

The Bechuanalands

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Bechuanaland Cinderella Labels

Peter Thy, USA

Relatively few cinderella labels from Bechuanaland are known to exist. To our knowledge, the only labels are the WW2 War Fund stamp and the tuberculosis seals of the early 1960's.

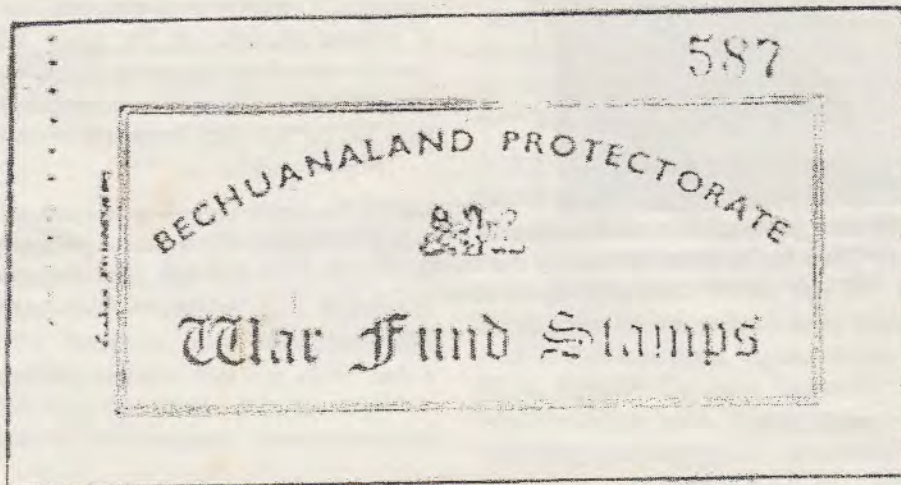
The War Fund stamp (Fig. 1) was issued probably during late 1939 or 1940. The purpose was to raise funds for the war effort. The stamp was produced by a Johannesburg printer in black, red and orange. The War Fund stamp was sold for 1d each in what appears to have been 2s6d booklets containing five panes each of six stamps arranged in two rows. The label is only known to exist in booklet panes. The full margin panes were approximately 10cm wide and 5.5cm high and were line perforated 13 (Fig. 1). Full booklet panes and booklets are so rare that we are unable to illustrate a full sheet. We can only reconstruct the panes from single marginal stamps like the one shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. War Fund stamp from the upper right corner of a booklet pane.



An apparently full booklet was sold in the Stephan Welz April 1982 sale. The front of the this booklet cover is shown in Figure 2 as taken from the auction catalog, lot 57. The printing of the booklet cover was done in red probably on white card. The text on the cover front reads "BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE / War Fund Stamps". To the left of the frame line was the printer's imprint - "Leader JOHANNESBURG". On the top right corner a serial number was applied (in black?). The only serial numbers seen are 581 and 655, suggesting that at least 21,000 stamps were printed. The back

Figure 2. War Fund stamp booklet cover.



cover had the same rectangular frame and inscription as the front, but was missing the printer's imprint and serial number. The cover and booklet panes were stitched together at the left (Fig. 2).

The War Fund stamp appears to have been made available in the Protectorate and is not uncommon on cover, although rarely tied to the cover by a postal canceler. Most covers are mailed from within the Protectorate or from the South African post office in Mafeking with dates being between May 1940 and February 1942 (Fig. 3).

The War Fund stamp is known with as large "V" for Victory overprinted or handstamped on the stamp. The similarity of the overprint suggests that the overprinting was made on whole booklet sheets; however, complete overprinted booklets or sheets have not survived. The handstamped overprint is known with double impression and can have been made on individual stamps. The overprinted stamp is seen on cover dated as early as 1942, which is rather early for proclaiming victory. It is thus probably that at least some War Fund stamps, with or without overprinted "V", may have been affixed at a later date after or during the end of the war. Because the War Fund stamps rarely are tied to cover, it is often not possible to assert their authenticity on covers.

A group of tuberculosis charity labels (of Christmas seals) were printed during four consecutive years from 1961 to 1964 (Fig. 4). The labels are inscribed B.P.A.P.T. (Bechuanaland Protectorate Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis or B.A.P.T. (Bechuanaland Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis). The design of all labels includes a Lorraine cross symbolizing the fight against tuberculosis.

The first label was from 1961 and shows as child facing a radiating cross. It is printed on blue paper in red and black. It

appears to have been issued in rouletted sheets of 25 (Fig. 5). The sheet shown in Figure 5 has two straight margins. Thus, it is possible that the labels were printed in sheets of 100 and were separated into four panes before being sold.

Figure 3. The War Fund stamp affixed to letter mailed from the South African post office in Mafeking.

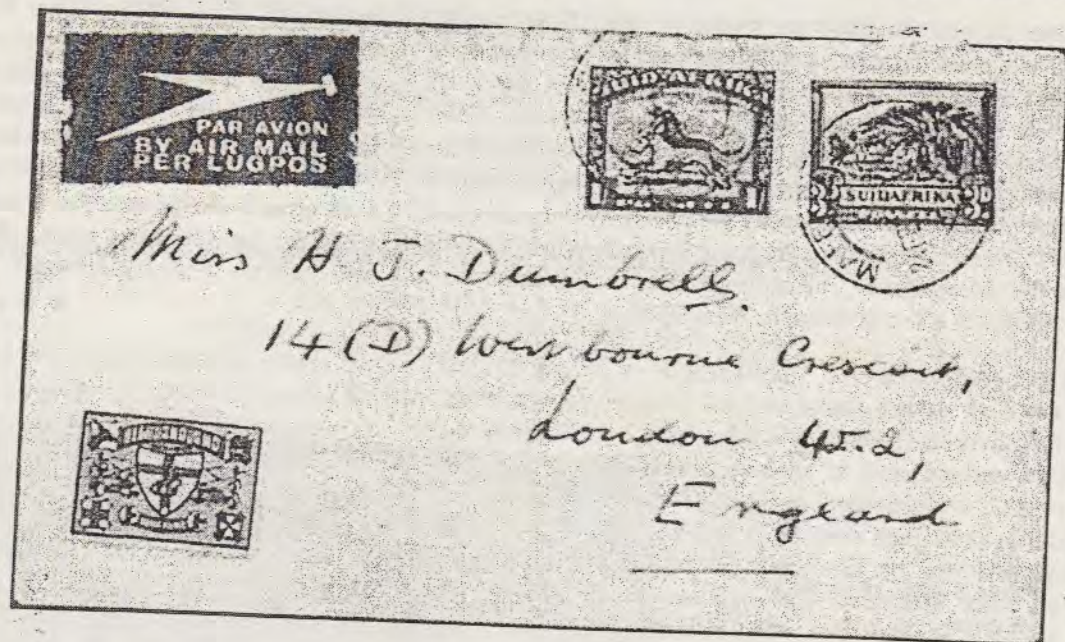


Figure 4. The Bechuanaland tuberculosis labels arranged left to right from 1961 to the 1964 label.

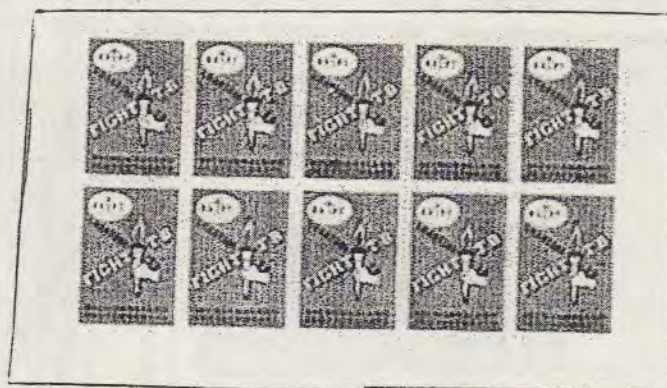


Figure 5. Sheet of the 1961 TB stamp.



The next label from 1962 was issued in 10-stamp, line perforated sheetlets (Fig. 6). The design shows a hand holding a torch and the inscription "Fight TB" in English and Setswana.

Figure 6. Sheetlet of the 1962 TB stamp.



The 1963 label was printed in black and red with a green background. The design shows a deer on a rock (Steenbok or Phuduhudu) and gives the year of issue as 1963. The label was printed in line perforated sheets of 30 (Fig. 7).

The last tuberculosis label was from 1964, printed in brown and red in a design very similar to the 1961 label. It was issued in line perforated sheets of 50 (Fig. 8).

No other tuberculosis labels are known to exist. Traditionally, the labels were released toward the end of the year and intended to be used on Christmas mail. However, labels on cover are very rarely seen, even more rarely than the WW2 War Fund stamp. Thus, it is possible that the majority of the labels did not reach the Protectorate from the printers (probably in South Africa), but were mostly picked-up by collectors and dealers. Nevertheless, there are some indications that they did reach the protectorate. The message in an aerogramme from Francistown to a stamp dealer in West Dprting

Springfield, USA, reads "Dear Sir, I have today despatched the Christmas seals for which you wrote on 31st December and 5th April. I sent them by sea mail because the cost by air mail would have been very high. I very much regret the delay in answering you..., but our seals have only just been issued..." The aerogramme is dated June 1961, say nine months after the seals should ideally have been received in Francistown to be ready for the Christmas mails. But did the other three seals also reach reach the Protectorate?

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Figure 7. Sheet of the 1963 TB stamp.



Figure 8. Sheet of the 1964 TB stamp.

