



Scots who made their mark on..... *The History of Africa 3: David Livingstone*



Not original, I presume !

How does one write something which is not old hat about this great Victorian Scotsman ? In my collection of Scots on stamps – and quite possibly in yours – he comes second only to Alexander Graham Bell as a popular subject for commemoration with issues from around a dozen countries. He was the first explorer I learned about at primary school in the 1950's and the subject of the first biography I was given as a present, a second hand hardback book with powder blue flowery cover written at the turn of the century and quite unreadable to me then as a ten year old and probably quite unreadable now, but for different reasons on account of the tortuous and convoluted prose which also makes the like of Scott, Dickens and Thackeray such a challenge today.

So rather than just present a biography of David Livingstone in strict chronological order (born Blantyre 1813, died in what we now call Zambia 1873) which will just readily remind you of what you already know or can easily access, I thought on this occasion I would look at what how stamps illustrate his life. And achievement.

Firstly, all the portraits in the stamps appear to use just the head from a single photo as their source, the one which is printed beside these words and which was produced by the Royal Geographical Society, sponsors of the third phase of his exploration of Africa. This appears to me show a middle aged somewhat preoccupied man with a formidable moustache who just wants to get away from the camera or to more interesting projects. The position of the arm supported on his thigh is natural, but the cupped hand not so much so. You might have expected his palm to be laid downwards on his thigh so perhaps this was influenced by the mauling he took from a lion in 1844, four years into his spell in Africa. From then on his arm was disabled and was a regular source of pain to him. Does his face also suggest he is in some discomfort in the photo and not just bored ?

Two other images from legendary occasions in Livingstone's life are also used by a number of countries—the "discovery" of Victoria Falls and the meeting with Henry Morton Stanley.

Livingstone explored some of the African interior when the Kolobeng mission eventually closed after suffering serious water shortages for five years from 1847 and it was during these explorations in 1855 that he came across the spectacular Mosi-oa-Tunya—"The smoke that thunders", on the Zambezi, which he named after his monarch Queen Victoria, also shown on the second



Rhodesia and Nyasaland issue of 1955.

Zambia (1973) also shows Livingstone in explorer garb seeing the waterfall for the first time and refers to the feature by its native name.


The meeting with Stanley at which the often quoted and parodied words, "Dr Livingstone, I presume" were or were not spoken is also understandably a theme in stamps from Botswana, Tanzania, Kenya & Uganda, and Zambia in 1973.

In 1869, Stanley had been commissioned by an American newspaper to find the long-lost explorer of whom nothing had been heard for six years. Not knowing that Livingstone had been very ill for four of




Portrait stamps issued in 1973 by Great Britain, Malawi, Botswana, Rhodesia, Zambia, Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1955 and Zambia in 1996 are all sourced from the R.G.S. portrait.

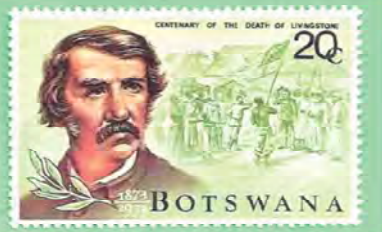
"DOCTOR LIVINGSTONE, I PRESUME"



Doctor Livingstone
AND
Sir H. M. Stanley
British Explorers
First Day of Issue



J. Dugdale,
"Cartref"
42 Nolt Loan Road,
ARBROATH.



them, Stanley finally tracked him down to Ujiji by Lake Tanganika on 10th November 1871. There is no substantive proof that Stanley spoke that greeting as those pages from his diary are not extant and the Scot's own journal does not record them, so alas the story may be apocryphal.. Even the location of the meeting is disputed by some experts.

Some other aspects of Livingstone's years in Africa are covered by various issues....missionary work, exploration, healing and working against slavery...

Missionary Work



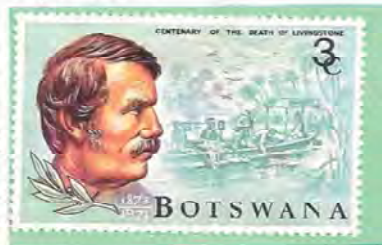
is referred to in the 4n value from the 1973 Zambia set. Influenced by fellow Scot Robert Moffat (see section at end of this article) and working on behalf of the London Missionary

Society (L.M.S.) Livingstone arrived at Moffat's mission at Kuruman in Bechuanaland in mid 1841 and within three years had moved inland. He was refused cooperation by the Boers to do this kind of work in The Transvaal so instead created a new mission station under the direction of Roger Edwards at Mabotswa

amongst the Kgatla people, then went on to Chonuanne where he encountered Kwena chief Sechele and onwards to Kolobeng by 1847 again with the Kwela. Chief Sechele was Livingstone's sole convert, because he wanted Africans to convert their own and not to have a Western religion imposed in the name of civilisation. Livingstone fully realised that the tenets of Christianity presented many challenges to the culture of the natives he worked with, for example their practice of polygamy and he wearied of conventional approaches.

Exploration

Is illustrated in the 3C Botswana issue of 1973. When Kolobeng had to close through lack of water Livingstone set out to explore where no



Westerners had been before and as well as being the first European to see Mosi-oa-Tunya he was in the vanguard of Europeans who journeyed from coast to coast. Between 1854 and 1856 he travelled from Luanda (in Angola) on the Atlantic

coast to Quelimane (in Mozambique) a hundred miles north of where the Zambezi runs into the Indian Ocean, which even as the crow flies is some 1,700 miles. During this trek he "discovered" and charted many geographical features. Distance fatigue of course was far being the only challenge explorers like Livingstone faced, also encountering tropical diseases like malaria (literally "bad air") and dysentery and hostile natives as Mungo Park and others before him had had to contend with.

These diseases were naturally not confined to the European traveller and as he journeyed Dr Livingstone engaged with the natives (unlike Park earlier in the century) and made use of his medical training, supplying medicines as and when he could, a practice consistent with his Christian principles and referred to in the 15n Zambia issue

Healing



Thus because of his overt kindness and (as the 3c Bostwana stamp suggests) since he travelled with a relatively unthreatening size of party—with no suggestion he was trying to conquer and take land - Livingstone's progress was not regarded with hostility in the way some previous European ventures had been and he made friends, even with formidable warlords like the Mwata of Cazembe in southern central Africa. This benevolent approach is summarised in his mission statement—*pardon the pun*—of Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation.

Action against Slavery



Zambia 1973 10n shows Livingstone and his party scattering mainly Portuguese slavers, whose practices he abhorred him and which he was to expose in his second book *The*

Zambesi and Its Tributaries in 1865 though ironically he had to rely on slaves and slave traders from time to time for the needs of his final exploration, providing bearers for example. Livingstone wrote to *The New York Herald* in which he exposed the brutality of slavery—"this open sore" saying that working against it was for more important to him than any other aspect of his time in Africa.

Further Exploration

After his trans-Africa journey Livingstone had returned to Britain to recharge his batteries, publicise what he had done to date by writing his first book (*Missionary*

Travels 1857) and raise funds for further projects. He gave up working for the L.M.S. when the British government backed his first return to the continent as head of the Zambezi Expedition, but organisation of this much larger project proved very challenging for him and it did not go as well as planned. When his wife died from malaria in 1863 Livingstone continued to put scientific objectives before self and carried on exploring for a further year before returning home taking his little steamer first to Bombay. The Zambezi Expedition was officially evaluated as a failure, despite large gains in scientific knowledge made by team members.

At the start of 1866 Livingstone was drawn back to Africa this time on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society—as it transpired for the final time—to search for the source of the Nile. He disembarked from the Eastern port of Zanzibar, headed West, "discovering" Lakes Mweru and Bangweulu and having tracked back to Ujiji to recuperate progressed further westward before coming to the Lualaba River, which he determined to be part of the Nile but it proved to be the Upper Congo. Again enduring chronic illness he made it back to Ujiji where he was in effect marooned for years until Stanley met up with him in late 1871, as mentioned above.

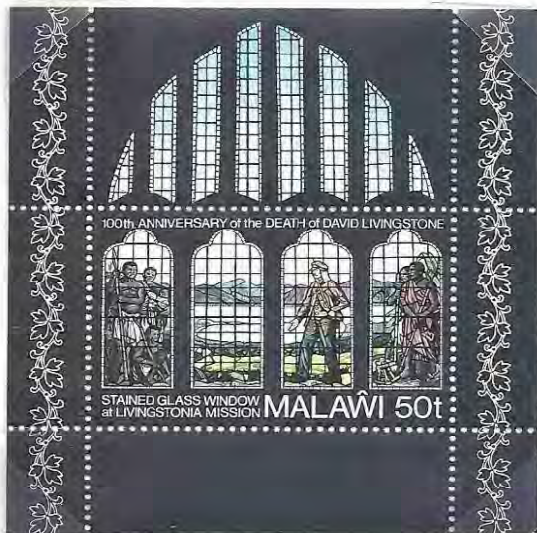
Against Stanley's urging to look after himself and come home, Livingstone doggedly made a final effort to locate the source of the Nile returning to the malaria and dysentery inducing swamps of Bangweulu. He was found dead in the village of Chitambo on the first day of May in 1873 so appropriately in the village under a Mvula tree, the carved trunk of which is now in the Royal Geographical Society's collection in London.



His body was embalmed and in a nine month, thousand mile journey carried back to Zanzibar along with his papers and journals by his devoted servants and friends Chuma and Susi and was eventually buried in Westminster Abbey.

A 1996 issue shows a Zambian memorial to Livingstone.





There are memorials to Livingstone in many places, for example at the Victoria Falls, in Livingstone and Lusaka in Zambia, at Livingstonia in Malawi (see above mini-sheet) with Blantyre in that country being named after his Scottish home town and of course in the original Blantyre and near the Scott Monument in Edinburgh, to mention just a few. Livingstone was also awarded the gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society.

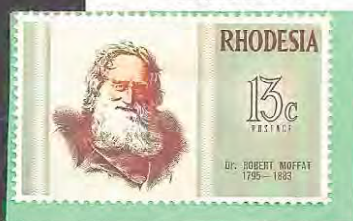
And all this is no surprise. Livingstone did more than any other European for the accumulation of new knowledge about Africa, enlightening millions as to its true diversity and wonders, when many believed its unexplored centre was the unremitting barbaric hell that Shakespeare's Othello might have been referring to when he spoke of

...the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders...

Livingstone was a path finder for so many Christian missionaries who followed him later in the century and his principled approach to exploration and his public abhorrence of slavery set a standard for subsequent exploration of the continent.



Rhodesia 1972



Robert Moffat

was David Livingstone's inspiration and mentor where he first began to consider being a missionary. Moffat was born into an unremarkable family in Ormiston, East Lothian in 1795 and when he was working as a gardener in Cheshire he wrote to the L.M.S. offering his services as missionary in Southern African to which he was dispatched at the age of 21 with fiancée Mary Smith following him three years later.

He worked in Namaqualand and Bechuanaland where with his wife he founded a missionary station west of the Vaal River which he ran for over 50 years. He did indeed find the natives savage and bloodthirsty but through courage and Christian example he established some civilised communities teaching them many western ways in cultivating food crops, constructing homes and equipment for peaceful purposes.

He also translated the whole of the Bible, Psalms and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* into the local African dialect called Sechwana, so providing the written basis of their literature which previously relied totally on oral tradition.

Moffat's daughter Mary was born in Africa and was to marry David Livingstone, whose original intention was to head for the Far East on missionary work, but met Moffat on a visit to London in 1840 and was persuaded to work with him in Southern Africa with its "thousand villages where no missionary had ever been". To be fair when Livingstone joined Moffat he was somewhat underwhelmed by what had been achieved after twenty years and that vicarious experience influenced Livingstone's approach to conversion as he deduced that a better method would be for Africans to convert fellow Africans.

Livingstone married Mary Moffat in January 1845 and she accompanied him on his early treks despite being pregnant. Their first daughter Agnes was born in May 1847 and Mary set up an infant school at Kolobeng. Further children, Robert and Thomas, followed and Livingstone eventually sent his family back to Kuruman. The family did go back to England with him but were with Livingstone again on his second, Zambezi Expedition during which Mary died, of malaria, in the Spring of 1863.

Livingstone had consistently and selflessly regarded the welfare of his family and of himself as subordinate to the needs of gathering knowledge and helping the African peoples he encountered.

Robert Moffat died in England in 1883 aged 87.

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