MINERALS OF ZIMBABWE
Issued 12th January 1993

Extracted from Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 1 of 1993)

Nothing is as important in the natural world as our own earth and the rocks beneath our feet. Minerals are chemical elements or compounds found naturally in the crust of the earth. They are inorganic, in contrast to organic chemicals (made mainly of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen) typical of living things. Some minerals have a fixed chemical composition, while others are a series of related compounds in which one metallic element may wholly or partly replace another. The minerals depicted in this issue are examples of such compositions.

25c: Uranium — (discovered in 1789 and isolated as an element about 1842) is now prized as a source of atomic energy. It occurs in some 50 minerals, most of them rare. The stamp depicts Autunite, a secondary ore of uranium and is formed by the altering of uraninite or other uranium-bearing minerals. It is relatively soft, has a pearly lustre, and its colour ranges throughout the greens and yellows. Autunite is very radioactive and highly fluorescent under ultraviolet light.

59c: Chrome — the stamp depicts Chromite, (Fe Cr₂O₄), the chromium ore. Chromite occurs in basic igneous rocks or in metamorphic rocks formed from them. It is metallic black or brownish; streak, dark brown. Sometimes slightly magnetic because of its iron content, it occurs in veins or in widespread granular masses, frequently with a coating of serpentine.

77c: Copper — the stamp depicts Azurite, Cu₃(CO₃)₂(OH)₂, a basic carbonate of copper. Azurite occurs as a secondary mineral in the oxidised parts of copper ore deposits, and is formed principally by the action of carbonated waters on other copper minerals. Malachite, like other secondary copper minerals, is a very common associate of azurite, as the stamp depicts. The mineral is named in allusion to its blue colour.

90c Coal — is the fuel which made the industrial revolution possible. Coal is an organic sedimentary rock consisting of the altered remains of plants. It is formed by a slow series of changes marked by a loss of water and volatile substances and a corresponding increase in the amount of "fixed carbon". Coal is classified by the relative amount of three groups of materials, lignite, bituminous and anthracite.

98c: Gold — the stamp depicts gold bearing quartz and a nugget. Gold is neither the rarest nor the most valuable metal, yet it is a part of the foundation of trade and commerce, and has many uses because of its metallic properties. Gold is found in quartz veins, sometimes with pyrite. The gold may occur within the pyrite itself - giving fool’s gold a real value. Only rarely is visible gold found in gold ore. It usually cannot be seen at all. Some of the commercial ores contain only 0.1 ounce of gold for each ton of rock.
$1.16: Emerald — is the blue-green variety of beryl. The beryl family also includes aquamarine (blue), morganite (pink) and golden beryl (yellow). Emerald tends to flaw in nature, and it is a rare crystal that is without cracks. The deep, rich green colour is most prized. An emerald is worth almost four times as much as a diamond of equal size and quality. The true emerald remains one of the most treasured of all gemstones.

Catalogue listings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG</th>
<th>ZSC</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>844</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>25c</td>
<td>Uranium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>845</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>59c</td>
<td>Chrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>846</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>77c</td>
<td>Copper</td>
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<tr>
<td>847</td>
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<td>90c</td>
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<td>848</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>98c</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>849</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>$1.16</td>
<td>Emerald</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Technical details

Stamp size: All values 35 x 30 mm
Sheet Size: 50 stamps (10 rows of 5 stamps), two panes per printed sheet
Artist: Rob Jeffrey
Paper: ZSC paper type D – HS8, fluorescent front and back, with cream PVA gum.
Print colours: Black, magenta, cyan & yellow
Perforations: SG 14½ x 14, ZSC 14¼ x 14
Top margin: Perforated through.
Other margins: Imperforate
Printer: NatPrint, Harare, Zimbabwe
Printer’s Imprint: Bottom Margin, below Row 10 Column 3. Imprint printed in black
Cylinder numbers: Top margin above R1/5. Colours from left – cyan, magenta, yellow, black
Colour register: Type TL 4– round boxed – right margin opposite R1/5. Colours reading down – cyan, magenta, yellow, black
Sheet Value: Top margin, above 1/1, printed in black.
Sheet Number: Type SN 4a with ‘PTC’ prefix, left margin opposite R1/1, reading down

Print numbers:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Value</th>
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<td>59c</td>
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<tr>
<td>77c</td>
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<td>90c</td>
<td>340,000</td>
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<td>98c</td>
<td>260,000</td>
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Issue date: 12\textsuperscript{th} January, 1993

Withdrawal from sale:

Demonetarisation: 15\textsuperscript{th} October, 1996

Listed varieties

No listed varieties have been noted

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.

25c: Lack of magenta to spot left of stone.  
(Courtesy Narebdhra Morar)

59c: Pink spot between ‘BW’ and stone  
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)

77c: Cyan dot left of value. R1/10 Cyl 1A, appears constant.  
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)

77c: Cyan dot to left tip of rock

77c: Smudged lettering to ‘Zim’

77c: Cyan spot to upper left of stone. Water on plate
First Day Cover

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.

Bibliography: