

HOUSEHOLD POTTERY OF ZIMBABWE

Issued 13th July 1993

(Extracted from Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 3 of 1993)²

Pottery has been used domestically in Zimbabwe for centuries to house and store water and grain, for cooking, for serving food and for brewing beer. The craft is still practised today although pottery-making has been adversely affected by the availability of more durable, mass-produced containers. The craft is traditionally practised only by women, and today it continues to be handed down in rural Zimbabwe from mother to daughter.



Postcard by Pictorial Publishing & Printing

Clay is collected by the older women. It is then ground into a fine powder before being mixed with water. Pots are formed by hand, using the coil method and a wooden tool which helps to shape them into the desired form and size. Decoration is incised with a sharp instrument before the pot is dry.

The completed pots are left in a cool place to harden off before being polished and finished with a rounded river pebble which gives a shiny external finish.

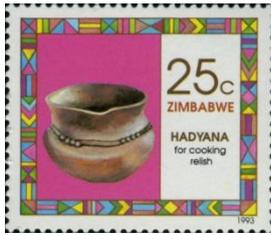
Further drying takes place in the sun before the pots are fired, usually about four days after they are made. The pots are then packed in a shallow ditch. Grass, tree bark and leaves are placed around and on top of them and the mound is set alight.

Several hours later it is checked to see if the clay has changed colour from black to brownish red. Whilst still hot, the pots are filled with a mixture of water and sadza (maize meal) porridge or liquid cow dung. This releases a resin which waterproofs the inside of the pots.

Many different pots are made, their function dictates their size and shape which also varies widely. Traditionally, ground graphite and red haematite were applied in V-shaped patterns around the neck of the pot. In modern times enamel paint in a variety of colours is also used.

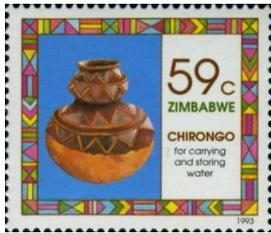


Zimbabwean household pottery



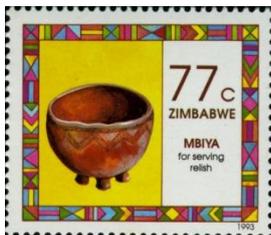
25c: Hadyana

The hadyana is a pot which is used on an open fire for cooking relish—a savoury sauce made from vegetables, fish, meat or peanuts. The pot illustrated is a small vessel, approximately 120mm high, which has a narrow neck and rim to avoid spillage, and a distinctive band of decoration on its shoulder.



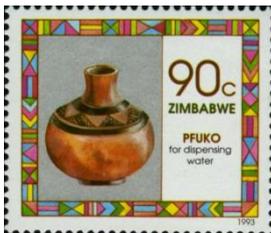
59c: Chirongo

The chirongo is used by women to carry water. It is balanced on the head with the aid of a woven grass ringlet which helps to cushion it. The example shown stands about 350mm high and is decorated with the traditional chevron design applied in alternate bands of red and black ochre.



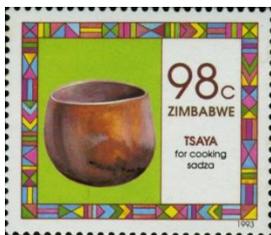
77c: Mbiya

This very attractive small vessel is used for serving relish which is the traditional accompaniment to sadza, the staple food of the Zimbabwean people. The mbiya shown has four stubby legs and is about 120mm high. It is decorated with a band of incised lines above a chevron pattern rendered in the same technique.



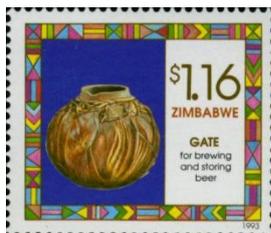
90c: Pfuko

This is a smaller pot, approximately 300mm high, which is used for storing and dispensing water. Young girls use pfukos when they are learning to carry water on their heads, as pfukos are much lighter than the chirongos. The illustrated pot has a painted decorative pattern on its neck, and a lip on the base which makes it more stable.



98c: Tsaya

This is a large vessel approximately 350mm high, used for cooking sadza, a thick porridge made from ground maize. The sample shown comes from Mutoko, and, as is the custom, it is undecorated. Tsayas are generally dark in colour from long exposure to naked flames.



\$1.16: Gate

The gate is a large vessel up to a metre in height, which is used for brewing and storing beer. The example shown comes from the Binga district and is covered in buffalo hide which helps to keep the contents cool

Catalogue listings

SG	ZSC ¹	Value	Description
854	281	25c	Hadyana (Relish Pot)
855	282	59c	Chirongo (Water Jar)
856	283	77c	Mbiya (Sadza Pot)
857	284	90c	Pfuko (Water Jar)
858	285	98c	Tsaya (Cooking Pot)
859	286	\$1.16	Gate (Beer Pot)

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:	Dianne Deudney			
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 R1/1. Colours from left – cyan, magenta, yellow, black			
Colour register:	Type TL 4– round boxed – left margin opposite R1/1. Colours reading down – cyan, magenta, yellow, black			
Sheet Value:	Top margin, above R5/1, printed in black.			
Sheet Number:	Type SN 4a with 'PTC' prefix, right margin opposite R1/1, reading down			
Print numbers:	25c	1,000,000	59c	200,000
	77c	200,000	90c	200,000
	98c	200,000	\$1.16	200,000
Issue date:	13 July, 1993			

Withdrawal from sale:

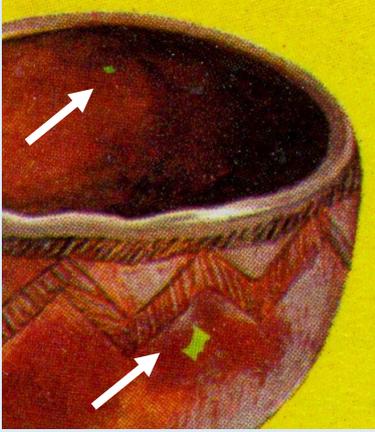
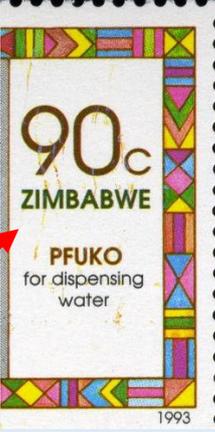
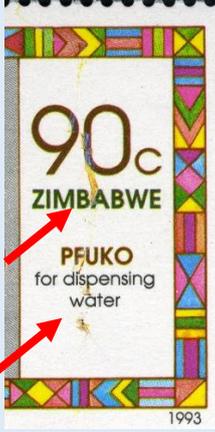
Demonetisation: 16th April, 1997

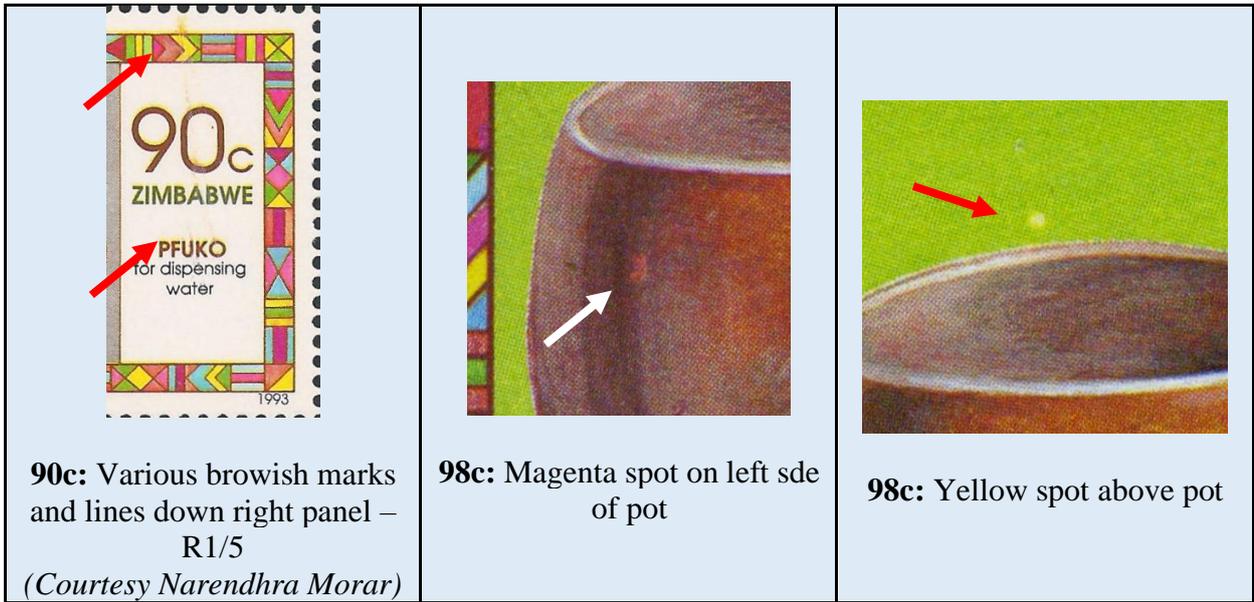
Listed varieties

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.

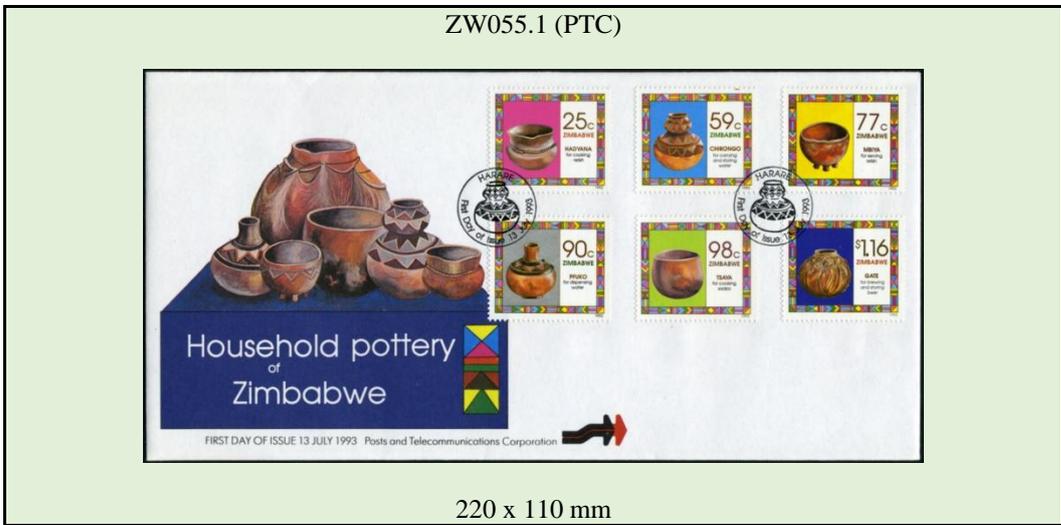
 <p>25c: Green scratch through left side of pot</p>	 <p>25c: Green spot to bottom of pot</p>	 <p>25c: White mark above top left of pot</p>
 <p>77c: Green spot to right centre of pot, and small green dot inside pot</p>	 <p>90c: Various brownish marks and lines down right panel – R10/2</p>	 <p>90c: Various brownish marks and lines down right panel – R10/4</p>



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:

1. "The Zimbabwean Concise Postage Stamp Catalogue", published by Harare Stamp Company, edited by Ken Allanson, Mike Amos and Geoff Brakspear. The catalogue continues to be updated and expanded by Geoff Brakspear
2. PTC Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 3 of 1993.