charm .. (American Philatelist, 1997).” An updated version from 2002 is available in pdf format.

“The Introduction and Usage of Postal Orders in Bechuanaland Protectorate” by Peter Thy is an important contribution to the postal history of the Bechuanalands. It traces the history of postal orders from their introduction in 1907 to independence from the South African Post Office. The booklet (34 pages) presents original research and will appeal to the specialist, as well as the general interest postal history collector. “Masterly Bechuanaland research.. (South African Philatelist, 1995).” Awarded Silver-Bronze at ORAPEX & C4NPLe in 1997.

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