

# 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of London - Rhodesia Airmail

Rob Cooke

A set of stamps was issued by the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first London to Rhodesia Airmail Service on 6 February 1932. The three stamps represent some of the aircraft used on the London to Africa route. These were the De Havilland 66 Hercules "City of Basra", a BOAC "C" Class flying boat and an unidentified BOAC Comet 4, presumably the 4C variant.

The stamps were designed by Victor Whiteley of Harrison and Sons Ltd., London and printed by the same company using Photogravure on pure white unwatermarked paper with colourless gum, perforations 14.5 x 14 and an overall size of 40.5mm x 27.0mm.

The design of the 6d value is based on a sketch made from a photograph of the "City of Basra" aircraft registration letters G-AAJH. A total of 1,300,000 stamps were produced.

The 1s3d value depicts a "C" Class flying boat taking off from the Zambezi River just above the Victoria Falls. Although it is an excellent stamp, all is not what it seems. This aircraft type was used on the East Coast route via Beira, but never landed at Victoria Falls. The image of the aircraft is based on a photograph of an Australian flying boat "Coolangatta", which has been reversed. Furthermore, the registration letters have been changed to those of the Imperial Airways flying boat "Canopus" (G-ADHL). The reasons behind this additional artistic licence are unclear. A total of 700,000 stamps were printed.

The 2s6d value shows a Comet 4 at sunset on the apron at what was then Salisbury Airport. The original concept was to depict the scene at night. However, as the black in the original design was too dark, it was modified to a scene just after sunset. A total of 240,000 were printed.

Stanley Gibbons lists the "Extra Landing Light" flaw on the 2s6d value (SG42a), in position Cylinder B, Row 9/2, as illustrated in the image below right which is taken from the SG 2016 CW & Empire Catalogue.

A special cover was also issued to commemorate the Anniversary, the example below (reduced to c.75%) being sent from Salisbury to the BOAC "Airways Terminal" in Victoria. The reverse (below right and enlarged by c.30%) shows it was delivered the following morning.

