

COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING (CHOGM)

Issued 16th October 1991

(Extracted from Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 4 of 1991)²

“At the threshold of a new century, the Commonwealth, an offshoot of nineteenth century colonialism, has grown to 50 member states and become a leading instrument of North-South co-operation. The membership adds up to a quarter of the world's nations and people. It spans the continents and is a bridge between races and religions and between rich and poor. It enables them to discuss common problems frankly and to work together for solutions.

The Commonwealth bears little resemblance to the Empire from which it has grown. It began to take its modern form at India's Independence in 1947. Two years later, India became a republic and the Commonwealth adapted to having within its countries owing no allegiance to the British crown. The newest member is Namibia which became independent in March 1990.

Commonwealth countries regard Queen Elizabeth II as a symbol of the association and as such, Head of the Commonwealth.”

The Commonwealth is known for its tradition of regular meetings of Heads of Government to discuss world problems and the work of the association. From October 16-22, 1991, this meeting took place at the Harare International Conference Centre, Zimbabwe.

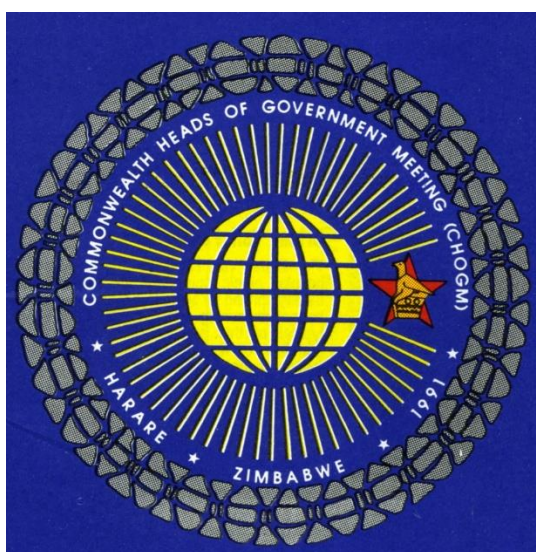


The Commonwealth Logo

39c: CHOGM Logo

The edge of the logo represents the great enclosure wall, in stonework design of the Great Zimbabwe viewed from above. Settlement and construction at the Great Zimbabwe by the Mwari (God) worshipping Shona culture started in the early 12th Century AD. the Great Zimbabwe buildings had both religious and military functions.

The Zimbabwe bird was found at the Great Zimbabwe. A number of the soapstone birds were found in good condition. They represent the token of the ruling clan, for a period at the Zimbabwe Culture, the Hungwe. The Star represents the noble and lofty aspirations of the Zimbabwe nation and appears on the national flag. The yellow radiating lines and the globe with the blue background are from the Commonwealth flag.



CHOGM Harare Conference Logo

The other designs represent the diversity, fascination and uniqueness of a country filled with places of interest that have, and will continue to draw the locals, tourists and Heads of Government back, time and time again.

20c - Bridal Veil Falls

The Bridal Veil Falls, in Chimanimani is a popular picnic spot, with its delicate water tracery spilling for 50 metres over rock steps to a natural swimming pool. The lush greenery is typical of this region, which combines the grandeur of Nyanga with the more tropical foliage of the Vumba.

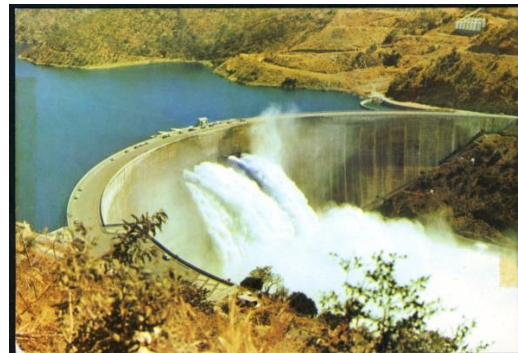


51c - Chinhoyi Caves

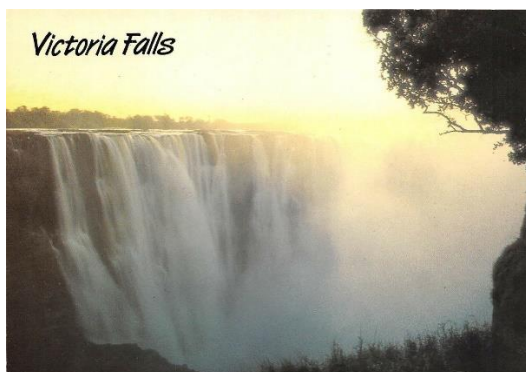
The cathedral-size Chinhoyi Caves with their Sleeping Pool lie eight kilometres from Chinhoyi on the Kariba Road. The caves descend 50 metres to the pool which is overhung by giant stalactites wreathed in creepers. Free from organisms and sediment, its limpid depth of 85 metres is lit at midday by a shaft of sunlight making the water appear impossibly blue. The pool is best viewed from the Dark Cave, known as the Coal Hole.

60c - Kariba Dam Wall

The 128-metre high dam wall which was built to tame the Zambezi River was completed in 1959. The result, Lake Kariba, covers 5 810 square kilometres and is the second largest man-made dam in Africa after the Aswan Dam in Egypt. The 579-metre length of the dam wall provides a road link between Zimbabwe and Zambia, on the north side.



Postcard by Big Game Photography



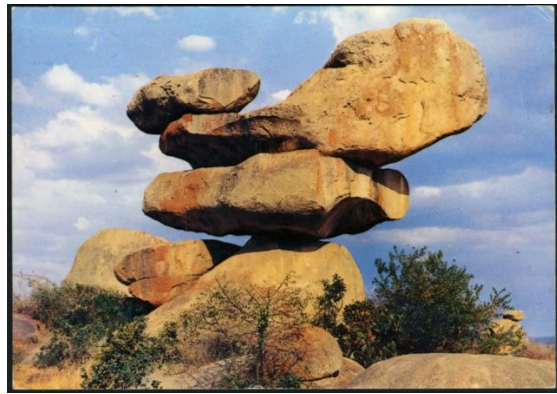
Postcard by Photo Safaris

65c - Victoria Falls

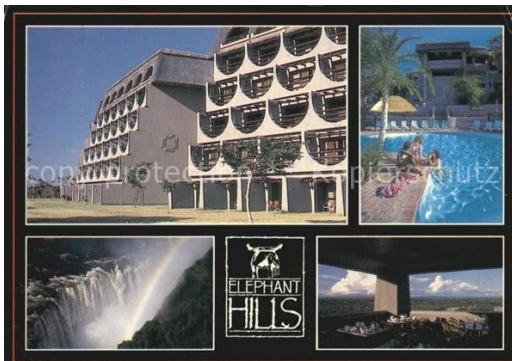
The massive rent in the earth, carved out by thousands of years of water turbulence, varies from 61 to 108 metres in depth. The force of the water - 545 million litres per minute in the flood season - sends spray clouds spinning high into the sky, often reaching heights of over 500 metres. This gave rise to the ancient African name for the Victoria Falls of Mosi oa Tunya - The Smoke that Thunders.

77c - Balancing Rocks

Granite has several peculiarities. In the process on its original cooling, natural lines of weakness and fracture appeared in the rock. Weathering of these granites caused them literally to fragment into shattered piles of separate rocks, with oddly assorted shapes, many of them fanciful in outline, and precariously balanced. These have formed powerful and evocative sculptures — nature's own creations.



Postcard by Tourist Promotion

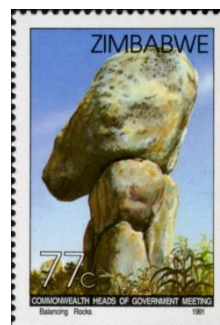
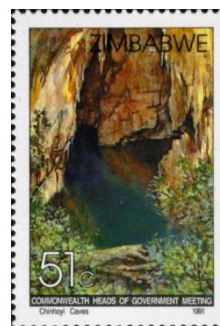


Postcard by Photo Safari

First Day Cover

Features an aerial view of the Elephant Hills Hotel, Victoria Falls, where the heads of government retreated for the weekend following the main conference.

The Stamps



Catalogue listings

SG	ZSC ¹	Value	Description
816	243	20c	Bridal Veil Falls
817	244	39c	CHOGM Harare logo
818	245	51c	Chinhoyi Caves
819	246	60c	Kariba Dam Wall
820	247	65c	Victoria Falls
821	248	77c	Balancing Rocks

Technical details

Stamp size:	All values	28 x 42 mm
Sheet Size:	50 stamps (5 rows of 10 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:	39c	Bluish-violet, magenta, yellow & black
	Others	Black, magenta, cyan & yellow
Perforations:	SG 14½, ZSC 14¼	
	Right margin:	Perforated through.
	Other margins:	Imperforate
Printer:	NatPrint, Harare, Zimbabwe	
Printer's Imprint:	Bottom Margin, below Row 5 Columns 5 & 6. Imprint printed in black	
Cylinder numbers:	Bottom margin below R5/1. Colours from left 39c – bluish-violet, magenta, yellow, black Others – cyan, magenta, yellow, black	
Colour register:	Type TL 4– round boxed – left margin opposite R5/1. Colours reading down 39c – bluish-violet, magenta, yellow, black Others – cyan, magenta, yellow, black	
Sheet Value:	Bottom margin, below 5/1, printed in black.	
Sheet Number:	Type SN 4a with 'PTC' prefix, right margin opposite R5/10, reading down	

Print numbers:	20c	1, 200,000	39c	250,000
	51c	170,000	60c	170,000
	65c	170,000	77c	170,000

Issue date: 16th October, 1991

Withdrawal from sale:

Demonetarisation: 19th July, 1995

Listed varieties

No listed varieties have been noted

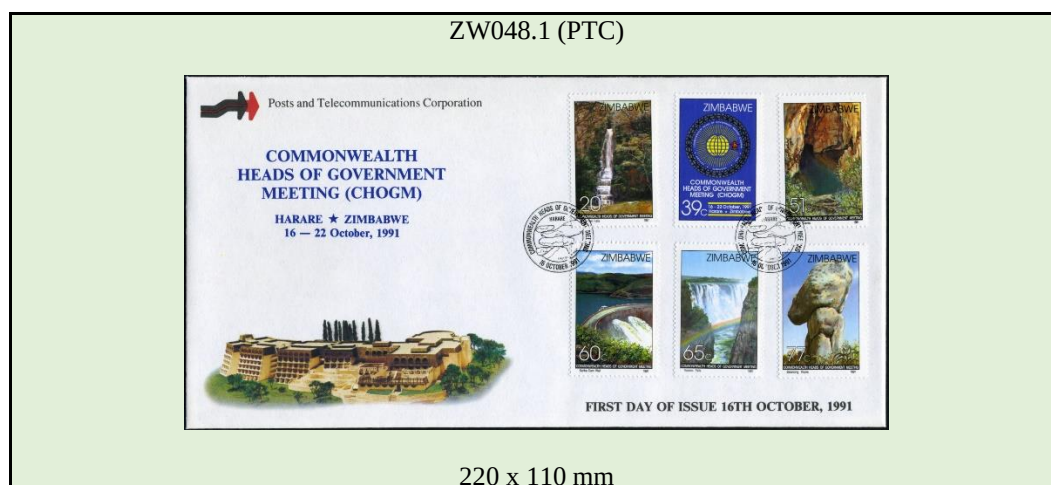
Unlisted Varieties

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.

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.



Related Material

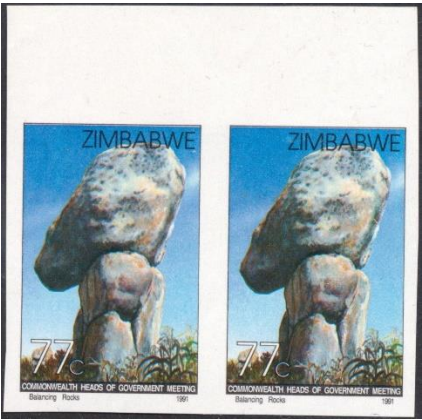
Proofs



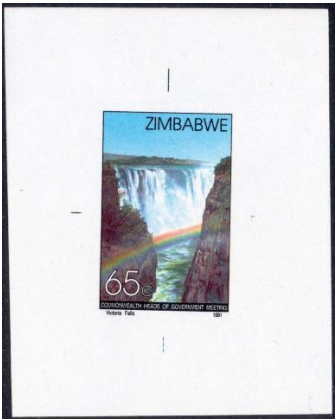
20c: Proof
(Source eBay April 2022)



60c: Proof
(Source eBay January 2021)



77c: Proof
(Source eBay February 2023)



65c: Initial printer's proof
(Source eBay August 2023)

Queen's Visit

The Queen, as Head of the Commonwealth, travelled out to Zimbabwe for CHOGM. Covers were produced by The Royal Air Forces Association on behalf of the Eagle Lodge Appeal.

Two covers were produced by the Association, the first having a British stamp with a special postmark of the British Forces Postal Service (No 2276) dated 10 OCT 91, see right. Unfortunately, the coat of arms used for the postmark was that of Rhodesia! The second cover was postmarked in Harare, and features the correct coat of Arms of Zimbabwe on the front.



British posted cover cachet.

The back of both covers six cancels of The Queen's Flight Windhoek (9 OCT 91); Harare (10 Oct 91); Royal Flight Bulawayo (12 Oct 91); Royal Flight Hwange (13 OCT 91); Harare (14 Oct 91); and Royal Air Force, Benson (26 OCT 1991).

The covers show a BAe 146 aeroplane of the Queen's Flight, this plane is a short haul or regional plane, as such it is unlikely that the Queen travelled from London to Harare on it. What is peculiar with these covers is the postmark for the Queen's Flight in Windhoek dated 9 October 1991, the day before the date of the cancels to both covers. Apart from the Harare cancels, it is probable that the cancels were produced by the British Forces Postal Service.

The UK cover is signed by Wing Commander N E L Beresford, the captain of the plane for both flights. The Zimbabwe cover is also signed by Beresford as captain of the flight, but also Air Commodore The Hon. T C Elsworth CBE RAF as Captain of the Queen's Flight.

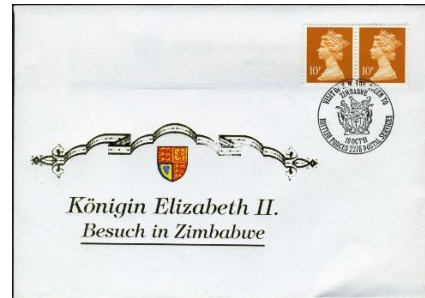
The Harare cover is signed and certified on the reverse as one of 798 covers produced. This is not added to the reverse of the UK cover.



In addition to the above covers, two further covers were produced, both of which bear the British Forces Postal Service cancel with the incorrect coat of arms.



Cover produced by Pilgrim Philatelics, Canterbury, Kent



Dutch cover, unknown producer

Related Material.

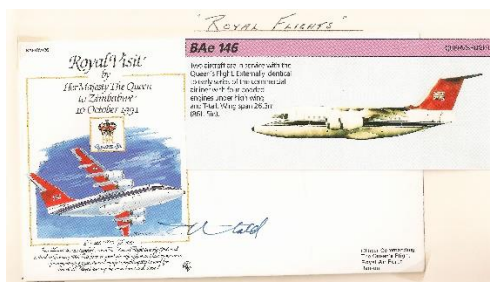
Narendhra Morar provided the following material which includes covers signed by the designer, Tony Theobald, of the Royal Visit covers.



Photo of the Bae 146 used to design the cover



Preliminary cover with picture of queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. Signed by Tony Theobald



Cover signed by Tony Theobald, with description of the BAe plane.



Zimbabwe cover signed by Tony Theobald

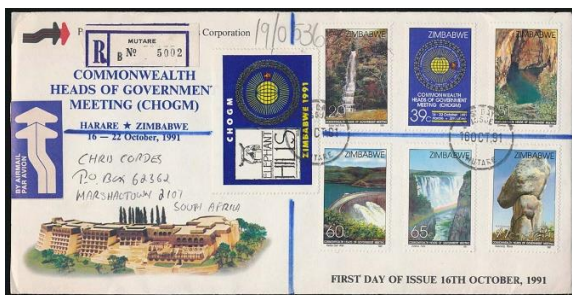


UK cover with signature of Flight Lieutenant R Stanton,
flight navigator

CHOGM Label

Zimbabwe Sun Hotel produced the label on the right featuring the Zimbabwe CHOGM logo and the logo of the Elephant Hills Hotel, a new hotel in its group.

The label is 52 x 42 mm in size, and was printed in a sheet of 35 labels (7 rows x 5 columns). The sheet is line perforated with a perf gauge of 14¼, and is probably the line printed stamp/label using the comb perforators. The only line perforated stamps produced by its predecessor, Mardon, were the 1965 Independence & 9d National Gallery stamps. Both of which used other perforators.



First Day Cover with CHOGM label tied in
with a Mutare First Day of Issue postmark

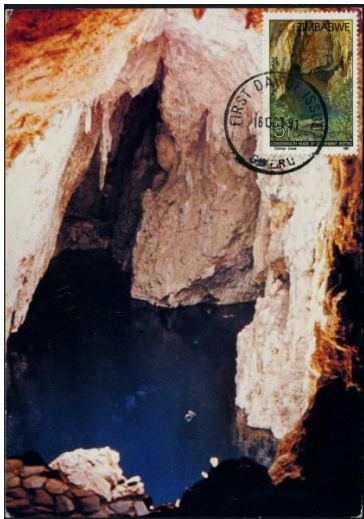
(Source – RSC website)



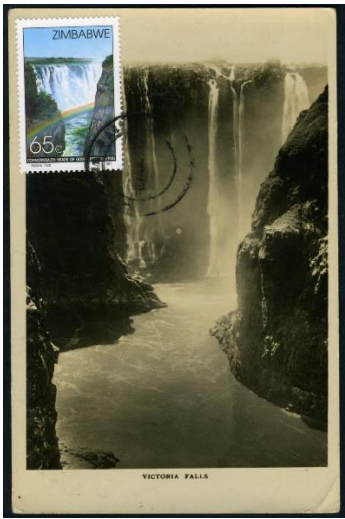
Cover with CHOGM label, posted 20th
February 1982 with Victoria Falls pictorial
postmark.

(Source RSC website)

Postcards



Postcard of Chinhoyi Caves
with 51c CHOOGM stamp,
postmark Gweru 16 Oct 91



Old postcard with 65c Victoria Falls
CHOOGM stamp
Posted Victoria Falls, unreadable date.

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 4 of 1991.

Additions/Changes since December 2020	
12-2021	15c proof
8-2022	Change in scan of 20c proof
3-2023	77c proof
8-2023	Postcard with 51c CHOOGM stamp
12-2023	65c initial printer’s proof