

Basutoland



1884 - 1966

Basutoland

Basutoland, the predecessor of present-day Lesotho, was a small British Crown colony that existed from 1884 to 1966. It had come into being in 1818 when Chief Moshoeshoe I started consolidating the remnants of various Sotho tribes which had been scattered in the "Mfecane", which was a series of inter-tribal wars dominated by the Zulu and Matabele. In 1824 he occupied the mountains of Lesotho as a defensive fortress where he established the Basuto Kingdom. The mountains of Lesotho are completely land-locked and are surrounded by South Africa from which much of territories' early history is derived, encompassing sporadic conflicts with both with British and Boer settlers over land. The culminating series of conflicts with the Boers (1856-1868), were incited by the Boers settling on traditional Basotho lands. By 1867, with much of the kingdom's land and fortresses taken in the ongoing conflict, the king, fearing defeat, once more appealed to the British High Commissioner for assistance. In January 1868, the Commissioner received authorisation to annexe Basutoland and on 12th March 1868 a proclamation declared the Basotho to be British subjects, Basutoland to be British territory and the Boers were ordered to leave. However, in February 1869, by the Convention of Aliwal North which defined the boundaries of the territory, the arable land west of the Caledon River (known as the "Lost Territory") was left in Boer hands, effectively reducing the kingdom to half its previous size.

After a period under the direct authority of the High Commissioner for South Africa, the territory was in November 1871, annexed to the Cape Colony. Rule by the Cape Colony proved unpopular and in 1879 a southern chief rose in revolt. When this was crushed and the chief killed in the fighting, the Basotho then started fighting amongst themselves over the division of his land. An attempt was made by the administration to disarm the Basotho, but this only resulted in the territory rising in revolt in the Gun War (1880-1881). Although a peace treaty was signed in 1881, sporadic fighting still continued.

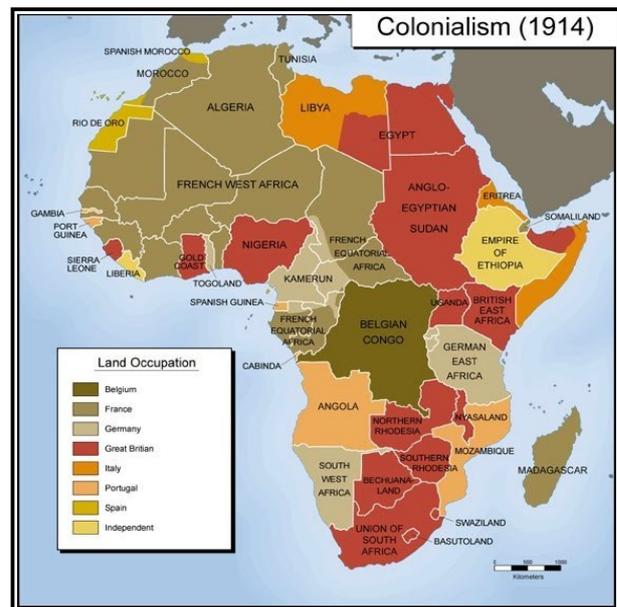
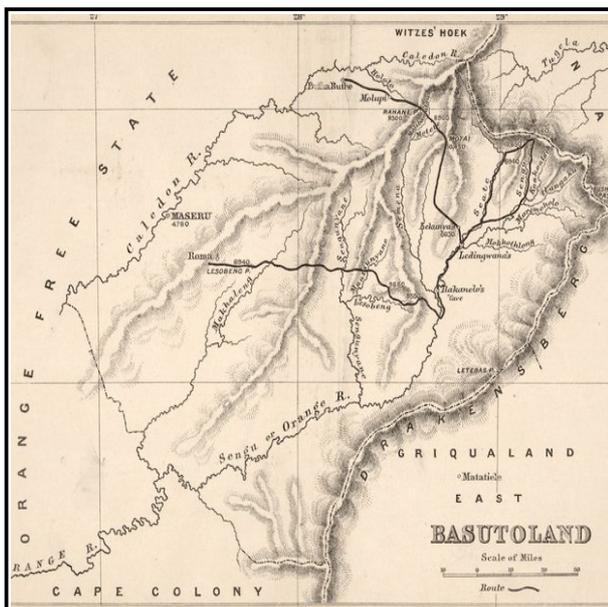
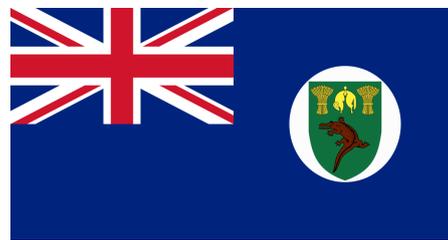
In 1884, with the Cape Colony's unpopular rule and its inability to control the territory, Basutoland became a Crown Colony with legislative and executive powers vested in the High Commissioner, but under control of a British Resident Commissioner. Initially the colony was governed by the Commissioner in conjunction with an Executive Council, but in pursuance of a policy encouraging self-governance, a National Council was established and held its first sitting in 1903. Resulting from a request in 1955 by the National Council to legislate its internal affairs, a new constitution was instituted in 1959 which gave Basutoland its first elected legislative assembly. This was followed in 1965 with general legislative elections under universal adult suffrage and the territory became self-governing. On the 4th October 1966 the Crown Colony of Basutoland attained independence from Great Britain as the Kingdom of Lesotho.

FLAG of Basutoland

Official Flag - British Union Jack



Unofficial Ensign of Basutoland



Total Area - 30,355 square kilometres



Basutoland

Postal History

Prior to the proclamation of Basutoland as Crown Colony, no postal service existed in the territory and the nearest Post Office was initially Graaff Reinet in the Cape Colony (300 miles away) from where mail was forwarded to Cape Town. Thereafter, at some stage during the 1840's, a Post Office was opened in Colesberg and this was followed in 1858, by a Post Office at Aliwal North, which meant a gradually shortening of the distance that post had to be first carried by hand.

When Basutoland was proclaimed a Crown Colony in 1868, it became necessary for an official postal service to be set up to serve the new government departments that were established with Maseru as their base. Initially the service was provided and administered by the Cape Colony, but following the repeal of the Act annexing the territory to the Cape Colony, it became the responsibility of the British High Commissioner to administer the postal service. During the period from 1868 to 1910, the stamps of the Cape of Good Hope were used for postage in the colony, but the stamps of the other states of Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal were also valid for postage in Basutoland. With the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, all provincial stamps were withdrawn and replaced by South African stamps issues, which were in use up to 1933 when the colony issued its first set of ten stamps inscribed with "Basutoland".

Stamp Issues of Basutoland

- 1933 - Definitive issue of King George V stamps. (10);
- 1933 - Postage Due stamps (1d, 2d). (2);
- 1934 - Official issue (4);
- 1935 - Silver Jubilee issue of King George V stamps (4);
- 1937 - Coronation of King George VI (3);
- 1938 - Definitive issue of King George VI stamps (11);
- 1945 - Victory. Three sets of overprinted South African stamps (3);
- 1947 - Royal Family Visit issue (4);
- 1948 - Silver Wedding issue (2);
- 1949 - 75th Anniversary of Universal Postage Union issue (4);
- 1953 - Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II issue (1);
- 1954 - Definitive issue of Queen Elizabeth II stamps (11);
- 1956 - Postage Due stamps (1d, 2d) (2);
- 1959 - Surcharged 2d stamp (1);
- 1959 - National Council of Basutoland issue (3);
- 1961 - Definitive issue of 1954 set with new currency surcharge (11);
- 1961 - Postage Due issue surcharged with new currency (1c, 1c, 5c) (3);
- 1961 - 1961-1963 -Definitive issue of 1954 set with new currency (11);
- 1961 - Postage Due issue surcharged with new currency (5c) (1);
- 1963 - Freedom from Hunger issue (1);
- 1963 - Red Cross Centenary issue (2);
- 1964 - Postage Due stamps (1c, 5c) (2);
- 1964 - Change of Watermark issue (5);
- 1965 - Self Government issue (4);
- 1965 - International Telecommunication Union Centenary issue (2);
- 1965 - International Co-operation Year issue (2);
- 1966 - Churchill Commemoration issue (4).

A total of 113 stamps were issued during the existence of the Crown Colony.



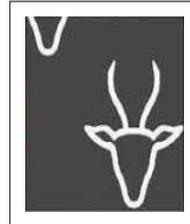
Basutoland

Watermarks used in the Stamp Issues of the Crown Colony of Basutoland.

Multiple Crown & Script CA



Multiple Springbok Heads



St Edward's Crown & Block CA



COAT of ARMS

Although in existence since 1868, the Crown Colony of Basutoland was only granted a Coat of Arms in 1951, by a Royal Warrant dated 20 March.

It consisted of a green shield incorporating a crocodile (the emblem of the northern Bakwena tribe of Chief Moshoeshoe) and above it a sheep flanked by two bushels of grain. The fact that crocodiles are not found in Basutoland is indicative of the king's tribal affiliation as the Bakwena/Bakoena Tribe are "those who venerate the crocodile".

The shield above is a winged Basotho walking shield which incorporates the Crown of St Edward, with an Assegai (short stabbing spear) and Knobkerrie (wooden club) behind the shield.

The Scroll underneath encapsulates the motto of the colony – KHOTSO KE NALA (Peace is Prosperity).

The heraldic description of the Coat of Arms is:

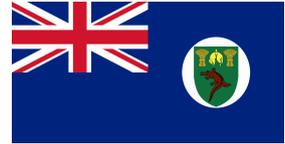
Arms: Vert, a crocodile proper and in chief a fleece between two garbs Or.

Crest: On a wreath of the colours, an arrow, a spear and a club in saltir charged with a Basuto shield charged with the Crown of St Edward.

Motto: KHOTSO KE NALA (Peace is Prosperity)

NATIONAL FLAG

The Crown Colony of Basutoland did not have its own official flag and used the British Union Jack until attaining independence in 1966. However, after the granting by Royal Warrant of an official Coat of Arms for the colony in 1951, an unofficial national ensign appears to have been adopted, displaying the arms of the territory in the fly of a dark blue British Ensign.



Basutoland

**King George V Definitive Issue.
1st December 1933.**

Watermark: Multiple Crown and Script C.A. Perf: 12½.



sg 1 sacc 1



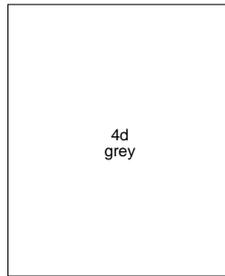
sg 2 sacc 2



sg 3 sacc 3



sg 4 sacc 4



sg 5 sacc 5



sg 6 sacc 6



sg 7 sacc 7



sg 8 sacc 8



sg 9 sacc 9



sg 10 sacc 10

Recess printing by Waterlow and Sons, Ltd.



Basutoland

George V Silver Jubilee. 4th May 1935.

Watermark: Multiple Crown and Script C.A. Perf: 13½ x 14.



sg 11

sacc 11



sg 12

sacc 12



sg 13

sacc 13



sg 14

sacc 14

Recess printing by De La Rue & Co, Ltd.

Coronation of King George VI. 12th May 1937.

Watermark: Multiple Crown and Script C.A. Perf: 14



sg 15

sacc 15



sg 16

sacc 16



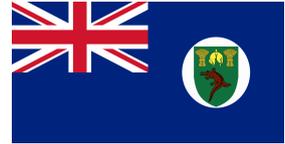
sg 17

sacc 17

Recess printing by De La Rue & Co, Ltd.

King Moshoeshoe I .





Basutoland

King George VI Definitive Issue. 1st April 1938.

Watermark: Multiple Crown and Script C.A. Perf: 12½.



sg 18 sacc 18



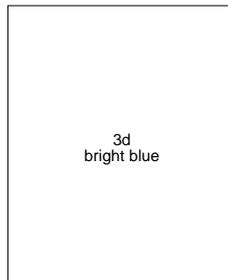
sg 19 sacc 19



sg 20 sacc 20



sg 21 sacc 21



sg 22 sacc 22



sg 23 sacc 23



sg 24 sacc 24



sg 25 sacc 25



sg 26 sacc 26



sg 27 sacc 27



sg 28 sacc 28

Recess printing by Waterlow and Sons, Ltd.



Basutoland

**Victory Issue.
3rd December 1945.**

Watermark: Multiple Springbok Head. Perf: 14.

**Stamps of South Africa overprinted with "Basutoland".
inscribed alternately in English and Afrikaans.**



sg 29

sacc 29



sg 30

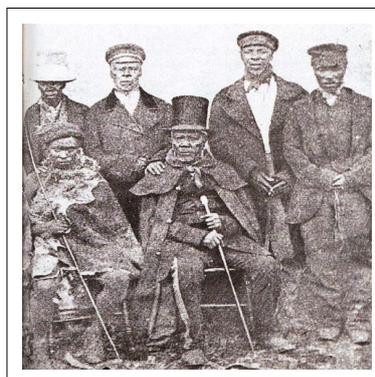
sacc 30

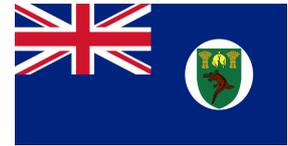


sg 31

sacc31

King Moshoeshe I with his Ministers.





Basutoland

**Royal Family Visit.
17th February 1947.**

Watermark: Multiple Crown & Script CA. Perf: 12½.

King George VI.



sg 32 sacc 32

King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.



sg 33 sacc 33

Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret.



sg 34 sacc 34

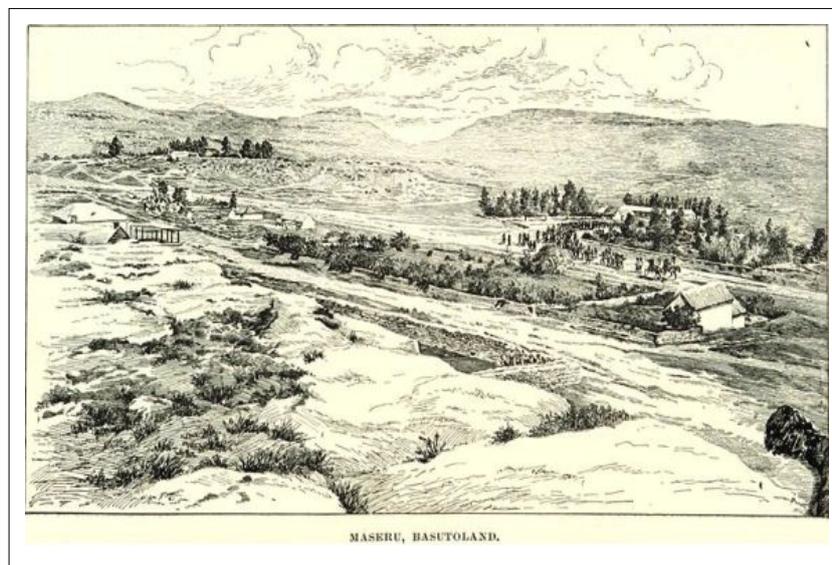
The Royal Family.

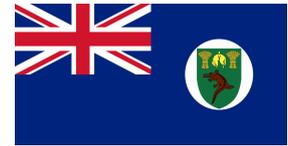


sg 35 sacc 35

Recess printing by Waterlow & Sons, Ltd.

Maseru - Capital of Basutoland.





Basutoland

Royal Silver Wedding. 1st December 1948.

Watermark: Multiple Crown and Script C.A.



sg 36 Perf 14 x 15 sacc 36



sg 37 Perf 11½ x 11 sacc 37

Recess printing by Waterlow and Sons, Ltd. (1½d),
Recess Printing by Bradbury Wilkinson & Co, Ltd but with Country name Typo printed on 10s.

75th Anniversary of Universal Postal Union. 10th October 1949.

Watermark: Multiple Crown and Script C.A.

Hermes, Globe
and Forms of Transport.



sg 38 Perf: 13½ x 14 sacc 38

Hemispheres, Jet-powered Vickers
Viking Airliner and Steamer.



sg 39 Perf: 11 x 11½ sacc 39

Hermes and Globe.



sg 40 Perf: 11 x 11½ sacc 40

U.P.U. Monument.



sg 41 Perf: 13½ x 14 sacc 41

Recess printing by Waterlow & Sons, Ltd. (1½d, 1s),
Recess printing by Bradbury Wilkinson & Co, Ltd but with Country name Typo printed (3d, 6d.)



Basutoland

Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. 3rd June 1953.

Watermark: Multiple Crown and Script C.A. Perf: 13½ x 13.

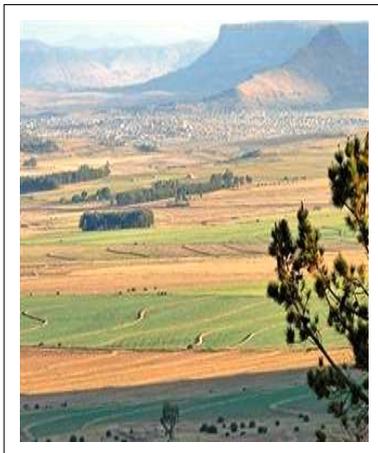


sg 42

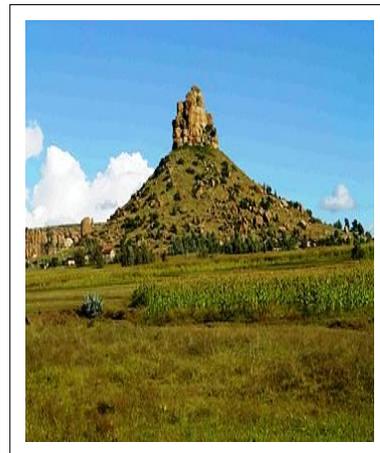
sacc 42

Recess printing by De La Rue & Co, Ltd but Country name Typo printed Bradbury Wilkinson & Co, Ltd.

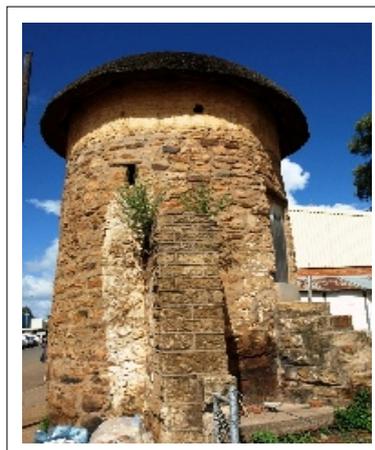
Country Scene.



Qiloane Mountain.



Major Bell's Tower, Leribe.





Basutoland

Queen Elizabeth II Definitive Issue. 15th September 1954 - 1958.

Watermark: Multiple Crown and Script C.A. Perf: 11½ (10s), 13½ (others).

Qiloane.



sg 43

sacc 43

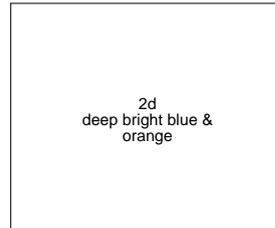
Orange River.



sg 44

sacc 44

Mosuto Horseman.



sg 45

sacc 45

Basuto Household.



sg 46

sacc 46

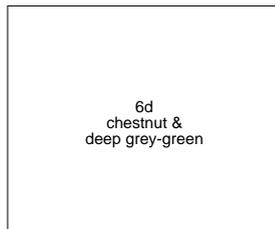
Maletsunyane Falls.



sg 47

sacc 47

Herd-boy playing Lesiba.



sg 48

sacc 48

Pastoral scene.



sg 49

sacc 49

Aeroplane over Lancers Gap.



sg 50

sacc 50

Old Fort, Leribe.



sg 51

sacc 51

Mohair (Shearing Angora Goats).



sg 53

sacc 53

Mission Cave House.



sg 52

sacc 52

Queen Elizabeth II Definitive Issue - Varieties.



sg 46a

27/11/1958

sacc 46a

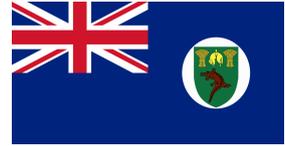


sg 51a

27/11/1958

sacc 51a

Recess printing by De La Rue & Co, Ltd.



Basutoland

**Surcharged stamp (No 45) with previous value blocked out by South African Government Printer, Pretoria.
1st August 1959.**



sg 54

sacc 54

Basutoland National Council Issue 15th December 1959.

Watermark: Multiple St Edward's Crown and C.A. Perf: 13 x 13½.

Chief Moshoeshoe I.



sg 55

sacc 55

Council House.



sg 56

sacc 56

Mosuto Horseman.

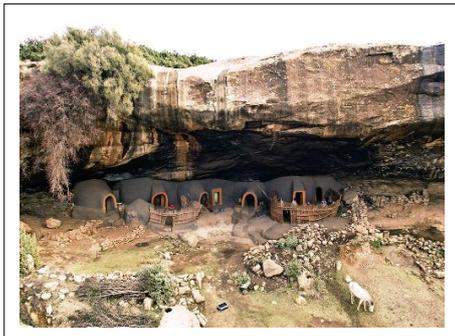


sg 57

sacc 57

Recess printing by Waterlow & Sons, Ltd.

Kome Cave Dwelling.



Building a Hut.





Basutoland

Queen Elizabeth II Definitive Issue Surcharged with new currency. 14th February 1961.

Watermark: Multiple Crown and Script C.A. Perf: 11½ (R1), 13½ (others).

Qiloane.



sg 58 1st Basic Type sacc 58

Orange River.



sg 59 2nd Basic Type sacc 59

Mosuto Horseman.



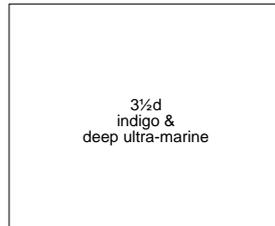
sg 60 sacc 60

Basuto Houshold.



sg 61 Type 1 sacc 61

Maletsunyane Falls.



sg 62 Type 1 sacc 62

Herd-boy playing Lesiba.



sg 63 Type 1 sacc 63

Pastoral scene.



sg 64 Type 1 sacc 64

Aeroplane over Lancers Gap.



sg 65 Type 1 sacc 65

Old Fort, Leribe.



sg 66 Type 1 sacc 66

Mission Cave House.



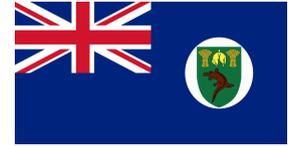
sg 67 Type 1 sacc 67

Mohair (Shearing Angora Goats).



sg 68 Type 1 sacc 68

Recess printing by De La Rue & Co, Ltd. Overprinted by South African Government Printer, Pretoria.



Basutoland

Queen Elizabeth II Definitive Issue Surcharges - Varieties.

Basuto Houshold.



sg 61a Type II sacc 61a

Maletsunyane Falls.



sg 62a Type II sacc 62a

Herd-boy playing Lesiba.



sg 63a Type II sacc 63a

Aeroplane over Lancers Gap.



sg 65a Type II sacc 65a

Old Fort, Leribe.



sg 66b Type III sacc 66b

Mission Cave House.



sg 67a Type II sacc 67a

There were two printings of the 2½c Type II, with different positions of the overprint.

Currency Overprint Types.
Basic Type I Type II Type III

1/2c.	2½c	2½c	
1c.	3½c	3½c	
	5c	5c	
2c	10c	10c	
	12½c	12½c	
	25c	25c	25c
	50c	50c	
	R1	R1	R1



Basutoland

Queen Elizabeth II Definitive Issue in new currency. 1961 - 1963.

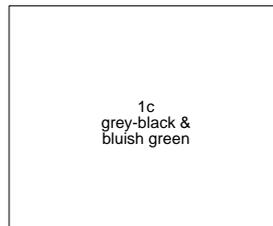
Watermark: Multiple Crown and Script C.A. Perf: 11½ (R1), 13½ (others).

Qiloane.



sg 69 25/9/1962 sacc 69

Orange River.



1c
grey-black &
bluish green

sg 70 25/9/1962 sacc 70

Mosuto Horseman.



sg 71 25/9/1962 sacc 71

Basuto Houshold.



sg 72 14/2/1961 sacc 72

Maletsunyane Falls.



3½c
indigo &
deep ultra-marine

sg 73 25/9/1962 sacc 73

Herd-boy playing Lesiba.



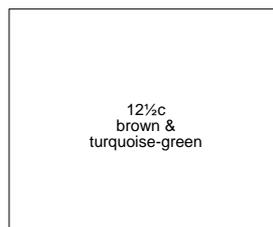
sg 74 10/8/1962 sacc 74

Pastoral scene.



sg 75 22/10/1962 sacc 75

Aeroplane over Lancers Gap.



12½c
brown &
turquoise-green

sg 76 17/12/1962 sacc 76

Old Fort, Leribe.



sg 77 25/9/1962 sacc 77

Mission Cave House.



sg 78 22/10/1962 sacc 78

Mohair (Shearing Angora Goats).



sg 79 4/2/1963 sacc 79

Recess printing by De La Rue & Co, Ltd.



Basutoland

Freedom from Hunger. 4th June 1963.

Watermark: Multiple St Edward's Crown Block CA. Perf: 14 x 14½.



sg 80

sacc 80

Photogravure printing by Harrison & Sons, Ltd.

Red Cross Centenary. 2nd September 1963.

Watermark: Multiple St Edward's Crown Block CA. Perf: 13½.



sg 81

sacc 81

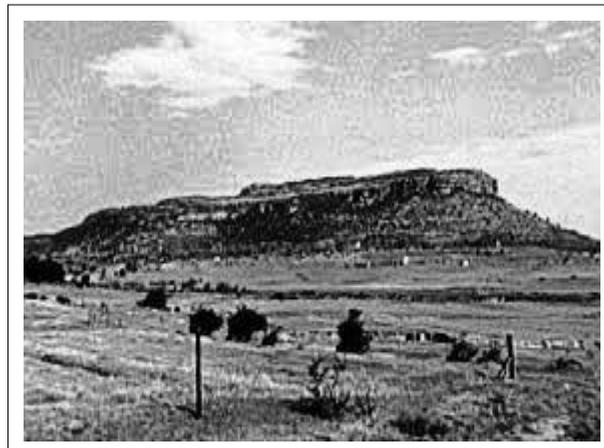


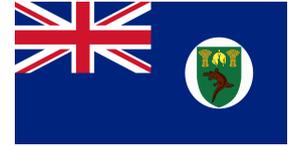
sg 82

sacc 82

Recess printing by Bradbury Wilkinson & Co, Ltd.

Thaba Bosiu Mountain - Unconquered Fortress .





Basutoland

Change of Watermark - 1964.

Watermark: Multiple St Edward's Crown Block CA. Perf: 13½.

Orange River.



sg 84 11/8/1964 sacc 83

Basuto Household.



sg 86 10/3/1964 sacc 84

Herd-boy playing Lesiba.



sg 88 10/11/1964 sacc 85

Plane over Lancers Gap.



sg 90 10/11/1964 sacc 86

Mission Cave House.



sg 92 29/9/1964 sacc 87

New Constitution. 10th May 1965.

Watermark: Multiple St Edward's Crown Block CA. Perf: 14½ x 13½.

Mosotho Women and Child.



sg 94 1/8/1964 sacc 88

Maseru Border post.



sg 95a sacc 89

Mountain Scene.



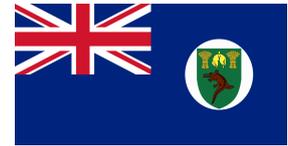
sg 96 sacc 90

Legislative Buildings.



sg 97 sacc 91

Recess printing by Harrison & Sons, Ltd.



Basutoland

100th Anniversary of International Telecommunications Union. 17th May 1965.

Watermark: Multiple St Edward's Crown Block CA. Perf: 11 x 11½.



sg 98

sacc 92



sg 99

sacc 93

Litho printing by Joh. Enschede en Zonen, Haarlem, Netherlands.

International Co-operation Year. 25th October 1965.

Watermark: Multiple St Edward's Crown Block CA. Perf: 14½.

Symbol of Co-operation



sg 100

sacc 94

Symbol of Co-operation



sg 101

sacc 95

Photogravure printing by Harrison & Sons, Ltd.

Mosuto Horseman .





Basutoland

Winston Churchill Commemoration. 24th January 1966.

Watermark: Multiple St Edward's Crown Block CA. Perf: 14.

Sir Winston Churchill and St Paul's Cathedral in Wartime.



sg 102 new blue sacc 96



sg 103 deep green sacc 97



sg 104 brown sacc 98

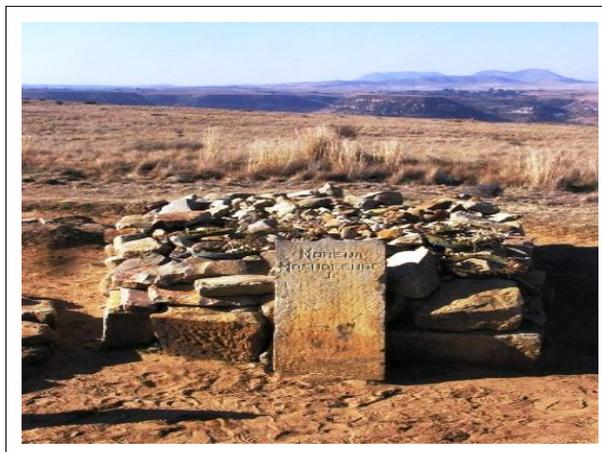


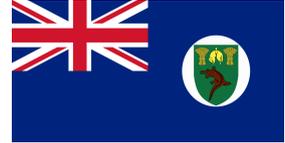
sg 105 bluish violet sacc 99

Printed in black, cerise, gold and background in colours stated. Photogravure printing by Harrison & Sons, Ltd.

After an lifespan of 82 years, the Crown Colony of Basutoland attained independence from the Great Britain on 4 October 1966 and became the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Grave of King Moshoeshoe I - Father of the Nation on Thaba Bosiu .





Basutoland

Postage Due Stamps & Varieties. 1st December 1953 - 1952.

Watermark: Multiple Crown and Script C.A. Perf: 14.

Chalk-surfaced Paper



sg D1 sacc 1



sg D1a sacc 1a



sg D1b 24/4/1951 sacc 1b

Chalk-surfaced Paper



sg D2 sacc 2



sg D2a 6/11/1952 sacc 2a



sg D2ad large "d" sacc 2ad

Typo printing by De La Rue & Co, Ltd on Ordinary Paper.

Postage Due Stamps. 1st December 1956.

Watermark: Multiple Crown and Script C.A. Perf: 14.



sg D3 sacc 3



sg D4 sacc 4

Typo printing by De La Rue & Co, Ltd on Ordinary Paper.

In 1897 Queen Victoria visited Basutoland during her Jubilee year. She gave King Lerotholi Letsie a blanket as a gift. He draped the blanket, poncho-style, over his shoulders and so began the blanket wearing tradition of Basutoland. The blanket was named Victoria England..

Heritage Blanket
Victoria England Crown



Heritage Blanket
Victoria England Badges of the Brave





Basutoland

Postage Due Stamps - Surcharged with new currency. 14th February 1961.

Watermark: Multiple Crown and Script C.A. Perf: 14.



sg D5

sacc 5



sg D6

sacc 6



sg D7

Type I

sacc 7



sg D7a

Type II

sacc 7a



sg D8

1/6/1961

sacc 8

Typo printing by De La Rue & Co, Ltd on Ordinary Paper.

Postage Due stamps. 1964.

Watermark: Multiple Crown and Script C.A. Perf: 14.



sg D9

sacc 9



sg D10

sacc 10

Typo printing by De La Rue & Co, Ltd on Ordinary Paper.

Basuto Mountain
Village



Replica Spitfire Mk Vb gift by Spitfire Heritage Trust as thank-you
for World War II contribution of 24 Spitfires by Basutoland.





Basutoland

