VALENTINE'S DAY

Issued 24th January, 2008

(Extracted from Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 1 of 2008)[2]

Saint Valentine's Day or Valentine's Day is celebrated on February 14. It is the traditional day on which lovers express their love for each other; sending Valentine's cards or candy. It is very common to present flowers on Valentine's Day. The day is named after the Valentines - martyred on February 14, they are: Valentine of Rome who was a priest in Rome; Valentine of Terni who became bishop of Interamna (modern Terni). The Catholic Encyclopaedia also speaks of a third saint named Valentine who was mentioned in early martyrologies under the date of 14 February. He was martyred in Africa with a number of companions, but nothing more is known about him.



Z: Heart

A heart (red or pink) with an arrow piercing through it is the most common shape seen on Valentine's Day. The heart is a symbol both of love and also vulnerability. When you send someone a Valentine, you take a risk of being rejected and your feelings hurt. So, a piercing arrow is a symbol of death and the vulnerability of love. On the other hand, the heart and arrow also symbolize the merging of the male and female as one. In the 12th century, physicians believed that the heart was the seat of love and affection in the human body. But the actual biological shape of the human heart does not look like the heart as we see it today. Why? Well, some people say that the Valentine heart-shape as we know it today was done by a doodler to represent the human female buttocks or a female torso with well-endowed breasts or the imprint of lips (wearing lipstick) made upon a piece of paper. Once again, it's all on how you want to spin the story!



A: Cupid

Cupid is the most famous of Valentine symbols - everybody knows that boy armed with bow and arrows, and piercing hearts. He is known as a mischievous, winged child armed with bow and arrows. The arrows signify desires and emotions of love, and Cupid aims these arrows at gods and humans, causing them to fall deeply in love. Cupid has always played a role in the celebrations of love and lovers. His arrows have become popular and love is most frequently depicted by two hearts pierced by an arrow - Cupid's arrow. In ancient Greece he was known as Eros, the young son of Aphrodite, the goddess of love andvatiation the beauty. To the Romans he was Cupid, his mother was Venus.



E: Valentine Cards

The custom of exchanging love notes goes back to the Roman Lupercalia festival. The first Valentine card was created by Charles, Duke of Orleans, imprisoned in the Tower of London for several years following the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, he sent Valentine poems to his wife in France from his jail cell. Conveying feelings of love on Valentine's Day is done by gift-giving and exchanging handmade cards. They are mostly sent anonymously - sealed and left secretly on a lover's doorstep (or sent in the mail). Hand-made valentine cards made of lace, ribbons, and featuring cupids and hearts were popularised by the British. This craze eventually spread to the American colonies. The tradition of Valentine's cards did not become widespread in the United States, however, until the 1850s, when Esther A. Howland, a Mount Holyoke graduate and native of Worcester, Mass., began mass-producing them.



R: Roses

Flowers were considered love tokens before there even was a St. Valentines' Day. The Roman God, Bacchus (God of Wine and Joy) and Venus (Goddess of Love and Beauty) both considered the beauty and fragrance of flowers to be tied with romance and love. But since the time of Solomon, the primary flower linked to romance was always the rose. Cleopatra of Egypt covered the floor with roses before receiving Mark Anthony. A Roman myth is that Cupid was carrying a vase of sweet nectar to the gods on Mt. Olympus and spilled it on the ground. From that spot of spilled nectar, roses grew! But if roses are so symbolic of romance and love, then why the thorns? Well, another story goes like this: The soft west wind named Zephyr, one day opened a lovely rose and Cupid bent over to kiss the elegant petals. When he did, he was stung by an irate bee hiding inside. Venus got so angry she told Cupid to shoot some bees and string them up on one of his arrows. She then planted this string of dead bees on the rose stems, and the stings became the rose's thorns and ever since then, roses have thorns.

Catalogue listings

SG	ZSC[1]	Value	Description
1250	664	Z	Heart
1251	665	A	Cupid
1252	666	E	Valentine Cards
1253	667	R	Roses
MS1254	MS21		Miniature sheet with stamps se-tenant in block



(50% of normal size)

Technical details

Stamp size: Sheet stamps: 30 x 35 mm
Miniature sheet: 89 x 114 mm

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

Artist: Darren Herbert

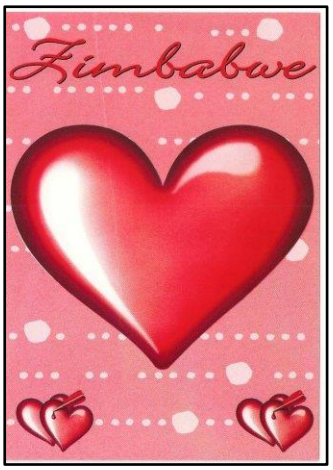
Paper:	ZSC paper type J: paper described by Zimpost as "Chancellor Litho PVA Gummed Postage Stamp Paper". This paper is produced by Tullis Russell Coaters of Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland. Under UV there is no fluorescence either front or back, the stamp appears to be very dark
Print colours:	Cyan, magenta, yellow & black
Perforations:	Sheet stamps: SG 14 x 14½, ZSC 14 x 14¼ Left margin: Perforated through Other margins: Imperforate Miniature sheets: Imperforate margins
Printer:	NatPrint, Harare, Zimbabwe
Printer's Imprint:	Sheet stamps only: Bottom Margin, below Row 5 Columns 5 & 6. Imprint printed in black
Cylinder numbers:	Sheet stamps only: Bottom margin below R5/1. Colours from left – cyan, magenta, yellow, black
Colour register:	Sheet stamps only: Type TL 4– round boxed – left margin opposite R5/1. Colours reading down – cyan, magenta, yellow, black
Sheet Value:	Sheet stamps only: Bottom margin, below R5/10, printed in black
Sheet Number:	Type SN 7 with printed 'ZIMPOST' prefix, right margin opposite R5/10, reading down

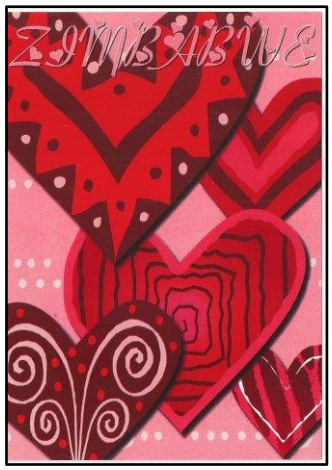
Print numbers:	Z	600,000	A	100,000
	E	100,000	R	100,000
	Miniature sheet	6,000		

Issue date: 24th January, 2008

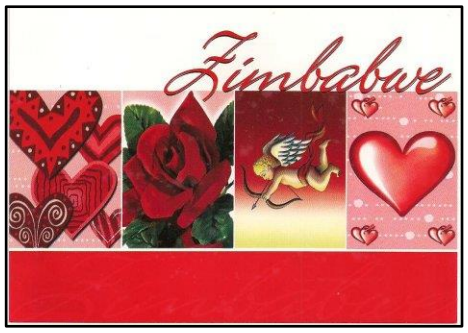
Maxi Cards

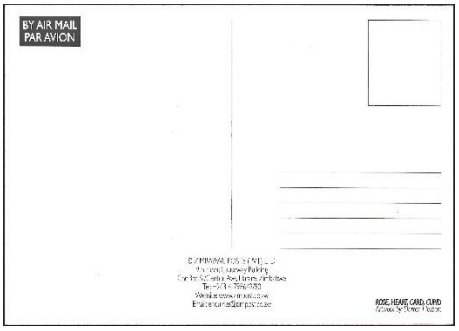
A set of four maxi-cards were also produced for this issue. The PTC, in its bulletin, says they are postcards, rather than maxi-cards, as they are capable of being used for that purpose.











Postal Rates

The postal rates applicable at the date of issue were those effective from 12th December 2007, as follows:

Z	$25,000	A	$100,000	E	$170,000	R	$240,000

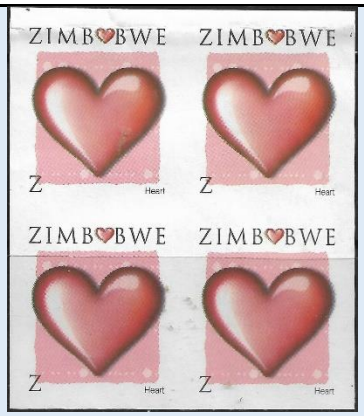
Listed varieties

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 which are more noticeable with the solid colours.

There is some significant colour variation in the printing of these stamps, particularly with the A and R values. The variation in the printing of the black on the R value is noticeable, and will be examined below.



Z value: Imperforate block of 4, probably waste proof material
(Source eBay October 2021)



A value: Perforation shift to right passed 'Z' of Zimbabwe



A value: Perforation shift to right touching 'Z' of Zimbabwe



A Value: Perforation shift up touching bottom text



E value: Totally misplaced perforation. Probably printer's waste

(Source eBay May 2025)



E value: Perforation shift down into the hearts and below the cylinder numbers



R Value: The printing of the black on the right-hand stamp is very light, giving the possible disappearance of the 'R', or being behind the petal.



R value: Perforation shift down into top of ‘Zimbabwe’ above cylinder numbers



R value: Perforation shift down into mid ‘Zimbabwe’



R value: Perforation shift down to base of ‘Zimbabwe, touching cylinder numbers



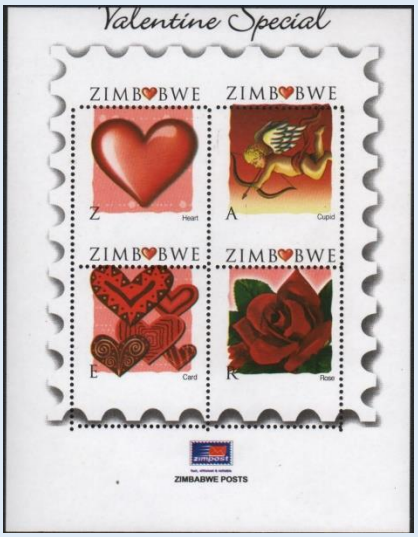
R value: Perforation shift into design, clear of ‘Zimbabwe’



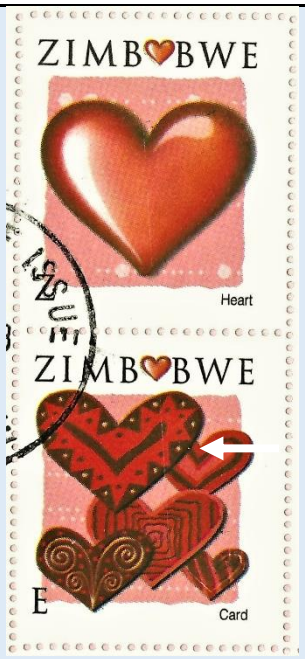
R value: Double perforation of stamps
(Source eBay May 2022)

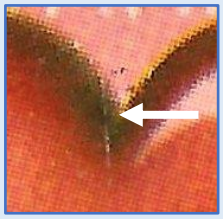


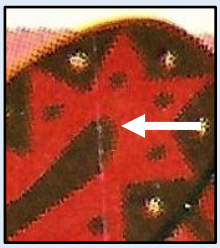
R Value: double perforations in both blocks, with left block showing a ‘gap’ in the perforating, probable printer’s waste
(Source December 2022 & January 2023)



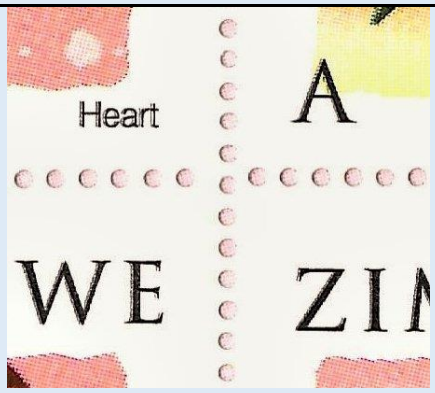
Miniature sheet: Mis-cut sheetlet and movement of perforations down
(Courtesy of Jefferson Ritson)



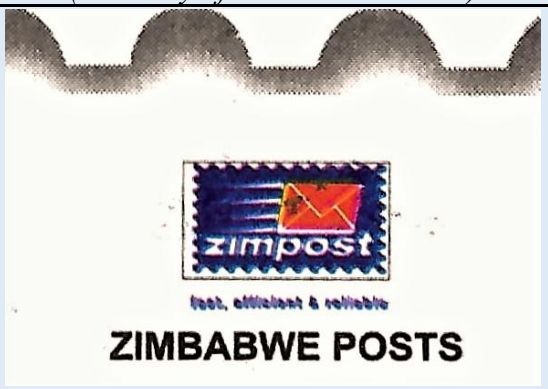




Miniature sheet: Vertical white lone through A & E value.
(Courtesy of Narendhra Morar)



Miniature sheet: Doubling of black printing
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)



Smudging of Zimpost logo
(Courtesy of Narendhra Morar)

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.



ZW132.1 (Zimpost)



Cover with set of stamps, placed on cover using Autophix machine and
Printed pictorial cancellation
220 x 110 mm

ZW132.1 (MS) (Zimpost)



Miniature sheet with hand struck
First Day of Issue, Harare, cancellation for 24.01.08

ZW132.2 (Maxi card) (Zimposr)



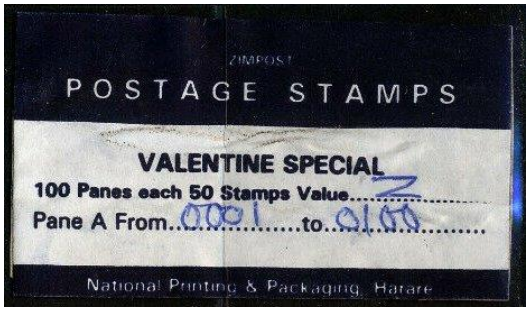
First Day of Issue, Harare, cancellation for 24.01.08

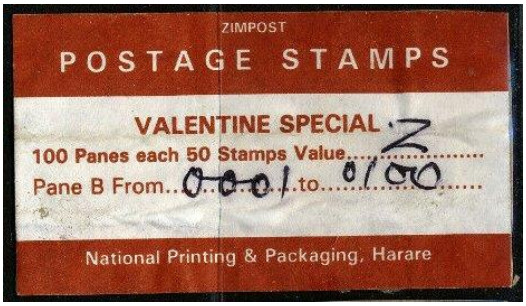
Related Material

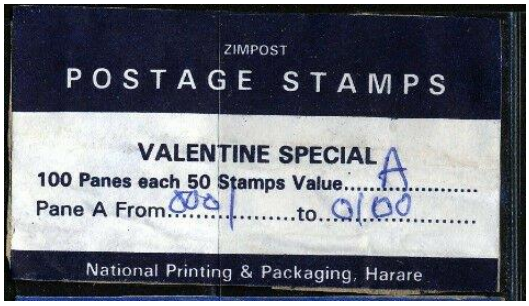


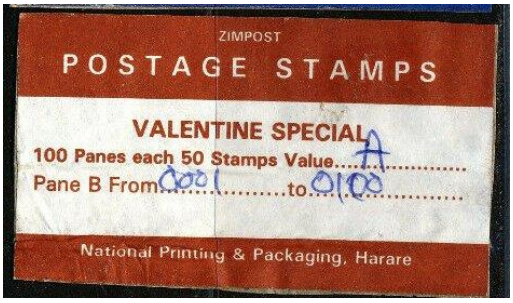
Set of maxi cards all postmarked on Valentine's Day 2008

Delivery Labels from packaging containing sheets of 100 stamps. Labels the Z and A values with the Cylinder 1A on blue label and 1B brown. Labels are for sheet numbers 0001 to 0100. *(Source EBay)*









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. Zimbabwe Post, Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 1 of 2008

Additions/Changes since December 2020	
12-2021	Z value – imperf block
12-2022	R value – imprint block of double perforated stamps (replacement of previous)
3-2023	R value – additional double perforated blocks
8-2025	E Value – totally misplaced perfs