

CENTENARY OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE VICTORIA FALLS

Issued 15th June 1955

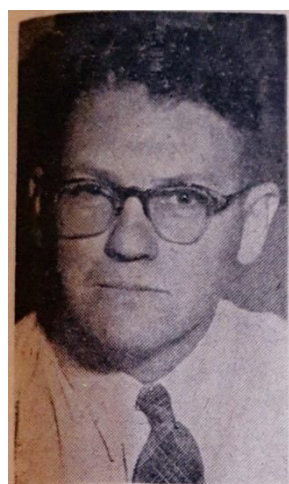
This is the first of the commemorative issues of the Federal Post Office to commemorate the “discovery” of the Victoria Falls. It would be more correct to say that David Livingstone was the first European to see the Falls that the indigenous Lozi population called “Mosi-oa-Tunya” (the smoke that thunders). Livingstone was to name the falls after the serving British monarch, Queen Victoria. The area is now a World Heritage site, whose official name is both Victoria Falls and Mosi-oa-Tunya.

In the Rhodesian Herald of 10th September 1954, there was an announcement by the Federal Government of the decision to commemorate the centenary of the discovery of the Victoria Falls by David Livingstone. The article stated that there would be two values – 3d and 1sh. “The public is invited to submit designs in black and white, or in colours, for these stamps. In width and depth they must not be less than 10 by 8 inches and must contain, in addition to the main theme, the dates 1855 and 1955; provision for the words Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and a value tablet showing the denomination of the stamp.” Entries were to be submitted to the Postmaster-General, Salisbury by October 16. The chosen entries would receive £25.⁶

The drawings were examined by a committee consisting of the Postmaster-General, representatives of Rhodesian philatelic societies, Government Departments and the Mayor of Livingstone. Thirty-nine entries were received and the committee chose those submitted by Messrs. J. E. Hughes and V. E. Home for the 3d. and 1s. values respectively.¹



Above - the artwork submitted by N E Horne, with the image on the far right being accepted for the 1sh stamp
(Source: Spink's October 2020 Auction)



Rhodesia Herald - 23 February 1955

“Mr. J. E. HUGHES, designer of the winning 3d. stamp to commemorating the centenary of the discovery of Victoria Falls. He is a draughtsman in the Salisbury City Electrical Department. He said yesterday that until a week before the closing date he had made up his mind not to go in for the competition. Then he decided that he had nothing to loose by entering.”

(Source: RSC Journal No 288, page 318)

The requirements of the brief stated in the Rhodesia Herald obviously created difficulties for designers, particularly with incorporating the full name of the country. Thankfully the name was reduced to just “Rhodesia & Nyasaland”.

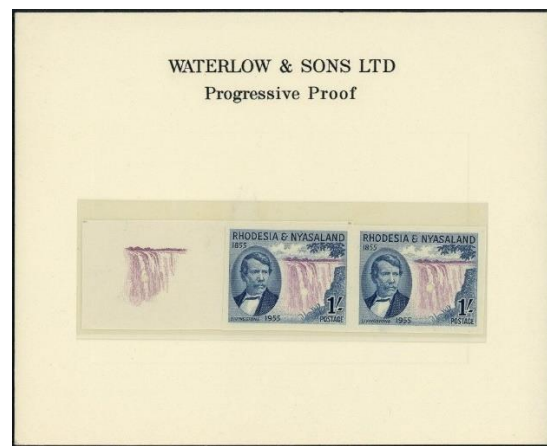
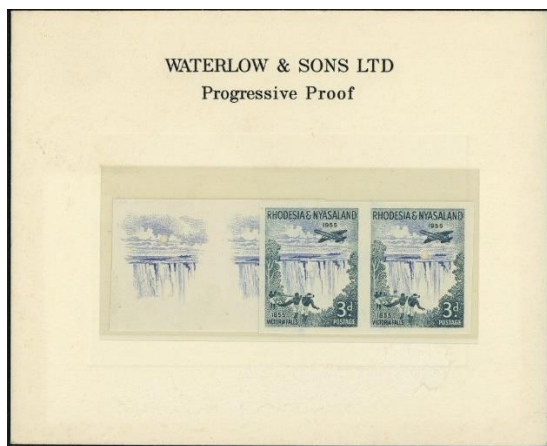
The original designs were modified slightly in accordance with the committee's wishes and submitted to London for printing.¹ In keeping with previous issues of the three nations the stamps were recess printed.

Opposite is a presentation card with hand painted designs of the two stamps prepared by Waterlow and Sons

(Source: Spink’s October 2020 Auction)

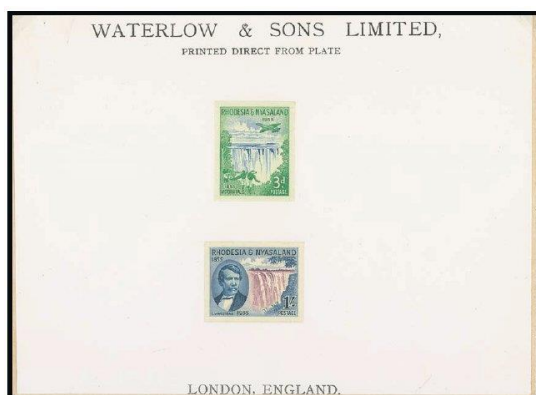


Progressive proofs were produced and placed on Waterlow and Sons cards



(Source: Spink & Co auction 2014)

Imperforate sample stamps were also produced and placed on Waterlow presentation cards



3d: printed in ultramarine & yellow-green
1sh: printed in purple & deep blue



3d: printed in ultramarine & turquoise-green

(Source: Spink’s October 2020 Auction)

Smith did not indicate that the designs were submitted to more than one printer to develop the artwork.

At an auction sale by Spink in July 2013, there was a collection of three sheets showing stamps from Bradbury Wilkinson's record book. These sheets contained photographic images of artwork produced by them for numerous countries, including Rhodesia & Nyasaland.

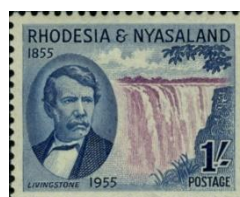


(Image supplied by Keith Harrop)

Included on one of those pages were photographs of artwork for the 1955 Victoria Falls Centenary, as illustrated above. The sheets were then cut up and sets of stamps sold separately. Unfortunately the only image available at present is from the complete sheet. The stamps do show some variations to what was eventually approved, although the basic design is much the same. The date of production is shown as 2nd November 1954.

The Stamps

De Havilland DH106
Comet 1 over the
Victoria Falls. With
Livingstone on a
stretcher carried by
four men
1855 & 1955



David Livingstone
& Main Falls

Catalogue listings

SG2	RSC3	Value	SG colours first/ <i>RSC colours in italics</i> , where different
16	C40	3d	Ultramarine and deep turquoise green (<i>ultramarine and myrtle-green</i>)
	a.		Wing/cannon flaw
17	C41	1sh	Purple & deep blue

Technical details

Stamp size:	3d: 25 x 31 mm; 1s: 31 x 25mm																																		
Sheet sizes:	Two panes of 60 stamps: 10 rows of six stamps																																		
Plates:	Each value with a vignette and frame plates																																		
Plate numbers: ⁴	3d vignette	46575																																	
	3d duty/frame	unknown																																	
	1sh vignette	unknown																																	
	1sh duty/frame	unknown																																	
Guide marks:	Short dashes are found between stamps on two sides of each pane of stamps, and perforation guide dots with crosses through are found in the margins of the printing sheets. The guide marks indicated below are shown as been between certain stamps in rows and columns. Guillotine guide marks are found both down and across at the corners of all the panes, together with ‘T’ marks opposite the perforation guide dots. Vertical guide marks between <table><tr><td>3d & 1sh</td><td>R1/C3 & 4</td><td>top</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>R10/C3 & 4</td><td>bottom</td></tr></table> Horizontal guide marks between <table><tr><td>3d & 1sh</td><td>R5& 6/C1 & R5&6/C1</td><td></td></tr></table> Perforation holes <table><tr><td>3d</td><td>Above</td><td>R1/C4</td><td>top</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Below</td><td>R10/C4</td><td>bottom</td></tr><tr><td>1sh</td><td>Above</td><td>R1/C3</td><td>top</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Below</td><td>R10/C</td><td>bottom</td></tr><tr><td>3d & 1sh</td><td>Opposite</td><td>R5/C1 & R5/C6</td><td>left</td></tr></table> Small cross <table><tr><td>3d & 1sh</td><td>At the intersection of R5 & 6, C 3& 4</td><td></td></tr></table>			3d & 1sh	R1/C3 & 4	top		R10/C3 & 4	bottom	3d & 1sh	R5& 6/C1 & R5&6/C1		3d	Above	R1/C4	top		Below	R10/C4	bottom	1sh	Above	R1/C3	top		Below	R10/C	bottom	3d & 1sh	Opposite	R5/C1 & R5/C6	left	3d & 1sh	At the intersection of R5 & 6, C 3& 4	
3d & 1sh	R1/C3 & 4	top																																	
	R10/C3 & 4	bottom																																	
3d & 1sh	R5& 6/C1 & R5&6/C1																																		
3d	Above	R1/C4	top																																
	Below	R10/C4	bottom																																
1sh	Above	R1/C3	top																																
	Below	R10/C	bottom																																
3d & 1sh	Opposite	R5/C1 & R5/C6	left																																
3d & 1sh	At the intersection of R5 & 6, C 3& 4																																		
Perforations:	Comb perforations: <table><tr><td>3d</td><td>Gauge 13½ (SG)</td></tr><tr><td>1sh</td><td>Gauge 13 (SG)</td></tr></table>			3d	Gauge 13½ (SG)	1sh	Gauge 13 (SG)																												
3d	Gauge 13½ (SG)																																		
1sh	Gauge 13 (SG)																																		
Margin perforations:	<table><tr><td>3d</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Bottom margin:</td><td>Imperforate</td></tr><tr><td>Other margins:</td><td>Fully perforated</td></tr></table>			3d		Bottom margin:	Imperforate	Other margins:	Fully perforated																										
3d																																			
Bottom margin:	Imperforate																																		
Other margins:	Fully perforated																																		

1sh	
Bottom margin	Imperforate
Top Margin	Perforated through
Pane A side margins	single to left and fully to right
Pane B side margins	fully to left and single to right

Imprint: “Waterlow & Sons, London Wall, London E.C.” below R10/C3 & 4

Sheet number: Post office sheet numbers are found above the top right hand corner stamps (R1/6)

Print numbers: ^{3,4} 3d 2,600,060 1sh 1,590,060
 (R C Smith mentions that as there had no previous experience of commemorative issues for the Federation, the amount ordered was “excessive”)¹
 (From the proof material below, the number of stamps to be printed is 2,575,00 in 21,459 sheets/pulls)

Date of issue: 15th June 1955 (Postal Notice 11 of 1955)

Withdrawn from sale: 17th November (Postal Notice 27 of 1955)

Demonetarised: 1st January 1969 (Postal Notice 5 of 1958)

Number of panes

The Mashonaland Guide does not recognise that there were two plates for each value.⁴ Proof material is available of Interpanneau blocks side by side, see the dies and Proofs section below. This may account for the statement that the “cannon” flaw on the 3d stamp is not found on all sheets. The Rhodesia Stamp Catalogue does state that the flaw is from one pane only.³

As this is recess printing, a flaw such as this is likely to be constant. In the Spink auction of April 2021, a 12 page collection of this issue was auctioned, which indicates that the flaw is found on the right pane. Apart from this “cannon” flaw, there does not appear to be any other way of distinguishing the two panes.

This however is not the case with the 1s value. Complete panes are easily distinguishable from the perforations within the sheet margins. The left hand pane having a single pin extension in the left margin, while the right hand pane has the single perforation in the right margin. When the printing sheet was being perforated the margin between the panes was perforated with the left and right margins of the printing sheet having the single perforation.



Top corner pairs from left pane
(Source: Spink's October 2020 auction)

Top corner pairs from right pane

All examples found during research indicted the imperforate margins as shown above. However in May 2022, the double bottom rows of a 1sh sheet was found where both the side column are fully perforated. No explanation for this variety has been forthcoming, so far.



Listed varieties

Value	Row	Col	Description	
3d	3	3	Wing/Cannon flaw – right pane SG16a, RSC C40a	

Unlisted varieties

No other varieties have been reported.

First Day Covers

The cover numbering comes from the catalogue produced by Geoff Brakspear. No first day covers were produced by the Post Office.

Cover 14.1.1 (Philatelic Society of Rhodesia)



154 x 89 mm

Cover 14.1.2 (Philatelic Society of Rhodesia)



228 x 102 mm

Cover 14.2



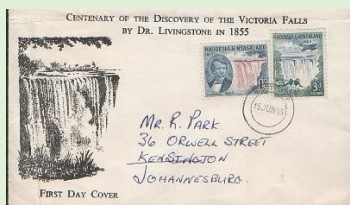
152 x 90 mm

Cover 14.3 (C G Junior III)



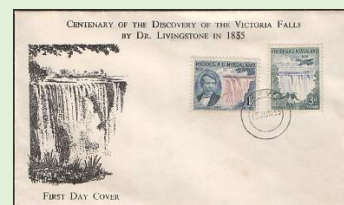
166 x 92 mm

Cover 14.4.1 #



152 x 90 mm

Cover 14.1.2 #



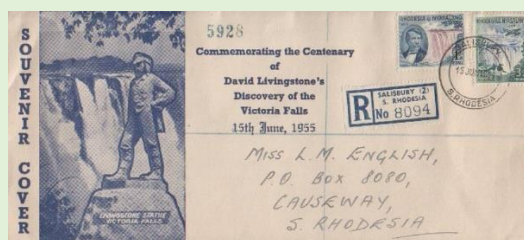
152 x 90 mm

Cover 14.5 (Three Arrows) @



153 x 90 mm

Cover 14.6



228 x 100 mm

Cover 14.7 @



163 x 91 mm

(Note cover above is not a first day cover, query if covers were issued on correct date)

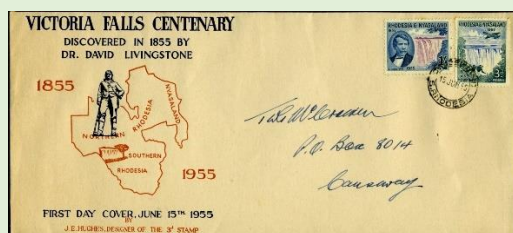
Cover 14.8.1 (J E Hughes – designer)



Outline of territory red-brown

228 x 102 mm

Cover 14.8.2 (J E Hughes – designer)



Outline of territory in orange-brown

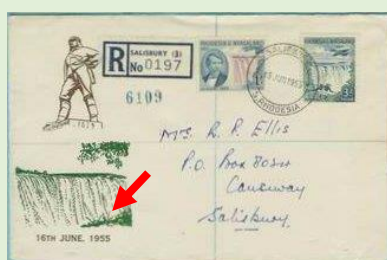
228 x 102 mm

Cover 14.9.1



136 x 110

Cover 14.9.2



Dated 16th June 1955 (example seen with handwritten amended date)

164 x 108 mm

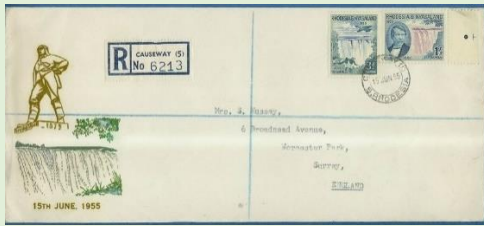
Cover 14.9.3



Typed strip with correct date pasted on cover

164 x 108mm

Cover 14.9.4



227 x 101 mm

Cover 14.10 #



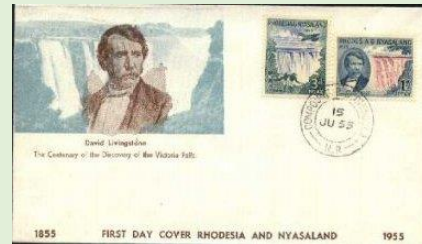
153 x 91 mm

Cover 14.11 (London Assurance)



157 x 124 mm

Cover 14.12 #



152 90 mm

Cover 14.13 (Ndola Philatelic Society) #



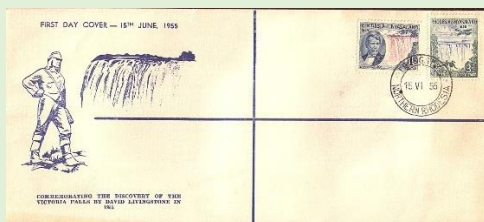
228 x 102 mm

Cover 14.14.1 #



150 x 89 mm

Cover 14.14.2 #



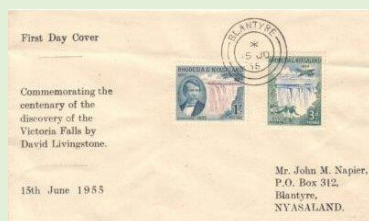
229 x 101 mm

Cover 14.15 #



165 x 92 mm

Cover 14.16 (John M Napier) @



152 x 90 mm

Cover 14.17 #



150 x 90 mm

Cover 14.18 (J Mackenzie)



152 x 89 mm

Cover 14.19



(Source: eBay)

Cover 14.20



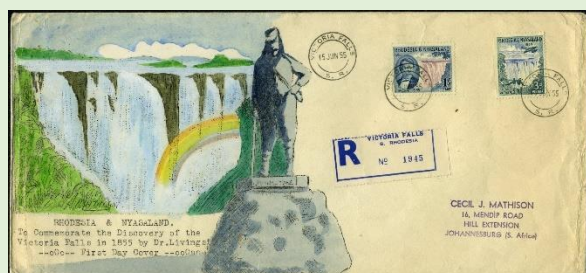
165 x 92 mm

Cover 14.21



(Printed slip pasted to back of Victoria Falls postcard)

Cover 14.22



(Possibly a one-off)

278 x 127

Cover 14.23



164 x 93 mm

Cover 14.24 #



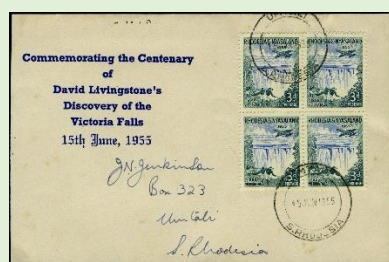
153 x 90 mm

Cover 14.25



152 x 90 mm

Cover 14.26



151 x 101 mm

Cover 14.27 #



145 x 107 mm

Cover 14.28



Postcard posted in Victoria Falls

(Source: RSC website)

Territories producing these first day covers, or at least where they appear to have been postmarked. (* possibly used in other territories)

Northern Rhodesia	Cover numbers 14.1*, 14.4, 14.7, 14.10, 14.11*, 14.12, 14.13, 14.14*, 14.24 & 14.27 (marked #)
Nyasaland:	Cover numbers 14.5, 14.16 (marked @)
Southern Rhodesia	All remaining covers

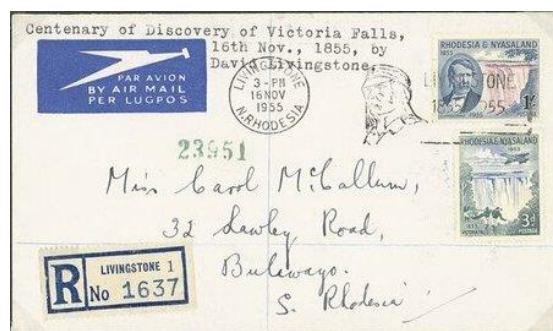
Related material

16th November 1955 covers

Several covers were produced to commemorate the centenary of the actual date that David Livingstone arrived at the Victoria Falls.

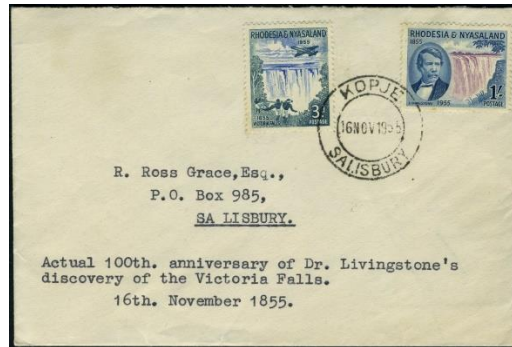


Posted in Victoria Falls



Posted in Livingstone

(Source: Spink's October 2020 Auction)

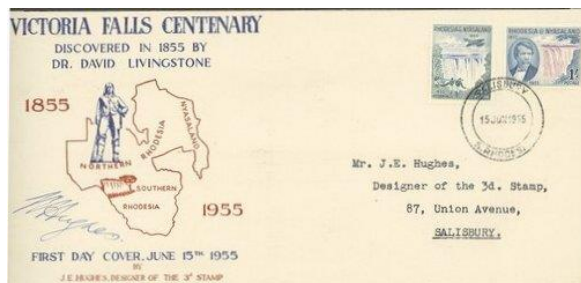


Posted at Kopje, Salisbury

Livingstone machine cancellation



Signed covers



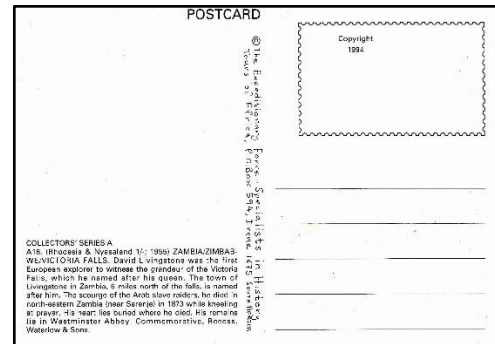
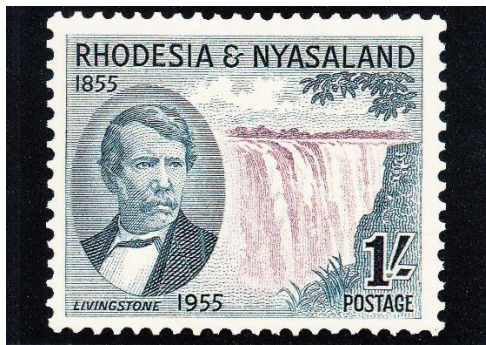
Cover signed by J E Hughes, designer of cover and 3d stamp



Cover signed by Sir Roy Welensky, Premier of Federation from 1956

(Source: Spink's October 2020 Auction)

“Maxi” postcard



©The Expeditionary Force – Specialists in
History Tours of Africa, P. O. Box 594, Irene
1675, South Africa. ©1994

(Courtesy of Keith Brodovsky)

COLLECTORS' SERIES A
A17. (Southern Rhodesia 4d; 1940) ZIMBABWE/VICTORIA FALLS. The Victoria Falls Bridge was completed in 1905 across the yawning chasm of the Zambezi gorge. It was Cecil John Rhodes who instructed that the bridge be built within spray-distance of the falls, although he never saw them himself. Stamp issued for the 50th anniversary of the British South Africa Company, 1940. Commemorative, Recess, Waterlow & Sons.

Dies & Proofs

Dies

Prints were taken of the dies for the proposed stamps. With master dies being produced as the base die for the individual value stamps dies. The images shown below of each of the master and stamps dies have a series of numbers around for record purposes. These being die, roller and proof numbers, all of which were placed in a preselected position, see opposite.⁵



Roller Number

Die Number

Proof Number



3d Vignette

Die No. 20629

Roller No. 18116

Proof No. 30588



3d Duty

Die No. 20630

Roller No. 18126

Proof No. 30589



1s Vignette

Die No. 20628

Roller No. 18117

Proof No. 30590



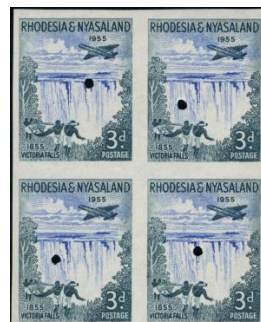
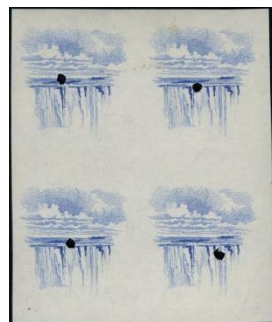
1s Duty

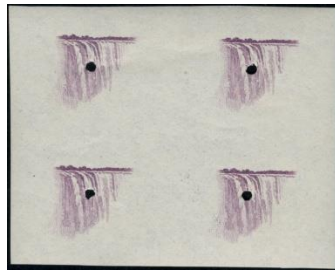
Die No. 20631

Roller No. 18137

Proof No. 30592

Proofs of individual stamps - imperforate





Interpanneau blocks of both values
(Source: Spink's October 2020 Auction)

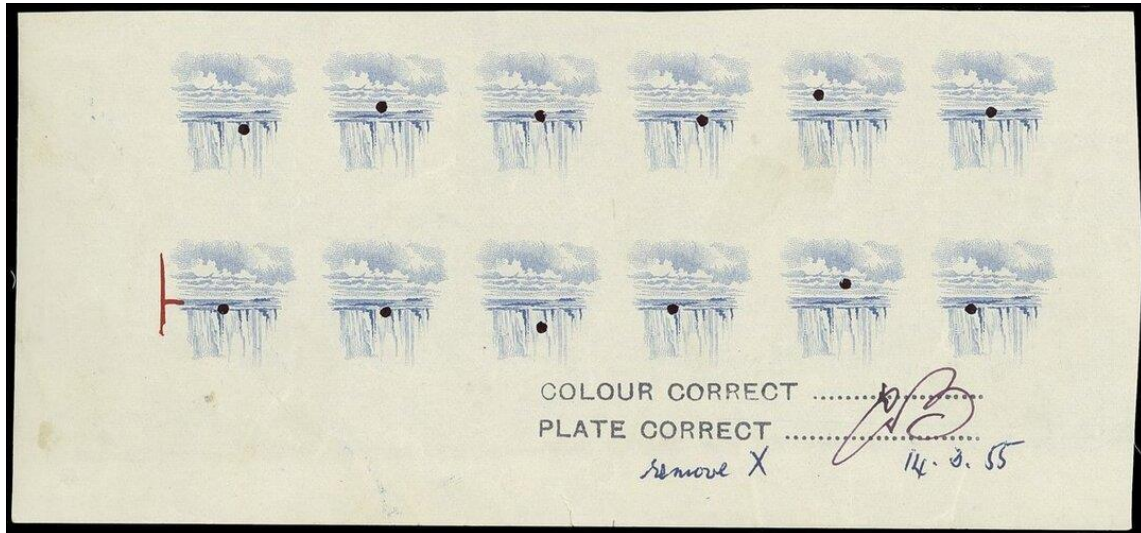
Proofs of individual stamps – perforated



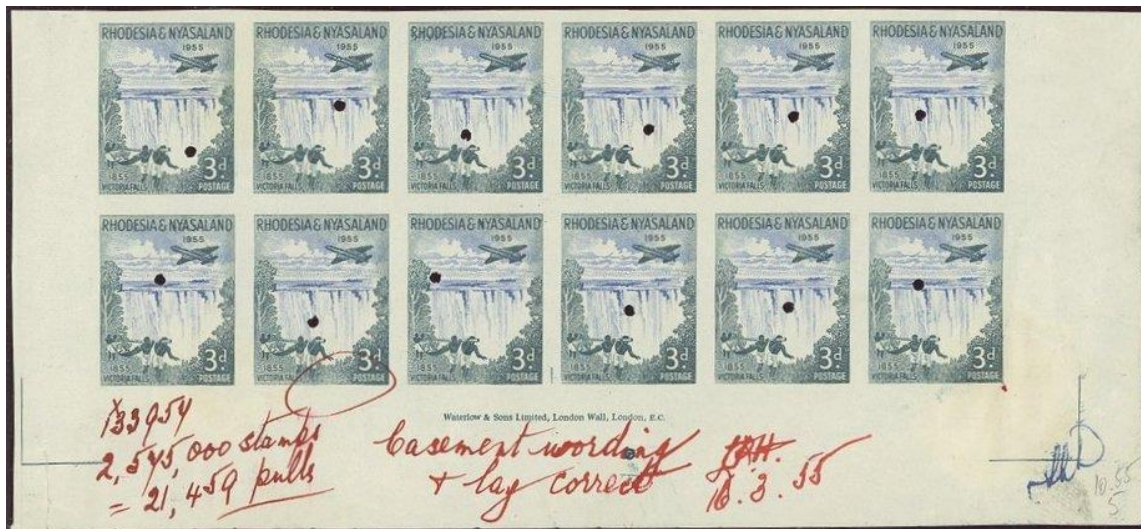
(Source: Spink's October 2020 Auction)

Annotated proofs

These proofs, from the “dirty” files, are from the bottom of the printed sheets and vignettes, and contain numerous approvals of the printing. Most have been signed, or initialled, and have a date of approval. (Source: Spink’s October 2020 Auction)



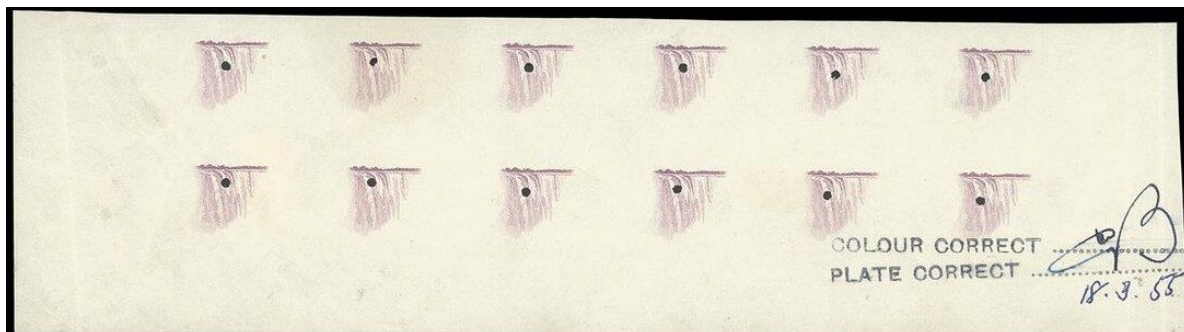
3d: Bottom two rows from vignette proof
“Colour correct/Plate correct” cachet, signed and dated 14.3.55



3d: Instructions in red
“Casement wording and lay correct”
“2,575,000 stamps = 21,459 pulls”
Order No 133954. Signed 16.3.55



3d: Bottom two rows
“Colour correct/Plate correct” cachet, and signed



1s. Bottom two rows
“Colour correct/Plate correct” cachet, signed and dated 18.3.55



1s: bottom two row
“Test for comb perf”



1s. Bottom two rows.

“Colour correct/Plate correct” cachet, signed and dated 22.3.55

Bibliography

1. “Rhodesia – A Postal History”, R C Smith, published in 1967, pages 392-93
2. Stanley Gibbons Commonwealth Stamp Catalogue – Southern & Central Africa, 2nd Edition 2014
3. The Rhodesia Stamp Catalogue, 1983/84 published by Salisbury stamp Company, Zimbabwe (last edition)
4. “A Guide to the Postage stamps of the Rhodesias & Nyasaland” published by the Mashonaland Philatelic Society in 1965.
5. “The Die Proofs of Waterlow & Sons – Part 1: Great Britain and the Empire to 1960” by Colin Frazer and Robson Lowe, published 1985
6. “Prize For Stamp Designs”, Rhodesian Herald 10 September 1954. RSC Journal 385, June 2021, submitted article by Jono Waters.

Additions/Changes since December 2021	
3-2022	Photo of J E Hughes
8-2022	1sh double bottom row, with side margins perforated
	Artwork produced by Bradbury Wilkinson
4-2024	1sh Maxi postcard