

CGH and Bechuanaland: The Atkinson Correspondence Part 1. The Bechuanaland Border Police and Associated Units¹

Robin Pelteret

The BECHUANALAND BORDER POLICE (BBP) was an Imperial unit raised on 4 August 1885 by then Lt. Col. Frederick Carrington² (Figure 1) of the South Wales Borderers, with strength of 500 men (Figure 2). Their weaponry included Martini-Henry rifles equipped with bayonets and at least one Maxim automatic machine gun.

In 1887, Frank William Frederick Johnson with Maurice Heany and Henry Borrow (ex-members of the BBP) organized a group known as the Northern Gold Fields Exploration syndicate, which won a concession from Chief Khama (Figure 3) covering all mineral rights in Bechuanaland.

In 1889, Johnson met Cecil John Rhodes in Kimberley. He was awarded a contract to organize, equip and lead the Pioneer Corps, a group of circa two hundred-odd men whose goal it was to occupy Mashonaland, build a road between Palapye and Mount Hampden (later Fort Salisbury) and essentially prepare the way for colonization and exploitation of the mineral concession.³ Of the order of one hundred-and-fifty men from BBP Troops A, B and C were enrolled to escort the Pioneer Column, this force being officially designated the "British South Africa Company Police."⁴ BBP Troops E, F and G camped until July 1892 at the Macloutsie river as a backup in case of strong native resistance. W.A. Atkinson was a member of Troop G (see part 2).

The BBP later participated in the First Matabele War (1893) and the Shangani Patrol (November-December 1893); and are reported to have been the first armed force to use Maxim automatic machine guns in skirmishes (Figure 4). In 1895/6, a few BBP men were captured while participating in the Jameson Raid.⁵

The BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA POLICE was formed on or about October 8th, 1896, by an amalgamation of BECHUANALAND BORDER POLICE (Division I), MATABELELAND MOUNTED POLICE (Division II)⁶ and MASHONALAND MOUNTED POLICE (Division III).⁷

The RHODESIA FIELD FORCE was an Imperial corps of approximately 5000 soldiers under the command of Lt. General Sir Frederick Carrington, KCMG KCB. The corps was established at the request of the British South African Company, and the troops assembled from many different parts of the world. They arrived in Beira, Mozambique, early April and into May 1900. Initially, they were not allowed to disembark as Portugal had declared itself a neutral party in the Second Anglo-Boer War. However, with the occupation of Bloemfontein, and taking into account the diplomatic pressure that was being brought to bear by the British on Lisbon, the order to prevent disembarkation of the troops was rescinded.

Rhodesia was only 10 years old when the Anglo-Boer war broke out in October 1899, and its European population numbered less than 4,000. Yet, it is said that more than one-third of the males in that population saw service in the South African Republic (Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek, ZAR). They were in three units: the Mashonaland (No. 3) and Matabeleland (No. 2) Divisions of the BSAP; the Southern Rhodesia Volunteers (SRV), and the Rhodesia Regiment (RR).

Their initial role was defensive. Some 500 guarded the drifts over the Limpopo and Crocodile rivers, and were engaged in numerous skirmishes in the Tuli area when engaged by a force of between 1,300 and 2,000 Boers from Pietersburg. When the Limpopo came down in flood in December 1899, the Boers withdrew, never to return.

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Endnotes

1.This summary of the Bechuanaland Border Police was written in 2008 as part of a survey of the Atkinson Correspondence, but was never published because of the lack of positive outcomes. It is here slightly edited by the author of Part 2 and some illustrations included.

2.Born Cheltenham, England 23 August 1844; died Cheltenham 22 March 1913.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Carrington

3.W. Ellerton Fry, former Secretary and Computer of the Royal Observatory, Cape Town and Lieutenant-Intelligence Officer of the British South Africa Company's Expeditionary Force, documented this journey in writing, photograph and diagram. In Murray (1891, pg. 167-192), he includes a hand-drawn map of the route taken from Macloutsie River to Fort Salisbury between June - September, 1890. Some of his exceptional photographs were published as a collection entitled Fry, William Ellerton, Occupation of Mashonaland: Views by W. Ellerton Fry, unknown publisher, October 1891. The book is exceptionally rare, numbering of the order of a dozen surveying copies world-wide (see note 4 for a reprint of the book).

4. Nominal Rolls of those members of the BSAC Police who escorted the Pioneer Column was published in 1982 and named Headquarters Officers & Staff numbered 24; A Troop, 56; B Troop, 58; C Troop, 36; Transport Troop, 12; Civilians, 37. The following remark is made in the text: "Although members of D and E Troops played an important role and were entitled to inclusion in the British South Africa Company's 1890 Pioneer Column Medal Roll, the fact that they did not march with the Pioneers explains their exclusion." See Fry, William Ellerton, *Occupation of Mashonaland: Views by W. Ellerton Fry*. With the addition of maps, new text and captions; biography and a bibliography prepared by Peter McLaughlin, Books of Zimbabwe, Bulawayo, 1982. The Pioneer Column Roll is also given by Johnson (1940). The postmaster at Macloutsie, J.E. Symons (reprint 2002) mentions Troops E, F, and G as being stationed at Macloutsie in 1892, but not Troop D.

5. The Jameson Raid (December 29, 1895 - January 2, 1896). Reeland, Charles John Headingham; Sergt. Greaves, Cecil Goldsmid; Cpl, Dobson, Joseph; Lance-Sergt, Newik, Henry - G Troop.

6. This unit was raised and equipped after the Matabele War of 1893, when the columns were disbanded on arrival at Bulawayo. Lieutenant W. Bodle raised 150 men to form the nucleus of the unit.

7. This unit was raised and equipped after the Matabele War of 1893. It was organised on the basis of a small cavalry regiment, which was supported by an establishment of African Auxiliaries. It also took part in the Jameson Raid.



Figure 1: Group of officers of the Bechuanaland Border Police with the commanding officer Col. Carrington in the centre at Macloutsie, Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1892. Clockwise from top to left: Lieut. The Hon. D.H. Marsham; J. Walford; Dr. Vigne; A. Wright; Capt. Molyneux; Capt. Greener; Capt. The Hon. C.J. Coventry; Capt. Sitwell, 5th Fusiliers; Col. Sir F. Carrington, K.C.M.G.; Major R. Grey 6th Drs; Capt. S.D. Browne, R.A. None of these appear to have been part of the initial Pioneer Column neither in the pioneer nor the BBS troops. Copy of original photo in the collection of General Sir Sam Browne, V.C. Copyright Afrilibia Ltd, 2004.

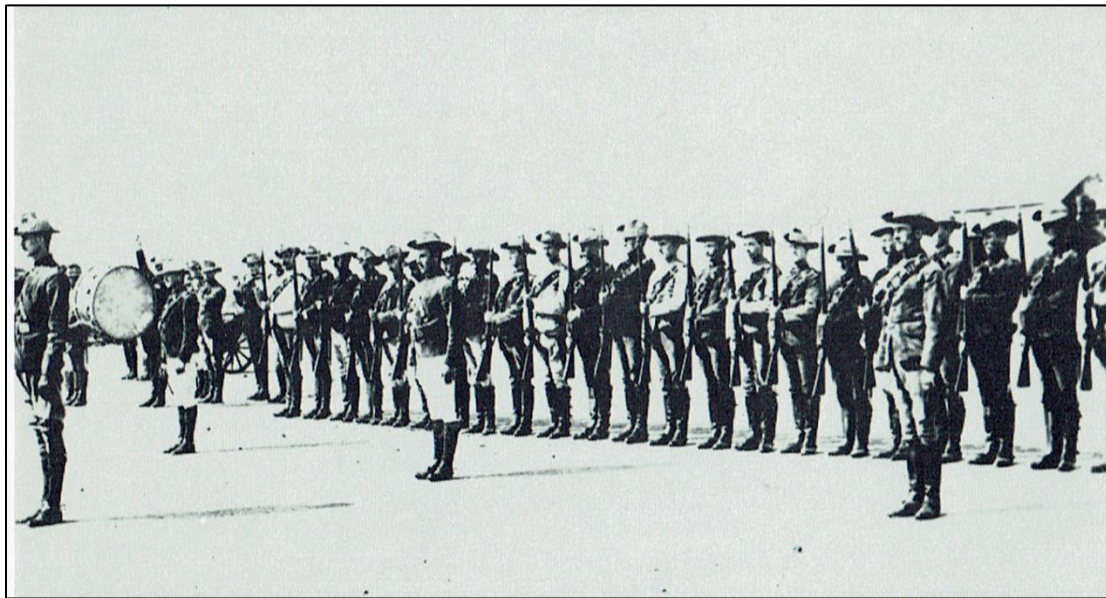
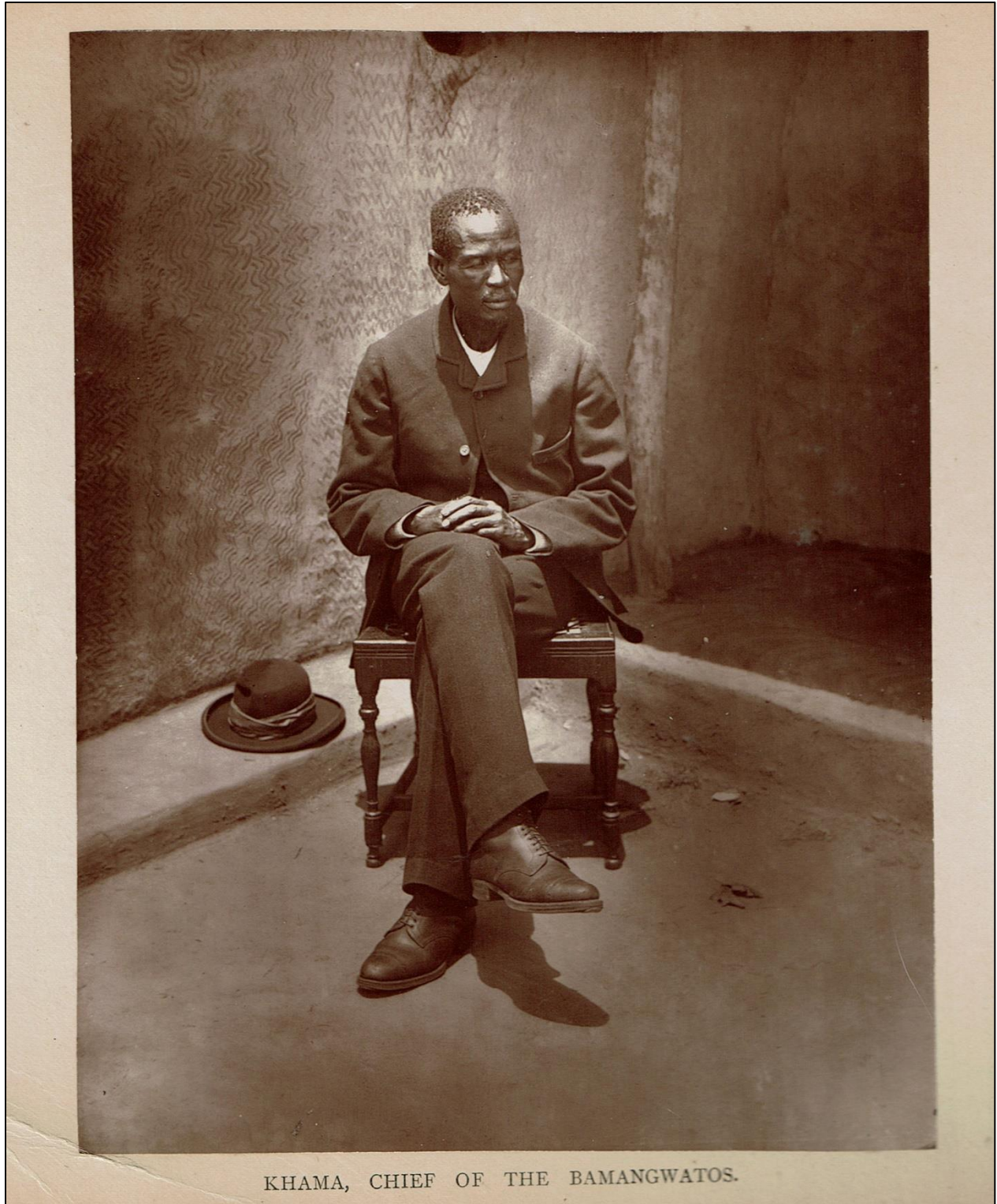


Figure 2: Upper: Group of Bechuanaland Border Police troopers on an Ogden cigarette card. Note the individual uniforms, except for boots and a slouch hat. All are well armed with rifles and an ammunition bandolier.

Lower Group: Bechuanaland Border Police on parade. Note what may be a Maxim machine gun in the left background. From Gon (1984).



KHAMA, CHIEF OF THE BAMANGWATOS.

Figure 3: Khama, Chief of the Bamangwato at Palapye in 1890. Photo by W. Ellerton Fry likely taken after the pioneer force was disbanded on September 30, 1890 and he returned to the Cape passing Palapye.



Figure 4: A former trooper of the Bechuanaland Border Police acknowledges in 1897 that he has received a medal by the British South Africa Company for his contribution to the Matabeleland campaign in 1893. The silver medal was sanctioned by Queen Victoria in 1896 and granted to military personnel. Inset shows an example of the medal's reverse with the *Matabeleland 1893* inscription.

CGH and Bechuanaland. The Atkinson Correspondence: Part 2. The Correspondence and Census

Peter Thy

The Correspondence

A group of covers mailed to a trooper with the Bechuanaland Border Police (BBP) during 1891-1893 are known to exist. These are here referred to as the *Atkinson Correspondence*. They are all addressed by the same handwriting and are all, except one, mailed from East-London. The exception is an early cover mailed from the Salt River located near Cape Town. The first early group of covers is addressed to *W.A. Atkinson, G Troop, Bechuanaland Border Police, Macloutsie, British Bechuanaland, S. Africa*. The second later group is addressed to *Camp Gaberones, Southern Protectorate, S. Africa*.

There are at present a total of 20 covers known (Table 1). The first was mailed in May 1891 to Macloutsie in the northern part of the Protectorate near the border to Matabeleland and the last was mailed in April 1893 to Camp Gaberones in the southern part of the Protectorate. The total duration of the correspondence (Figure 1) was nearly two years with an average frequency of one per month (one per 33 days); however with a couple of longer intervening durations suggesting that a few covers may be missing from the listing: Sept. 1891, Jan. 1892, and July 1892. A few of the covers to Macloutsie bear notations of the date of reply. Based on these few covers, the Trooper promptly responded within 2-9 days, but with an exception of the July 1892 letter that took him 42 days to respond. Since this letter must have arrived at Macloutsie around the time he was relocated to Gaberones (June-August 1892) it could have missed him at Macloutsie and had to be redirected to Gaberones.

There is another interesting observation that can be made. The first group of covers was addressed to Trooper Atkinson. In November, he is addressed to as Lance Corporal (Lcpl) Atkinson. The last letter is addressed to Mr. Atkinson. This change illustrated his status with the border police and also suggests that his East-London correspondent was aware that he in April 1893 might have left the service and was on his way home. This last letter in contrast to the previous bears an 'Immediate' notation in the upper left corner showing that the sender expected that time could be crucial and that the recipient might already be on his way home before the letter reached Gaberones. Interesting, this letter is also the only one with a return address (Figure 2) anticipating that the letter might have had to be returned to the sender.

When this study was started in 2008, it was assumed that the correspondence was between a father and a son who had been unable to resist the temptation of promised adventure in the frontier of southern Africa and had left family, friends, and perhaps a good job in East-London. Attempts to locate decedents of the family in East-London has proven furtive in part because of the large number of people in East-London and area named Atkinson.¹ Further attempt to locate a nominal roll of Troop G also was also a failure, although the members of the A, B, and C Troops that marched with the Pioneer Column are listed in the Books of Zimbabwe's 1982 edition of Fry's *Occupation of Mashonaland*.² Johnson (1940) also listed the nominal roll for the BBS troops that marched with the Pioneer Column, but not the stationary companies at Macloutsie.

As noted, the last mailed cover from April 1893, recently discovered, bears a return address (Figure 2). This shows that the sender was a 'J. Doherty, ? Department, East-London, S. Africa' (cover 20). The type of department is subject to an interpretation. However, it has been pointed out to me that the unclear scribbles may be interpreted as 'Svc's' being short for Services.³ Despite 'service' or not, there are not likely to have been many 'Departments' in East-London at that time for the sender to be able to assume that the Post Office would be able to locate the right department. Most likely there was only one Department in the town and that was part of the Municipal Services or City Hall. The plausible interpretation is that Trooper Atkinson worked at the City Hall when deciding to go north to seek adventures and had to leave his co-worker and best friend behind. It is possible that he had left with a leave of absence for one or two years and thus had to return at the time when he finally did. The alternative possibility that 'J. Doherty' could have been his girlfriend is assumed unlikely considering the times that the letters were written.

The Border Police

Calls for volunteers for the Bechuanaland Border Police and later the Pioneer Column may have circulated among interested parties as early as late 1889, when the Pioneer Column was being planned, initially to assemble at Mafeking. The Border Police was known as an elite organization and its recruitments was primary directed towards affluent and

well-educated young men, like Mr. Atkinson, and with a need for adventures. For this reason a fair number of the men that had originally joined the Warren Expedition and had not seen any military actions, also joined the Border Police.

Two groups of the Bechuanaland Border Police troops affiliated with the Pioneers. One group made up of Troops A to C rode with the Pioneers into Mashonaland. The other group made up of Troops D to G accompanied the Pioneers northward until Macloutsie where they camped so as to act as a backup in case strong resistance from the Matabele should be encountered. Trooper Atkinson likely arrived at Mafeking where he was late for the Pioneers and had to sign up with the Border Police and there awaited further available northward transport opportunities. He would have had to sign up for at least a one-year service at 6 shillings per day (Gon, 1984). For a two-year service his pay would have amounted to over £200, probably in part spent at the camp canteens (Figure 3), where alcohol would be served to the Europeans. The life at Macloutsie must have been leisurely and occupied with basic training and construction of the camp (Figure 4), but with the main time occupied by waiting for the action, that like for the Warren Expedition recruits, never materialized.

The Census

The covers for which illustrations are available are shown in Figures 5 to Figures 13 and a summary of all known covers is given in Table 1. The majority of covers has not been seen by the writer, but was included with the details in a listing made by Johnny Barth of covers in his then collection 15 years ago.

The covers appear to have reached the philatelic market earlier than 1990, judging from the first known descriptions of three of the covers that appeared in the *Runnerpost* in 1991-1996.⁴ They eventually became parts of the collections of David Wessely, Brian Trotter, and Johnny Barth. The Wessely and Trotter collections have been sold by auction, the latter most recently by Spink. The Barth collection is believed to have been sold by private treaty a few years ago, but its whereabouts today is not known. The present summary of the covers is based on the available existing auction and other sales records in addition to the writer's own collection and the spreadsheet kindly supplied by Johnny Barth in 2008.

The Postal Rates

With the exception of the cover from Salt River (4d) (cover 2), the rest are all franked by 2d, as a single stamp or as two 1d stamps. Up to May 1892, the letters are untaxed. Between May and June 1892, the letters are being taxed an additional 2d to be paid on delivery in Macloutsie. Between Oct. and Nov. 1892, the letters are now being taxed 4d to be paid on delivery in Gaberones.

These rate changes may have occurred without the sender and the Post Office in East-London being aware of them. The Trooper in Bechuanaland clearly had not informed his correspondent that he was being charged a substantial amount of money to receive the letters. This is a surprise considering that he had communicated his change in the police rank and also his locations. It is also a surprise that the clerks at the Post Office in East-London apparently were not aware of the real postal rates to the frontier of the Bechuanalands and into Mashonaland. It is certainly possible that the letter writer dropped the letters in receptacles without interacting with the postal clerks and thus that the tax markings would have been done in East-London. The primitive style of the markings (Figure 10), however, does not match well to those used in the Cape at the time.⁵ They far better compare to markings applied in Bechuanaland, probably in Mafeking where the northern mails were sorted. If this were correct, it would mean that the East-London Post Office and the letter writer did not know the frontier postal rates and their developments.

A Postal Convention was in 1884 signed between the Cape Colony and the newly established Crown Colony of British Bechuanaland. This allowed for letters to be exchanged between the two convention signees as well as other southern African colonies and republics at a uniform inland rate. These inland letter rates were, in 1891 when the story begins, and throughout the period covered by the Atkinson letters, 2d per ½-ounce or fraction thereof.⁶ The postal convention would have taken the letters to Mafeking, but not necessarily into the Protectorate and Mashonaland.

In 1888, a postal service was organized carried by native runners between British Bechuanaland, to the Protectorate, and finally into what was then known as the Transprotectorate. Letters addressed to the Bechuanaland Protectorate were required prepaid by the Cape and British Bechuanaland rate and a further charge would be made on delivery (2d in the Protectorate, 4d further north of the Protectorate and the Transprotectorate).⁷ The police camp at Macloutsie was located just outside the Transprotectorate. The runner post was short-lived and was soon being replaced by weekly mule-drawn carts of the Bechuanaland Exploration Company reaching Palachwe/Palapye. This was about 70 miles

from the main temporary encampment of the Pioneer Column on the southern banks of the Macloutsie River and later also the camp for the Bechuanaland Border Police (see Symons, 2022).

The massive increase in mail volume to and from the Pioneer Column forced the British South Africa Company to organize a service from Palapye to Macloutsie and onward to Tuli within Mashonaland, following the Column's northward progress.⁸ Eventually, this service was picked up, firstly in March 1891 by the Bechuanaland Exploration Company and later by the Wirsing Brothers in March 1893, organized by the Postmaster of British Bechuanaland at Vryburg. A post office was opened at Macloutsie in June 1890, however, already in 1893, the Macloutsie Post Office was downgraded to an agency as a result of the main sorting of the Mashonaland mails being transferred to Vryburg. See Symons (2022) for a narrative of the functioning of the Macloutsie Post Office written by its postmaster during a short but critical period of 1892.

In May 1891, the postal rate to the Protectorate was thus made up of 2d for the internal rate to British Bechuanaland and an additional 2d for delivery in the Protectorate to be collected from the recipient. This delivery fee of 2d was clearly not being collected for the first year of the correspondence until June 1892. From the letter mailed June 1892 and until October, a 2d tax was marked on the letters, being the Protectorate delivery fee and presumably collected. On November 17th, 1892, the delivery fees in the Protectorate were abolished and could now be prepaid, meaning that a letter from the Cape to be delivered in the Protectorate should be franked by 4d, being 2d for British Bechuanaland and 2d for the Protectorate.⁹ The letters from November 24th and forthcoming are thus correctly taxed by 4d being double the deficiency. It is still a puzzle why the East-London post office and the letter writer were not aware of this change and that letters were accepted for half a year at the old rate.

The anomaly still, however, persists that the 2d delivery fees were not collected between May 1891 and May 1892 for the mail to Macloutsie. Drysdall and Collis (1990, 112ff) delve into this⁽¹⁰⁾ suggesting that the 'company' (here the Chartered British South Africa Company) would have picked up the surcharge for delivery within its territories in the Protectorate and Mashonaland. This would probably have been arranged when the mail was assembled in Mafeking and thus was not individually taxed as other mail to the Protectorate would have been. This practice was discontinued during May-June 1892 probably because of a strong increase of mail volume. The question is obviously whether the company would have attempted to collect the fees when the mail was delivered to the pioneers and police members taking part in the invasion. However, Symons⁽¹¹⁾ describes during his tenure at the Macloutsie Post Office how he carefully marked the delivery surcharge on the mail. He collected the surcharge fees on the local deliveries and dispatched daily an invoice for the transit of the Mashonaland mail to the Tuli Post Office that would be paid by check once a month. It is probable that the description by Symons dates to after the time the company ceased picking up the Protectorate delivery fees, since his article first appeared in Post Office Magazine in 1893 after he had left Macloutsie at the end of 1892 for his new assignment as Postmaster of Vryburg.

The Atkinson correspondence thus suggests that the early Protectorate mail from the Cape was locally charged a transit fee of 2d at delivery. Until May-June 1892, the company picked up this fee as a service to the members of the invasion force and police. After this date the mail was taxed the Protectorate 2d delivery fee on delivery. In October-November the delivery fee was abolished and mail from the Cape could now be prepaid at the full amount of 4d. Since the letters from East-London continued arriving franked by 2d, they were taxed twice the deficiency at 4d, following standard U.P.U. regulations.

The Routes

During the time period of interest, the rail line had reached Vryburg in 1890 and construction was still ongoing toward Mafeking, first reached in 1894 (Figure 14). Further northward transport would have been by oxen or mule carriage. The letters from East-London were likely transported by rail via Queenstown toward De Aar and onward to Fourteen Streams where the mail until January 1892 was sorted and cancelled (Table 1). From February 1892, the mail was transferred to the Midland Traveling Post Office (TPO) probably in Rosmead or Naauwport and marked with a Midland Up canceller (Table 1). This is late, considered that the Midland TPO was established sometime in 1890 from Port Elizabeth to Cradock and extended to De Aar in March 1891 (Frescura, 2022). This now allowed the mail to bypass Fourteen Streams and to reach Vryburg where the mail was further sorted and cancelled (Table 1). The final sorting of the Protectorate mail was done in Mafeking to evaluate which delivery surcharge would apply (Protectorate 2d or Mashonaland 4d) and how to handle the further transport. The last couple of letters during March and April 1893 were also inspected in Kimberley (Table 1), perhaps reflecting that the mail now was sorted here before reaching Vryburg.

The Durations and Schedules

It took an average of 13 days for a letter posted at East-London to reach the frontier Macloutsie Camp and slightly less of 11 days to reach Fort Gaberones. By far the majority of this time was spent traveling with the coach line from Vryburg to Macloutsie amounting to an average of 9 days. This estimated duration slightly exceeds the nominated duration for the interior mail card leaving Vryburg on Monday mornings, passing Mafeking and Palachwe, and arriving at Macloutsie late Monday evenings (July 1890). Symons corroborates this arrival time, stating that the English and Colonial arrives once a week, the Tuli and Mashonaland mail arrives late Sunday night, and the down mail would leave on Tuesdays, thus leaving only Mondays for the arrival of the European and Colonial mail. The schedule in effect from 1890 is shown in Figure 15 from the British Bechuanaland Government Gazette.

Acknowledgement

Johnny Barth generously supplied a detailed listing of covers in his collection and Robin Pelteret assisted with an early phase of this project, now 15 years ago. It is my responsibility that it took so long to bring this forward to a better, although perhaps still incomplete understanding. Alan McGregor kindly supplied scans and information of covers that he had handled and Jan Stolk evaluated the tax markings.

Dimensions: typical covers measure 13.5 mm x 8 mm (covers 4, 5, 11, and 15) and 14.5 mm x 8 mm (cover 20).

Endnotes

1. Attempts by Robin Pelteret to contact decedents with the name Atkinson from the telephone directories of Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage, and East London, only garnered two negative responses and several returned letters from the post office due to unknown addresses.

2. Further attempt by Robin Pelteret to locate the roll for the Bechuanaland Border Police Troop G at the Botswana National Archive also were negative.

3. This was suggested by Steve Hannath, South African Philately Club,
<https://southafricanphilatelyclub.com/forum/topic/trooper-atkinson-correspondence#postid-3458>

4. Described in the Runnerpost by Campbell and Trotter, 1991, whole no. 23, page 434; by Mike George, 1995, whole no. 38, page 824; and by Drysdall and Catterall, 1996, whole no. 45, page 1092.

5. Goldblatt (1984, p. 156-157); Jan Stolk, personal communication (March, 2022).

6. Goldblatt (1984), Drysdall and Collis (1990), and Drysdall (1994).

7. Transprotectorate refers to a disputed territory between Bechuanaland and Mashonaland bordered by Macloutsie and Shashi Rivers (Bulawayo, Tuli, and Tati) to which both the Ngwato (Khama) and the Matabele (Lobengula) claimed the rights. The Macloutsie Camp was located on the southern bank of the Macloutsie River and thus located in the Protectorate proper (Sillery, 1965, 81ff).

8. The notice headed “*Protectorate Post*” and with a introduction statement that reads “*It is hereby noticed 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 Rate of Postage will come into force.*” Further it is mentioned that postal agencies are being established in Kanye, Molepolole, Shoshong, Tati, and Gubulawayo. Note that Shoshong, the administrative centre for the Ngwato, today has moved to Serowe and Shoshong having been abolished, the functions of Tati has today been taken over by Francistown, and that Gubulawayo is present day Bulawayo.

9. The 1892 postal notice headed “*Rates of Postage in the Bechuanaland Protectorate*” published by the Postmaster-General of British Bechuanaland states in the introductory comments “*It is hereby notified that on and from the 18th November, 1892, the following rates of postage will be levied on correspondences posted in the British Bechuanaland Protectorate and the Post Offices of Tati and Bulawayo, in the District known as the Trans-Protectorate, and that from the same date charges hitherto levied on the delivery of mail matter addressed to Offices in the above named*

Territories will be abolished except in the case of correspondence insufficiently prepaid at the rates chargeable in the country where such correspondence is posted.”

10. Drysdall and Collis (1990) quote an April 1892 letter from the Kimberley Post Office to London saying: “*At present there is no recognised charge to the Company’s territories. Letters are franked at the rate of 2d per ½ oz. to British Bechuanaland and a further charge of 2d per ½ oz. in made at Macloutsi upon all letters carried through the Protectorate. The Bechuanaland Government collects this from the Company who is expected to recover it from the addressees in Mashonaland.*”

11. Symons describes in 1892 his duties as Postmaster at the Macloutsie Post Office: “*The mail from Vryburg, including English and Colonial mails, arrives once a week, and up to the end of July brought me a large amount of work, as all the Mashonaland mails were made up on this office; running from 8 to 13 bags, and containing some 3,000 to 4,000 items, including letters, papers, parcels, and book-packets, each item carrying an “additional postage” debit; letters 2d. per ½ oz.; papers 1d. per 4 ozs.; parcels and book-packets 3d. per lb. (...) all the items had to be checked to avoid errors; (...) I used to empty all the mail bags on to the floor, placing the papers, parcels, and book-packets in distinct heaps, and the letters on the table; the letters I would first check, then stamp and sort (...), and pacify the “madding crowd” by delivering them first; then I would check all the other items and sort them, and nearly always managed to deliver the whole local mail under three hours; and I can assure you I worked hard, (...) I had to count the letters and weigh those which were over a ½ oz. to arrive at the correct number of rates, and in the same way I had to deal with the papers, &c., and their rates. Items originating in the Protectorate had to be carefully put on one side, as they were not charged with additional postage.*” See Symons (2022) for the full text.

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Table 1. The Atkinson Correspondence, 1891-1893, East-London to Bechunaland Protectorate

No	Figure	Origin	Date	Type	Franking (d)	Taxed (d)	Title	Addressed to	Midland Up	Fourteen Streams	Kimberley	Vryburg	Mafeking	Gaberones	Macloutsie	SEEN
1		East-London	MY 16 91	H	2	-	-	Macloutsie		MY 20 91		MY 20 91	MY 26 91		JU 4 91	NO
2		Salt River	JU 29 91	B	4	-	-	Macloutsie				JY ?? 91	JY 7 91		JY 14 91	NO
3		East-London	JY 8 91	H	2	-	-	Macloutsie		JY 11 91		JY 11 91	JY 14 91		JY 21 91	NO
4	5	East-London	AU 1 91	H	2		Trooper	Macloutsie		AU 5 91		AU 5 91	AU 7 91		AU 17 91	YES
5	6	East-London	NO 17 91	H	2		Lcpl	Macloutsie		NO 20 91		NO 20 91	NO 24 91		NO 29 91	YES
6	7	East-London	DE 13 91	H	2		Lcpl	Macloutsie		DE 16 91			DE 13 91		DE 27 91	YES
7		East-London	DE 29 91	H	2		-	Macloutsie		JA 1 92		JA 1 92	JA 5 92		JA 10 92	NO
8		East-London	FE 26 92	H	2		-	Macloutsie	FE 27 92			FE 28 92	MR 1 92		MR 6 92	NO
9	8	East-London	MR 18 92	H	2		Lcpl	Macloutsie				MR 20 92	MR 22 92		YES	YES/NO
10		East-London	AP 1 92	H	2		-	Macloutsie	AP 2 92			AP 3 92	AP 5 91		AP 10 92	NO
11	9	East-London	MY 13 92	H	2		Lcpl	Macloutsie	MY 14 92			MY 15 92	MY 17 92		MY 22 92	YES
12	10	East-London	JU 3 92	H	2	2	Lcpl	Macloutsie				JU 6 92	JU 10 92		JU 19 92	YES/NO
13		East-London	AU 12 92	C	2	2	-	Fort Gaberones	AU 13 92			AU 14 92	AU 22 92			NO
14		East-London	SP 2 92	C	2	2	-	Fort Gaberones				SP 4 92	SP 12 92		SP ? 92	NO
15	11	East-London	OC 7 92	C	2	2	Lcpl	Fort Gaberones	OC 9 92			OC 11 92	OC 17 92		? OC 92	YES
16	10	East-London	NO 25 92	H	2	4	Lcpl	Fort Gaberones	NO 26 92			NO 27 92				YES/NO
17	12	East-London	DE 30 92	H	2	4	Lcpl	Fort Gaberones				JA 1? ??	JA 9 92	10 JA 92		YES
18		East-London	FE 10 93	H	2	4	-	Fort Gaberones	FE 11 93			FE 12 93	FE 20 93	FE 21 93		NO
19	10	East-London	MR 24 93	H	2	4	Lcpl	Fort Gaberones	MR 25 93		MR 26 93	AP 11 93!	AP 3 93	AP 4 93		YES/NO
20	13	East-London	AP 12 93	H	2	4	Mr	Fort Gaberones	AP 13 93		AP 14 93	AP ? 9?	AP 17 93			YES

- 1 Barth Cape Collection
- 2 Barth Cape Collection
- 3 Barth Cape Collection
- 4 Spink 2021 Greca No. 21030 (lot 63)
- 5 Provenance unknown
- 6 Argyl Etkin 2010 Wessely sale (lot 746)
- 7 Barth Cape Collection
- 8 Barth Cape Collection
- 9 Spink 2008 Sattin No. 8029 (lot 12); Spink No. 4001 (lot 62); Spink No. 3032 (lot 58)
- 10 Barth Cape Collection
- 11 Spink 2021 No. e20040 (lot 38)
- 12 Barth Cape Collection
- 13 Barth Cape Collection
- 14 Barth Cape Collection
- 15 Spink 2021 Greca No. 21030 (Lot 61)
- 16 Barth Cape Collection
- 17 Alan McGregor VV493
- 18 Barth Cape Collection
- 19 Barth Cape Collection
- 20 Spink 2014 No. 14021 (lot 221); Spink 2021 Greca No. 21030 (lot 62)

H Hooded canceller
 B BONC 277
 C Circular dated canceller

No	Figure	Origin	Date	Type	Franking(d)	Taxed(d)	Title	Addressed to	Midland/Up	Fourteen/Streams	Kimberley	Vryburg	Mafeking	Gaberones	Macloutsie	SEEN
1		East-London	MY16/91	H	2	-	-	Macloutsie		MY20/91		MY20/91	MY26/91		JU14/91	NO
2		Salt River	JU29/91	B	4	-	-	Macloutsie				JY27/91	JY27/91		JY24/91	NO
3		East-London	JY28/91	H	2	-	-	Macloutsie		JY11/91		JY11/91	JY14/91		JY12/91	NO
4	5	East-London	AU17/91	H	2	-	Trooper	Macloutsie		AU15/91		AU15/91	AU17/91		AU17/91	YES
5	6	East-London	NO17/91	H	2	-	-	Macloutsie		NO20/91		NO20/91	NO24/91		NO29/91	YES
6	7	East-London	DE13/91	H	2	-	Lcpl	Macloutsie		DE16/91		DE13/91	DE13/91		DE27/91	YES
7		East-London	DE29/91	H	2	-	-	Macloutsie		JA17/92		JA17/92	JA15/92		JA10/92	NO
8		East-London	FE12/92	H	2	-	-	Macloutsie	FE17/92			FE18/92	MR11/92		MR16/92	NO
9	8	East-London	MR18/92	H	2	-	Lcpl	Macloutsie				MR20/92	MR22/92		YES	YES/NO
10		East-London	AP11/92	H	2	-	-	Macloutsie	AP12/92			AP13/92	AP15/91		AP10/92	NO
11	9	East-London	MY13/92	H	2	-	Lcpl	Macloutsie	MY14/92			MY15/92	MY17/92		MY12/92	YES
12	10	East-London	JU13/92	H	2	2	Lcpl	Macloutsie				JU16/92	JU10/92		JU19/92	YES/NO
13		East-London	AU12/92	C	2	2	-	Fort/Gaberones	AU13/92			AU14/92	AU12/92			NO
14		East-London	SP12/92	C	2	2	-	Fort/Gaberones				SP14/92	SP12/92	SP17/92		NO
15	11	East-London	OC17/92	C	2	2	Lcpl	Fort/Gaberones	OC19/92			OC11/92	OC17/92	OC19/92		YES
16	10	East-London	NO25/92	H	2	4	Lcpl	Fort/Gaberones	NO26/92			NO27/92				YES/NO
17	12	East-London	DE18/92	H	2	4	Lcpl	Fort/Gaberones				JAU17/92	JAU17/92	103A/92		YES
18		East-London	FE10/93	H	2	4	-	Fort/Gaberones	FE11/93			FE12/93	FE10/93	FE12/93		NO
19	10	East-London	MR12/93	H	2	4	Lcpl	Fort/Gaberones	MR15/93		MR16/93	AP11/93	AP11/93	AP11/93		YES/NO
20	13	East-London	AP12/93	H	2	4	Mr	Fort/Gaberones	AP13/93		AP14/93	AP17/93	AP17/93			YES

1 BarthiCapeCollection
 2 BarthiCapeCollection
 3 BarthiCapeCollection
 4 Spink2021GrecalNo.1030(lot63)
 5 ProvenanceUnknown
 6 Argyletkin2010WesselySale(lot746)
 7 BarthiCapeCollection
 8 BarthiCapeCollection
 9 Spink2008SattiniNo.18029(lot12);SpinkNo.18001(lot62);SpinkNo.18032(lot58)
 10 BarthiCapeCollection
 11 Spink2021No.20040(lot38)
 12 BarthiCapeCollection
 13 BarthiCapeCollection
 14 BarthiCapeCollection
 15 Spink2021GrecalNo.1030(lot61)
 16 BarthiCapeCollection
 17 AlanMcGregorWV493
 18 BarthiCapeCollection
 19 BarthiCapeCollection
 20 Spink2014No.14021(lot221);Spink2021GrecalNo.1030(lot62)

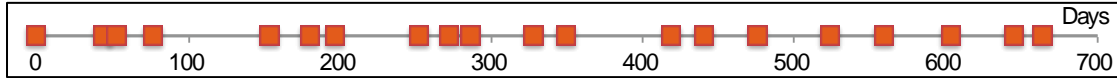


Figure 1: Frequency of letters from East-London to the Trooper in Bechuanaland during a two-year period between 1891 and 1893

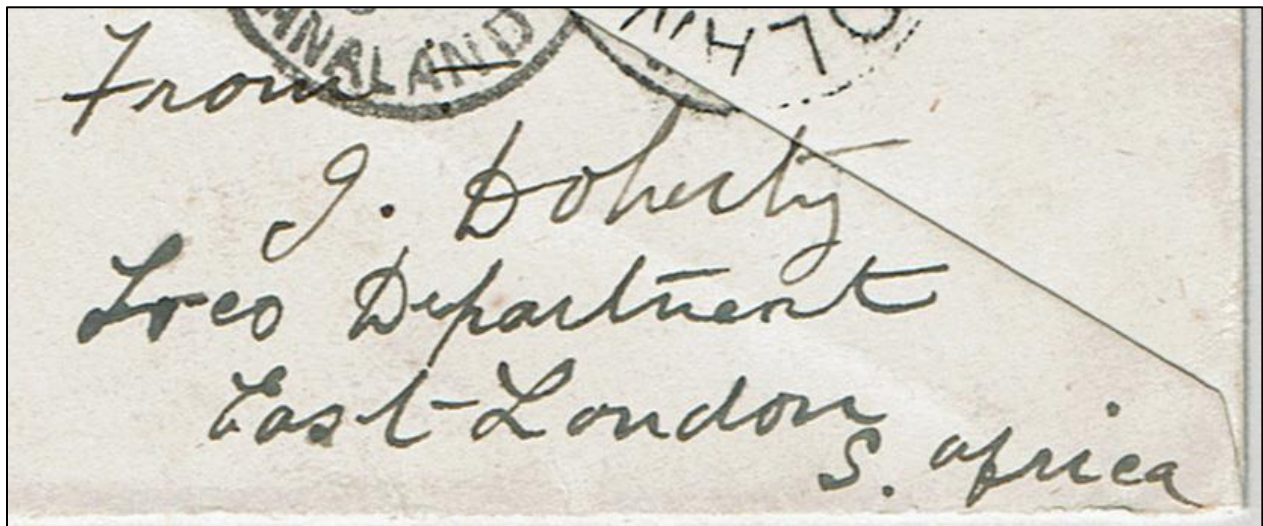


Figure 2: The return address on the last cover from April 1893 (Figure 13)



Figure 3: Two examples of metal canteen tokens circulating at the Bechuanaland Border Police camp at Gaberones (one penny and one shilling tokens are also known to exist)



Figure 4: 'Northumberland House' Captain Sitwell's headquarter at Macloutsie around 1892. Reproduced from Proud (1996, p. 314)



Figure 5: Cover 4



Figure 6: Cover 5



Figure 7: Cover 6



Figure 8: Cover 9



Figure 9: Cover 11



Figure 10: Covers 19, 12, and 16 from top to bottom



Figure 11. Cover 15



Figure 12: Cover 17



Figure 13: Cover 20 with return address

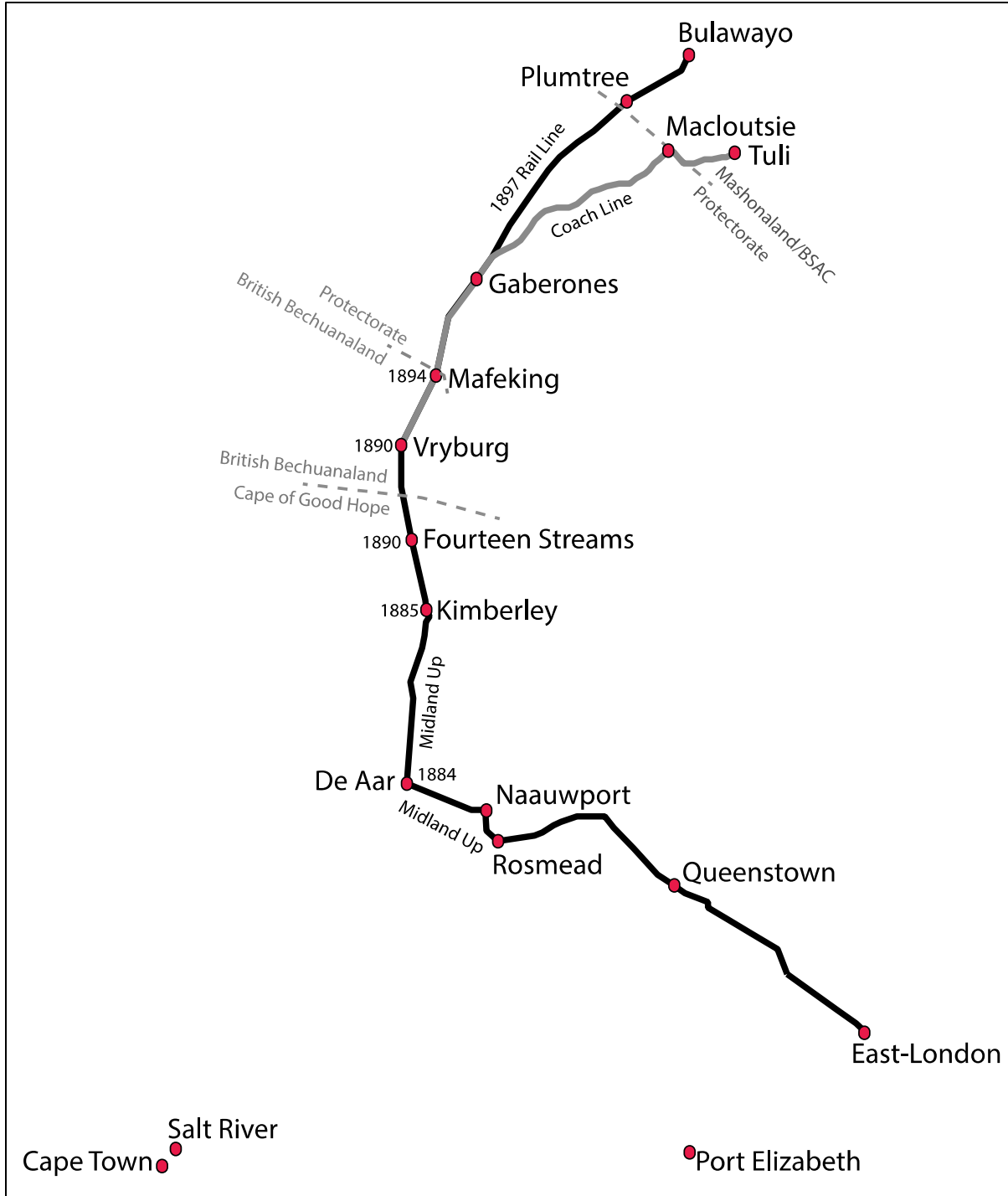


Figure 14: Schematic illustration of the mail routes during 1890-1893 with locations mentioned in the text. Years refer to the date of arrival of the rail line.

TIME TABLE

OF THE

BECHUANALAND AND INTERIOR MAIL CART SERVICE.

VRYBURG TO MAFEKING, PALACHWE AND MACLOUTSIE.

UP							DOWN.								
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY		SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Leave Vryburg		9 a.m.			9 a.m.			Leave Macloutsie			12 noon.				
Arrive Setlagoli		7 p.m.			7 p.m.			Arrive Palachwe				6 p.m.			
Leave „		7.30 p.m.			7.30 p.m.			Leave „				7 p.m.			
Arrive Mafeking			9 a.m.			9 a.m.		Arrive Palla					8 a.m.		
Leave „			4 p.m.					Mochudi						6 p.m.	
Arrive Boulder Pits				5 a.m.				Gaberones						Midnight	
Arrive Ramoutaa				1 p.m.				Ramout-a	6 a.m.						
„ Gaberones				9 p.m.				Boulder Pits	2 p.m.						
Leave Mochudi					7 a.m.			Arrive Mafeking		6 p.m.					
„ Palla						7 p.m.		Leave „	10 a.m.			7 a.m.			
Arrive Palachwe	12 noon.							Arrive Setlagoli	6.30 p.m.			3 p.m.			
Leave „	1 p.m.							Leave „	7 p.m.			3.30 p.m.			
Arrive Macloutsie		10 p.m.						Arrive Vryburg		10 a.m.			7 a.m.		

General Post Office,
Vryburg,
British Bechuanaland.

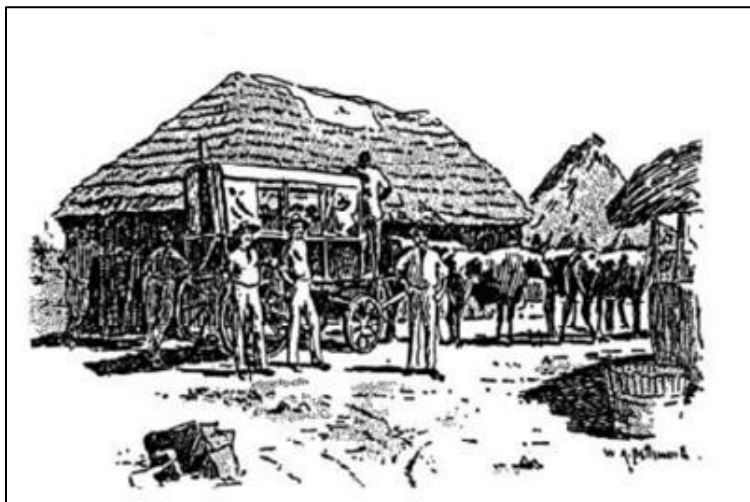
J. E. MIDDLETON,
Postmaster-General.

This cancels all previous Time-tables

Figure 15: Time Table for the Vryburg interior cart service between Vryburg and Macloutsie in effect from 1890. From the Government Gazette for British Bechuanaland (September 1890).

.oo00oo.

CGH and Bechuanaland: Macloutsie Post Office



The Mashonaland Post Cart at the Macloutsie Post Office (Thanks and Acknowledgements to Peter Thy: The Macloutsie Post Office and its postmaster Bechuanaland Protectorate 1892. J E Symons. 2nd Edition Ed. P Thy. Krone Publications 2002).

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Badge of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Police Force
Thanks and Acknowledgement to Bing for use of the above image

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