

'Aerogrammes and the promotion of Tourism in Rhodesia and Nyasaland 1950 – 80'

Introduction, some background

This has been another interesting confinement project.

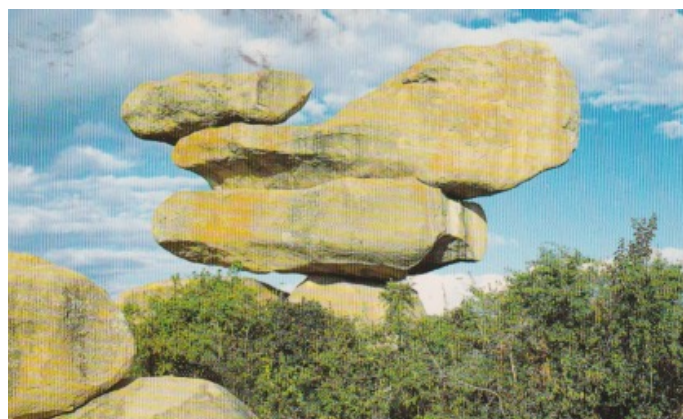
Rummaging through old family travel brochures, I was at interested to find that so little was information was initially available for visitors to Rhodesia and Nyasaland before the mid-1950s.

In East Africa well-established Safari companies were operating out of Dar-es-salaam, Nairobi and Kampala before the Second World War. At last, in 1957, the Federal postal authorities sought to attract visitors to the beautiful destinations available; the game parks, Victoria Falls, balancing rocks and lakes using its prepaid aerogrammes. The 6d rate was imprinted in pink with a reminder box for additional postage needed for certain areas.



In my display I have included three 1958 covers to Renfrewshire in Scotland. This series of letters confirms my sense that, at last, families were touring all the main sites, booking into lodges and writing home enthusiastically about all the sites recommended on the aerogrammes. Another air letter from Bulawayo to Germany insists on the payment of a £7 outstanding bill. Shortly after, Rhodesians tended to use aerogrammes to correspond, and to celebrate the opening of Kariba dam (1960) to invite delegates to participate in the regional mining convention (1961) and World Tobacco Congress (1963.)

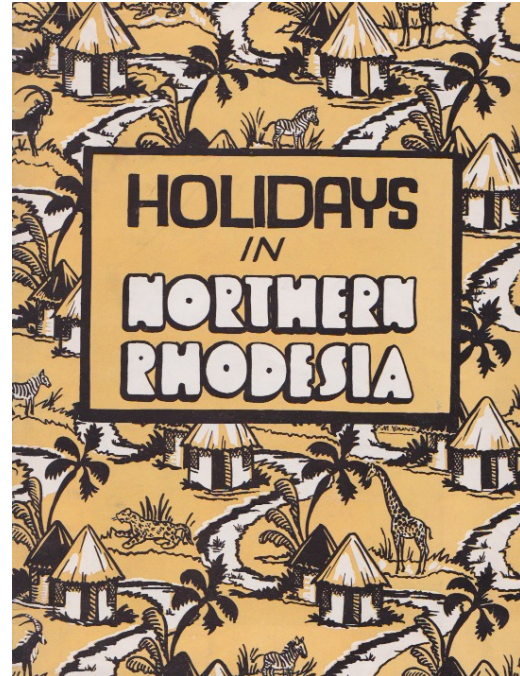
After 1964, the standard UPU format was gradually phased out by most of the newly independent countries. In Zimbabwe, the Tourist Promotion office published increasingly gaudy aerogrammes with as many as a dozen photos – a cross between the postcard and letter card. Although aerogrammes can still be bought in hotels, sadly, its days are surely numbered: most tourists favour a colourful postcard with space for a brief message of greetings.





‘Aerogrammes and the promotion of tourism in Rhodesia and Nyasaland’ 1950 - 80’

Letter card to Utrecht, Holland 1906



Pre-Federation 1940 - 53

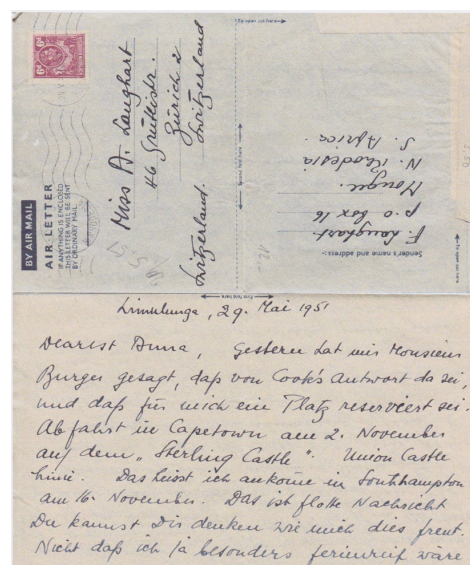
The **McCorquodale & Co** printing firm was based in Wolverton, Lancashire. In the period during the two World Wars they specialised in railway and official printing contracts. Their early letter cards were issued for use in the armed forces; a 6d stamp was impressed on the forms printed by security printers **Kenrick and Jefferson** of West Bromwich. In 1942 the international UPU established a standard size and weight (124 x 129 mm, 1/10 oz) to be folded on three sides. In no time, aerogrammes were adopted by the postal services in Rhodesia and Nyasaland



NR,
1941



SR
1953



An aerogramme from Swiss missionary Frieda Langhardt, May 1951, Mongu to Zürich

Coronation and Rhodes Centenary covers 1953



SR – Rhodes Centenary

Nyasaland – Tea Estates

NR – Coronation First Day cover

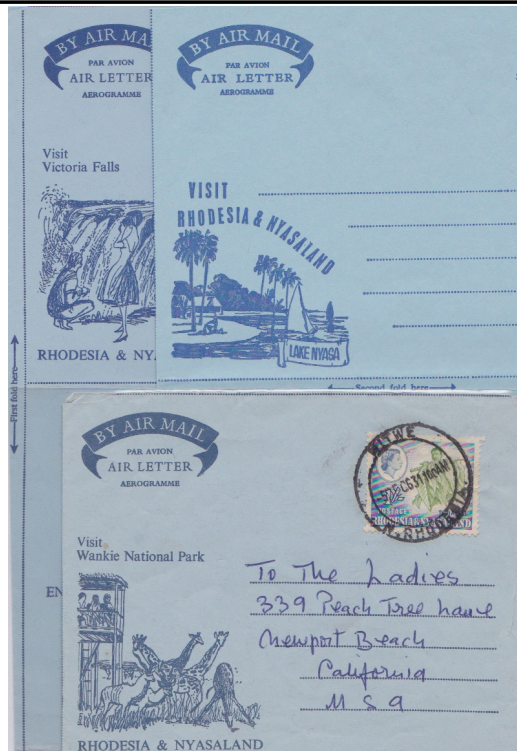
Pink series: aerogrammes 1957 - 58

In September 1957 eight designs were introduced by the Federal Post Office to promote tourism



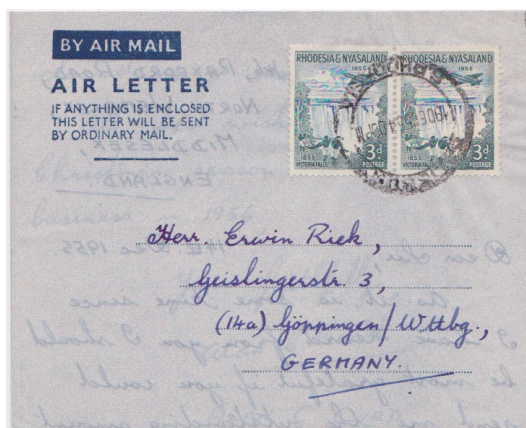
Blue series: aerogrammes 1959 - 64

From 1959 until 1964 Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland aerogrammes were printed in blue. A few more tourist scenes were added, including Wankie and the Eastern Districts. Stamps celebrated economic achievements, including the regional Mining Convention 1961 and World Tobacco Congress 1963.



Milestones

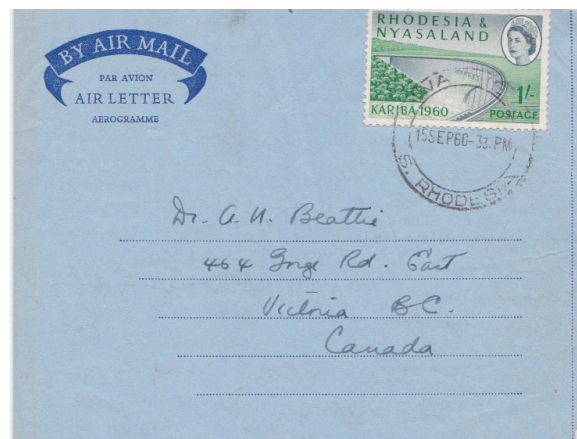
Throughout the Federation years the aerogramme's popularity was unsurpassed



1955 Livingstone Centenary



1960 Official opening of Kariba dam



Post-Federation 1964 – 1980s

Standard UPU-approved aerogrammes continued to be used post-independence: Zambian postal authorities featured the Mkishi dancer. Southern Rhodesia reverted to the Flame Lily.



Zimbabwe switched to locally printed 16 x 11 cms and Mardon printers (Salisbury/Harare) definitive issue stamps. The 11c postage stamp (Lion) is known to show differing variations of gold, ochre and brown shades



Left: gold
Right: brown



Tourist promotion office aerogrammes and privatisation

Through the 1980s the old designs were adapted, though by the end of the decade Zimbabwe Tourist promotion aerogrammes were offered in hotels. But there was too little space to write: post cards are back in vogue, or emails!



Above: 1986 Zimpost aerogrammes

