

# SIR ALFRED BEIT

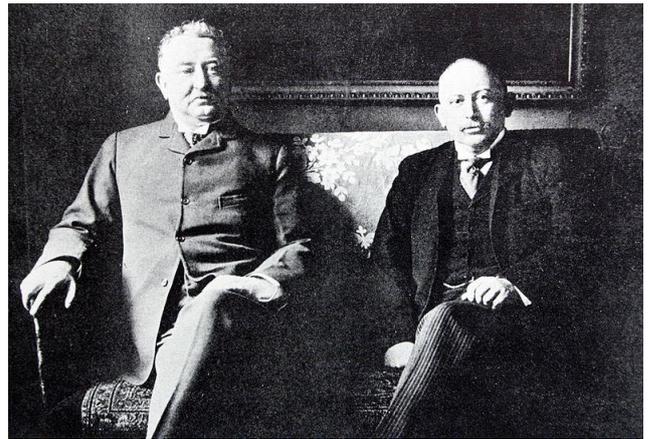
Issued 15th July, 1968

The second in the Famous Figures issue commemorated Sir Alfred Beit.

“But, perhaps equally sharing in Rhodes' dreams and fortunes, was his friend and partner, Alfred Beit, who had much in common with Rhodes, through their association and common interest in the diamond mines of Kimberley.

Alfred Beit was born of Jewish parents in Hamburg in 1853. His father Siegfried Beit was in partnership with one Goddefroy in a shipbuilding and boiler works. Alfred joined the German firm of Lippert & Co., who had diamond and wool interests in South Africa, to where he made his way in 1875. After spending a few weeks in Port Elizabeth, he left by coach for Kimberley, where he displayed a remarkable aptitude for business and soon became a partner in the firm of Wernher, Beit and Company—a firm which was to play a profound role in the financial affairs of South Africa. It was not long before Beit set about amassing a great fortune.

It was at Kimberley that he first met Rhodes, and soon became entranced with his ambitious schemes. He became a close friend and collaborator of the great Empire builder, and lent him both moral and financial support in many of his plans. Rhodes had arrived in Kimberley four years before Beit and both shared the same ambition to control the diamond market of South Africa. Rhodes' great rival, Barney Barnato had similar ideas, but fought against Rhodes, whereas Beit collaborated with him. Eventually Barnato conceded defeat, leaving Rhodes virtually in command.



Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Beit



Sir Alfred Beit, circa 1905

Rhodes trusted Beit, and seldom acted without first consulting him. Beit was a very hard-working and thorough business man. At Kimberley he would be up at six, looking at the works and giving instructions to the managers. His day ended at midnight. He would take nothing for granted and would supervise everything himself. Yet he was a frail and sensitive man, but at the same time extremely practical.

Beit, like Rhodes, never married, and he died in 1906, only four years after Rhodes. The death of his friend, and the lonely years following the Raid and the Boer War, no doubt had left their mark. The lives of these great men had followed many similar paths.

Perhaps in honour of his friend, and in pursuance of his dream, he left the sum of £1,200,000 to the people of Rhodesia for the improvement of transport and communications, as well as for the betterment of education.

Many school halls, bridges, and other institutions have been built from the funds of the Beit Trust, and they bear a permanent testament to the man who loved our founder and the country that bears his name.

One of the outstanding projects undertaken by the Trust is Beit Bridge, which links the Republic of South Africa with its northern neighbour across the Limpopo River. This bridge was completed in 1929, and provides the means by which the people of the two countries, who have so much in common, can visit one another. Another major bridge provided by the Trust is the Otto Beit Bridge at Chirundu, which was constructed across the Zambezi in 1939. This bridge was designed by Sir Ralph Freeman, and erected by Messrs. Dorman Long, a famous firm of bridge builders from Britain. It has a single span 1,050 ft. long, and was completed at a cost of £186,559. The bridge was officially opened on 24th May, by Lilian, Lady Beit, Sir Otto's widow, who named it after her late husband, who had faithfully interpreted his brother's wishes. The opening ceremony was attended by the Governor of Southern Rhodesia, Sir Herbert Stanley, who travelled there by air in a Rapide of Rhodesia and Nyasaland Airways.

Birchenough Bridge, across the Sabi River, was also financed by the Beit Trust, and is the finest example of a bridge constructed by the suspension technique that occurs in Africa. The Sabi River is a wide watercourse and with its rapidly rising flood waters and shifting sands, it was thought that piers would be unsuitable for constructing a bridge across the river.”

(The above has been extracted from “Supplement to – Rhodesia – A Postal History” by R. C Smith, published in 1970)<sup>1</sup>

The £1,200,000 legacy of Sir Alfred Beit, would in 2015 have the economic power of the equivalent of £1.15 billion, indeed a substantial amount.



Sir Alfred Beit's Statue  
at National Archives  
(also see selection of postcards below)

Apart from Rhodes, Beit was the only other person honoured with a statue in Salisbury. However, the statue did tend to move around.

At first the statue was situated outside the Boys High School in Moffat Street (some of the buildings still survive and form part of Queen Elizabeth School). He was later move to the centre of Cecil Square, which area later become the Coronation Fountain. From there he was moved to the roundabout at the intersection of Jameson Avenue and Moffat Street, where he faced down Jameson Avenue to the statue of Cecil Rhodes.

When the roundabouts were removed from Jameson Avenue he was relocated again outside the Salisbury (later Harare) Polytechnic.

He was finally moved after Zimbabwe's Independence to outside the National Archives in Borrowdale, Harare. Unlike his friend Rhodes, his statue is still in public view due to the Trust that he set up, which still benefits Zimbabwe.

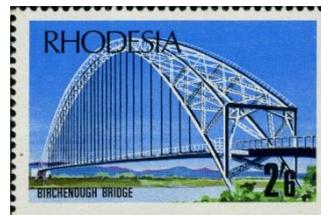
## **THE BEIT TRUST<sup>2</sup>**

### **The Original Terms of the Will**

Under the original terms of reference, the Trust was able to provide the funds to build most of the great bridges of Central Africa - over the Limpopo at Beitbridge on the border of Zimbabwe and South Africa; over the Save in Zimbabwe; over the Kafue in Zambia; over the Luangwa on the Great East Road from Zambia to Malawi, and the Otto Beit Bridge (below), opened in 1939, which spans the River Zambezi between Zambia and Zimbabwe at Chirundu. Over four hundred smaller or low level bridges were also built, which, at the time, provided much-needed communication in rural areas.

The contribution of both the founder and The Beit Trust to Zimbabwe's 20th century history was also celebrated in two commemorative stamp issues. In 1968 a stamp was issued featuring Alfred Beit himself and then a year later the Trust's bridge-building achievements were acknowledged with an issue showing both the many low level bridges and the Birchenough Bridge as part of the "Bridges of Rhodesia" issue.

Assistance was also given to the railways, in particular with the provision of rolling stock and the building of railway tracks.



## **The Present Constitution**

In 1954 the Trust was reconstituted by an Act of Parliament in the United Kingdom as an incorporated charity and, with the advent of Federation, Nyasaland (now Malawi) was included in the beneficial area as a beneficiary. Under Section 3 of The Act, The Beit Trust is now an incorporated body. The Trust does not fundraise and seeks to continue the philanthropic work desired by the donor through the careful stewardship and maintenance in perpetuity of its existing resources.

In his Will Alfred Beit laid down the terms of the Trust which were re-emphasised in The Beit Trust Act 1954. Although a mining magnate himself, he forbade his Trustees from investing in mining shares, other than preferred stocks. The geographical area of the Trust's compass is restricted to the three countries of the beneficial area and the Trust's activities must invariably benefit one of these countries. Since the Second World War there has seldom been a need for grants for improvement to communications in the beneficial area. Instead, the Trustees' objectives have been to provide assistance in the fields of education (including teacher training, bursaries and scholarships), health, welfare and the environment. Individual grants do not normally exceed £50,000 and assistance in the field of education is normally restricted to secondary and tertiary education. The Trustees have also made grants for ecological projects, but remain reluctant to make grants to other UK grant-making charities.

## **The Present Organisation of the Trust**

The Trust has its Headquarters at Beit House in Woking, Surrey, and also has an office in Harare, Zimbabwe, staffed by the Trust's Representative in Africa and his staff. At present, there are six Beit Trustees whose Chairman is Sir Alan Munro, great nephew of the Founder. The Trustees meet in London twice a year to decide upon the grants to be allocated. They are advised by a committee of local Correspondents in Africa, two or three per beneficial country, who meet shortly before the Trustees' meetings to give their expert advice on each application. New grants are normally in the order of up to £50,000, and the Trust also operates a system whereby contingency grants of up to £4,000 can be authorised out of committee for subsequent ratification by Trustees.

## THE ISSUED STAMP



### Catalogue Listings

SG <sup>3</sup>	RSC <sup>4</sup>	Value	Description	Print colours
426	C	1s6d	Sir Alfred Beit	Magenta, cyan, yellow & black

### Technical details

<b>Stamp size:</b>	42 x 28 mm
<b>Sheet Size:</b>	60 stamps (6 rows of 10 stamps), two panes within printed sheet
<b>Artist:</b>	Alfred Hayward (1875-1971), painting in the Bulawayo Club, painted in 1913 <sup>6</sup>
<b>Paper:</b>	Type 10 - Chromo, creamy/brown gum
<b>Print colours:</b>	Yellow, magenta, cyan and black.
<b>Perforations:</b>	Comb perf: SG 14½, RSC 14¼ Top margin: Perforated through Side margins: Two perf holes Bottom margin: Imperforate
<b>Printer's Imprint:</b>	Type 6a, bottom margin, below columns 5 & 6
<b>Cylinder numbers:</b>	Cyl 1A bottom margin under R6/1 Reading across - black, cyan, yellow, cyan
<b>Colour register:</b>	Type TL 4 – round boxed - left margin opposite R6/1 Reading down – black, cyan, yellow, cyan
<b>Sheet Value:</b>	Bottom margin, below R6/10, black printing
<b>Sheet Number:</b>	Type SN 3, right margin opposite R6/10
<b>Print numbers:</b>	300,000 (5,000 sheets)
<b>Issue date:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> July, 1968 (notice No 9 of 1968)

**Withdrawal from sale:** 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1968

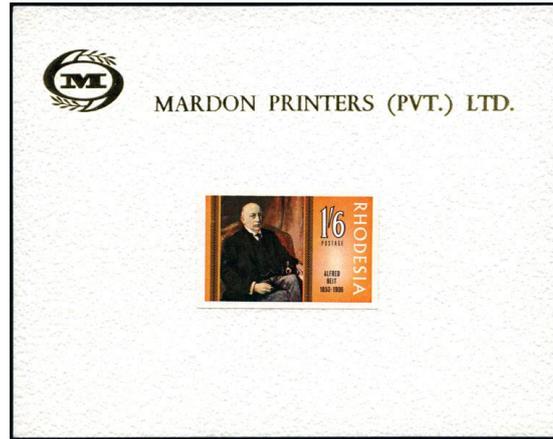
**Demonetisation:** 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1971 (post decimalisation)

### Listed varieties

Below are varieties documented or seen for each of the values, starting with the listed varieties within the Mashonaland Guide<sup>4</sup>, and those listed in the RSC<sup>3</sup>, shown in yellow shaded tables. The varieties listed in bold are considered by the authors of the Guide to be more important. Having examined a full sheet of stamps, the varieties listed below are relatively insignificant with many appearing to be batch flaws.

Row	Col	
Multipositives		Red dot to left of right leg of 'R' of Rhodesia. 1/1, 1/6, 4/1, 4/6
		Broken lace motif on right fringe. 1 /4, 1/9, 4/4, 4/9
		Black dot in lace motif on left halfway down. 2/1, 2/6, 5/1, 5/6
		Green dot on coat collar. 2/2, 2/7, 5/2, 5/7
		Yellow dots between 'RH' of Rhodesia and to right of 'H' of Rhodesia 2/5, 2/10, 5/5, 5/10
		Tiny yellow dot to left of word Beit. 2/3, 2/8, 5/3, 5/8
		Tiny white dot almost cutting 'R' of Rhodesia on right. 2/4, 2/9, 5/4, 5/9
		Red dots to right of R and on right leg of 'R' of Rhodesia. 3/2, 3/7, 6/2, 6/7
		Red dot on shoulder. 3/2, 3/8, 6/3, 6/8
1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black dot on left leg.</li> <li>• Black dot on R of Rhodesia.</li> </ul>
1	3	Tiny green dot at 2 o'clock from head at top of curtain
1	4	Broken lace on left fringe.
1	7	Two white dots at toe of 'E' of Rhodesia.
1	8	Green curved line at 2 o'clock from head on curtain
1	9	Emerald 'ring' <sup>1</sup> on right hand little finger
2	2	Black spot under 'T' of Postage.
2	4	Tiny black dot to left of 'I' of Rhodesia
2	5	In addition to multipositive, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yellow dot between 'ES' of Rhodesia</li> <li>• Yellow dot to left of 'S' of Rhodesia.</li> <li>• Emerald fly button.</li> <li>• Black dot over '0' of 1906.</li> <li>• Black dot to right of E of postage.</li> </ul>
2	7	Three dark blue spots on body of Beit at waist line
3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yellow dot below '5' of 1853</li> <li>• Black dot above 'D' of Alfred</li> </ul>
4	2	Tiny green dot at 2 o'clock from Beit's head
4	4	Tiny black spot on cheek
4	7	Tiny red dot below sleeve
4	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yellow mark to right of 'S' of Rhodesia on edge of printing.</li> <li>• Green spot on back of chair</li> </ul>
5	5	In addition to Multipositive, yellow dot in middle of 'D' of Rhodesia
5	10	In addition to multipositive, a yellow "grave accent" to right of 'O' of Rhodesia
6	2	Red dot between 'SI' of Rhodesia
6	10	Yellow spot at right of A of Rhodesia.

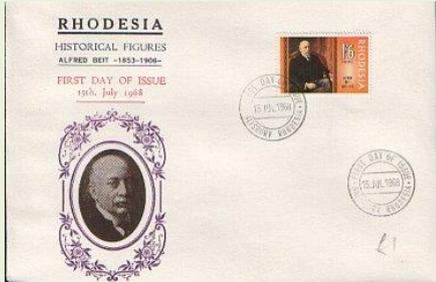
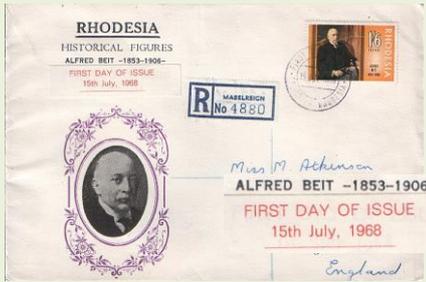
## Mardon Presentation Card



Presentation card with imperforate stamp  
(Source Rhodesian Study Circle website)

## First Day Covers

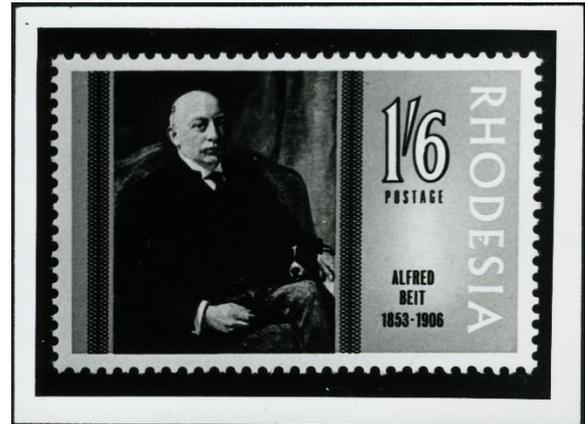
The cover numbering comes from the catalogue produced by Geoff Brakspear.

<p style="text-align: center;">Cover 39.1</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Post Office Cover 228 x 102 mm</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Cover 39.2.1</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">189 x 128 mm, correct issue date</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">The following two covers are similar to Cover 39.2.1, but it would appear that the producer originally printed the wrong date of issue. This has been corrected with a white slip over the area of the date in two different fonts.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Cover 39.2.2</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">189 x 128 mm With pasted on correction slip, with serif lettering</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Cover 39.2.3</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">189 x 128 With pasted on correction slip, no serif lettering</p>

## RELATED MATERIAL

### Post Office Publicity

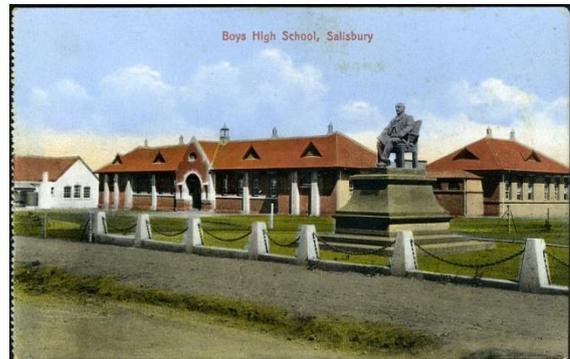
The Post Office photographed stamps that had been, or were about to be, issued. The enlarged black and white photographs were then sent to philatelic publications, or the local papers, for publicity purposes.



### Post cards – Beit's Statue, Salisbury

This was the earliest location of Alfred Beit's Statue in Moffat Street, several post cards were produced showing the statue in this location in the 1900's to 1920's. Either the Boys High School or the adjoining Queen Victoria Library are seen in the background

Card produced by G.B. & Co, Cape Town

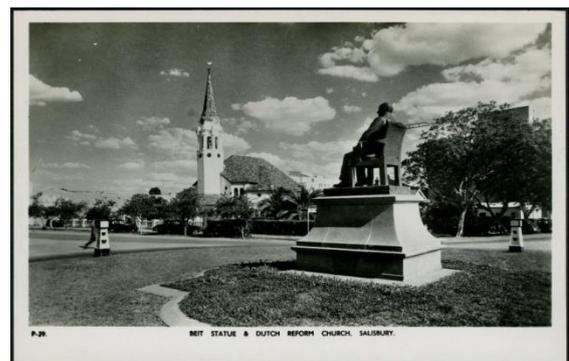


The statue was later moved to Cecil Square and appears to be at the intersection of the various paths that have the UK's union flag configuration.

The only post card seen with the statue is this one produced by Newman Art Publishing Co, Cape Town. The back of this card is dated October 1944

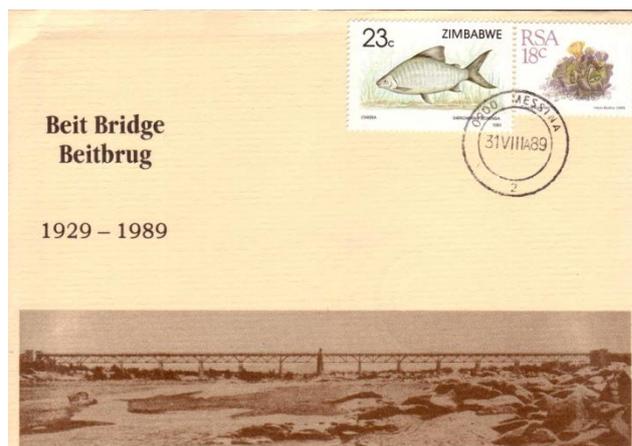
The statue then appeared in the middle of the roundabout at the intersection of Jameson Avenue and Moffat Street, where it remained until all roundabouts in Jameson Avenue were removed, probably in the 1960's.

A number of post cards show the the statue, most with the Salisbury Dutch Reformed Church in the background. This card was produced by John Hamlin, Salisbury



## BEIT BRIDGE

The printed cover opposite was produced to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Beit Bridge in 1929. The cover has stamps from both Zimbabwe and South Africa and is postmarked in Messina, the town of the South African side. Unknown whether covers were also cancelled in Beitbridge, the town on the Zimbabwean side



## Bibliography

1. "Supplement to Rhodesia – A Postal History" by R.C Smith, published 1970, pages 19 to 21
2. Extracts from the Beit Trust website, [www.beittrust.org.uk](http://www.beittrust.org.uk)
3. Stanley Gibbons Commonwealth Stamp Catalogue, Southern & Central Africa, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2014
4. The Rhodesia Stamp Catalogue, 1983/84 (last edition), published by Salisbury Stamp Company.
5. "A Guide to the Postage Stamps of Rhodesia, No 4" 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1968 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1972, published by the Mashonaland Philatelic Study Group, 1968
6. Magnify, February 1975 Vol 5 No 11