

The Iconic Victoria Falls used on the Postage of the BSAC and Rhodesias (1905 to 1980)

Livingstone described the Victoria Falls in the following terms...*Of these falls we had often heard since we came into this country. It was called by the natives Mosi-oa-tunya ('Smoke sounder there') or more evidently 'Shongwe', which may mean a seething cauldron or 'boiling water in a pot.' Nowadays "the smoke that thunders".*

Although attributed to Dr Livingstone in 1855, the earliest people to depict the Victoria Falls are believed to be the Bushmen. They left at least six paintings in their rock caves and shelters in Southern Rhodesia. These representations are in oxides of red and yellow ochres, and are probably a thousand years old, possibly more. They show the line of the falls, or some section of it, and one portrays the columns of white vapour above the Falls uniting in a cloud.

The Victoria Falls form part of the boundary between Northern and Southern Rhodesia; so both can claim the falls as their Icon. In 1953 it was thought rational to administer Northern and Southern Rhodesia as well as Nyasaland as one Federation. This lasted until 1964 when all three regions became independent. Southern Rhodesia did not accept independence, and continued as a rogue republic until 1980 when it too got its independence as Zimbabwe.

For the purposes of this exhibit, I have limited its extent to only those areas using the original pre-independence county names:

British South Africa Company	page 2
Southern Rhodesia	pages 3 to 12
Northern Rhodesia	page 13
Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland	pages 14 to 16
UDI Rhodesia	part page 15

The Exhibit illustrates the popular usage of the Victoria Falls on a variety of definitive and commemorative stamps produced between the 1905 set commemorating the official opening of the Falls, to 1980 which was used in the final definitive set of the UDI Rhodesia. Examples are also displayed of the Falls used on Postal Stationary and Aerograms.

In addition to the Victoria Falls, the examples used in the exhibit include the portraits of :

King George V	page 11
King George VI	page 12
Queen Elizabeth II	pages 13, 15 & 16
Cecil Rhodes	page 13
Dr Livingstone	page 14

The Iconic Victoria Falls will no doubt continue to be used on many postage stamps and other postal items for many years to come, as it remains one of the most magnificent natural wonders of the world.

List of References:

The Victoria Falls Bridge	Danny Swart	The S A Philatelist, May 1978
Victoria Falls stamps J	John Woolford	The antique Collector, September 1987
The Large Falls Stamps of Southern Rhodesia	Alan Drysdall	RSC Memoir 14
Southern Rhodesia Specimens and Die Proofs	Dave Cooper	RSCJ 288 December 2021
Rhodesia-A Postal History	RC Smith	Mardon Printers
Commonwealth Stamp catalogue	2011 Edition	Stanley Gibbons

The British South Africa Company

Victoria Falls Bridge Opening - 1905

On 12 September 1905 the road and rail bridge across the gorge near Victoria Falls was opened by Professor Darwin, the second son of Charles Darwin. The stamps shared one design which was the Victoria Falls, based on a photograph taken by Percy Clark, a local curio dealer. The stamps set shows the name BSAC which was the ruler at the time.

This design will be repeated through the years, but none as attractive as this set. The set below are all marked 'SPECIMEN', all printed over the stamp in black, except the 5d which is perforated.



This set of stamps do contain minor faults to assist in plating them, but the best known is the "Bird in the tree" Variety shown on the left. It is in position (2,5) on the 5d stamp sheet



A printer's proof sheet of 5 x 5d stamps showing the lower left corner including the Printer's Imprint. Printed by Watermans and Sons, London.

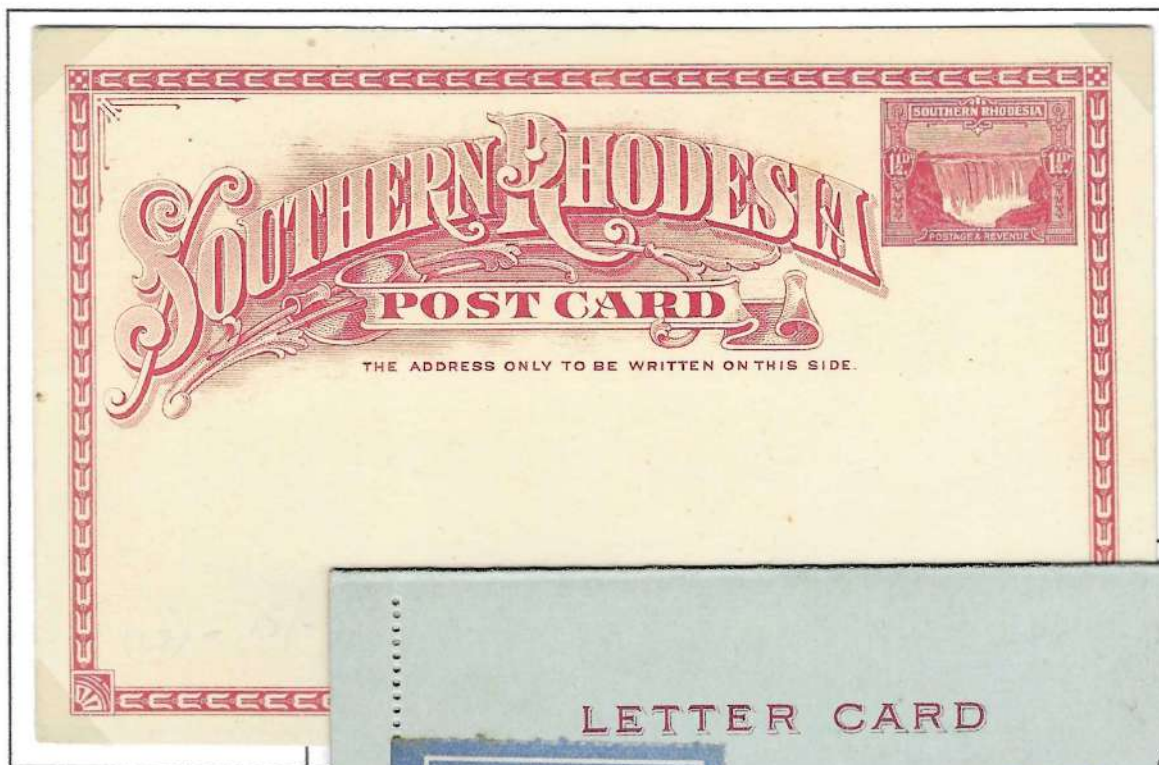
Southern Rhodesia

Small Victoria Falls Definitives - 1931

The 2d and 3d Small Falls were part of the Field Marshall definitives (KG V) issued on 1 April 1931. Waterlow and Sons printed these mono-colour stamps, and the remaining Field Marshall values from 1/2d to 5/- were printed by Bradbury Wilkinson. In addition the Small Falls was used on a 1 1/2d Postal stationary Post Card.



Lower left marginal pairs of the 2d and 3d
Small Falls Definitive



A fine example of
the 1 1/2d Postal
Stationary Post
Card printed by
Waterlow & Sons

The Postal
Stationary Letter
Card with the 1d
Field Marshall and
an additional 3d
Small Falls to
make up the
postage for
Airmail.
Cancellation from
Salisbury dated
1 December 1934.



Southern Rhodesia

Large Victoria Falls Definitives – 1932 (1)

The Large Victoria Falls definitives in 2d and 3d were based on the popular 1905 BSAC issue. Postal Notice number 13 of 1932, announced the replacement of the Small Falls with the larger format with effect from 1 May 1932. It appears that in using the 1905 format, the "Postage and Revenue" tablet was forgotten. These stamps were printed by Waterlow and Sons. The octagonal 1906 panel in each top corners was replaced by similar stars. "Southern Rhodesia" replaced "British South Africa Company"



Bottom row of sheet pair imprinted Waterlow & Sons Ltd, London...



Top right Corner of a sheet showing sheet number in black. Stamped "Registered, Bulawayo, 31 May 1932"

A vertical pair of 2d Large Falls on a Rhodesia and Nyasaland Airways Ltd first flight from Salisbury in S. Rhodesia to Zomba Nyasaland, dated 9 March 1934.



Southern Rhodesia

Large Victoria Falls Definitives – 1932 (2)



Imprint pairs of the 3d first printing showing the use of two different shades of paper



Left side marginal copy of imperforate printer's proof in this case with gum

A printer's perforated proof of the lower right corner of a sheet of the early 3d issue

Use of an early 3d Victoria Falls definitive on an First Flight cover, upgraded to 4d airmail rate with a 1d KGV Field Marshall. Stamped Salisbury 9 March 1934, 6 AM to Blantyre, Nyasaland, arrived same day at 3 PM.



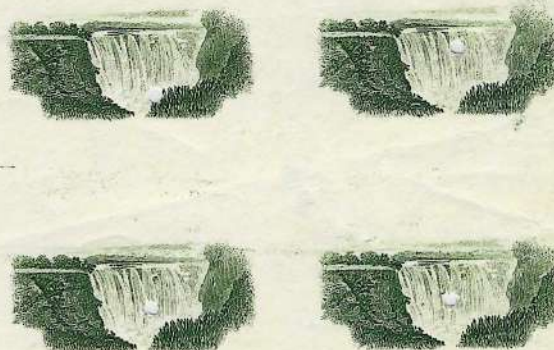
Southern Rhodesia
Large Victoria Falls Definitives – 1935 Inscribed 'Postage and Revenue' (1)



2d Maroon and deep blue colour trial die proof on gummed paper.
Overprinted "Waterlow & Sons - Specimen" with punch hole lower left tablet



A printer's plate proof copy of 2d frame only
with new design showing the 'Postage
Revenue' Tablet with setting mark in margin



A printer's plate proof copy of 2d Large Falls
vignette only with punch holes



Printers plate proof copy (gummed) of top
right corner and margin



Printers imperforated
vertical pair proof copy
with large punch hole

Southern Rhodesia

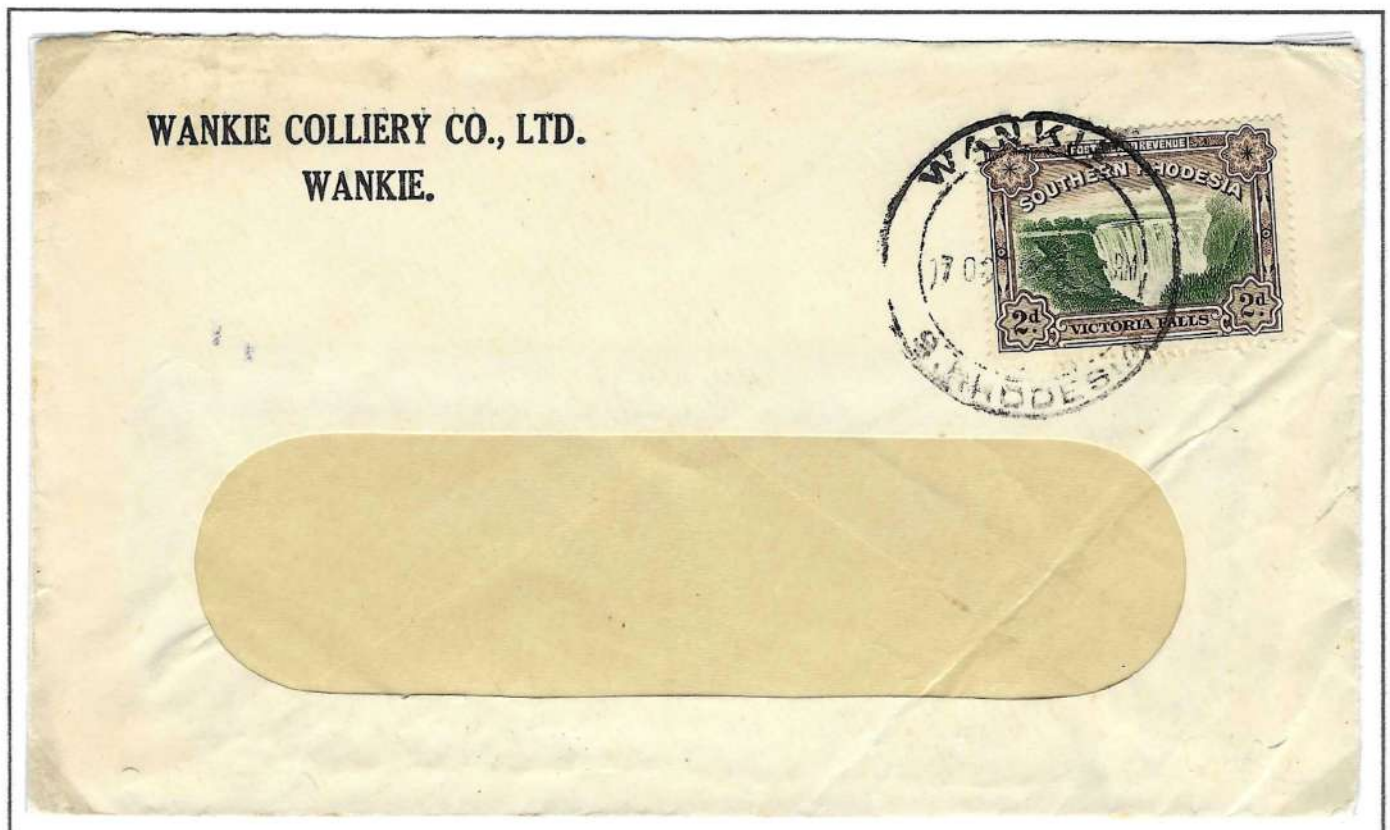
Large Victoria Falls Definitives – 1935 Inscribed 'Postage and Revenue' (2)



Imprint block of the redesigned stamp.
The imperf margin indicates that it was
line-perforated. Needling mark is left



Imprint block of the redesigned stamp
with perforations through the margin
indicates that it was comb-perforated.
Needling mark is right.



A fine example of the commercial use of the redesigned stamp on a Wankie Colliery
window envelope.. Cancelled WANKIE, S.RHODESIA on 17 October

Southern Rhodesia

Large Victoria Falls Definitives – 1935 Inscribed 'Postage and Revenue' (3)



Printer's proof copy of the 3d revised Large Falls showing small punch holes and a very dark blue trial colour



Two imperforate printer's proofs with large punch holes showing the new 3d revised Large Falls stamp in the correct colour



The Maryland Forgery. These originated from Maryland, USA and appeared in 2002. The stamps were well printed and were popular on the internet.



3d Revised issue Waterlow & Sons Imprint block

Southern Rhodesia

Large Victoria Falls Definitives – 1935 Inscribed 'Postage and Revenue' (4)

RECEIPT
A.F.R. } N^o 36488

**& MERCANTILE
ANY, LIMITED.**

1809

HEAD OFFICE FOR SOUTH AFRICA,
NORTH BRITISH & MERCANTILE BUILDING,
84 COMMISSIONER STREET

RECEIVED the sum sho
Policy numbered as unde
bly to the terms of the said

olicy No. 6716698.



JE
AFFI



in consideration of the Sum of [See Note.]

paid by

*ROLAND FITZGERALD
& MARKE*

Signature
Address
Occupation

Signed, sealed and delivered, by the above-named

in the presence of

Signature
Address
Occupation

NOTE.—The Consideration money set forth in a transfer executed by the Buyer, the Stamp Act requires that in such cases the Consideration money be paid in the ad valorem Duty; the following is the Clause in question: "Where a person, having contracted for the purchase of any property, or to any other person and the property is, in consequence of the contract, transferred to any other person, the ad valorem Duty in respect of the Consideration money shall be paid in the ad valorem Duty in respect of the Consideration money." (54 and 55 Vict. Cap. 39 (1891), Section 58, Sub-Section 4.)

Instructions for executing Transfers.

* When a transfer is executed out of Great Britain it is recommended that the transfer be executed by the Vice-Consul, a Clergyman, Magistrate, Notary Public, or by some other Person holding office in the Colony. If the transfer is executed by any other Person, the transfer must be attested by the signature of the transferor, or of a witness, or of a wife, or of a widow, and if a wife, she must give her husband's Name, Address and Qualification, and if a widow, she must give her late husband's Name, Address and Qualification. The signature of the witness must be inserted in Words and not in Figures. Wife's witness of husband's signature.



the first S
urchaser,
ng obtain
the Sul
er."

Because the Large Falls stamps were POSTAGE and REVENUE, they were often used to pay the Taxes on business and legal documents. Here is an example of the Revised 2d Large Falls being used on an Insurance Company Receipt and an original Large Falls 3d used on a share certificate.

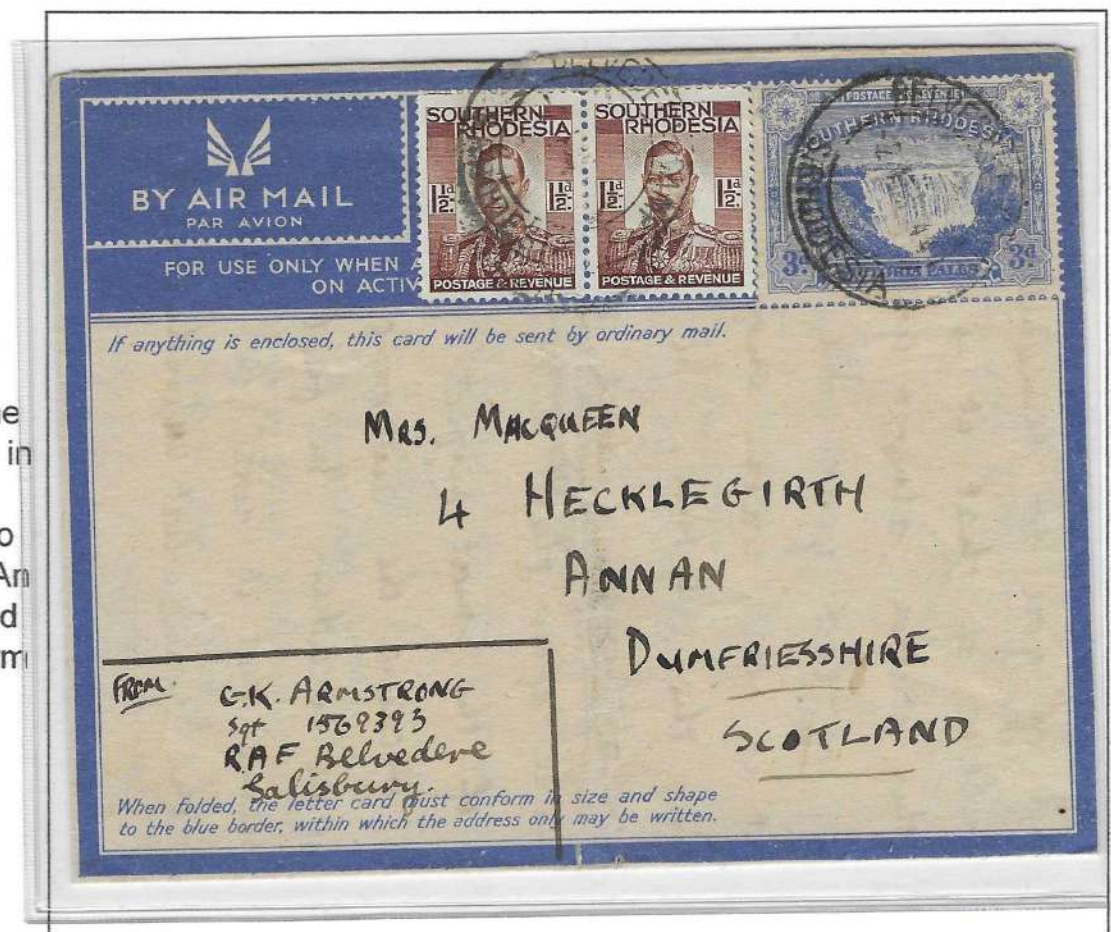
Southern Rhodesia

Large Victoria Falls Definitives – 1935 Inscribed 'Postage and Revenue' (5)



In Postal Notice 40 of 1940, The Southern Rhodesia Post Office introduced a new service of Active Service Letter Cards. The Notice announced that these letter Cards would be impressed with a 3d Large Falls stamp. Additional postage would be necessary for private use, or use out of Africa. This example shows the earlier letter card sent to the UK and needing an additional 2d and ½d postage. A 2d Falls stamp and a KG VI stamp are used.

This later example of the letter card (with warning in white script on blue background) was sent to the UK from Salisbury. An additional 3d was added to the postage in the form of two KG VI 1½d definitives.



Southern Rhodesia

1935 King George V Silver Jubilee

The Silver Jubilee was the first occasion on which a concentrated issue of stamps had been made practically throughout the Empire.

The design of the stamps depicting a group of animals, the King's portrait in Black Watch uniform and the Victoria Falls was selected personally by His Majesty, who was a keen philatelist.

The stamps went on sale on the 6th January 1935 and were withdrawn on 31 December 1935



The Southern Rhodesia Government decided to produce four values of the Silver Jubilee Stamp, based on the postal rates of the time. These are shown here in top right marginal blocks, showing the sheet number in black.



His Majesty sent requests throughout the Empire to send him personally a first day cover - an address was given. These went into his collection.

Southern Rhodesia

1937 Coronation King George VI

Following a decision of the United Kingdom to issue an omnibus series of the coronation, Southern Rhodesia decided to issue a set of four stamps bearing the effigies of their Majesties, the King and Queen on either side of the central view of the Victoria Falls. . Design and printing by Waterlow and Sons

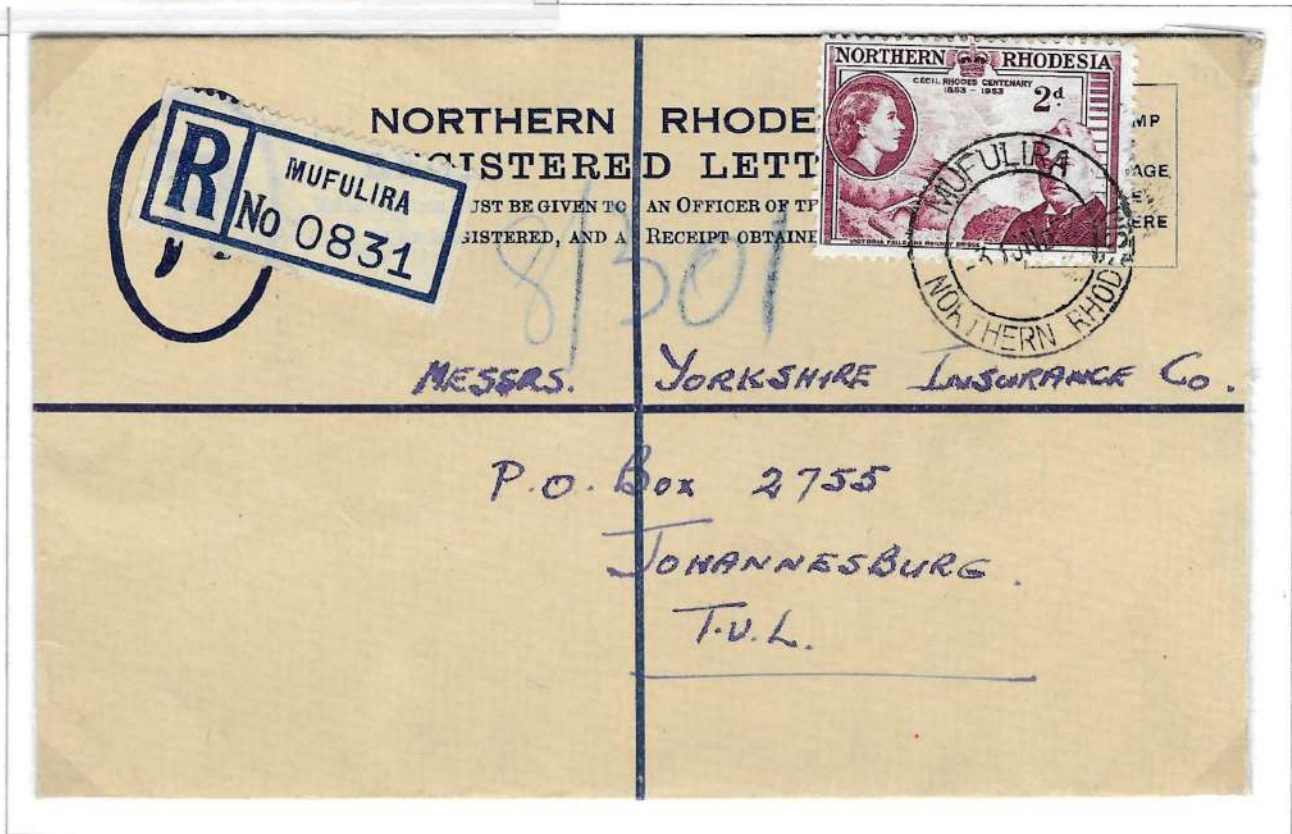


A registered cover bearing the 2d and 6d Coronation stamps, cancelled 21 June 1937

Northern Rhodesia

1953 Cecil Rhodes Birth Centenary

On 30th May, 1953, a set of four commemorative postage stamps were produced to celebrate Cecil Rhodes Birth Centenary. The set depicts the Queen and on lower right, a portrait of Cecil Rhodes. The background is a view of the Victoria Falls seen from the Northern end of the Bridge which is also in the panorama. Recess printed by De La rue and Co.



A registered postal stationery cover bearing the 2d Centenary stamp cancelled Mufilira 3 June 1953

Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland

Centenary of the Discovery of the Victoria Falls by David Livingstone.

This was the first commemorative issue of the newly formed Federation, and went on sale on 15 June 1955. Two stamps, a 3d and 1/- were issued. The designs are a result of a public invitation to submit ideas. The designs submitted by Messrs Hughes and Horne were chosen and sent to Waterlow and Sons to finalise and print.



Background depicts the Gorge at the Victoria falls with a portrait of Dr David Livingstone

The stamp depicts the main falls with Dr Livingstone being carried on a stretcher by four African men, with a modern plane flying overhead. A repeating flaw is the "machine gun" on the wing of stamp (3,3) shown by red arrow

An airmail letter from Causeway S. Rhodesia to Toronto, Canada with a pair of each of the two centenary stamps affixed. The 3d stamp has the "machine gun" flaw



Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, S.Rhodesia & UDI Rhodesia

Victoria Falls on Definitive Stamps

Most of the examples referred to in this exhibit were commemorative stamps, but the Victoria Falls also featured in four of the Definitive Issues. One from Southern Rhodesia, one from the Federation, and two from the UDI decimal period.

1953 S.Rhodesia
4d. From 1953
Definitive Issue
showing view
from N.
Rhodesian side



Mardon Printers (Pvt.) Ltd., Salisbury, Rhodesia



Rhodesia &
Nyasaland 1969
definitive 6d Value
showing Victoria
Falls Eastern
Cataract. Used on a
cover to USA

1978 (last) UDI
definitive set, the \$2
value imprint block
showing Victoria
Falls from above.

JOHANNA BLVD.
L 12
SOTA
S.A.

POST CARD



The 1970
issue 7½c
stamp imprint
block with Vic
Falls Devils
Cataract.
Post Card with
same design
as above but
8c with the
official Victoria
Falls
Cancellation
dated June '73



Mardon Printers (Pvt.) Ltd., Salisbury, Rhodesia

GAME PHOTOGRAPHY (PVT) LTD. P.O. BOX 220, SALISBURY.

Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland

Federal Post Office Produced Three Sets of Tourism Air Letters

A new aerogramme design was printed by McCorquodale in late 1956

In September 1957 the Federal Post Office issued the first of three sets of aerogrammes to promote tourism in the Federation. There were eight different scenes in each set, the reason being that McCorquodale printed aerogrammes in sheets of eight, and in the case of the first issue the stamp later impressed. The first and second sets, issued in 1957 and 1958 respectively. Only the first printing had the 6d QE II imprinted pink stamp.



First Issue with imprinted 6d QE II stamp. One of the eight tourism issues was Victoria Falls. Issued Dec 1957.

Second Issue in July '58 had no imprint stamp, but were often sold with the 6d Vic Falls stamp from the 2nd Definitive.



Third issue had revised sketches printed in grey-blue with no imprint stamp. Issued October 1958.