

Fishing Flies from the Transkei 1980 - 1984



Location: Enclave, East Cape Province, Republic of South Africa

Government: Self-governing tribal homeland

Area: 16,910 sq. mi.

Population: 2,876,122 (1985)

Capital: Umtata

The World's First Fishing Fly Stamps

Building a Business in South Africa

In 1976, Mr. Barry Kent, his partners, and the Republic of Transkei Development Corporation built a fishing fly manufacturing plant at Butterworth, Transkei, South Africa. The company, named High Flies Ltd., was one of the most modern fishing-fly manufacturing plants in the world.

Pricing, quality and clever product marketing proved to be very successful. By 1979 High Flies was employing more than 350 labor-intensive Transkeians, producing over 1,000 dozen flies each day. These flies are used mainly in fly-fishing for trout and salmon. The entire production was exported to countries where these fish are prolific: America, the British Isles, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Scandinavia, and other European countries.

An idea for promoting other Transkei industries was created by depicting fishing flies on postage stamps. The outcome produced a series of five sheets for each year from 1980 through 1984. Each sheet contains five different fly patterns arranged in se-tenant format.

Although the last issue of these stamps appeared in 1984, the factory closed in 1983 due to a corrupt business partner and poor management by the South African/Republic of Transkei Development Corporation bureaucrats. Mr. Kent, along with approximately 390 local workers lost their jobs.

Philatelic Specifications

Designer: A. H. Barrett

Arrangement: Printed se-tenant in one sheet, vertically and horizontally.

Paper: Unwatermarked, non-phosphor Harrison paper with PVA gum.

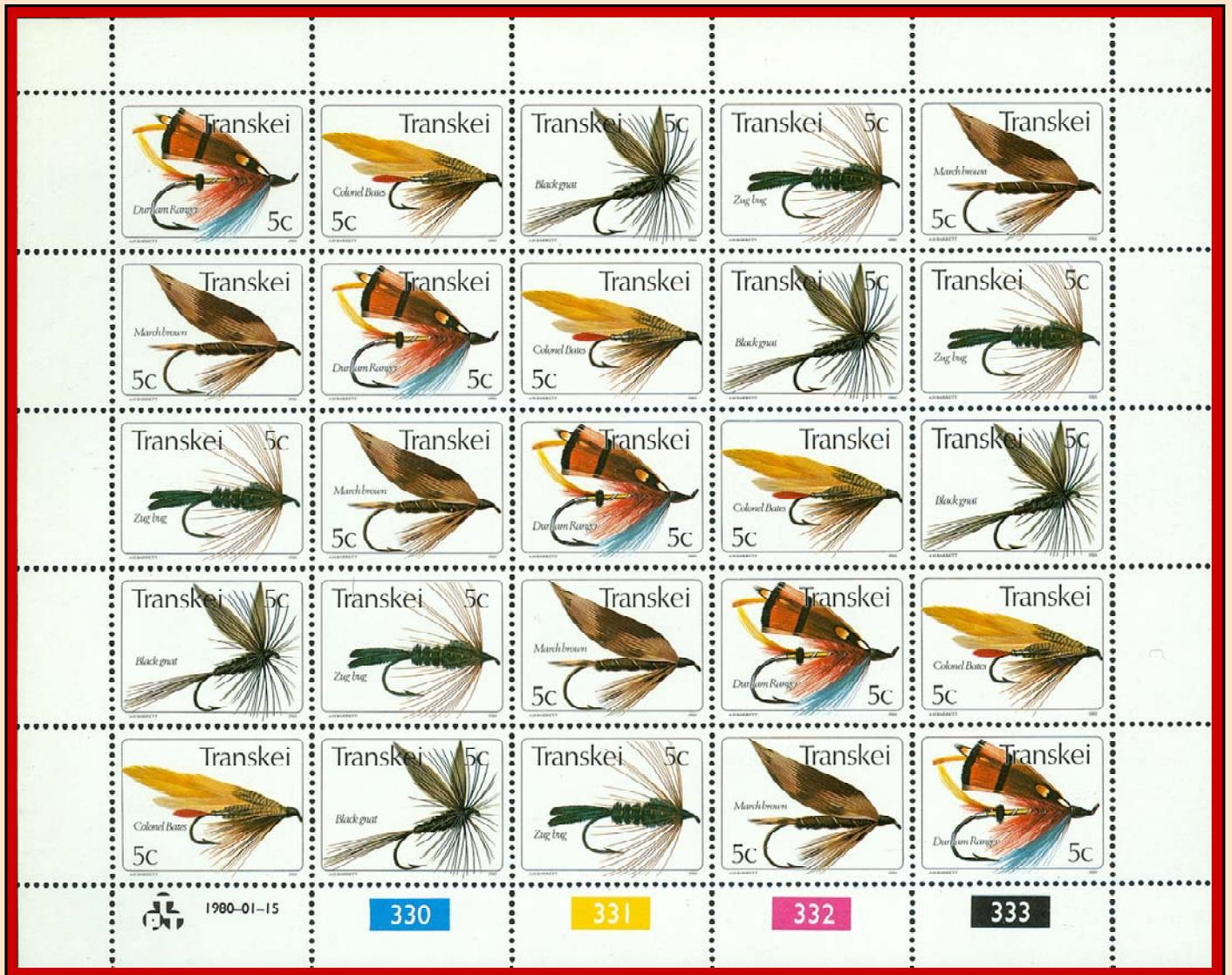
Stamp Format: Horizontal, measuring 30.2 mm across by 23.9 mm down.

Sheet Format: Vertical, measuring 406 mm across and 630 mm down. A pane of stamps has 25 stamps in five rows of five stamps each.

Perforation: Walter Kroll machinery with a double row perforator gauging 14 x 13.7 (measuring 14 x 14.25 on the Instanta perforation gauge). All margins are perforated through.

Print Technique: Lithographed by the Government Printer, Pretoria, using four plates, each a different color. Plate numbers are shown together with the printing date on the bottom margin. The control block is the bottom row of each pane.

1980 Sheet of Five Se-tenant Issues



Left to right, top row: March Brown, Zug Bug, Black Gnat, Colonel Bates, Durham Ranger

March Brown – This pattern is one of the oldest recorded dressings and was first mentioned in a book entitled “A Tretise of Fysshynge with an Angle”, which was published in 1469. Since this date, anglers have been crafting artificial flies with feathers, fur and tinsel to imitate aquatic life forms. This style of fly is termed a wet fly as it sinks to imitate underwater life.

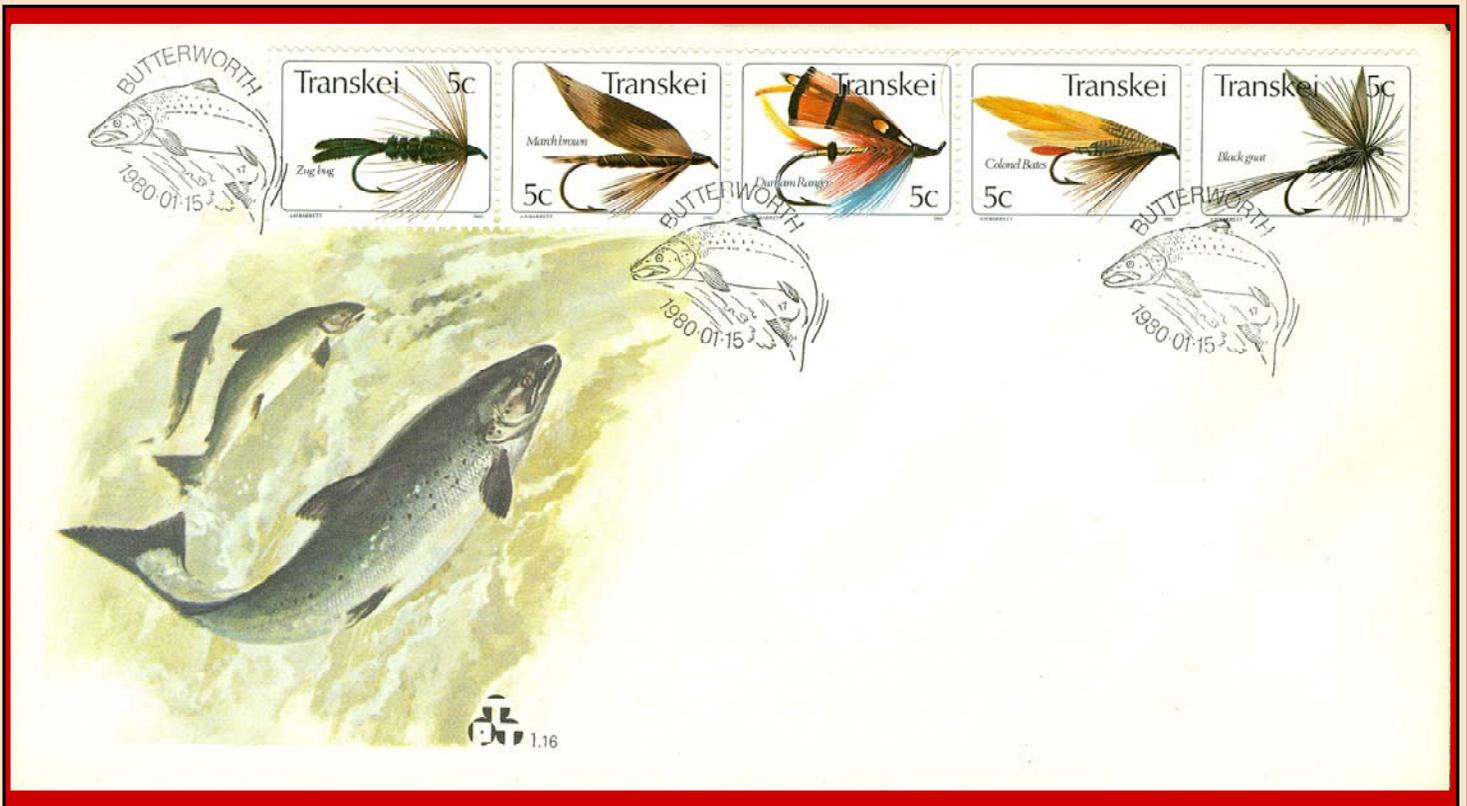
Zug Bug – A popular American nymph dressing that was designed in America but is now used by anglers throughout the world. It has a suggestive nymph pattern, dressed predominately with peacock herl to imitate the aquatic form of life that trout feed on.

Black Gnat – With its stiff hackle fibers, the Black Gnat is a floating fly that imitates the adult insect, *Bibio Johannis*. Although this is a land insect, trout will geed avidly on it when a chance wind blows it onto water. The angler tries to imitate this phenomenon by using the floating imitation fly to fool the fish. This form of fly-fishing is the greatest test of the angler’s skill.

Colonel Bates – Designed during the World War II by a highly skilled American fly dresser, Mrs. Carrie G. Stevens. This streamer was named after Joseph D. Bates, Jr., a famous American angler and angling writer. It is used as a small bait-fish imitation for land-locked salmon, trout and bass and is dressed on stainless steel hooks. It is also used for sea fly-fishing.

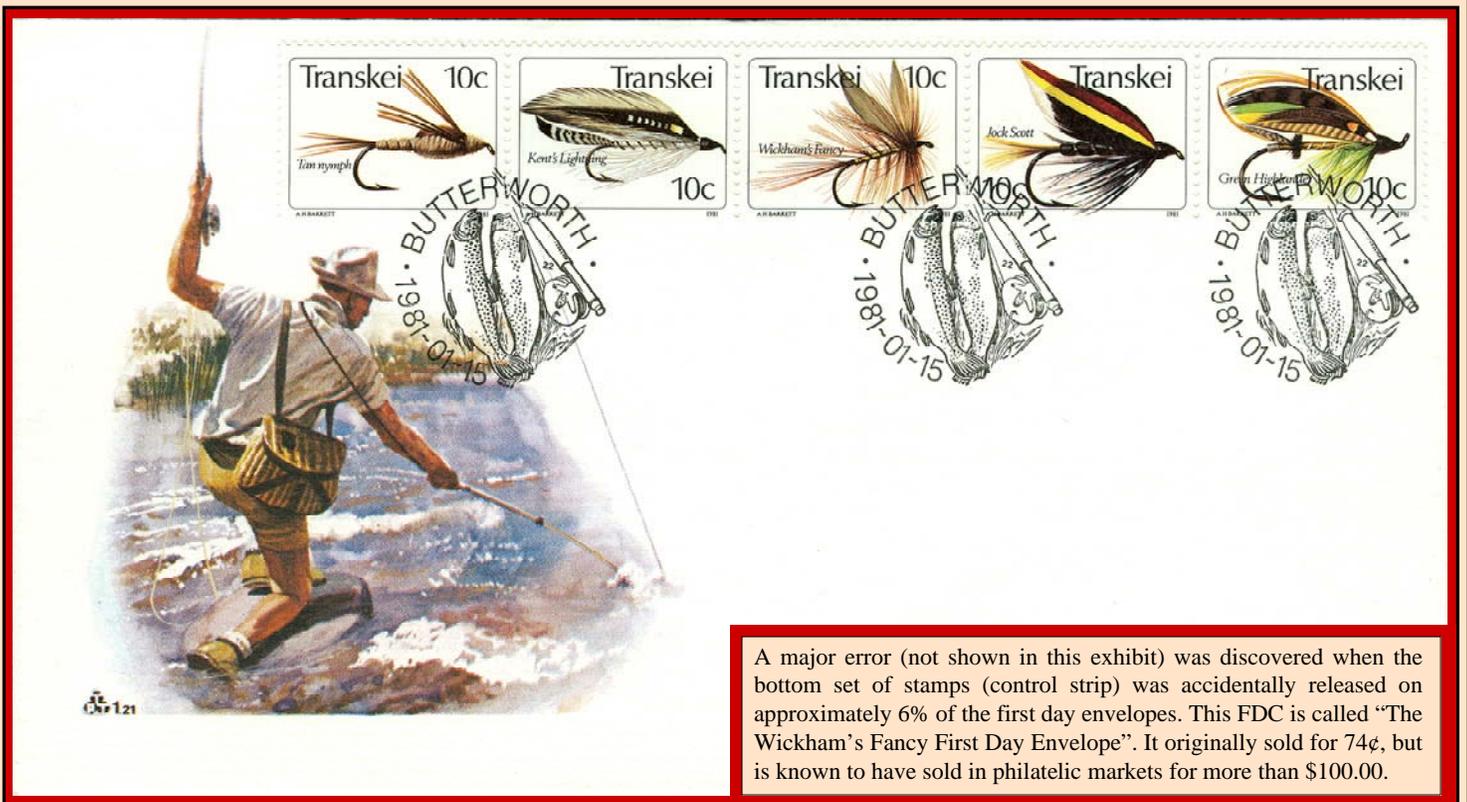
Durham Ranger – One of the best known traditional Scottish salmon flies, the Durham Ranger was designed in the 19th Century by James Wright of Tweedside. This style of fly, along with married-wing salmon flies, is regarded as the pinnacle of the fly-dresser’s skill and is still used as an attractor fly for catching Atlantic salmon, the king of all fish. The Durham Ranger and many other salmon flies are in great demand by anglers and collectors.

1980 First Day of Issue



5c 15 Jan. 1980, Butterworth, Transkei, East Cape, South Africa

1981 First Day of Issue



A major error (not shown in this exhibit) was discovered when the bottom set of stamps (control strip) was accidentally released on approximately 6% of the first day envelopes. This FDC is called "The Wickham's Fancy First Day Envelope". It originally sold for 74¢, but is known to have sold in philatelic markets for more than \$100.00.

10c 15 Jan. 1981, Butterworth, Transkei, East Cape, South Africa

1981 Sheet of Five Se-tenant Issues



Left to right, top row: Kent's Lightning, Wickham's Fancy, Jock Scott, Green Highlander, Tan Nymph

Kent's Lightning – Designed by Barry L. Kent, the Lightning is a fine bait-fish imitation. When pulled through the water at moderate speed it assumes the shape of a small fish, inducing the trout to attack it.

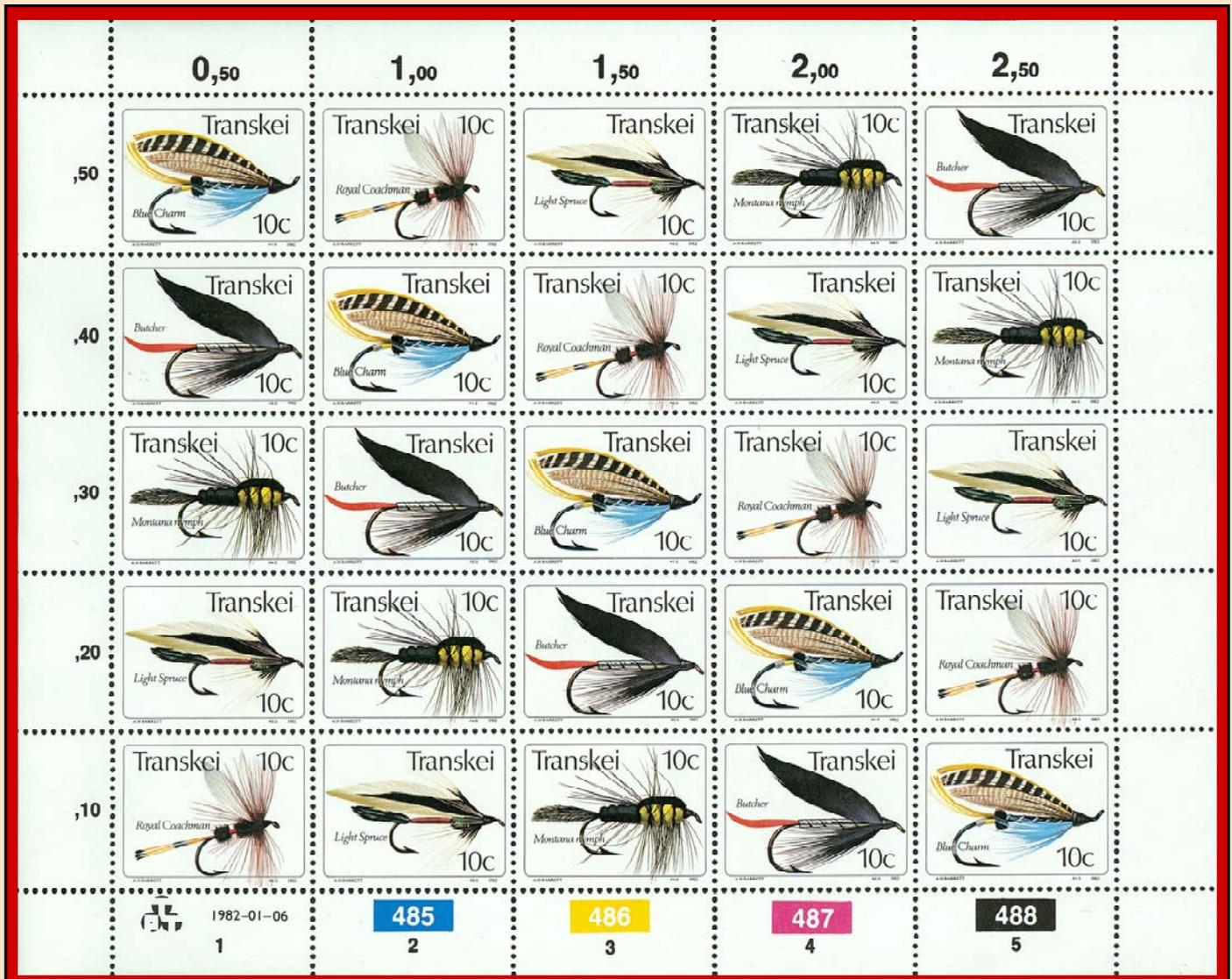
Wickham's Fancy – A very popular and old established European pattern. Fished as a floating fly it catches trout, sea trout, grayling and even some species of course fish.

Jock Scott – This dressing is a simplified version of the famous salmon fly of the same name. It is widely used in Canada for all types of game fish.

Green Highlander – Designed by Mr. Grant of Speyside in the late 1800s. It is known throughout the world as one of the finest salmon flies in use today.

Tan Nymph – Sometimes called the Otter Fur Nymph, this pattern imitates a wide variety of underwater life. Otter fur was once used for the body and thorax of the fly. Now synthetic fur is substituted to protect the otter populations of the world.

1982 Sheet of Five Se-tenant Issues



Left to right, top row: Blue Charm, Royal Coachman, Light Spruce, Montana Nymph, Butcher

Blue Charm – This pattern is an old favorite with salmon fishermen around the world. It is a fully dressed salmon fly with a simple wing construction of only two types of feathers, unlike many other salmon flies having up to ten different materials built into their wings. The pattern in the stamp is a replica of the original 19th century dressing.

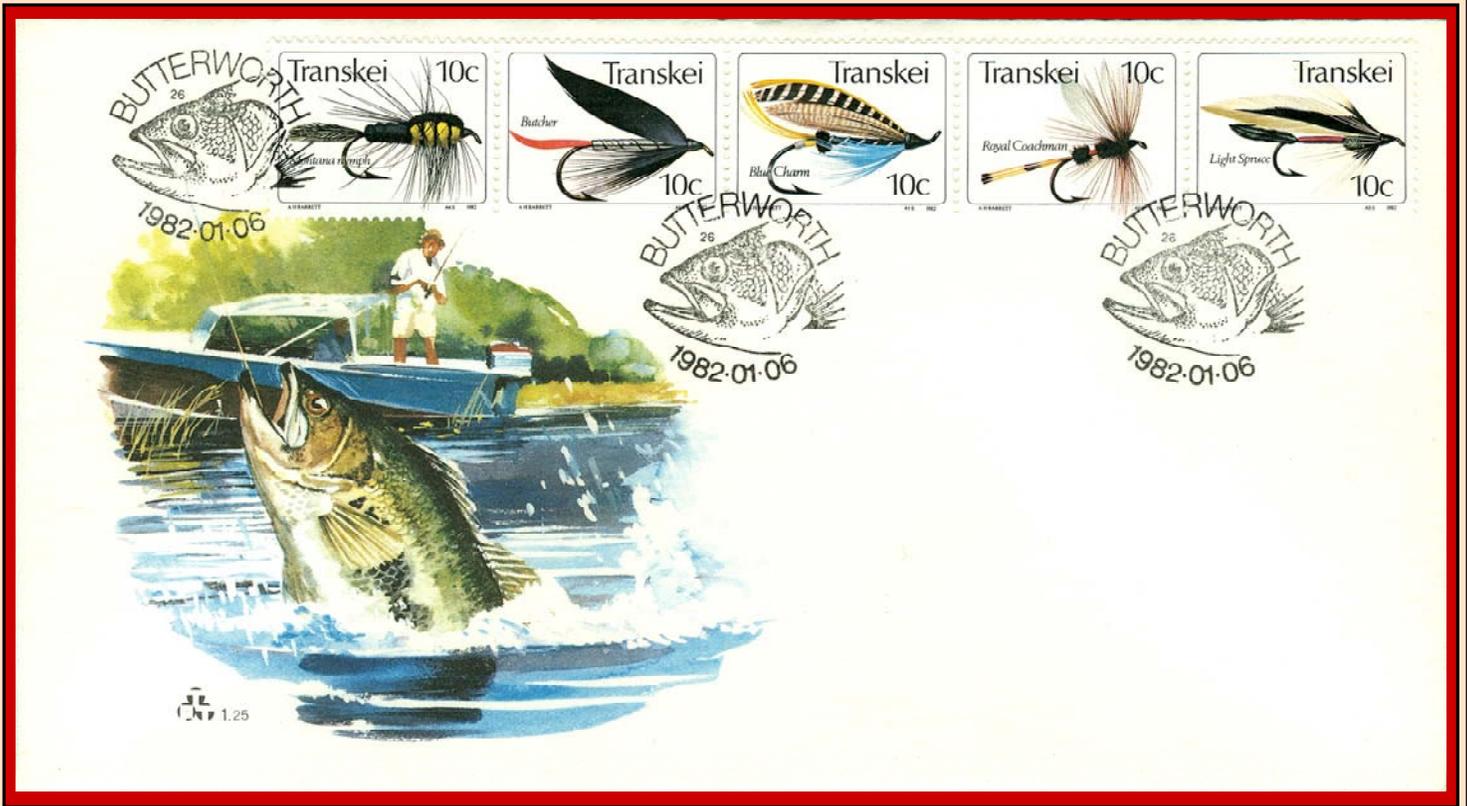
Royal Coachman – A dry fly variation of the original Coachman pattern presumably designed by a coachman to the British Royal Family many years ago. The most distinctive difference between the Coachman and Royal Coachman patterns is the band of scarlet floss silk around the middle of the pattern.

Light Spruce – A streamer fly originally named the Godfrey Special, after the designer who lived in Seaside, Oregon. It was first used in the Oregon mountain streams for catching trout, but soon became widely known. It was renamed the Spruce, after the spruce timber of Oregon, and is dressed in light and dark versions, the Light Spruce being the more popular.

Montana Nymph – This North American pattern is also known as the Montana Stone. It is an imitation of the nymph of a stonefly found on rocky bottoms in clear streams. The stonefly nymph grows to a very large size, sometimes over 50 mm (1.96 inches) long, therefore the imitation is dressed on large hooks and is fished deep.

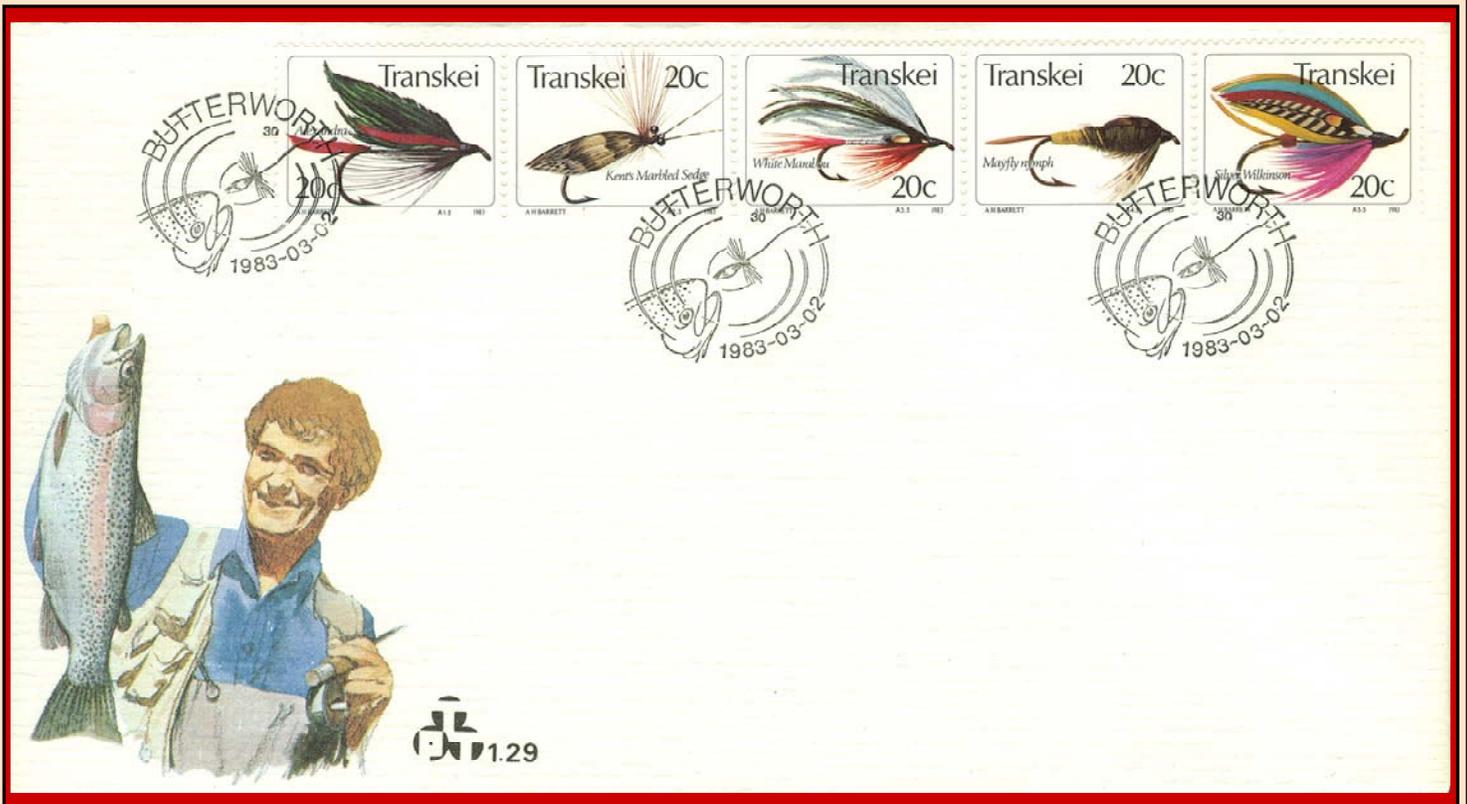
Butcher – Originating in Britain, this is one of the best known patterns in the world. It is used extensively in lake, river and sea trout fly-fishing and is especially productive during early-season spring fishing..

1982 First Day of Issue



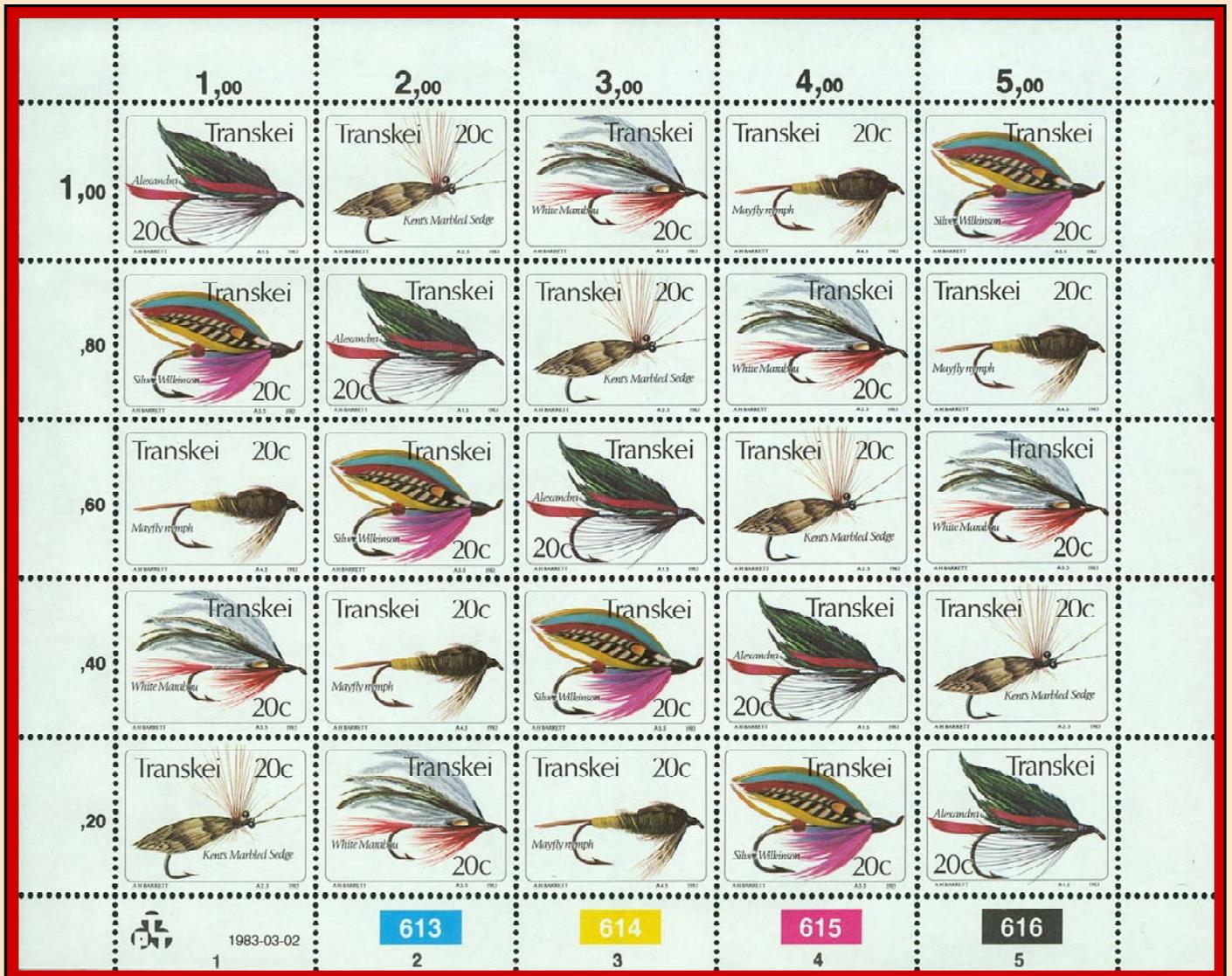
10c 06 Jan. 1982, Butterworth, Transkei, East Cape, South Africa

1983 First Day of Issue



20c 02 Mar. 1983, Butterworth, Transkei, East Cape, South Africa

1983 Sheet of Five Se-tenant Issues



Left to right, top row: Alexandra, Kent's Marbled Sedge, Mayfly Nymph, White Marabou, Silver Wilkinson

Alexandra – Originally named The Lady of the Lake, this well known pattern was renamed in honor of H.R.H. Princess Alexandra. It is not certain who the original creator was, but most authorities attribute the design to Mr. W.G. Turl of Newton Stacey, Stockbridge, England. The date or origin is thought to be around 1860. This attractor pattern does not represent any specific insect and is mainly used for lake fly-fishing.

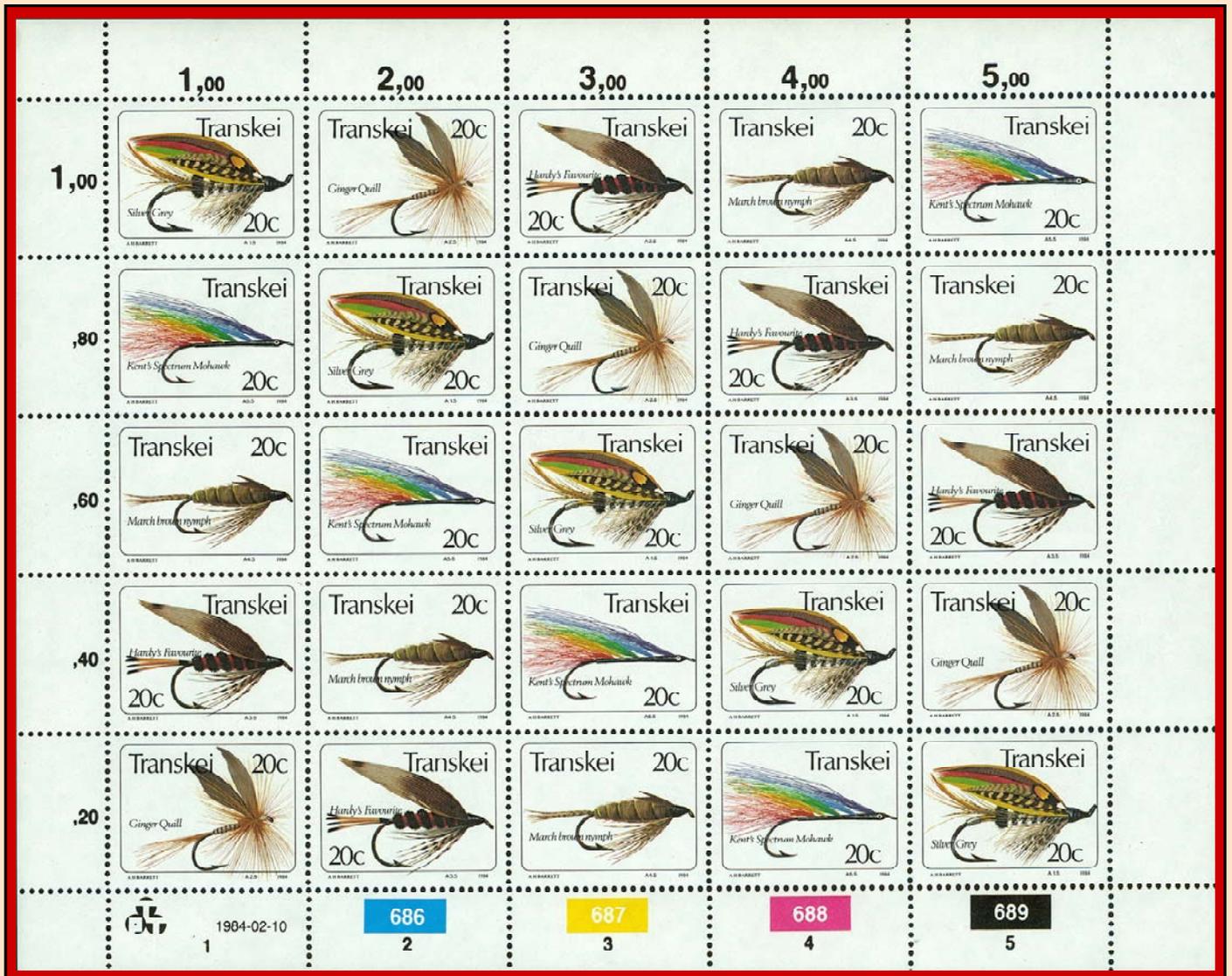
Kent's Marbled Sedge – This dry fly has the unique feature of always floating horizontally on the water surface, like the real insect. The roof-shaped wings trap a pocket of air, giving this design excellent floating properties. The actual marbled sedge hatches during early evening, sometimes in great numbers. This is when the trout can become pre-occupied and feed exclusively on this insect. Created by Barry L. Kent, it is a very exact imitation designed to catch cunning trout that are hard to fool with normal dry sedge imitations.

Mayfly Nymph – A free imitation of the nymph stage of the order *Ephemeroptera*, also known as mayflies or dayflies. Dayflies are the aristocracy of aquatic insect life. In their adult stage they are beautiful insects with upright wings that look like minute sailing-boats drifting along with the current. Trout feed predominately on the nymph stage of this insect.

White Marabou – The wing is made of the soft, fluffy under-wing feathers of a white turkey. These feathers' beautiful undulating action under water is a great enticement to trout not feeding on a specific insect. It is a popular attractor pattern used all over the world.

Silver Wilkinson – One of the most beautiful fully dressed salmon flies. The pattern depicted on the stamp is a simplified commercial dressing of this classic fishing fly. The original dressing had eleven different feather sections in the wing alone. A total of twenty-two materials are used in the construction of this pattern. It requires great skill to attach the various materials to the hook in such a way the final product is an object of beauty.

1984 Sheet of Five Se-tenant Issues



Left to right, top row: Silver Gray, Ginger Quill, Hardy's Favorite, March Brown, Kent's Spectrum Mohawk

Silver Gray – This pattern is attributed to James Wright, who was born at Sprouston, Roxburghshire, England in 1829. Mr. Wright was a famous fly-dresser of his time – he tied particularly beautiful salmon flies. The traditionally correct dressing of the Silver Gray used no less than twenty-three materials. Many of the original materials are no longer available or come from protected wildlife, with the result that the modern commercial dressing is simplified.

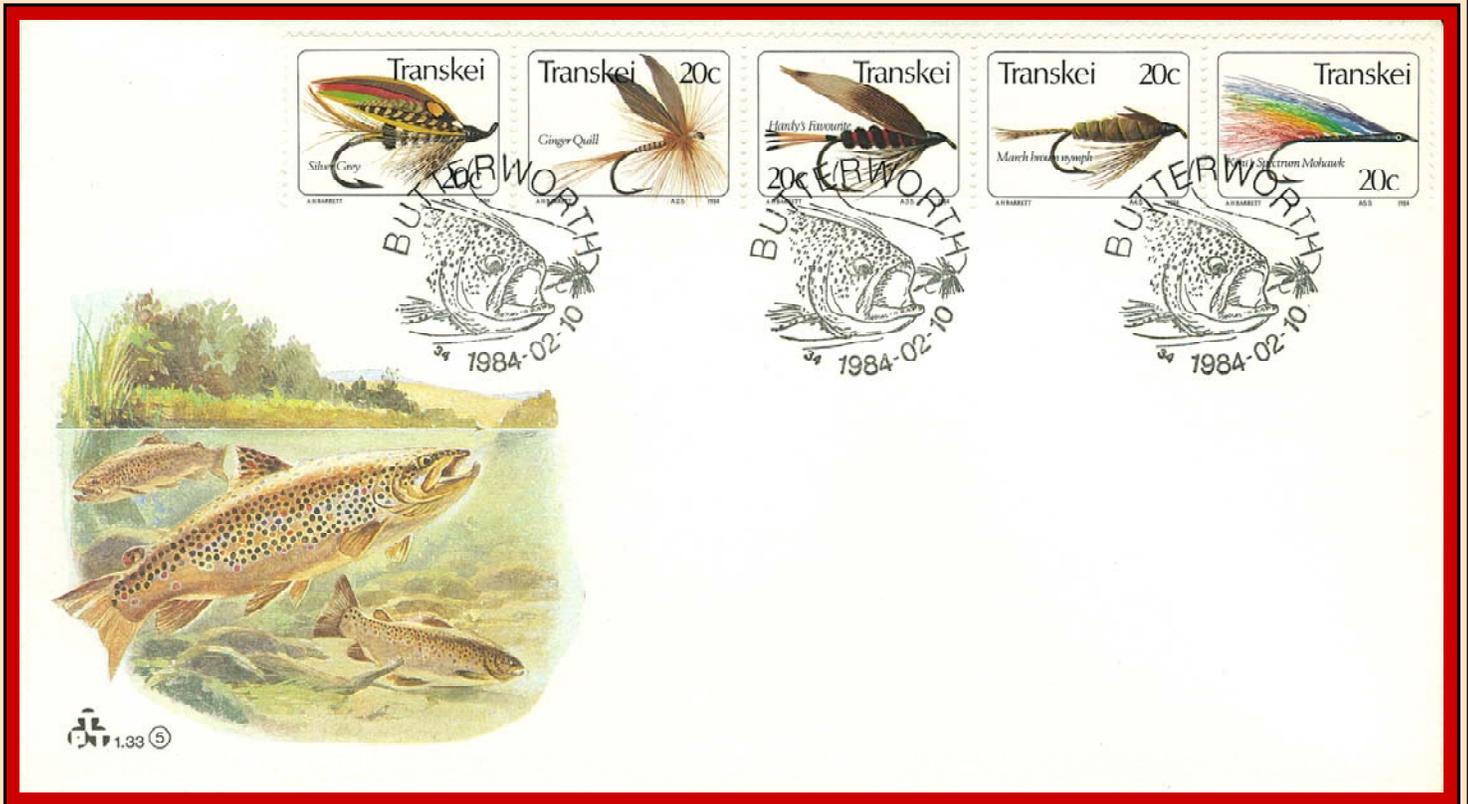
Ginger Quill – Here, the representation of a common aquatic insect order known as *Ephemeroptera*, inhabiting flowing water. River and stream fly-fishermen always have a few of these flies, in various sizes, in their fly-boxes.

Hardy's Favorite – This wet fly of the attractor variety does not represent any specific insect. It was designed by the late J.J. Hardy of the famed fishing tackle firm, Hardy Bros. of Britain. It is a very well known and proven pattern used by fly-fishermen throughout the world.

March Brown – The pattern is the nymph stage of the popular group of trout flies under the heading “March Brown”. It represents the stone-clinging type of natural nymph which is found in swift flowing, stone bottomed rivers.

Kent's Spectrum Mohawk – A stainless steel hook is used to mount this pattern, used mainly for sea fly-fishing. It was designed by Barry L. Kent in 1974. The wing is formed with dyed North American white-tailed deer hair, and incorporates all the major colors of the spectrum for maximum visibility. This bright attractor fly has been proven to take various fish species in many different waters. It has been successful in fresh water for bass and trout in Southern Africa, shad, bonefish and barracuda in the salt flats of Florida.

1984 First Day of Issue



20c 10 Feb. 1984, Butterworth, Transkei, East Cape, South Africa



Durham Ranger



Green Highlander



Jock Scot



Silver Gray



Silver Wilkinson

Salmon flies produced by the High Flies, Ltd., manufacturing plant in Butterworth, Transkei, South Africa

Additional salmon patterns, like the *Princess Diana/2* (*Princess to the World*), *Sarah Palin* (*Alaskan Beauty*), *John McCain* (*New Glory*), *Glenn Beck* (*American Hero*), *Keith Kent* (*Master Printer*), *Rotary International*, *Kent's Dirty Fetal Glasshrimp*, *Quill Gordon*, *Flint Creek*, and others, were also created by Barry Kent.

These patterns are extremely difficult to find and were never produced on philatelic material.