

UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION CENTENARY

Issued 20th November, 1974

The contents of the Philatelic Bureau Bulletin read as follows:³

“The year 1974 is the centenary of the Universal Postal Union, which came into being as the "General Postal Union" following a meeting of representatives of twenty-two countries, held in Switzerland in September, 1874. Three years later, after the accession of a number of other countries, the present title was adopted.

Prior to the formation of the Union, the dispatch of a letter from one country to another could be fraught with difficulties, particularly if it had to pass through transit countries between its origin and destination. Each country required payment for its services, usually in its own currency, and each charged different rates based on different factors, such as weight, size, or the number of sheets of paper used. Some neighbouring countries formed loose associations to simplify postal exchanges, and there were varying bilateral agreements.



The UPU Monument at the UPU Headquarters, Berne, Switzerland. Sculptured by Rene de Saint-Marceaux and unveiled in 1909

The development of international commerce and increasing literacy in the nineteenth century led to greater quantities of international mail, which in turn accentuated the deficiencies of the postal services. Rationalization became essential, and with this end in view, the then Postmaster-General of the United States of America, Montgomery Blair, took the initiative in 1862, of convening the first international meeting of postal officials. This led directly to the formation of the Union twelve years later. Membership of the Universal Postal Union today comprises 152 countries and 60 territories and embraces virtually the whole world.

Constant improvements in the means of communication and methods of conveying mail and providing ancillary services have led to numerous changes to the Acts and Agreements of the Union. Congresses are held generally every five years, but the work of the Union goes on all the time, and there are frequent meetings of standing committees as well as ad hoc committees formed to study specialized subjects and make recommendations to Congress. Although the Union keeps up with the times, it is a tribute to its founders that the broad base of the Union has remained with little change since its formation.

Virtually all facets of postal activities in the international sphere are covered by Universal Postal Union Agreements. This means not only that similar services are available to the public in all parts of the world, but also that basically similar charges are levied by all Postal Administrations. Some flexibility of charging structures is permitted, and it is of interest to note here that the postage rates charged in Rhodesia are at the lower end of the scales stipulated in the Agreements.

The Union's activities embrace many fields, and one that may be quoted as an example of its value is the negotiation of rates payable by Postal Administrations to Air Lines for the conveyance of air mails. These rates are agreed with the organization representing Air Lines, and are applied throughout the world, ensuring that all Postal Administrations have access to all Air Lines at standard charges. This is but one example of the application of one of the basic tenets of the Union - that postal services of one country should be available to other countries at charges similar to those paid by the country in which the service operates, or is based.

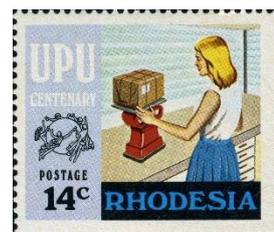
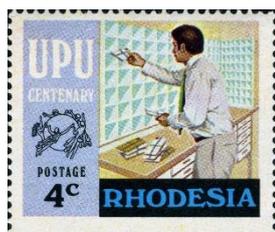
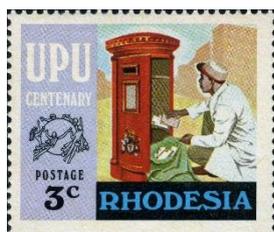
There can be few better examples of true international co-operation than that provided by the Universal Postal Union. The centenary of its inception is an event of importance, and is being marked not only by ceremonies at the Congress held in Lausanne, Switzerland this year, but also by the issue of commemorative postage stamps by many Postal Administrations all over the world. Rhodesia is proud to join the international community of Postal Services, in marking the occasion in this way”

The UPU emblem is full of historic significance, and takes its inspiration from the Universal Postal Union monument erected at the beginning of the 20th century in Berne, Switzerland; it is located in the *Kleine Schanze* Park in the heart of the city, near the train station. The bronze and granite statue commemorating the Union's founding in 1874 was unveiled on 4 October 1909. It is the work of the French sculptor René de Saint-Marceaux, a member of the Paris Académie des Beaux-Arts. He was commissioned to produce the work following an international competition organized by the Swiss Government on the theme: "*Around the world*". De Saint-Marceaux's sculpture embodies the UPU's truly universal mission, depicting five messengers, men and women, dancing round around the Earth; they symbolize the five continents as they pass letters round the globe. The monument's symbolic representation was gradually accepted as the UPU's distinctive emblem. The logo appeared for the first time on the cover of the UPU's flagship magazine *Union Postale* in 1951, and was then used on envelopes and official documents. The UPU's Executive Council adopted it as the Union's official logo in 1967.⁴



The central logo for the UPU is depicted on the stamps issued. The logo is based on the UPU Monument.

THE ISSUED STAMPS



Catalogue listings

SG	RSC ²	Value	Description
509	C136	3c	Postman emptying letterbox
	a.		Broken emblems (5 stamps – R1 to 5/C5 Cyl 1A & 1B)
510	C137	4c	Sorting Mail
511	C138	7½c	Delivering Mail
512	C139	14c	Weighing Mail
	a.		“Hairgrip flaw” (R9/2 Cyl 1B)

Technical details

Stamp size:	35 x 30 mm
Sheet Size:	50 stamps (10 rows of 5 stamps), two panes within printed sheet
Artist:	M C Chase
Paper:	Type 10 - Chromo, creamy/brown gum
Print colours:	Cyan, yellow, magenta and black
Perforations:	Comb perf: SG 14, RSC 14¼ Top margin: Perforated through Side and bottom margins: Imperforate
Printer's Imprint:	Type 6a, bottom margin, below columns 2 to 4 – black printing
Cylinder numbers:	Cyls. 1A & 1B bottom margin under R10/1, colours reading across from left – cyan, yellow, magenta, black.
Colour register:	Type TL 4 – round boxed - left margin opposite R10/1, colours reading down – cyan, yellow, magenta, black.
Sheet Value:	Bottom margin, below R10/5, black printing
Sheet Number:	Type SN 4 with 'PTC' prefix, right margin opposite R10/5, reading down

Print numbers:
 3c 3,500,000 stamps (35,000 1A & 1B sheets each)
 4c 800,000 stamps (8,000 1A & 1B sheets each)
 7½c 600,000 stamps (6,000 1A & 1B sheets each)
 14c 400,000 stamps (4,000 1A & 1B sheets each)

Issue date: 20th November, 1974

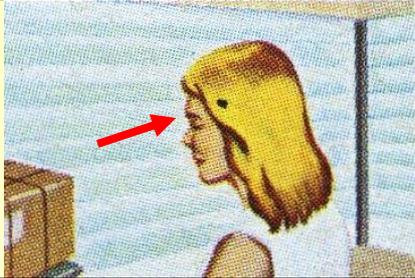
Withdrawal from sale: 18th August, 1975

Demonetisation: 1st September, 1978

Listed varieties

Below are varieties documented or seen for each of the values, starting with the listed varieties within the Mashonaland Guide¹, and those listed in the RSC², shown in yellow shaded tables. The varieties listed in bold are considered by the authors of the Guide to be more important.

Cyl	Row	Col	
3 cents			
1A & 1B			<p>Variety known as the "The Broken Fairies." on all five stamps in column 5, i.e. 1/5, 2/5, 3/5, 4/5 and 5/5, but to varying degrees, the major breaks being on 2/5 and 3/5 (extreme left), and on 4/5 left centre.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RSC C136a – Broken Emblems flaws</p>
			<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Normal</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>R1/5</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>R2/5</p> </div> </div>
			<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>R3/5</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>R4/5</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>R5/5</p> </div> </div>
4 cents			
1B	5	5	White vertical dash between the lower parts of 'I' and 'A' of RHODESIA

	10	4	Large mark inside 'O' of Rhodesia	
14 cents				
1B	4	2	Dark blue dot on second slat of blind from the top, directly above the parcel	
	9	2	Black dot in hair above eye level	

First Day Covers

The cover numbering comes from the catalogue produced by Geoff Brakspear



Related Material

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.



Bibliography

1. “A Guide to the Postage Stamps of Rhodesia”, supplement No 5, issued 1978, 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 1974, published by the Philatelic Bureau
4. Extract from the website entitled “The History of the ICAO”, regarding the history of the UPU.
https://www.icao.int/secretariat/PostalHistory/icao_and_the_universal_postal_union.htm