

# MOTHER PATRICK

Issued 16<sup>th</sup> November, 1970

This issue is the fourth in the series of historical figures

No women were included amongst the Pioneers, but it soon became clear they would be needed for nursing and education. The Superior, Father Alphonsus Daignault, from the Jesuit Zambezi Mission approached Rhodes suggesting that some of the sisters from King William's Town go to Mashonaland to do the nursing and work in the schools and the Jesuits would devote themselves to educational and pastoral work. Rhodes agreed.

Five Sisters volunteered their services, including Mary Ann Cosgrave, who was born on the 22 May 1863 in Summerhill, County Meath, Ireland. In February 1890, they set out on the long and dangerous journey to Mashonaland. They travelled to Grahamstown by post-cart and then by train and Cape cart to Mafeking. They then travelled from the 13<sup>th</sup> April to 10<sup>th</sup> May from Mafeking to Macloutsie, some 400 miles, as several of the men there were ill. Mother Patrick records in her diary: *An enormous ox-wagon was hired, which was to be our abode for the next five weeks. We viewed this kind of conveyance with mixed feelings and our apprehension grew when we were told it was to be pulled by a span of sixteen oxen.*

On May 10<sup>th</sup> 1890 with Macloutsie in sight she wrote; *As the wagons drew near to the camp, the men formed two lines for us to pass through and burst into loud and prolonged cheers...the men outspanned (unyoked) and made ready to pull the wagons into the camp themselves; we got off and walked through the guard of honour into the hospital amidst loud and continued cheers, no uncertain sign that they were pleased we had come to take care of them.*

Mother Patrick and her companions waited here and worked in the local hospital for ten months until the rains were over in March 1891. The five volunteers were teachers by profession and here they received nursing training from the doctors in charge. Describing the conditions there, she says, *the hospital at Macloutsie consisted of two marques and two bell tents and held twenty-seven patients who were lying on the ground with nothing but their blankets and waterproof sheets to cover them. Nursing was difficult as the poor men were closely packed together; several of them were seriously ill and Sisters Amica and Constantia went on duty immediately. One patient died that night. Veld sores were a common complaint, some of which were so large as to cover almost a whole arm or leg. The Sisters felt nervous when alone on night duty for wild beasts prowled around the tents making weird noises.*



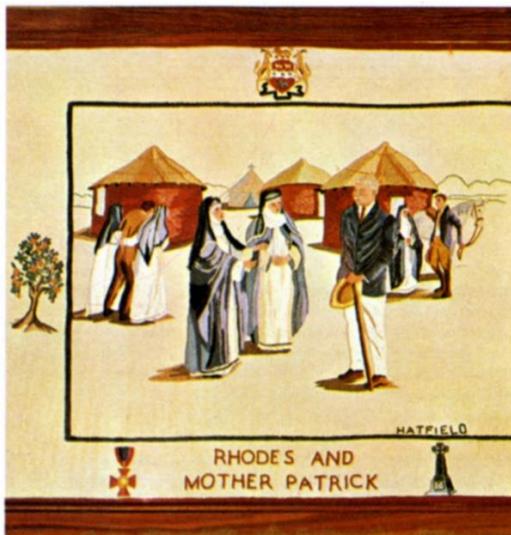
Mother Patrick Cosgrave

By the end of December when a second group of Sisters arrived at Mother Patrick's request in March, from King William's Town. In March 1891, Sister Patrick and four other sisters left for Fort Tuli about 60 miles further on. Here too men were down with fever and required their urgent attention in very difficult nursing conditions. The Sisters lived in primitive

conditions *often plodding from tent to tent in the pelting rain, ankle deep in mud, sliding and slipping, while every now and then, a shoe would stick fast in the adhesive clay*

On 5<sup>th</sup> June 1891 the five sisters and their chaplain, Fr Prestage, SJ, left Fort Tuli on the final leg to Fort Salisbury (now Harare). Their ox-wagon often stuck fast in swamps and mud and they all got out to help push. At last eighteen months after leaving King Williamstown they reached Salisbury (Harare) on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1891, ten months after the Pioneer Column had arrived, having covered more than 1,200 kilometres since their departure from South Africa.

They opened their hospital that consisted of three large huts, a marquee, and some tents, all in a poor state of repair and needing replacement on 1 August 1891. In the first three months of 1892, three hundred and eight patients, mostly suffering from malaria fever, were admitted. A better solution was required and a more permanent building was erected, consisting of two thatched pole and *dhaka* huts, each holding sixteen beds, a canvas ward with eight beds, and some isolation huts.



Tapestry showing Mother Patrick meeting Cecil Rhodes<sup>5</sup>

On 18th October 1892, a thatched pole and dhaka hut opened its door and ten pupils commenced lessons in their new school, this was the beginning of the Dominican Convent School.

In the early part of 1893, a small brick building was erected as a dormitory for the Sisters who until then had lived under canvas. Rhodes visited the Sisters and they told him of the urgency for a brick hospital. He agreed, and by the end of 1894 had provided the majority of funds required. The five original Sisters constituted the nursing staff, with Sister Patrick as Superior of the group until Dr Andrew Fleming arrived in October 1894.

The new buildings were completed in ten months in 1894 and comprised single-storey brick under corrugated iron buildings arranged around three sides of a rectangle. There were two main wards for eight patients each and five small wards, consulting rooms, a doctor's bedroom, kitchen and scullery and a special room with a high small window for cases of delirium tremens. The mortuary featured here was omitted from the original plans and added afterwards



The mortuary is still in existence and is listed as a Historic Monument.

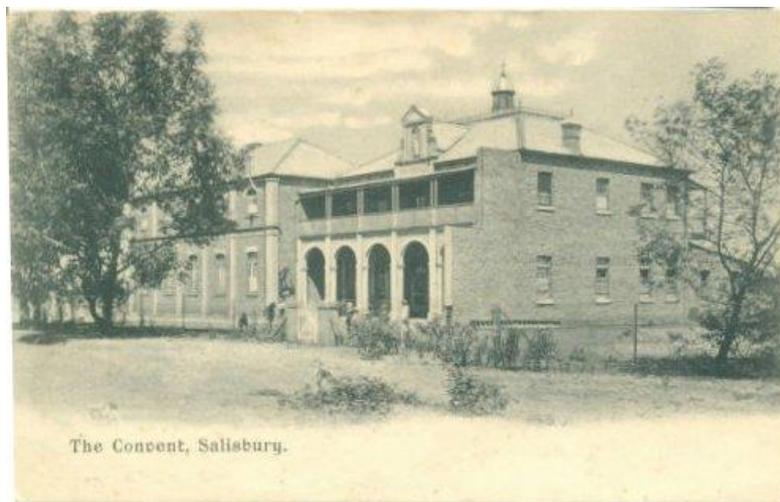
From 1892, several small groups of Sisters came from King William's Town, so that by the end of 1897 their total number had risen to about 30. However, the Dominicans of King William's Town were a teaching congregation; it was becoming more and more difficult for them to satisfy the continuous demand for nursing sisters. After much discussion, they

concluded that the Dominicans in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) should become independent of their Motherhouse in King Williams' Town to enable them to adapt themselves better to local conditions and to look for and train their own recruits.

In December, a group of Sisters began missionary work at Chishawasha, a station 25 kilometres northeast of Harare started by the Jesuits six years previously. The Sisters started a school for young black girls, visited the sick in the neighbouring villages, and supplied medicine. Over the following decades, the Sisters moved into further mission stations in Rhodesia.

On January 6<sup>th</sup> 1899, the Sisters unanimously elected Mother Patrick Prioress of all Dominican houses in the country. At the same time, they were increasingly worried about her health, as she had suffered from recurrent bouts of fever and early stage tuberculosis; her health continued to decline throughout 1899. Her death on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1900 at the age of 37 years was not unexpected, *but her fortitude in time of difficulty, her schemes for the expansion of the good work, especially the school, her thoughtfulness for others, scarcely relaxed or slackened up to the very day of her death.*

On the day of her funeral, all the stores closed as a mark of respect and flags flown at half-mast, and practically the whole town attended the burial service with all the vehicles in Salisbury forming part of the funeral cortege. The Mashonaland Irish association erected a granite Celtic cross that was unveiled on her feast day, the 17<sup>th</sup> March 1903.



The Dominican Convent, Salisbury, in the 1990's.  
Founded by the Dominican sisters lead by Mother Patrick.  
Postcard produced by Strachan & Co., Salisbury

(Source: the above biography was extracted from the website of ZimFieldGuide<sup>4</sup>)

## THE ISSUED STAMP



### Catalogue listings

SG	RSC	Value	Description
457	C107	15c	Mother Patrick

### Technical details

<b>Stamp size:</b>	42 x 28 mm
<b>Sheet Size:</b>	50 stamps (10 rows of 5 stamps), two panes within printed sheet
<b>Artist:</b>	Rose Martin
<b>Paper:</b>	Type 10 - Chromo, creamy/brown gum
<b>Print colours:</b>	Black, dark blue, magenta & yellow
<b>Perforations:</b>	Comb perf: SG 14½, RSC 14¼ Top margin: Perforated through Side margins: One perf hole Bottom margin: Imperforate
<b>Printer's Imprint:</b>	Type 6a, bottom margin, below columns 2 to 4 - black printing
<b>Cylinder numbers:</b>	Cyls. 1A & 1B bottom margin under R10/1, colours reading across from left – black, dark blue, magenta, yellow.
<b>Colour register:</b>	Type TL 4 – round boxed - left margin opposite R10/1, colours reading down – black, dark blue, magenta, yellow.
<b>Sheet Value:</b>	Bottom margin, below R10/5, black printing
<b>Sheet Number:</b>	Type SN 4, with 'No' prefix, right margin opposite R10/5, reading down
<b>Print numbers:</b>	300,000 stamps (3,000 1A & 1B sheets each)

**Issue date:** 16<sup>th</sup> November 1970

**Withdrawal from sale:** 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1971

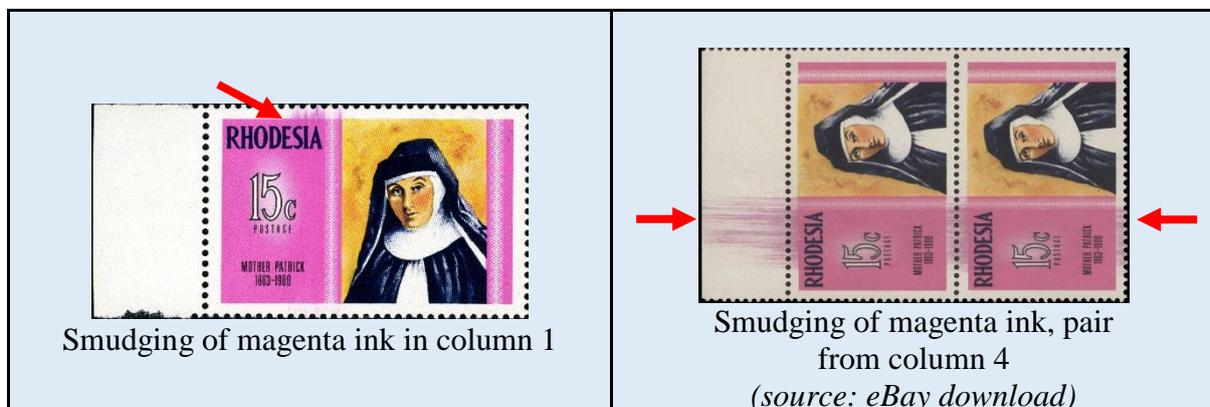
**Demonetarisaton:** 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1974

## Listed varieties

Below are varieties documented or seen for each of the values, starting with the listed varieties within the Mashonaland Guide<sup>1</sup>, and those listed in the RSC<sup>2</sup>, shown in yellow shaded tables. The varieties listed in bold are considered by the authors of the Guide to be more important.

Row	Col	
Multipositives		Broken loop in lace on left opposite Postage. 5/5, 5/10
Cyl 1A		
2	4	Black spot bottom left of the cape.
8	3	White spot under 'A' of Postage.
Cyl 1B		
2	2	Black vertical stroke to top of lace on left
3	2	White dot under 'E' of Rhodesia
7	2	White dot bottom left of 'P' of Postage
8	1	Beauty spot on left of Mother Patrick's chin
8	4	White dot on the curl of 'c' of 15c
8	5	Small black dot in left margin of stamp level with the 5th perforation hole and the words "Mother Patrick".
9	2	Small black dot after 15c.

## Unlisted varieties



Several single examples have been seen where “Rhodesia” appears thicker, almost like a double print. But this only affects the country’s name and no other part of the stamp. Suspect that this is a positional flaw on one of the cylinders.

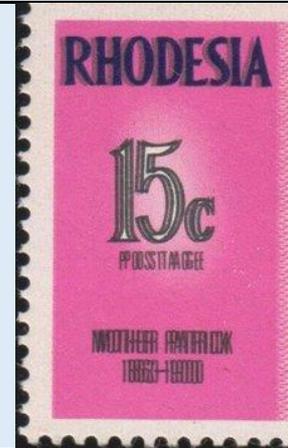
**RHODESIA**

**RHODESIA**

Double printing of the black plate



(Courtesy Dave Cooper)



## First Day Covers

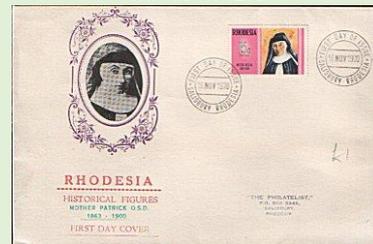
The cover numbering comes from the catalogue produced by Geoff Brakspear

Cover 46.1 (PTC)



162 x 114 mm

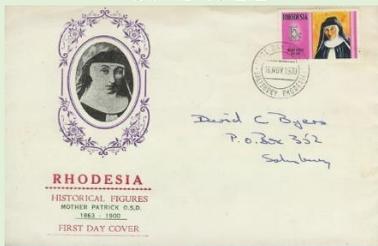
Cover 46.2.1



193 x 127mm

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> lines in red  
3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> lines of text in turquoise blue

Cover 46.2.2



193 x 127mm

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> lines in red  
3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> lines of text in dark green

Cover 46.2.3



193 x 127mm

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> lines in violet  
3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> lines of text in red  
(Image supplied by James Gavin)

## Related Material



First day cover signed by artist,  
Rose Martin

## Bibliography

1. "A Guide to the Postage Stamps of Rhodesia", supplement No 4, issued 1972, published by the Mashonaland Philatelic Study Group
2. "The Rhodesia Stamp Catalogue", 1983/84, published by Salisbury Stamp Company
3. Post & Telecommunications Corporation Bulletin No 3 of 1970, published by the Philatelic Bureau
4. <http://zimfieldguide.com/harare/mother-patrick%E2%80%99s-mortuary-1895>
5. "Rhodesian Tapestry – A History in Needlework", published by the Women's Institutes of Rhodesia, 1971