

# World of Stamps:

## Landlocked Countries: Botswana

by Geir Sør-Reime



Botswana, the land of the Tswana is another landlocked African state. It has around 2.3 million inhabitants and an area of 224,610 square miles, making it one of the most sparsely populated countries in the world.

Mining and tourism dominate the economy and the country is the world's biggest producer of diamonds.

Boer settlers from Transvaal tried to move into Tswana territory, and in 1882 Boers established the Goshen Republic and in 1883 the Stellaland Republic in the southernmost part of Bechuanaland.

The British saw these as a threat to their interests and in March 1885 they sent an expedition that bloodlessly annexed the two republics and made them part of the new British Bechuanaland Crown Colony, and at the same time, the rest of the area became a British protectorate called Bechuanaland Protectorate.

In 1893, a portion of Matabeleland (today part of Zimbabwe) was detached from Matabeleland and administered separately by the British Resident Commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, and in 1911 the area was annexed to Bechuanaland and is now part of Botswana.

Gold was discovered there in 1864 and a British company was granted concessions there by the Matabele king in 1870. In 1880 another company subsequently named Tati Concessions Ltd. took over the concession.

In 1896 the company was granted the right to issue its own revenue stamps, but

*Botswana 1997 Francistown 100 years, Tati, Sc. 616-17, see also next column*



*Stellaland 1884 1d, Sc. 1*

not postage stamps, for use in the concession area. The main settlement was Francistown,

and in 1997, its centenary was celebrated with four stamps.



*Botswana 1997 Francistown 100 years, Tati, Sc. 618-19,*



*Left to right: British Bechuanaland 1885-87, Cape of Good Hope stamps overprinted British Bechuanaland, Sc. 6, 9;*



*British Bechuanaland, left to right: half penny, overprint on British stamp (Sc. 10); 1887, Sc. 13; 1891, British stamp overprinted British Bechuanaland (Sc. 35)*



*Left to right, British Bechuanaland 1891, Cape of Good Hope stamp overprinted (Sc. 32); 1889 British Bechuanaland halfpenny overprinted Protectorate Fourpence, Sc. 64; 1897 overprint on British stamp, Sc. 72*

British Bechuanaland issued its first stamps in 1885, stamps of the Cape of Good Hope overprinted British Bechuanaland, whereas the Protectorate issued its first stamps in 1888, stamps of British Bechuanaland further overprinted Protectorate.

In 1889, Cape of Good Hope stamps overprinted Bechuanaland Protectorate were issued, but between 1889 and 1891, Cape of Good Hope stamps overprinted British Bechuanaland were used by both the Crown Colony and the Protectorate.

In March 1895, the Crown Colony was annexed to the Cape Col-





Above, left to right: 1906 half penny on British stamp, Sc. 76; 1913-24, overprint on British stamps, Sc. 89; 1925-27, Sc. 103; right, 1914-15, Sc. 93, on Britannia Rules the Waves issue

only, and from 1897, British stamps overprinted Bechuanaland Protectorate were used (page 1) in the protectorate until 1932.

In 1932 a series of pictorial stamps inscribed Bechuanaland Protectorate were issued. Distinct stamps inscribed Bechuanaland Protectorate were then issued until 1966, although most 1964-66 stamps were inscribed Bechuanaland only.

Bechuanaland participated in the 1935 and 1937 British omnibus issues for the Silver Jubilee of King George V and the coronation of King George VI, respectively. In 1938, the 1932 definitive series with a medallion portrait of King George V was re-issued with a portrait of King George VI.



1932 definitives, first stamps inscribed Bechuanaland Protectorate, here Sc. 111



Right: 1935 Silver Jubilee George V (Sc. 119); 1937 Coronation George VI (Sc. 121); Left, 1938 definitive, (Sc. 126)



In 1945, the South African Victory stamps were overprinted Bechuanaland for use there, and in 1947 there was a four-stamp set for the royal visit. In 1948, Bechuanaland participated in the omnibus issue for the silver wedding of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, in 1949 for the 75th anniversary of the Universal Postal Union, and in 1953 for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The definitive series was re-issued 1955 with her portrait.



Above: 1945 victory, overprint on South African stamp, Sc. 137 1947 royal visit, Sc. 146 right: 1949 UPU, Sc. 149-52



Left to right: 1948 silver wedding, Sc. 148; 1953 coronation, Sc. 153; 1955 definitive, Sc. 162



1960 75 years protectorate, Sc. 166

In 1960, the 75th anniversary of the Bechuanaland Protectorate was marked with three stamps with portraits of Queens Victoria and Elizabeth.



1961 definitive, Sc. 176, with surcharge on 1955 Sc. 162

Bechuanaland adopted the new South African decimal currency in 1961 and the 1955 definitive was surcharged in the new Rand currency. Later the same year a completely new definitive series featuring birds, animals, and local scenes was issued.



1961 definitives, Sc. 181, 190, 192

Thereafter, Bechuanaland participated in several omnibus issues: 1963 Freedom from Hunger, and centenary of the Red Cross, 1964 for the 400th birth anniversary of Shakespeare, 1965 centenary of the International Telecommunications Union, and the International Co-operation Year, and 1966 for the first anniversary of the death of Sir Winston Churchill.



1963 Freedom from hunger, Sc. 194; 1963 Red Cross, Sc. 196



1964 Shakespeare, Sc. 197; 1965 ITU, Sc. 202







1965 ICY, Sc. 205; 1966 Churchill, Sc. 206

In addition, there were four 1965 stamps for the introduction of internal self-government, and a 1966 set of four for the Royal Bechuanaland Pioneers.



Internal self-government, Sc. 201; 1966 Royal Pioneer Corps, Sc. 212

The Bechuanaland Protectorate became the independent Republic of Botswana in 1966 and issued a set of four stamps to celebrate independence and the definitive stamps of the protectorate were overprinted Republic of Botswana at the same time.



Botswana 1966 independence, Sc. 3-4

A brand-new definitive series featuring birds of Botswana was issued 1967. A new definitive series depicting minerals was issued 1974.



Above, 1966 definitive with Republic of Botswana overprint, Sc. 17; 1967 definitive birds, Sc. 24;



Left, 1974 definitive minerals, Sc. 114

In 1976, Botswana replaced the South African Rand with its own Pula currency on par with the Rand, and the minerals definitive series was surcharged with the new currency. There were also four stamps showing the new Pula banknotes.



1976 Pula currency soiv. sheet, Sc. 154a

Below, 1976 Pula surcharge, Sc. 166



Left to right: 1982 birds, Ostrich, Sc. 306; 1997 birds, Yellow-billed Oxpecker, Sc. 633; 2014 birds, Southern red bishop, Sc. 952



Left, 1987 wildlife, Square lipped rhino, Sc. 417; right, 1992 wildlife, Lesser bushbaby, Sc. 532

In 1978 a new definitive series featuring birds was issued, again replaced by a 1982 definitive also featuring birds. The 1987 definitive depicted Botswana's rich and varied wildlife, and the 1992 definitive did the same. Birds were again the motifs of the 1997 definitive series. The 2002 definitive series features mammals, and the 2007 series butterflies. Birds were again the motifs of the 2014 definitive series.



2007 butterflies, Large blue Emperor, Sc. 850

The fifth anniversary of independence was celebrated with five 1971 stamps, and in 1975, the tenth anniversary of internal self-government was commemorated with four stamps showing a portrait of Botswana's first president, Seretse Khama. The same year a stamp for the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the Bechuanaland Protectorate was issued. The centenary was commemorated on four 1985 stamps.



1985 centenary of protectorate, Sc. 379a





Left to right: 1971 independence 5 years, Sc. 79; 1975 internal self-government 10 years, Sc. 133; 1975 protectorate 90 years, Sc. 140

The tenth anniversary of independence was celebrated in 1976 with five stamps. In 1981, the first anniversary of the death of President Seretse Khama was remembered with four stamps.

New President Ketumile Masire was portrayed on one of the 1983 Commonwealth Day stamps. In 1986 the 20th anniversary of independence was celebrated with four stamps issued in a souvenir sheet.



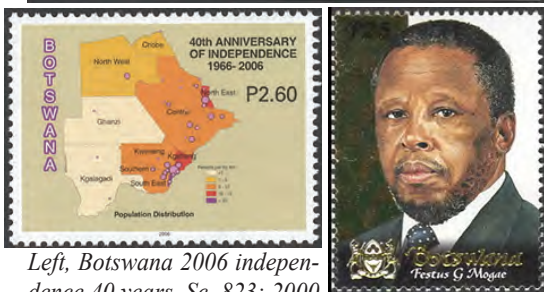
Above right, 1976 independence 10 years, Sc. 172, left 1981 1st death anniversary of Khama, first president, Sc. 283; 1983 president Masire, Sc. 325; Below, 1986 independence 20 years Sc. 388



In 1990, the 25th anniversary of internal self-government was included in a set of four commemorative stamps.

In 2000, presidents Seretse Khama, Ketumile Masire, and Festus Magae were portrayed on stamps.

In 2006, the 40th anniversary of independence was marked with four stamps, and in 2016, a series of eight stamps entitled "50 Years of Progress" celebrated the 50th anniversary of independence (next column).

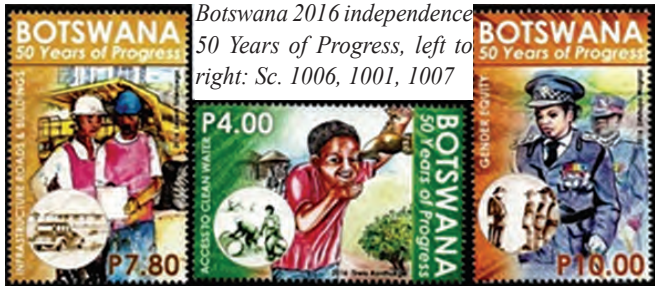


Left, Botswana 2006 independence 40 years, Sc. 823; 2000 presidents, Pres. Mogae, Sc. 700



Left, 1990 internal self-government 25 years (Sc. 468); right, 2018 president Masire in memoriam

President Masire died in 2017, and a memorial set of three stamps was released in 2018.



Botswana 2016 independence 50 Years of Progress, left to right: Sc. 1006, 1001, 1007

Notable stamp issues after independence include four 1968 stamps and Botswana's first souvenir sheet for the opening of the National Museum and Art Gallery in Gaborone, Botswana's capital city after independence. Prior to independence, the Protectorate was administered from outside its borders, first in Vryburg and later Mafeking, both in South Africa.



1968 opening of national museum and gallery (Sc. 46a)

In 1988, the 20th anniversary of the National Museum and Art Gallery was celebrated on four stamps, and in 2008 five stamps marked the 40th anniversary. In 2022, the development of the museum building from 1968 to 2021 was shown on the two stamps issued for the International Museums Day.



Left, 1988 national museum 20 years, Sc. 446; above, 2022 international museum day, featuring National Museum & Art Gallery

The country's mineral mining was highlighted on four 1970 stamps, featuring diamond, copper, and nickel mines. Traditional, pre-industrial mining was shown on six 1980 stamps (page 5).



1980 Traditional mining, clockwise: rock breaking, ore hoisting, smelting, ore crushing, Sc. 24748, 250-51



Left, 1984 mining industry, Sc. 344; right, 1970 mining industry, Sc. 58

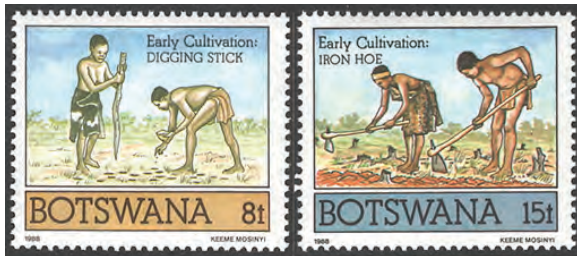
The mining industry was again featured on four 1984 stamps. The diamond industry was presented on four diamond-shaped 2001 stamps.



Below right, 2001 diamond industry (Sc. 713)

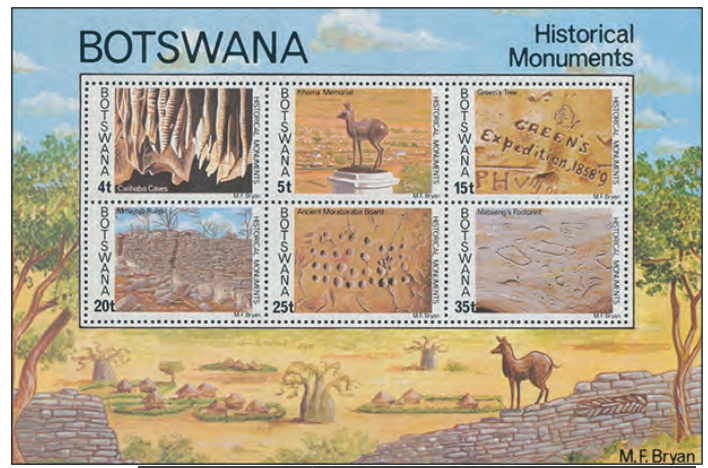


Botswana's agricultural resources were the theme of a 1971 quartet, showing cultivation of sorghum, millet, corn, and peanuts. Traditional cultivation was shown on four 1988 stamps. The country's cattle industry was honored with four 1981 stamps, and again on four 2006 stamps.

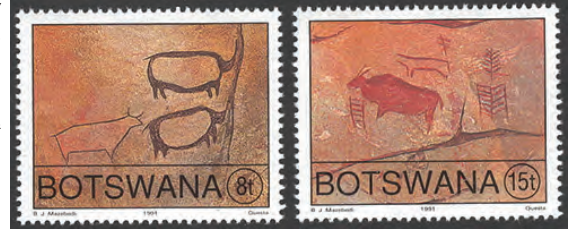


Top, 1988 traditional agriculture, Sc. 428-29  
Bottom, 1971 agriculture, crops (Sc. 71-74)

Left, 1981 Cattle industry, Sc. 286;



Above, 1977 historic sites (Sc. 192a); right, 1991 rock art (petroglyphs) (Sc. 490-91)



Historic sites of Botswana were featured on six 1977 stamps, and a 1991 quartet depicted rock paintings found in Botswana.

In 1979, traditional crafts were shown on four stamps, and again on four 1983 stamps. Traditional Tswana houses were shown on four 1982 stamps. Traditional basketry was presented on four 2001 stamps, and traditional pottery on four 2002 stamps.



Top, 2001 traditional basketry, Sc. 721a;

1979 traditional crafts, Sc. 233a;



1982 traditional houses (Sc. 299-302)



Continued on page 6



1983 traditional crafts  
(Sc. 333, 336)



self-government, and 1966 independence stamps. The 50th anniversary of Botswana stamps was commemorated on five 2016 stamps.

Below, 2002 traditional pottery,  
Sc. 736, 738



2016 Botswana stamps 50 years,  
Sc. 1008-12

The tourism industry's importance to the national economy was reflected on a series of tourism stamps issued 1998-99, and in 2019. Top row, 2019 tourism



1999 tourism, (Sc. 673)



Botswana 2002 fighting AIDS, Sc. 757



Botswana has been seriously affected by AIDS, and in 2002 four stamps were issued to publicize the fight against it.

1998 tourism (Sc. 655-58)



The Bechuanaland Protectorate issued postage due stamps 1925-1961, and Botswana issued postage due stamps 1967-89. The use of such stamps ended 2002. Bechuanaland Protectorate postage dues: right, 1926, Sc. J2; below, left to right: 1932-54, Sc. J4; 1961 5c on half penny (Sc. J9); 1961 decimal currency (Sc. J12)



The centenary of stamps in Botswana (Bechuanaland) was commemorated with five 1985 stamps showing the 1885 British Bechuanaland, 1897 Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1932 King George V, 1965 internal



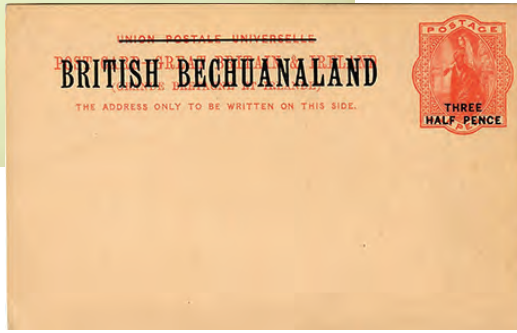
1985 centenary of stamps (of Bechuanaland), c. 363-67



Botswana, left to right: 1967 postage due, Sc. J1; 1971 postage due (Sc. J7); 1984 postage due, Sc. J9

There have also been several postal stationery issues, both by British Bechuanaland, the Bechuanaland Protectorate, and by Botswana (page 7). All of these three entities have issued postal cards, the first two also registration envelopes, the Protectorate also pre-stamped envelopes and aerograms, and Botswana postal cards and aerograms. British Bechuanaland further issued newspaper wrappers.





British Bechuanaland: top, 1890 postal card, Higgins & Gage 5 (overprint on Cape of Good Hope card); bottom, 1893 postal card, H&G 8 (overprint on British card)



Bechuanaland Protectorate, top to bottom: 1907 postal card (H&G 4); 1921 postal card (H&G 6); 1958 aerogram (H&G F6); 1944 aerogram (H&G F2)



Botswana 1994 aerogram (NGK LF16)



Botswana 1997 aerogram (NGK LF25)



Botswana: 1985 aerogram, NGK LF5



Botswana 1994 postal card, front and reverse (NGK P2)

