CHRISTMAS 1999
Issued 12th October 1999

(Extracted from Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 5 of 1999)

$2.00: Christmas Time - Family Time

Zimbabwe is a country of wide distances and Christmas is the joyful season of reunions. City workers crowd the packed buses. Precious cartons and boxes of gifts are precariously balanced on the roofs. Leaving the smog of factories and offices behind them, tired workers watch eagerly for the first sight of home. There also have been great preparations. Here they come! What excitement, what rejoicing! Christmas joy to you, one and all.

$6.70 Christmas Tree in Africa

This design is inspired by a true story. Very early upon Christmas morning holiday makers at Kariba Heights came upon an unusual scene. In a brightly lit shop window stood a Christmas Tree, its lights flashing, its branches hung with glittering toys. Before it, completely fascinated, trunks raised and eyes staring, stood three wild elephants. The words of the carol filled the air: Oh Christmas Tree, Oh Christmas Tree. How lovely are your branches!

$7.70: Joy to you this Christmas

With the coming of the Christ Child Christmas has become, in a special way, the children's festival. These happy children stem from the different tribes of Africa and from the nations of the East and West. Our hearts go out to them and to many of our children less fortunate, the homeless, the Street Kids, the AIDS orphans and many more. Spare a thought for these, this Christmas!

$9.10: Christmas Time - Flame Lily Time

The wild Flame Lily, Gloriosa superba, is the national Flower of Zimbabwe and it flowers in full glory at Christmas. Standing erect or sprawling over rocks and bushes, the beautiful petals move and twist like flames. They are scarlet, yellow and gold, ageing to deep crimson. This is a protected species, but unknowing children sometimes pick them for a game of conkers, the last survivor being the winner. Pick up the broken flower from the dust and float it in water. It will revive to delight you amongst your Christmas decorations.
$12:00: Glory to God and Peace on Earth

Down the ages, the Angel's message rings out yet again. Christmas, Christ-Mass, is our yearly remembrance of the birth of Jesus Christ when LOVE became a person, born in poverty as a helpless human baby and grew up, walking amongst us, very simply, asking us plainly to be like himself. The gentle Mother and her Child belong to us all and to every land and nation. May the peace and joy of Christmas be with us; one and all.

$16:00: The House of Christmas

This could be anywhere, city or slum, village, farm or market place, solitary or crowded, bringing the Christmas message of friendship, hope and joy to a world that seems to have lost its way. To an open house at Christmas (wrote the poet)

Home shall all men come;
To the end of the way of the wandering star,
To the things that cannot be and that are,
To the place where God was homeless
And all men are at home.

Catalogue listings

<table>
<thead>
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<th>SG</th>
<th>ZSC</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>998</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>Christmas Time – Family Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>999</td>
<td>427</td>
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<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>428</td>
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<td>1002</td>
<td>430</td>
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<td>Glory to God and Peace on Earth</td>
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<tr>
<td>1003</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>$16.00</td>
<td>The House of Christmas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Technical details

Stamp size: All values 30 x 35 mm

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

Artist: Lady Margaret Tredgold

Paper: ZSC paper type F - Although still officially described as HS8, the paper properties changed in 1996. This is fluorescent front but non-fluorescent back and the gum is whitish PVA.

Print colours: Cyan, magenta, yellow & black
Perforations: SG 14 x 14½, ZSC 14 x 14¼
Right margin: Perforated through.
Other margins: Imperforate

Printer: NatPrint, Harare, Zimbabwe

Printer’s Imprint: Bottom Margin, below Row 5 Columns 45 & 6. Imprint printed in black

Cylinder numbers: Bottom margin below R5/1. Colours from left – cyan, magenta, yellow, black

Colour register: Type TL 4 – round boxed – left margin opposite R5/1. Colours reading down – cyan, magenta, yellow, black

Sheet Value: Bottom margin, below R5/10, printed in black.

Sheet Number: Type SN 4a with ‘PTC’ prefix, right margin opposite R5/10, reading down

Print numbers: $2.00 2,500,000 $6.70 250,000
              $7.70 250,000 $9.10 250,000
              $12.00 250,000 $16.00 250,000

Issue date: 12th October, 1999

Withdrawal from sale:

Demonetarisation:

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.

$2.00. Shift of cyan plate down, and slight doubling of the black ink

(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)
$7.70: Imperforate pair, possibly from proof sheet

$7.70: Movement of perforations downwards into top of design

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.
Artwork

This is the first of several issues of stamps illustrated by Lady Margaret Tredgold, here seen examining the artwork for the Christmas 1999 issue.³

Although not complete, the preliminary artwork for three of the stamps are shown below. These show almost complete designs for the $2.00 and $16.00 values, with alternative designs for the $9.10.
In 2003/08 a number of stamps appeared on eBay showing genuine Zimbabwe stamps, which had been rubber-stamped "Specimen".
On enquiry at the Zimbabwe Philatelic Bureau, it was advised that the Bureau did have a "Specimen" rubber stamp, but that it had not been used in years. In the past, the Bureau, on occasion, send out pre-issue material to a few publications with this cancel on. It was done on request from the people concerned, so that the stamps couldn't be used as postage. It is hard to see by a publication would want copies of the stamps for publication with the stamps so heavily cancelled.

Bibliography: