The title of this issue is “Steam Safaris 1985”, but there is nothing within the Bulletin issued for this release about steam safaris. Bulletin No 1 of 1985 only describes the steam locomotives that are depicted on the stamps.

However, it is understood that there was supposed to be a special steam safari happening on or about the date of the release of this issue. The special steam safari did eventually, in August 1985, see “related material” below.

This issue is also significant as it was the first time that the PTC issued a set of four Maxicards to accompany the issue, each card bearing a picture of the issued stamps. (Note the maxicards for the Artists of Rhodesia issue in 1977 were issued by the National Archives).

(Extracted from Bulletin No 1 of 1985). Illustrations are the fronts of the maxicards.

The locomotive featured on the 9 cents stamp is a 9th Class Superheat numbered 86, originally owned by the Mashonaland Railways entering service in 1918. Built by the North British Locomotive Co. Ltd., Glasgow, Scotland, at a purchase price of £5020/16/8 the 9th Class was the first superheated engine on the system and proved a success in the movement of traffic over main lines. It is worth noting that by way of experiment, the boiler of locomotives No's 86-91 were fitted with steel tubes as against brass tubes which were fitted to the remainder of the boilers in this series. This engine was sold for scrap to a Bulawayo firm in 1972. A comparison locomotive of the 9th class, No 115, may still be viewed at the Zimbabwe Railways Museum at Raylton, Bulawayo and as a working exhibit is available to haul special trains as required.

The 11 cents stamp features a 15 A Class Garratt articulated type locomotive built by Beyer Peacock and Co. Ltd., Manchester, England. It entered service with Rhodesia Railways in 1950 and was originally numbered 404. She was involved in a series of mishaps almost from the start of her service but since being renumbered 424 and named "Isilwane" in July 1970 has led a respectable and trouble-free existence. This engine was used on all main lines with the exception of the eastern and northern lines and is still currently working.
The 17 cents stamp features a 12th Class locomotive No. 190 built by the North British Locomotive Co. Ltd., Glasgow Scotland, in 1926. The type was extremely popular with staff and was able to haul all types of traffic without difficulty, being economical in the use of coal and water. In the early stages this engine was universal on all main lines but towards the end of its commercial life became associated principally with the lines north of Zimbabwe. Although this engine is now an exhibit at the National Railways of Zimbabwe Museum it is used from time to time to haul special trains and was used on an Easter excursion on the West Nicholson branch line to Mbalabala in 1984. It is also probable that locomotive No. 190 will be selected for use in King Solomon's Mines, a major film now being shot on location in Zimbabwe.

Featured on this stamp is a 20A Class Garratt articulated type locomotive numbered 726, built by Beyer Peacock and Co. Ltd., Manchester, England, and entered service with Rhodesia Railways in 1957. This type of locomotive is the largest on Zimbabwe Railways system with a load haulage of 1,400 tons. With the large coal capacity of its bunker, mechanical stoking is provided, which was an innovation in this part of the world.

The Stamps
Catalogue listings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG</th>
<th>ZSC</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>653</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>9c</td>
<td>Engine No 86, 9th class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>654</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>11c</td>
<td>Engine No 190, 12th class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>655</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>17c</td>
<td>Engine No 424, 15a class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Damaged ‘424’ Flaw (Cyl 1B R10/1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>656</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>30c</td>
<td>Engine No 726, 20a class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Technical details

Stamp size: All values 42 x 28 mm

Sheet Size: 50 stamps (10 rows of 5 stamps), two panes per printed sheet

Artist: Geoff Cameron based on photos by F C Butcher, except 9c which is based on photo courtesy of National Railways of Zimbabwe.

Paper: ZSC paper type B – HS6, fluorescent coated paper with PVA gum with a blueish/greenish tinge.

Print colours: All values - Black, magenta, cyan, yellow

Perforations: SG 14½, ZSC 14¼
Top margin: Perforated through.
Other margins: Imperforate

Printer: Mardon Printers (Pvt) Ltd., Harare, Zimbabwe

Printer’s Imprint: Bottom Margin, below Row 10 Columns 2 to 4. Imprint printed in black

Cylinder numbers: Top margin above column 5. Colours reading from left All values – yellow, cyan, magenta, black

Colour register: Type TL 4– round boxed – right margin opposite R1/5. Colours reading down. All values – black, magenta, cyan, yellow

Sheet Value: Top margin, above R1/1, printed in black.

Sheet Number: Type SN 4a with ‘PTC’ prefix, left margin, opposite R1/1, reading down.

Print numbers: 9c 750,000 11c 750,000 17c 750,000 30c 750,000
Issue date: 15th May, 1985

Withdrawal from sale:

Demonetarisation: 31st January, 1994

Listed varieties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZSC 79a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Damaged ‘424’ flaw – Cyl IB row 10/1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlisted varieties

There are numerous small dots and specks in the printing of these stamps, particularly in the backgrounds. Some dots and specks shown below are a bit more distinctive, some may be constant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9c: Cyan area in wheels, probably caused by water on magenta plate. Also red ring around ink clot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Courtesy Dave Trathen)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11c: White spot above ‘W’ of Zimbabwe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
17c: Black line after ‘Class’

17c: Strange whitish disturbance to top of locomotive, possibly water on plate

17c: Sheet number printed on to stamp R1/1

17c: Bottom half of stamp has a magenta wash to the paper. Not easy to see

Perforation movements:
17c movement to left into design
30c movement down into top of design.
First Day Covers

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

A pictorial first day of issue canceller was produced for this issued and was used by the Philatelic Bureau. Other first day cover cancellers continued to be used at main post offices.

This cancellation also used on single stamps on the reverse of the maxicards.

ZW018-1 (PTC)  
ZW018- maxicard

Each stamp has an equivalent maxicard, all first day cancellations by Philatelic bureau are on same stamps as frontage.

200 x 138 mm

Related Material

Steam Safari – August 1985

The Railway Magazine produced a commemorative cover for a special Steam Safari using steam locomotives between Gweru and Victoria Falls, via Bulawayo, from 5th to 11th August 1985. Within the cover there is a stiffener that firstly describes the journey and secondly has descriptions of the four Steam Safari stamps (as with the Bulletin’s descriptions).

“The covers were placed on the 'Steam Safari' train in Gweru, on which there was a special travelling post office. Mail posted on this train was franked with a special date handstamp. The first part of the journey to Bulawayo used a steam locomotive from the Railway Museum. From Bulawayo to Dete the Garrett hauled special train was attached to train 26. Water was taken on at Gwaai and the line, which is absolutely straight for 116.237 km, passes through the Hwange Game Park. From Dete it went to Hwange
Town by train 22, and here took a detour to the Wankie Colliery system (the largest open cast coal mine in Africa) via Thompson Junction and onto Old Wankie Station where the train was stabled overnight. It returned next day to Thompson Junction to join train 16 to Victoria Falls. Steam Safari covers were cancelled at Victoria Falls on 11th August 1985.” (From stiffener within cover)

In addition to the Railway Magazine’s covers, maxicards were also posted in Gweru and cancelled 5 AUG. 85 in sets of four cards with single stamps on reverse. The Travelling Post Agency (T.P.A.) was also able to accept registered mail and for this special registration label with “Steam Safaris” typed on.

Maxicard with steam Safaris T.P.A, cancellation

Registered cover with special cancellation and registration label.

Other material

Victoria Falls Safari Express postcard, with elephants on the line!

Card produced by Fleetwood, Cheyenne, Wyoming USA in 1896
2004 Sierra Leone stamp and cover. Featuring the Rhodesia Railways 12th Class 4-8-2 locomotive No 190, which is pictured on the Steam Safari 17 cents stamp. But the two picture do not appear to be the same trains, despite having the same description particulay loco no. (This cover and stamp refers to “Rhodesia Railways” – some 24 years after Zimbabwe’s Independence!)

Bibliography: