

The Sarawak Journal

A philatelic journal devoted to Brunei, Labuan, North Borneo (Sabah) and Sarawak

Volume 74 No.1

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March 2021



The front panel of an entire sent from Bidi in Sarawak by T.L. Stevens in August 1859.
(From the Brooke Trust archive)

In this Issue

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Labuan 1892 Provisionals: Two Sheets, Two Covers and a Mystery

Book review: A Stormy Petrel, the life and times of John Pope-Hennessy

A Variant of the 1883 50c error

The Sarawak Specialists' Society

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Founded by Donald D.C.Castle for the furtherance of the study of the stamps and postal history of Sarawak, to which was added Brunei in 1956 and North Borneo and Labuan in 1958.

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FOR THE YEAR BEGINNING 1 JULY 2020

Were due on 1 July

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£5 to cover bank charges should be added to the basic subscription of £15, when payment is in a currency other than sterling

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£1.50 to cover administrative costs should be added to the basic, subscription of £15, with payment made via the Society's email address 'sarawakss@btinternet.com'

LABUAN, NORTH BORNEO & SARAWAK



1885 (June) 2c on 16c
blue, a fine o.g. copy
SG 24



1916 Red Cross 25c, Cross
in carmine, fine used on
piece. BPA certificate



1947 3c Royal Cypher
overprint albino SG152a
BPA certificate

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Sarawak Journal - Back Issues v.1 - 70, on 7 CD-ROMs covering 1947 to 2017	£10 each

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The Sarawak Journal

Organ of the Sarawak Specialists' Society

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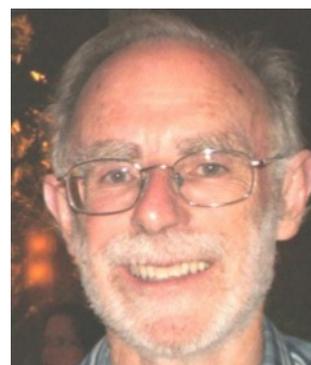
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The next issue will be dated June 2021, and the deadline for copy will be 1st May 2021.
Subsequent issues will be dated September 2021, and December 2021.

Editorial

Another year, another volume of the Sarawak Journal, as the Society edges closer to its 75th anniversary. We must hope that 2021 brings a resolution of the COVID crisis and that our lives can get get back to something like normality.

However all is not bad. In lockdown, we have had more time to examine our collections, to explore the Internet for more information, and we have discovered the value of on-line meetings which can be attended by members wherever they are based around the world. If the meeting is held at an awkward time, the full presentation may be able to be watched at a more convenient time afterwards. Most stamp auctions have moved to real time on-line sales and geography is no longer a barrier to live bidding. Delivery is a more serious problem as mail and courier services have been seriously disrupted with the closing of borders, airline routes cancelled, and only limited services on those which are still operating.



International mail services can vary from week to week and from month to month. Claire Scott and Willi Ott have combined to give us a picture of services to Brunei as they were some weeks ago. By the time this issue of the Sarawak Journal reaches you they will almost certainly have changed again. Get your postal history items now!

I am writing this in mid-January and Malaysia has just begun a new series of lockdowns to try to combat spreading of the COVID virus. The Agong has proclaimed a National State of Emergency lasting until August 1st 2021, and a new Movement Control Order has been issued which applies to Sabah and Labuan as well as a number of States in West Malaysia.

Ray Price

Notices and Forthcoming Events

Taipei 2020. 38th Asian International Stamp Exhibition 4th - 8th June 2021

Virtual Stampex, 25th - 27th March 2021

London 2022, February 19th - 26th

Melbourne 2022, September 8th - 11th

Most exhibitions worldwide have been postponed. See <https://fepanews.net/events/> for European events, <http://www.asiaphilately.com/Calendar.html> for Australasia, and <https://stamps.org/events/international-shows> for the Americas, and for UK <https://www.abps.org.uk/forthcoming-Exhibitions/> for the latest information on previously announced exhibitions.

Society Meetings for 2021

Spring Meeting, June / July	Displays and Auction	Tiverton. Details to be confirmed. Check the Society's web site for the latest information
Annual Weekend, October 2021	Displays, Auction, AGM	
Regular presentations and displays are being held using Zoom. Check the SSS Web Site for details		

Cover Story

A very scruffy entire from Bidi to the U.K. sent in 1859

Jon Higgins

At the end of Simon Martin-Redman's superb display to the Society of early mail from Sarawak (2020), I held up a page from my collection stating that we had seen some wonderful material, now I want to show you what surely must be the scruffiest early Sarawak item. This very distressed entire from Bidi only has half a stamp (Figure 1)! Although to be fair it is amongst the earliest mail from Sarawak and has a very nice 'POST OFFICE / SARAWAK' postmark.

By very good fortune Martin Laverty, the digital archivist of the Brooke Trust watched Simon's Zoom presentation via Facebook and subsequently got in touch with me via our Secretary asking if I could send him a scan of the entire, front and back and the message as the Trust had no correspondence from Bidi from this early period. This of course I was very happy to do along with a transcript of this letter from T.L.Stevens to his mother.



Fig. 1: Front and Reverse of the Letter

By Southampton

To Mrs W Bowell London, c/o John C. Templar Esq. Dudley Lodge, Harrow on the Hill, Middlesex

August 20th 1859, Bidi Sarawak Singapore.

“My dear mother,

I have often started to write to you but something always happened to prevent me so that together with this feeling of idleness which this climate also produces has been the reason that I have not written sooner. I do not deserve to be forgiven for such gross neglect but I write to prevent you from being in any more anxiety concerning me. I received all the nice presents which you and my dear sisters send me by Penty (Note 1) & I must not neglect to thank you for them. The books more specially have been very interesting. I could not avoid crying fairly when



Fig. 2: The inside section of the letter. The transcript is shown in this article.

first I saw the portrait it is so like my dear mother that I always thought that I was before her. I often look at it & fancy how that there will be some alteration in the original since Jemima tells me that you have been very ill. I was but a little better in the beginning of March, when she wrote – I received the letter in June – I was very much grieved to hear that you my dear mother was so ill as to be unable to write and sincerely hope that you may have recovered before now. I have seen both Mr and Mrs Penty. I was at Sarawak at the new year and spent some days there principally with Mr Penty. He told me that he spent some pleasant afternoons with you & besides whenever he writes he asks kindly after all of you. I am still at my old place (Bidi) and things go on pretty much as formally except that we have a very good road now & the mines are working as well as we can work them with the primitive appliances which are to be got here. I was often afraid that the \$60 which I sent would not reach you as soon as they really did & that anxious uncertainty was the reason for never mentioning them until you had got them. I have very little to write about I think that if I could write oftener I should have more to write about but I am so lazy that I cannot write very often. In the daytime I can't write for sand fleas and in the night I can't write for mosquitoes. At this present time my arms are covered with large lumps where the mosquitoes have been biting me and they are buzzing in my ears as though they are not satisfied with biting but must tease me as much as possible besides. Their bite is very disagreeable indeed it is worse than a stinging nettle not as painful but excessively itchy and not so easily got rid off – a person from Europe suffers terribly from them but after they're acclimatised the lumps go down in 2 or 3 hours. For my part if I am not obliged to sit or stand still I do not care for the mosquitoes now.

I have some queer adventures (if I may call them such) sometimes – for instance when I was at Sarawak last year I was within a ??? of being married to a Scotch woman of nearly 40 years – but I slipped out of that engagement alright as it happened but it was a great chance nevertheless and I think that

that has added a little to my stock of worldly wisdom – a day or something since I was told by an unquestionable authority that she is married now to a person in Singapore. Another of my adventures but of a different kind is one bright moonlight night I happened to get up and look out of the window and saw about 30 yards from the house I saw an old wild pig and four young ones with her. I could not fire a shot from ???loaded with small shot and that would have been entirely useless and I could not take out the shot to find a bullet for want of a screw to draw the wad out so I took a barbed spear and opened the door as quietly as I could but the ??? me so that she had 25 yards of start go? I followed and caught them just in time to see the old one and 2 young ones through the gap in the fence
.....

(and so on for another 10 lines. The sow chased him but he escaped up the ladder of his house, later shot the sow and got two young ones weighing about 100lbs each – they were good eating)

“When you write to Arncott do not forget to give my love to dear old grandfather and grandmother. I hope Uncle Tom will be getting on alright. Goodbye my dear mother & believe me still your affectionate son
?Stevens.

Note 1: Penty was James Brooke's manservant. He had been in England in 1856 to get married, so may well have become friendly sailing back to Sarawak with Stevens (M. Laverty)

Note 2: An expanded transcript is available via <https://archive.brooketrust.org/DA/showPerson.php?init=TLS>

Generally not very exciting reading although it appeared that he had nearly got married to a lady almost twice his age, but at the end of a letter he writes

P.S. Keep my letters to yourself, if too many see them something unpleasant may arise..... do not let anyone else see them if you can possibly help it. I say nothing about the work because of that and letters open themselves occasionally in Sarawak so that I'm obliged to be guarded.

What I wonder was the problem? He was working for the Borneo Company which at times I believe had an uncomfortable relationship with James Brooke.

The entire is addressed to Mr & Mrs Bowell c/o John C. Templer, Harrow on the Hill.

The Sender

Martin Laverty, kindly sent me the following:-

J. C. Templer was a senior judge and close friend of James Brooke, although becoming estranged through his position as a director of the Borneo Company (Brooke Trust)

The name Jemima Stevens appears in the 1851 English census for Wooton, Berkshire, and reveals T.L. Stevens' full name and family. William Bowell, 32, is head of the family and his wife is Sarah, 33: they have two children, Jabez Daly, 5, and Julia Fanny, 1, with the Bowell surname. The household also includes Theophilus Lessey, 13, Sarah, 11, and Jemima, 9, all with the Stevens surname, related as children-in-law (i.e. stepchildren) and born in the Buckinghamshire village of Boarstall: presumably this signifies that Sarah had been widowed but remarried. (Findmypast.com)

Once the names behind the initials T.L. were revealed Martin could also extend the short biographical sketch of T.L. Stevens, as follows: -

Theophilus Lesse Stevens born in Buckinghamshire in 1837. In the 1851 census he was listed as a farm labourer (at the age of 13) at Wooton, Berkshire. Sailed to Sarawak in 1857 to work for the Borneo Company...In 1859 he was timekeeper and cashier at the Bidi mines, and he was in Upper Sarawak in 1869, but left in 1873. After marrying in London, he went to live near Auckland in New Zealand where he went back to mainly farm work. He retained a deep interest in Sarawak and languages, writing a paper 'Relationship of Malayan Languages (1908)', and 'Raja Brooke' (1910) for a socialist newspaper, and some poetry. He died in 1926.

It would therefore appear that John Templer had obtained Stevens position working for the Borneo Company in Sarawak. William Bowell's occupation in the 1851 census is given

as an agricultural labourer. Despite this Theophilus Stevens, an agricultural labourer at 13, has somehow acquired sufficient education to become timekeeper and cashier for the Borneo Company six years later. One speculates how his natural father chose to endow his son with the name 'Theophilus' and about the relationship between the Bowells and J.C. Templer.

T.L. Stevens is mentioned in a letter sent by Arthur Crookshank, administrator of Sarawak from 1868-70, to Charles Johnson Brooke in 7 May 1869, which indicates Stevens was in an administrative post by that time.

Oliver St John, Postmaster in 1864, and later Resident of Upper Sarawak, Mr Stevens and others found the names of all 14 Hue officers, a Chinese secret society similar to the Hong Kong Triads, who were stationed at Buso, Pako, Bauh, Siniawan, and Tegora. One was missing, and his body was later exhumed showing stabbing and private parts cut off, supposed to be taken as proof to those who ordered the foul deed, believed done away with for informing against the Hue. The suspects were rounded up by St John, and Noel Denison, Postmaster to 1876).

Another gem found by Martin Laverty, was this letter to the Sarawak Gazette written in 1921 by Stevens when he was 84 (Fig. 3) entitled 'From an Old Sarawakian'

"The Editor, Sarawak Gazette

Dear Sir

This morning I received the Gazette for 1st September 1921, and have perused most of its contents.

I have to thank you most heartily for sending it to me: I have received it for a good while past and should have written sooner to thank the sender. Of course, as an old inhabitant, I am still much interested in the good Government and well-being of a Country and its people.

I was not in the Government service but in that of the B.C.L. And I arrived in Kuching on the 27th of December 1856, having worked my passage as a sailor in the Foxle.

The first years (1857 – 1861 inclusive) I was at the Bidi mines and know the locality well, with its swallows and limestone caves. Afterwards I was at Busau and then at Pinding (the mud flat) and at Tambak and Santubong where I was collecting timber for export to England. Later I was sent to the Rejang River to collect Belian for Java and China. Then back to Busau antimony mines.

After 14 years service I got a holiday to London. When I returned I was sent to the Cinnabar mines at Tegora, and there I was kept in the retort shed all day and every day, assaying and looking after the retorting of the mercury until the poisonous fumes so affected my health that I decided to get out of it. During the long voyage to London in a Sailing Ship, The Otter, I recovered my health and now I am here in NZ still kicking tho' I am four score and four years old.

I was much interested in the account of the fight of the Rainbow with the Lanun Pirates, given in this gazette. William Walters Superintendent of the Busau Mines was on board the Rainbow this trip. He went up to see what the coal at Bintulu was like, and as I was his assistant at the mines, I heard all about the fight at first hand. I could tell some, to me, interesting things of those days but your readers will hardly be interested now.

Thanking you again and wishing you all sorts of good wishes for the country and the people and hoping they will never forget what the late Rajah Sir Charles Brooke said at a Council Negri not long before his death: viz: "*Tanah itu daging darak kamu*", and to save themselves from the foreign exploiters. For he who owns the land owns those who must live on it and cultivate it and this is the worst form of slavery.

I am Dear Sir,

Your most sincerely,

T.L. Stevens

Tanah itu daging darak kamu translates as "the land is your flesh and blood" (Martin Laverty).

Theophilus Lesley Stevens after a life of adventure and peril died at the age of 89, they certainly made them tough in those days.

References:

The Brooke Trust: "a charity with a vision to explore Sarawak's unique heritage to inform, enrich and inspire". <https://brooketrust.org> or go direct to the Archive at <https://archive.brooketrust.org/DA/>

Martin-Redman, Simon (2020). Sarawak, Pirates, Population and the Post. Available at <https://www.facebook.com/sarawakspecialists>

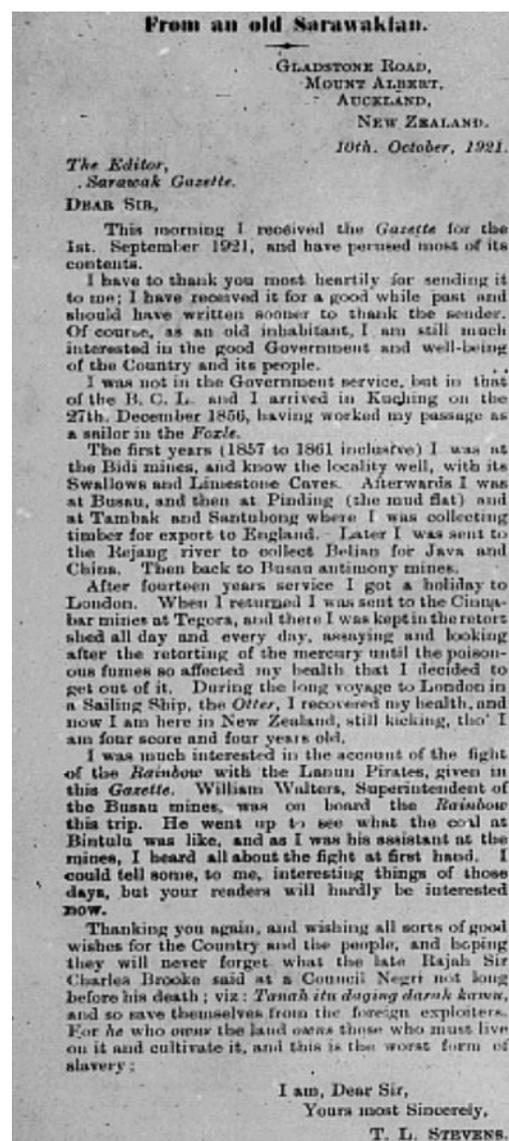
Acknowledgement:

I would like to sincerely thank Martin Laverty for mining the wonderful archives of the Brooke Trust as well as unearthing the Stevens/Bowell family entry in the GB 1851 census to find the full name and family history of Theophilus Lesley Stevens, the writer of the letter. Without his input there would have been no article.

Dr. Jon Higgins FRPS,L
14.01.2021

I would like to sincerely thank Jon Higgins for sharing this philatelic item. Scruffy as it may be, I think I am not alone in seeing an archival gem!

Martin Laverty, 15.01.2021



Letters to the Editor

Two Beaufort early dates



The 1901 1c brown adhesive above has an early date for Proud's Beaufort D3 of 21 SEP 03. Ted Proud's dates are 13.10.03-14.10.09. The reconstructed cds shows the year displaced to the left and perhaps the year plug only had 03 rather like the year 1909 date on the 10c Honey Bear, also shown above, which has only the single digit 9. However, Beaufort D3 is a lot more complicated than it seems to be. Firstly, Proud's reconstruction has the year too close to the month above. This was probably copied from the illustration in the *Sarawak Journal* v.13 p.86 which has similar characteristics. Secondly, Proud recorded a type D2 (16.8.99-21.9.01) which is not present in our Journal and nor do I have a copy. Our journal for Beaufort Type D1 spans 10 AUG 1899 to 14 OCT 9 (Peter Cockburn in *Sarawak Journal* v.39 p.71). I think it is quite likely that Proud types D2 and D3 are one and the same. His latest date for D2 was based on a cover which was Lot 1736 in the sale of his own collection (the Spink 2010 Stolz auction). The CDS on that cover is really Type D1 or a more accurately constructed D3.

Liau Fah Onn (Nottingham)

Sarawak Censored Mail 1941

After watching Jon Higgins' excellent display of WWII Censored Mail at the recent Zoom meeting I looked again at my own collection of this material and was reminded of a cover which has puzzled me for many years. The cover from the Chartered Bank, Kuching to the Bank of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand dated 16 September 1941 has the usual



small Kuching boxed Passed by Censor chop and a second boxed chop reading Passed by Customs Censor. I cannot recall having seen this chop anywhere else but it was suggested to me that it related to some form of Exchange Control which had been applied in Singapore. I have never been able to get any confirmation of this and both chops appear to use the same ink. A copy of the cover front is attached. Can any member throw any light on this matter?

Frank Rivett (Great Yarmouth)

Alec Turner Award 2020

Copy of letter from SSS Vice-President Jon Higgins to Jeremy Dickson:

Congratulations on being awarded the Alec Turner Award for the best article in the *Sarawak Journal* over the past two years. I am not at all surprised, a superb series of articles based on your normal thorough research and a lot of very nice material.

I was wondering if the post-war Labuan articles could be collected together and turned into a monograph, scattered as they are over several issues of our Journal, they might be overlooked. These days I imagine the cost of printing a small number of copies would be fairly minimal. Are there other articles concerning this post war period which might be included?

Best wishes,

Jon Higgins (Kings Lynn)

Letters to the Editor (Continued)

Early Dates for Lahat Datu



The 1909 12c blue has Proud's Lahat Datu D4 with an earlier date of 14 JAN 1910. Proud's recorded range is 22.6.10-13.8.12.



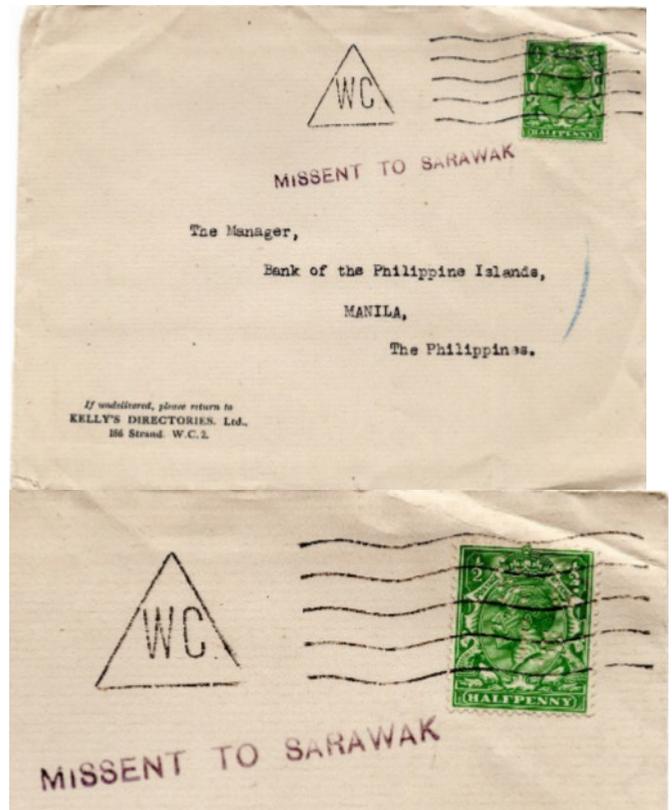
The 3c brown postal stationery card below was cancelled with Lahat Datu D2 with the date of 22 JUN 98 which makes it very likely the earliest PSC from Lahad Datu with a cds. Prior to D2 (4.1.98-1.8.00), the Silam Post Office handstamp was used in 1897. There is a backstamp from Sandakan dated 23 J 1(8)98 and also 2 adhesives carefully removed which I assumed were postage dues stuck on in Germany. The message is in German but the handwriting is difficult to decipher. In addition, we also have the T mark from Sandakan, Proud UP4 (23. 9. 98-30.4.41) which again is an earlier usage on this card.

Liau Fah Onn (Nottingham)

An unrecorded Missent cachet?

The cover shown was purchased a few months ago. It was sent by Kelly's Directories Ltd. to the Philippines but has been missent to Sarawak. There is a Kuching cancel on the reverse, the date is smudged but I think it is 14 MAY 1929. The G.B. halfpenny stamp (printed

paper rate) is perfined K L / L D which has been recorded (Gault Catalogue of G.B. Perfins) used by Kelly's Directories between 1926 - 1937. As I understand it, the triangular dumb cancel was in common use for second class mail.



Although I have several different different post war 'Missent to Kuching (Sarawak)' cachets I am not aware of any other 'Missent to Sarawak' cachets before or after the war. If you do know of any please let me know via the editor.

Jon Higgins (Kings Lynn)

Unidentified cachet on Sarawak

I have a copy of SG37 with a part Kuching cancel (shown). It has another square cornered cancel in red which I don't recognise. I wonder if any member can enlighten me as to what it is.



May I also congratulate you on the 'Zoom' display you gave. As a 'Sarawak only' collector I still found it very interesting.

Peter Halmkin (Dawlish)

Letters to the Editor (Continued)

Labuan 1879 issue Cancelled and Specimen

Jon Higgins to Malcolm Gascoyne

I have Specimens of the 1879 issue in pairs signed and dated 1 week before the Crown Agents were invoiced. Only one sheet of 10 survived and it was split later into 2 pairs block of 4 and two singles - so presumably they were taken at the time of printing and placed into the De La Rue archive as a record. .

The Cancelled stamps are more difficult to understand and they are also ex De La Rue archives. The set of four stamps are printed on the correct sideways CA over Crown paper and they are believed to be unique. Strangely the 2c is in the colour of the second issue which was printed on Crown CC paper.

What was their purpose?

Jon Higgins (Kings Lynn)

Response from Malcolm Gascoyne

There are a number of possible reasons why these overprints were used.

Specimen was, as we all know, overprinted onto stamps that a colony or country requested De La Rue to send to the UPU. Not all stamps were so requested, for example Sarawak's 1888 issue, as they were not a UPU member at that time. Specimen was also used internally to invalidate stamps retained for other purposes, or supplied to institutions for other purposes. Hence the plethora of revenue stamps with Specimen overprints.

What is not totally clear is why De La Rue used "Cancelled" overprints as well. These are prevalent on Indian stamps, particularly the revenues. I have a set of the 1866 Indian Special Adhesives overprinted "Cancelled". Only 12 sets were produced, 6 retained by De La Rue and 6 sent to the Inland Revenue. There are also blocks of four similarly overprinted from the De La Rue reference colour sheet. This suggests that this was for reference purposes. However, when the Joint Committee on Postage Stamps was supplied with books containing reference

stamps they were all overprinted Specimen. It could be that originally Cancelled was for reference purposes for colour, but later the usage became random.

Malcolm Gascoyne (High Wycombe)

Silam Cancellation in Red



This red Silam cancellation on NB SG 25 was sold on eBay recently for US\$128. It is a good partial strike. The red variety is less common than the blue.

According to Proud, they were used from 1892 before reverting to blue ink again when the post office was moved to Lahad Datu in 1896/97.

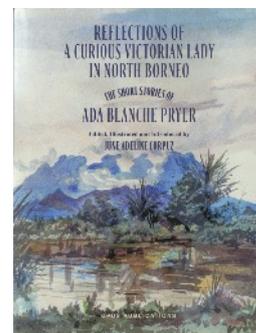
Liau Fah Onn (Nottingham)

New Books from Opus Publications

There are 2 new publications from Opus in Sabah which may be of interest to collectors.

They are:

1. Reflections of a Curious Victorian Lady in North Borneo. This is about Ada, the wife of the founder of Sandakan, William Pryer.



2. Sabah Society Journal volume 37. It has an article about the early history of Sandakan Bay and German Town by me and Rosalie Corpuz.

Enquiries can be directed to me at fahonnliau@gmail.com

Liau Fah Onn (Nottingham)

Colour Variations in the 1907 and 1908 Issues of Brunei

Claire Scott, FRPSL

Willi Ott's recent *Sarawak Journal* article about the \$1 carmine (Ott 2020) prompted me to contact him regarding his article in which he wrote about the SG 23 1 cent shade of olive green and black.

Last year, when stamp fairs were not a distant memory, I was at Swinpex browsing dealers' stocks when I came across a mint set of the 1907 issue. When you have collected a stamp for as long as I have the correct colour is obvious, which makes anomalies stand out. In this group two stamps shouted at me. The 1 cent was olive green, as Willi had described, and the 4 cents was almost brown not mauve. I bought them and moved to another dealer where I was offered SG 37, whose frame is not scarlet, and also SG 46 \$1, whose paper is a bright blue and the red a much deeper shade. Finally, at a third dealer I found a 1 cent vignette I, watermark Multiple Crown CA with a grey frame and a green vignette. A very successful morning.

All of these stamps are vignette I with the correct watermarked paper supplied by Crown Agents. In talking to Ivor Moore about these stamps Ivor confirmed that he had seen the 1 cent olive green. I sent scans of these stamps to Willi who had not seen the other colours.

The De La Rue ink recipes for the 1907 and the 1908 issues unfortunately do not have an illustrative stamp next to the recipe as they do for some countries. De La Rue's reputation at this time was such that one would expect the colours to be correctly mixed.

1. Appendix Sheet A

The 1907 issue was printed on Multiple Crown CA paper in sheets of 60. Two Appendix sheets were provided by De La Rue for the choice of the colour scheme, dated 14th September 1906 and signed off on the 21st September 1906. All the stamps were printed using the 1c frame on unwatermarked paper and were guillotined. The proposed denomination was written in manuscript next to the stamp. At some point this Appendix Sheet was cut into two, however because the sheet was filed and not exposed to light, the colours are very fresh (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Appendix Sheet A

2. 1 Cent Grey-Black and Pale Green Vignette Plate I (SG 23)

The ink recipe for the 1 cent was: -

Centre: Black

Border: 1 lb Dry Green G

9 lbs Dry White Lead

2 lbs 8 ozs BT (Burnt) Oil No 1

Requisitions:

14th November 1906, Requisition No 46/06, 609 sheets of 1 cent, making 36,540 stamps plus 732 overprinted Specimen.

<i>Altered</i>	<i>lbs oz</i>	2829	<i>Brunei 1 Cent</i>	<i>2 Color</i>
			<i>Centre</i>	<i>Black & Green</i>
			<i>Black (Pure)</i>	
			<i>in June 1908 both workings as below</i>	
			<i>March</i>	
			<i>Border</i>	
			<i>dry Green G</i>	
			<i>White Lead</i>	
<i>1</i>			<i>1st lot No 1</i>	
<i>9</i>				
<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>			<i>1711</i>
				<i>Sept 1906</i>

Figure 2: Manuscript entry for No 2829 Brunei 1 cent of September 1906



Figure 3: 1 cent grey-black and pale green and the 1 cent black and olive-green for comparison.

29th May 1907, Requisition No 33/07. 36,000 stamps. 'Delivery to your inspector in six weeks'.

23rd July 1907, Requisition No 33/07, 614 sheets, 36,840 stamps.

18th February 1908, telegram from Crown Agents to De La Rue. 'No 12/08 1c should be all green'.

19th February 1908, Requisition No 12/08, 50,000 1 cent all green.

There were three printings of the 1c in two colours and each printing was for roughly 36,000 stamps. The sheets of stamps sent out to Brunei

		2832	<i>Brunei 4 Cents Postage</i>	<i>2 Color</i>
			<i>Centre</i>	<i>Black & Violet</i>
			<i>Black</i>	
			<i>Border</i>	
<i>8</i>			<i>Permanent Violet 115^B G₄</i>	
<i>8</i>			<i>White Lead</i>	
<i>7</i>			<i>Burnt Oil No 1</i>	
				<i>1714</i>
				<i>1906</i>

Figure 4: Manuscript entry No 2832 Brunei 4 cents Postage 1906

were numbered on the selvage and those kept by the Crown Agents for sale were not numbered. Figures 2 and 3.

3. 4 Cents Grey-Black and Mauve Vignette Plate I (SG 26)

The ink recipe for the 4 cents was: -

Centre: Black

Border: 8oz Permanent Violet 115B Dry

8 oz White Lead

7oz Burnt Oil No 1

Requisitions:

14th November 1906, Requisition No 46/06, 401 sheets 4 cents, making 24,060 stamps plus 732 Specimens.

15th April 1908, Requisition No 12/08, 174 sheets 10,440 stamps.

3rd August 1911 De La Rue to Crown Agents '100,000 of each of 1c, 2c, 3c, 4c,



Figure 5: 4 cents grey-black and mauve and the 4 cents grey-black and brown.

We could deliver the two-colour stamps to your inspector in two months and commence the deliveries from the single colour plates in three months...'

This marked the change of the 4 cents from two-colours to one and to Vignette Plate II. There were two printings of the 4 cents from 1906 to 1908 of nearly 35,000 stamps, some of which were not sent to Brunei but held by the Crown Agents. (Figures 4 and 5).

4. Appendix Sheet B, 14th September 1906

The colours proposed on this Appendix Sheet were not accepted for the 1907 Requisition 46/06 issue, however the colours of the top three stamps were used. (Figure 6)

The 1 cent green in Requisition No 12/08. The 1 cent scarlet became the 3 cents scarlet in Requisition No 12/08.

The 1 cent blue became the 8 cents blue and indigo-blue in Requisition 12/08.

5. 3 Cents Scarlet Vignette Plate I (SG 37)

The colour of the 3 cents was changed to red and the change was annotated in the recipe book.

'Altered. This colour adopted for 3 Cents 27.2.08'

The ink recipe for the 3 cents was: -
3½ oz Vermilion Ink.



Figure 6: Appendix sheet B top three stamps.



Figure 8: 3 cents scarlet and the 3c dark red and red.

The changes to the colour were introduced to come in line with the UPU colour scheme. (Figures 7 and 8).

Requisitions:

21st February 1908, Requisition No 12/08
 'CA-DLR Our memo of 18th inst. The 3c stamp should be printed in all red...'

15th April 1908, Requisition No 12/08, 167 sheets, 10,020 stamps and 449 Specimens.

5th August 1908, Requisition No 54/08, 331 sheets, 19,860 stamps.

19th July 1911, CA-DLR, Requisition No 73/11, 'Copy of telegram, Brunei stamps, send a.s.a.p. 100,000 3c old pattern'

21st July DLR-CA, 'Delivery to your inspector in six weeks from receiving final instructions. If the stamps are printed in the old colour it will conflict with the existing 2c.'

2nd August 1911. '...the 3c stamp ordered under Requisition No 73/11 will have to be printed from the existing plate.'

2nd August 1911, CA-DLR, 'Your memo of 21 July. We have received the following telegram from Brunei High Commissioner. In answer to your telegram of 25 July, 3c Brunei Postage & Revenue stamps should be coloured same as Straits Settlements stamps.'

Altered		2830	Brunei 2 Cents	2 Color
This Color adopted for 3 Cents 27.2.08			Centre Black	Black & Red
	3 1/2		border Vermilion Ink	17/12
	1 1/2		inadder Lake "	1906
Altered		2831	Brunei 3 Cents	2 Color
			Centre Black	Black & Red brown
			border	
			Imitation Prusburg brown	17/12
			2793 Ink	1906

Figure 7: Manuscript entry No 2830 and 2831 with the alterations in red ink

3rd August 1911, DLR-CA, '100,000 of each of the 1c,2c,3c,..... We could deliver the two colour stamps to your inspector in two months and commence the deliveries from the single colour plates in three months and complete the order in four-five months.'

26th September 1911, Requisition No 73/11, 1,747 sheets, 104,820 stamps.

10th January 1912, Requisition No 78/11, 3c Vignette Plate II, new working duty plates.

6. \$1 Black and Red on Blue SG46



Figure 9: \$1 black and red on blue paper and the \$1 grey/black and dull red.

The ink recipe for the \$1 was: -

Centre: Vermilion Ink

Border: 1 lb Dry white Lead

3 ½ oz Dry Milori Blue

1 ½ oz Dry 9 of Black

10 ½ oz Burnt Oil No 1

23rd December 1910, '(sheets of C.A. Postage "blue" paper, 16 ¼ x 15 ¼)'

The \$1 was printed on blue paper which was very different from the other denominations of this period (Figures 9 and 10).

3rd August DLR-CA, 100,000 of each of 1c.....\$1. We could deliver the two-colour stamps to your inspector in two months....'

18th October 1912, Requisition No 78/11, \$1, 1,729 sheets, making 103,740 stamps plus 404 Specimens.

28th January 1931, Requisition No 99, 'Decreasing set of eight printing plates from 60 to 50 set'. 201 sheets \$1, 10,050 stamps plus 431 Specimens.

Requisition No 99 also saw the change in watermark to Script CA.

Requisition No 78/11 is the only printing of the \$1 on Crown CA watermarked paper.

Conclusion

I have found two examples of the 1 cent olive green and black, Willi Ott has an example and Ivor has seen an example. The other three discussed above are the only ones I have found and I have not seen any on cover so far.

The Crown Agents supplied the watermarked paper to De La Rue in the quantity necessary for the order. There was excessive spoilage when printing the \$5 and \$25 and they had to despatch more paper for the order to be completed, which was very unusual, and De La Rue had to account for every sheet which they received. The idea that these stamps are bogus can, I believe, be refuted by the fact that they were printed on CA watermarked paper and in

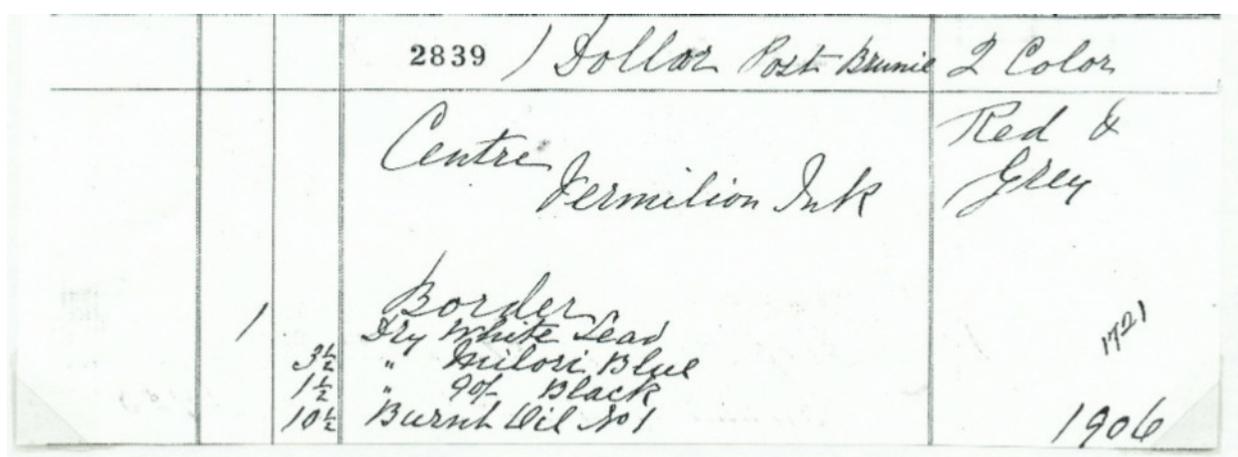


Figure 10: Manuscript entry for No 2839 Brunei \$1 of October 1912

the example of the \$1 can be plated as position 33 on the sheet.

The question remains, why have so few been found.

All collectors of this stamp will have shades in their collection; however, this group are a little more than a shade. The stamps that were sent out to Brunei commonly have gum toning due to the climate and the high humidity whereas those retained by the Crown Agents did not suffer from this problem. The gum on the 3 cents shows a colour change with a degree of brown indicating that it has experienced humidity.

The stamp that provokes even more questions is the 1 cent grey and green. (Figure 11)

There are no Brunei stamps of this design with a grey frame and coloured vignette. This example is printed on Crown CA paper, Perf 14. It has been suggested to me that perhaps it is a proof, but as far as I am aware proofs were not usually printed on expensive watermarked paper or perforated.

I was taught by my father a long time ago that when you had a query and were unable to solve it, the best solution was to publish an article or monograph about it, then other people



Figure 11: 1 cent grey and green.

with information would come forward and help to provide the answers. I look forward to hearing from you.

All illustrations are from my collection.

The information about the stamp orders supplied by De La Rue are from the De La Rue Day Books at the National Archive, Kew.

Reference:

1. Ott, Willi (2020). Brunei \$1 Black and Scarlet (SG90) vs. Black and Carmine (CW12a). *Sarawak Journal* v.73 no.3 pp.67-71.

The Sarawak 1895 Issue – Was It Really a Mistake?

Graham Woodhouse



De La Rue 1888-1897 Perkins, Bacon 1895

asking them to send 1000 sheets (say 60,000 stamps) at one cent. Charles Pearce, the Treasurer appears to have departed on leave, which in those days was a minimum of 3 months, and almost as he was walking

Forrester-Wood sets the position out quite clearly, saying that “on January 1st 1895 a new issue of four values engraved by Messrs Perkins Bacon was released. For many years past all the Sarawak stamps had been produced by De La Rue. The change to a different firm of printers gave rise to interest among philatelists until it was established that the order was placed in error by the Acting Treasurer during the temporary absence of the Treasurer from the country.”

Various letters are cited to explain the position. First a letter to Perkins Bacon of 1st March 1894

out of the door told his assistant Reginald Awdry to order more stamps. On his return, discovering what had happened, Pearce immediately wrote to Perkins Bacon stating that "The order for stamps as per the Acting Treasurers letter of 1st March, was sent in error and I have to apologise for the same."

However Perkins Bacon, whether or not they realised that it looked like an error, had seized the opportunity and incurred considerable costs, so it was agreed that the order could stand. But what was finally ordered consisted of quantities of 2, 4, 6 and 8 cents stamps.

It seems to be generally agreed that Reginald Awdry made a mistake in placing the order. Res ipsa loquitur (the facts speak for themselves, as they say in the law courts. Quod erat demonstrandum, as is said in Rome, or by smug mathematicians proving their theories).

Understandable, it is argued, because Perkins Bacon already printed all the Sarawak banknotes and Awdry was used to dealing with them.

This explanation seems to me to be too facile, too obvious, almost too easy to apportion blame. Does it take account of all the facts? Consider these:

1. Awdry was Acting Treasurer, but he was also Postmaster General. Is it likely that he of all people would not know which firm normally printed the stamps?

2. The order to Perkins Bacon was countersigned by the Rajah, a man known for his meticulous attention to detail. Did he really not Notice?

3. In 1892, a couple of years beforehand, the Rajah had written to Perkins Bacon about the portrait of himself on the banknotes. He enclosed

a new portrait which he "hoped they would be able to use in future" - a Royal Command! The portrait on the banknotes by 1894 was the same one, in all detail, that was used on the new stamps. To the outside observer it is a much more impressive likeness than the one used by de la Rue on previous stamps. So it appears that the Rajah might well have wanted to see a better likeness on the stamps than de la Rue had available, and would therefore favour Perkins Bacon.

4. When the Treasurer, Pearce, returned from leave he immediately wrote to Perkins Bacon countermanning the order sent by Awdry (and the Rajah?). There is no suggestion that he consulted the Rajah about this. Coincidentally, by this time there was a need for a supply of stamps not of the original 1 cent denomination, but of others. At this point the Rajah was clearly consulted. Would he decree that de la Rue should print them = one assumes that Pearce favoured this, or would he plump for Perkins Bacon? The decision was that de la Rue should print the odd numbers and Perkins Bacon the even numbers. Hence the 1895 issue consists of 2,4,6 and 8 cents. De la Rue continued with the 1 cent, 5 cents and the higher denominations. The Rajah's Judgment of Solomon.

Make your own mind up. I don't wish to prejudice you (actually I do). It seems to me that there is a good case to argue that Awdry did not make a mistake, I see the hand of the Rajah himself behind all this. After all, he achieved a much more dignified representation of himself than had previously adorned Sarawak covers.

Much of the above information, in so far as it is factual rather than conjecture, was obtained from the Perkins Bacon records held by the Royal Philatelic Society, London, who were most helpful in allowing me unfettered access to the original correspondence.

Corona Virus in East Malaysia

Sabah is still a hot spot for COVID-19 cases in East Malaysia. On February 7th there 13,206 people in quarantine, and the total number of confirmed cases was 50,374 with 342 deaths and 160 new cases. Kota Kinabalu, Tawau, Sandakan and Lahad Datu accounted for 30,000 cases. For the whole of Malaysia the total number of cases was 242,452 with 872 deaths. Sarawak has had 5,676 cases, 50 deaths and 219 new cases. The towns most affected are Sibul, Kuching and Miri, with Kapit with the highest increase on Feb 7th with 78 new cases. Source is <http://covid-19.moh.gov.my/terkini>

A variant of the North Borneo 1883 50c error

Liau Fah Onn

It is thought that the first high value stamps for North Borneo which consisted of 50c and \$1 designs were issued towards the end of 1883. They were printed in sheets of 50. Our handbook and the SG catalogue stated that stamp 42 or R 5/2 has the inverted "L" for the first "F" in "FIFTY" error. This was due to the lower horizontal arm of "F" been damaged and broken off in the printing plate. This is also the same mechanism by which the 1889 \$10 "DOLLAPS" variety was derived.



Figure 1: Damaged F varieties

Looking through my spares recently, I was very surprised to find a CTO 50c stamp with both horizontal arms of "F" missing (Figure 1). For comparison, I also have the mint copy of this error which was acquired from the Dr Majeed's sale a couple of years back. By looking at the flaws common to both, I can ascertain that they originated from the same position on the sheet. There is only a partial plating list known (Heritage) in which the error was identified at stamp 46 or R5/6 and he also identified 2 constant flaws at this position. These are illustrated here together with other flaws that I have found to be in common on these 2 stamps. So far, there has been no evidence to support the presence of this error at position 42. The first time that this flaw and its position was mentioned in our Journal was in 1959 (Forrester-Wood). It was based on observations of the Napier collection.

According to Heritage (1983), the flaws common to both stamps are (Figure 2):

1. White dot between "5" and "0" in "50" on upper left.
2. Dark patch on left forearm holding flagpole.

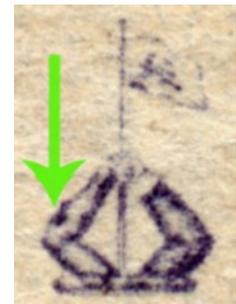
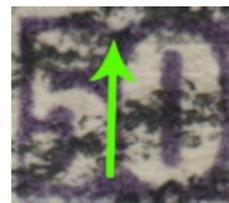


Figure 2: Dot above 50 and Dark patch on arm varieties

New findings

3. White dot breaking the outer border of "0" of upper right "50" at lower aspect.
4. White dot on lowest horizontal arm of "E" in "CENTS".
5. White dot on lower curve of "S" in "CENTS".
6. White dot next to "H" near the midline of stamp.

These flaws (shown in Figure 3) are more pronounced in the CTO stamp implying progressive damage and perhaps a later printing from the single transfer known. These stamps were more likely to be intended for fiscal usage. Used stamps as well as CTOs are listed, but a postal CDS is more likely to be from cancellation per favour rather than proper usage, bearing in mind date cancellers were not applied on stamps until around 1892. This was intermittent but by the time of the 1894 pictorial issue, it became a more regular feature. This is from looking at NB covers.

Prior to that, bar cancels were used to obliterate the stamp to prevent fraudulent use.



Figure 3: The new flaws, 3-6

Therefore, some of these stamps with bar cancellations could well have gone through proper postal usage. I have seen one example with a 19 bar cancellation which was not utilised in CTOs. A partial 13 or 14 bar cancel would be difficult to assess. My one copy with proper usage has a faint manuscript date of 31 3 87, albeit fiscal use and I only paid 99p for it on eBay.

With regard to the design, somehow they had chosen to use gibberish in place of the Chinese characters on the right side, a practice that they continued for all subsequent 50c issues under Blades, East and Blades. On the other hand, the \$1

stamp has proper Chinese script. Notable forgeries of both these 1883 50c and \$1 stamps were made by Fournier and usually have the forged Sandakan cancel 23 JUN 1886. They are easy to differentiate as toned paper was used. And so far as the design is concerned, the lines and outline are quite hard in texture and the animal within the shield bears no resemblance to a lion. This variant to the inverse "L" error is yet another new finding and whoever said that the last word in philately is never written is quite right.

References:

Shipman, L H (1976). *The Stamps and Postal History of North Borneo* Part 1. Sarawak Specialists' Society. pp. 38-40.

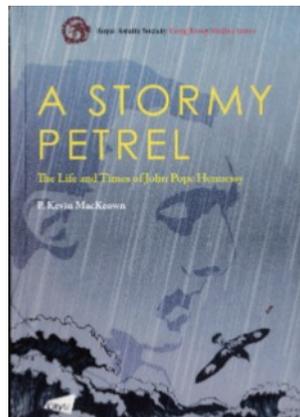
Heritage, Noel (1983). North Borneo 1883 50c SG 4. *Sarawak Journal* v.36 pp.74-77

Forrester-Wood, W R (1959). Casual comments on the stamps of North Borneo II. *Sarawak Journal* v.12 p.39

The Borneo Bookworm

A Stormy Petrel: the life and times of John Pope Hennessy / P.Kevin MacKeown. Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, 2020. 473pp.

Pope Hennessy was the Governor of Labuan from 1867 to 1871 and we owe much of our knowledge of the early postal services in Labuan to Pope Hennessy. In 1869 the Labuan Postmaster was suspended from duty and charged with mismanagement of the accounts. The evidence at the trial provided us with much information about the postal system on the island in the 1860s (Price 1993).



Irish born Pope Hennessy had a varied career, studied medicine and law at Queen's College, Cork. He didn't practice either profession but became a Tory MP in the British parliament in his 20s. He lost the seat through lack of attention to his electorate after being seen as a

future senior member of the Tories. Sent to Labuan to move him out of the limelight and away from two potential paternity suits, he went on to be the Governor of Sierra Leone and West Africa, the Bahamas, Barbados, Hong Kong and Mauritius. Most of these moves were made because he was a troublemaker, upsetting the balance between officials, settlers and local people in most of these places. He was a patriotic Irishman and very supportive of the Catholic Church and Home Rule. His wife, the daughter of Hugh Low, was born in Labuan. They owned an offshore island near Labuan and visited on occasions especially when he was residing in Hong Kong. About 10% of the book is about Labuan but many of his experiences there affected his later view of the world. Much of what we know about Pope Hennessy is from the biography written by his grandson, *Verandah*. This book, written by a former academic at the University of Hong Kong, provides a different perspective of the man, and it is well worth reading.

Reference:

Price, R (1993). Extracts from the Colonial Office Records on Labuan. *Sarawak Journal* v.46 nos. 2-3.

Ray Price

Some eBay Sales



1897 Labuan reply half of 3c postcard sent to Deli in Sumatra via Singapore and Penang. Has Paquebot and NI Postagent markings. Sold for US\$449.44 on 35 bids. Seller is vanbeethoven2000.

A scruffy 1917 cover from Labuan to New Zealand (Keasberry correspondence) brought US\$250 on 32 bids. An 1898 cover from Labuan to Singapore per S.S. Hecuba with the 10c on \$1 reached US\$136.90 on 11 bids, seller was capri-1162.



The 4c Straits Settlements on 16c Labuan Crown with the overprint in red and black sold for US\$150. Seller was a-



North Borneo 1901 10c Bear SG134 pair CDS Mempakul. £58 on 5 bids

choice stamps of Setapak in Malaysia.



Postal History, Covers, Postcards and Stationery from Sarawak, Malaya, Borneo and Asia



Indian Prisoner of War card sent via Tokyo, but returned to the sender as unknown



Reuten's Coloured Postcard no.3, Government Offices Kuching, Stamp on the view side

David Wrigley
The Silk APT 311/12 No.30
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Thailand

Telephone: [+66 2 270 5423](tel:+6622705423)
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Mobile: [+66 81 633 1100](tel:+66816331100)
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Web site: <https://www.davidwrigleypostalhistory.com/>

Japanese Occupation Picture Postcard, Kuching to Serian, 1943

by Tom Anderson

I enjoy reading about the Japanese Occupation of Sarawak and North Borneo and decided to dip my toe into JapOcc philately when I successfully bid on a fine picture postcard in the March 2020 SSS auction (Figure 1). Its caption is “The Reservoir Amoy”, accompanied by Chinese text that translates as “Xiamen Drinking Water Reservoir (do not reprint)”. Xiamen is a port city within Fujian Province in Southeast China that used to be known as Amoy by foreigners. The card is attractively printed in relief halftone and has survived well given that it is rather flimsy.

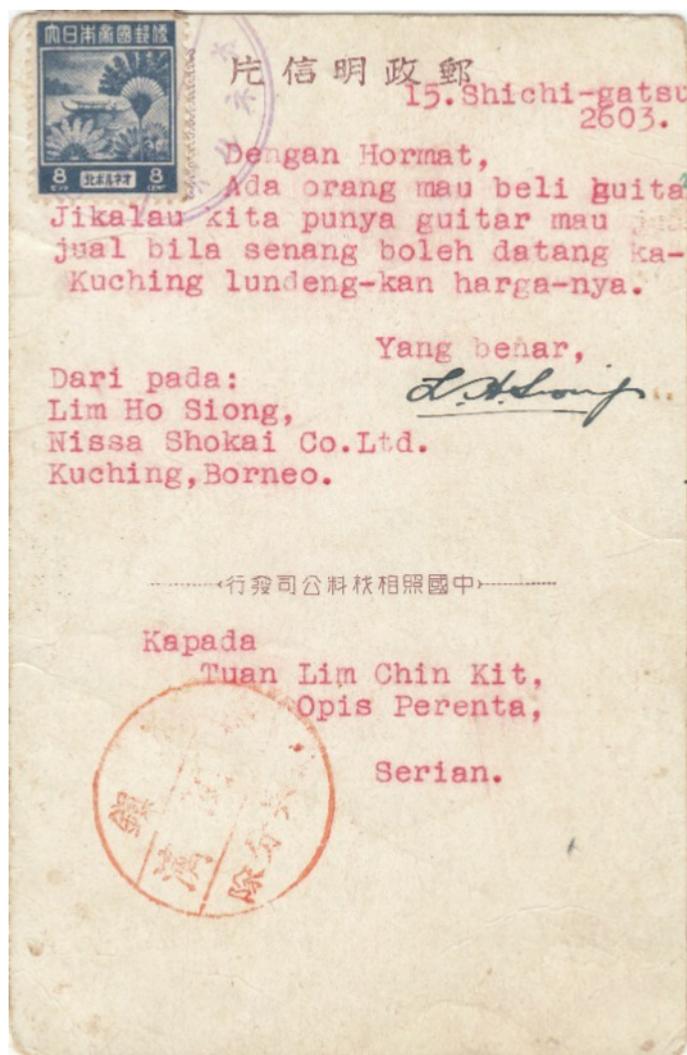


Figure 1. Japanese Occupation postcard sent from Kuching to Serian, 15 July 1943.

The verso displays Chinese text at the top which translates simply as “postcard”, with further Chinese text in the centre, “Published by the Chinese Photography Material Company”. It was sent internally within Sarawak, from Kuching to Serian, paying postage using a single 8c stamp of the Emperor Hirohito’s birthday issue which shows a perahu and travellers’ palm trees (Dant, 1950; Forrester-Wood, 1963). The Kuching postmark is unclear although the card is hand dated in Japanese “15 Shichi-gatsu 2603” which corresponds to 15 July 1943 (2603 is the Japanese imperial year dating from the enthronement of Emperor Jimmu in 660 BC). The card displays an attractive vermilion

Japanese censor chop. I have seen a similar card (Tsuchiya, 2008, p. 72) with what appears to be the same censor marking, sent 29 June 1943 from Kuching to Jitogata in the Shizuoka District, Japan. It was written in Japanese and paid only 4c postage, presumably a favourable rate for mail from native Japanese travelling to the Japanese homeland.

The postcard shown here was sent by Lim Ho Siong to Lim Chin Kit, who were evidently two Malaysian Chinese. Their surname Lim is a dialect equivalent of the Mandarin Lin as used in mainland China and the two of them were likely descended from Chinese settlers that arrived in Sarawak during the 1870s, at which



Although some business activity continued, there was an exodus of Chinese from Kuching to the surrounding rural villages and coastal areas, and many shops closed (Lim, 2005). Those that stayed on needed to make money at any opportunity. Hence the message on the card (translated): “With respect, there is someone who wants to buy a guitar. If we want to sell our guitar, come to Kuching when you are free and we can negotiate a price. Sincerely ...”. Lim Ho Siong, who wrote the message, was apparently in the employ of the Japanese company Nissa Shokai Ltd. Founded in the early 20th century, this was the only Japanese trading firm in Brooke Sarawak. It catered for the small Japanese community, which numbered only 155 in 1939, by importing and selling goods, as well as being affiliated to a Japanese rubber plantation at Samarahan (Ooi, 1999, 2011). Attempts were made to cultivate rice and pineapples, but these failed to progress beyond the experimental stage. Only a small number of Japanese were living in Kuching, where Nissa Shokai had its office at no. 11 India Street (Reece, 1998), and so the company complemented their staff with foreign workers. One wonders whether Lim Ho Siong and Lim Chin Kit ever managed to sell their guitar.

time Charles Brooke was inviting Chinese pioneers to work on pepper and gambier plantations (Chew, 1990). Many of the settlers were Teochews and Hakkas from southeast China, including Fujian province, and so it is unsurprising that the postcard shows an image from that area. While all Europeans were interned by the Japanese during the occupation of Sarawak, most Chinese continued to go about their business, albeit in an air of covert suspicion and mistrust (Ooi, 1999). Resentment was rife given that many of the Malay police and civil servants kept their positions. Everyone was instructed to learn Japanese language and culture and it may be for this reason, as a token act to demonstrate loyalty, that the card is dated in Japanese. Malay continued to be used, especially for government business (Reece, 1998), and the card’s message in this language.

As far as possible, the Japanese invaders aimed to maintain cooperation within the local community, while aiming for self-sufficiency in food and industrial development (Reece, 1998).

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank Wong Keng Hoo and Masuyo Coward for their help and advice in writing this article.

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Members' News and Activities

Zoom Meetings

With the ongoing lockdowns in the UK, the Sarawak Specialists' Society is presenting a series of displays on topics of interest using Zoom software. Most of these displays are being held at 11am UK time to enable members in Borneo and Australasia to take part.

March 9th: De La Rue and the Stamps of Sarawak (Malcolm Gascoyne)

April 13th British North Borneo Company Numismatics. (Mike Roberts)

Zoom links are available on the SSS web site <http://www.britborneostamps.org.uk/> on the Events page. Earlier presentations, listed below, are available on Facebook at :

www.facebook.com/sarawakspecialists.

Sarawak Censored mail 1939 - 1941. (Jon Higgins, 21 November 2020)

Labuan, the 8 cent Queens. (Ray Price, 24 November 2020)

Pirates, Population and Posts (Simon Martin-Redman, 8 December 2020). Simon also presented this display to the Royal Philatelic Society London on 26 November 2020.

Labuan 1894 - 1906. (Jon Higgins, 16 December 2020)

North Borneo Postal History of KGVI. (Peter Cockburn, 5 January 2021)

Forces in Borneo. (Tom Anderson, 9 February 2021)

Membership News

Ivor Moore

Last issue's report that Ivor was looking to retire and was seeking a successor has proved premature. He had been having some problems with his eyesight but the treatment he is having is proving successful and he intends to continue.

Alec Turner Award

Jeremy Dickson is the well deserved recipient of this year's Alec Turner Award for his series of articles on the post-war mail services in Labuan.

Sarawak Registration Cachets 1874 - 2000

Preparation of a Second Edition is underway. Members with additions or corrections to the 1st edition are requested to send details to Jon Higgins or Roger Johnson.

William Wells

Our long-term member William Wells died on February 4th 2021. He joined the Society in 1963 and was member no. 161, and was our third longest serving member.

Simon and Claire Martin-Redman

Simon and his wife Claire have now completely recovered from their Corona virus infection. Society members wish them both well and hope to hear that they have not suffered any of the complications which affect some victims.

Exhibition Results

Australian Virtual One-Frame Exhibition (AusVipex) October - November 2020

Ling, Chung, Frame H6. Japanese Occupation of British Borneo 1942-45 87 Gold

Ling, Chung, Frame H7. Liberation of Occupied British Borneo June-October 1945 86 Gold

Howard, James, Frame 26. Civil Censorship of Brunei Mail 1939-42 82 Large Vermeil

The exhibits can be viewed on the Exhibition website at <https://www.ausvipex2020.com.au/>

Brunei Darussalam. Anniversary of the Fire and Rescue Department.

Willi Ott



On 20 October 2020 the Postal Services Department of Brunei Darussalam issued a series of stamps in se-tenant pairs of 10 sen and 20 sen to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Fire & Rescue Department of the State. The stamps depict four fire fighting vehicles, on the 20 sen two water tender ladders and on the 10 sen a rescue tender and a turntable ladder. They were designed by Hj Malik Hijrahuddin bin Pg Hj Tengah of the Fire and Rescue Department. The low denominations are surprising. They are only suitable for letters up to 20 grams within Brunei (20s) and to Malaysia / Singapore (30s), not for international mail.

The stamps were printed in offset lithography by Southern Colour Print, New Zealand on Nova Stamp Paper 105 gsm and sold in counter sheetlets consisting of 12 horizontally se-tenant pairs of 20s and 10s values as shown by the image of a block of four. The top part of the sheet contains a header inscribed (in capital letters) "Thematic stamps in conjunction with / the 60th anniversary of the / Fire and Rescue Department / (20 October 2020)."

The stamp size is 40 x 30 mm and the perforation is comb 13 $\frac{3}{4}$, not 13 as indicated in the first-day-cover leaflet. In contrast to previous issues from Southern Colour Print, there is no fluorescent security device (the Brunei PTT logo) incorporated in the design. Instead, the printing paper is phosphorized and has a strong afterglow after exposure to UV light.

The sheet numbers are printed on the bottom right selvedge and range from 00001 to 10500. This would suggest that a total of 126,000 each of 10s and 20s stamps were issued.

The cylinder numbers are possibly of some philatelic interest. They are printed on the top left and bottom right sheet margins in four colours, reading from top to bottom: yellow - magenta - cyan - black. The same sequence applies to the traffic lights on the bottom left and on the top right corners of the sheets. Images of cylinder numbers seen (all x 4) are 1A, 1B and 1E. Most likely, 1C, 1D and 1F also exist. Hence it is almost certain that the stamps were produced in larger sheets (printer's sheets) containing six smaller sheets (the counter sheets) numbered 1A to 1F. The printer's sheets or parts thereof, if uncut, could contain interesting gutter pairs connecting adjacent counter sheets.

Labuan 1892 Provisionals: Two Sheets, Two Covers and a Mystery

Jon Higgins

Labuan Government Notifications No. 7 of the 13 December 1892 and No. 10 of the 29 December announced that, due to a shortage of stamps, 1300 of the current 40 cents stamps and 1000 of the current 16 cents stamps were to be surcharged Two Cents and Six Cents respectively. Sheets of ten were overprinted in one operation in coarse uneven type which allows individual stamps to be plated (Price 1991). To assist alignment it is probable that the left and right sheet margins were removed before the sheets were put to the press.

The Sheets:



Fig. 1: Sheet of 10 of the Two Cents on 40 cents



Fig. 2: Sheet of 10 of the Six Cents on 16 cents

Covers:

Either the local agents of U.K. dealers or possibly the Postmaster himself quickly prepared covers franked with the

provisional stamps including a number of almost identical registered covers franked with the Two Cents to H.J. Wildsmith, Camden Road, London.

Registered cover (registration number absent) from Labuan to H.J. Wildsmith, London correctly franked at 12c with six copies of the provisional Two Cents on 40 cents (6c per ½ oz overseas letter rate + 6c registration). The CDS is 12 JA 1893, (Figure 3)

The cover bears two cachets: a large non serif 'R' in oval (Proud R8) recorded used since 1885 and an oval 'REGISTERED' over 'No ___' (Proud R2), the earliest recorded use. R2 was probably introduced in early January 1883 when a growing number of multiple registered mailings created a difficulty for the PO in distinguishing one from the other. The absence of a registration file number suggests that it had only recently entered use and the postal clerk didn't fully understand how registered mail should be handled. By early February a sequential registration number was being correctly entered.

Registered cover (registration No. 46) from Labuan to Singapore correctly franked at 12c with a pair of the Six Cents. The CDS is 4 FE 1893, (Figure 4)

Invariably both cachets are applied to registered covers between 1893 and 1903. Perhaps the 'R' was



Figure 3: Registered cover from Labuan to HJ Wildsmith, London, correctly franked at 12c, with 6 copies of the 2c on 40c. (6c per ½ ounce overseas rate, 6c registration). CDS 12 JA 1893.



Figure 4: Registered cover (Registration No. 46) from Labuan to Singapore correctly franked at 12c with a pair of the Six Cents CDS. 4 FE 1893.

struck when the mailing was received and R2 when it was recorded as a registered item.

The Mystery Item

Last year I acquired the item shown as Figure 5. I have not been able to find any reference to it and would be most grateful for any

information concerning its status and when and where it might have been produced.

A possible proof in red of the registration cachet, Proud R2, on thin laid paper. Inscribed in manuscript: *J.Vo(?)*. 582 /1880 A and *Labuan*. '*J.Vo.*' (or *No?*) might refer to *Journal Number* and is therefore possibly an accountancy entry No.

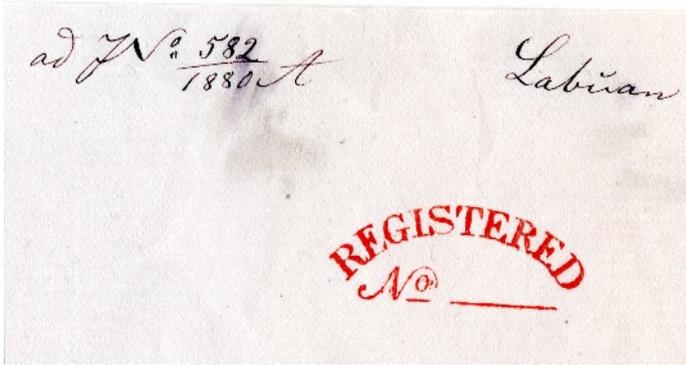


Figure 5: Possible proof of the Registered cachet.



Figure 6: North Borneo Coat of Arms on the back flap of the envelope.

582 in 1880 which suggests that the hand stamp was prepared in 1880 shortly after the supply of the first Labuan stamps. If so, why was it not put into use until twelve years later? It may have been mislaid or not deemed necessary as the volume of registered mail handled by the Labuan Post Office was probably very small, the earliest recorded registered cover from Labuan is dated April 22 1885 and there are only a handful of registered covers from 1885 to 1893.

The Colony

While remaining a Crown Colony, Labuan was administered by the British North Borneo Company from 1889 to 1906, this is nicely

indicated by the Coat of Arms of 'The Government of British North Borneo' embossed on the back flap of the 4th February cover. An enlarged copy of the back flap of the 4 FE 1893 registered cover is shown in Figure 6.

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1. Price, Raymond (1991). *Concise Guide to the Queen Issues of Labuan*. Sarawak Specialists' Society. p.99,

Acknowledgements.

My thanks to Jeremy Dickson for his advice during the preparation of this article.

In the Sale Room

Cherrystone December 15-16 2020 Lot 4966

Japanese Occupation of North Borneo. 1942 1c-\$5, complete set, handstamped in violet (4c and 8c with black handstamp), n.h., usual overall gum toning, fine-v.f., signed Milo Rowell, with 1998 BPA certificate set (SG J1-15). Sold US\$2,800

-- November 10-11 2020. Lot 2622



Sarawak. 1910 (28 Mar) registered Ha Buey Hon cover to Belgium, fine four color franking to

Belgium, with Brussels arrival pmk on back. Sold US\$475

Status Stamps December 10 2020.

Brunei. Lot 3428 1906 overprints: 1c black & purple, ovpt in BLACK. Superb fresh M. SG 11a cat £2500. Brandon certificate. Sold A\$1,500

- Lot 3431 8c black & vermilion, right marginal horiz pr, right stamp variety 'line through B'. VF fresh M. Sold A\$300

- Lot 3447 1922 Malaya-Borneo set with Short I, M. Sold A\$220

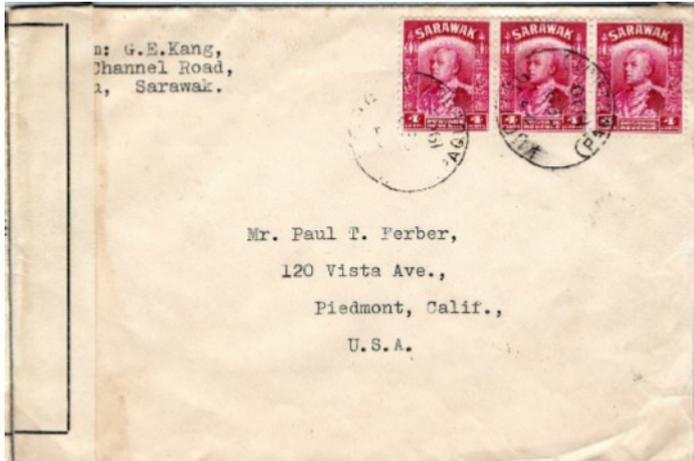
Siegel December 14 2020 Lot 96

LABUAN, 1885, 2c on 16c Blue, Double Surcharge (27a; SG 25a). Slight fault. Sold US\$2,300

Censored Mail from Sibü 1940

Kang Tee Yong and Jon Higgins

I attended the Zoom meeting of the Sarawak Specialist Society on 27th October last when Jon Higgins was presenting his collection of Censored Covers from Sarawak just before the Second World War.



I was extremely surprised to see a cover sent by a Mr. GE Kang from Channel Road Sibü, and it was confirmed by Jon that it was from 15, Channel Road Sibü. The cover was sent to the USA, franked with three Vyner Brooke 4c. stamps and postmarked Kuching Paqueboat cds, type Proud SL8, dated 27th September 1940.

I was born and lived all my childhood years at 15, Channel Road, Sibü so you can imagine how happy I was at seeing this cover which brought back many happy memories.

My late father's name was Kang Thian Choo, but I think that GE Kang may be a pen name he used on his correspondence. He was a stamp collector and presumably, like the famous Mr. Ha Buey Hon, he would correspond with many collectors from other countries in order to obtain and to exchange stamps with them. I have other reasons to believe that GE Kang was his pen name.

Firstly, he was educated up to Form 3 in the 1930s which was considered very well educated in those days, especially as the majority of the population was unable to speak write in the English language. He would have been able to correspond with friends in English.

It was certainly fashionable, when I was in primary school to write to pen pals all over the world, so that we could obtain the stamps pasted on the envelopes and also to exchange stamps. In those days, we were only interested in the beautiful stamps and had no interest in postal history, postmarks, covers etc. Lots of my friends gave themselves pen names, even though I used my real name.

Secondly, he had a typewriter which was not common in Sibü in those days. His major use for the typewriter was to write business correspondence.

Thirdly, I have no knowledge of this GE Kang, as it did not fit into any one of my family's generation name, that of my grandfather, my father and I, and I could not think of any distant relatives who could be this person. I have also enquired from my living aunties and uncles as well as all my siblings and they have no knowledge of this GE Kang. Unfortunately, both my parents have passed on, so I cannot therefore be certain of the above as facts.

No. 15 Channel Road was a two story shop house, 20 feet wide and 100 feet long. The front was used for business while the back comprised the kitchen, dining tables for both the staff and the family. Upstairs were our living quarters. It may have been small for our family but it did provide us with a wonderful childhood with many happy memories.

Channel Road was near the river Rajang in Sibü, and in the 1950s, almost at one end of Sibü, but it was quite busy as that was where the motor launches from Sarikei, Binatang and Kapit dropped and collected passengers and goods. Even though Sibü has grown much bigger, it is still one of the busier streets in downtown Sibü.

My father extended the property and made it into a four story building with the top floor being used as living quarters. It is now a specialist ophthalmological clinic operated by my youngest sister who is a UK trained eye surgeon and she has a small operating theatre within the premises.

The Effects of the Covid Pandemic on the Air Mail Services into Brunei

Claire Scott FRPSL

In 1904 Brunei was hit hard by a smallpox epidemic which decimated the population already affected by a very serious outbreak of cholera in 1902. These were the last major natural disasters to have befallen the Sultanate prior to the Covid virus pandemic of 2020.

One of the effects of the Covid pandemic was that airlines were forced to cancel the majority of their flights when the lack of passengers and restrictions placed on movement created empty planes. This in turn affected the transport of mail around the world, and flights into Brunei were suspended for a time and mail was returned to the sender. Restrictions on flights continue and Bruneian citizens are not permitted to leave Brunei at the present time (December 2020), unless for medical treatment or education and they need permission from the Prime Minister's Office. This pandemic and the resulting disruption provide us with a new collecting area.

The first cover, illustrated below, was sent from Germany dated 22 08 20 and was returned due to the cancellation of flights to Brunei (Figure 1).

A list of countries to which all air traffic was cancelled from Germany, as of 16 October 2020 provided by Will Ott, is shown on the next page (Table 1).

The German cachet reads: -

Return to sender

postal traffic with the country of destination is interrupted for the present.

For the time being the resumption is not foreseeable.

Agency for International Post 1 60544 Frankfurt am Main.

The second cover Willi Ott sent on the 11th November and it was returned to him on the 29th December, illustrating the continuation of the disruption to the mail between Germany and Brunei (Figure 2) The label from the first cover has now become a printed one, perhaps demonstrating the demand for such labels.

The next item was sent from China to Brunei and is cut out from the wrapping paper of an item of blind parcel mail (Figure 3). The parcel was addressed to Kampong Sungai Hanching, Jalan Muara, and sent from Tangzhou Post Office, Jiangsu Province, Tangzhou District of Nantong City. The white label is the return label and the bottom line to the left No. 5, reads 'Postal route is blocked'. The red cachet bottom left reads 'Mail Service for Braille reading item'. The first line of the white label reads, 'Post 1407, Return label.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 4

**Länder mit vollständig gesperrtem Postverkehr
Stand 16.10.2020**

Nord-, Süd-, Mittelamerika und Karibik
Bahamas
Belize
Bolivien
Cayman Islands
Chile
Dominica
Französisch-Guayana
Grenada
Guadeloupe
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
Kuba
Martinique
Nicaragua
St. Kitts und Nevis
St. Vincent und die Grenadinen
Venezuela

List 1: List of countries with no postal service from Germany as at October 16,2020

Asien
Brunei Darussalam
Iran
Jemen
Laos
Mongolei
Myanmar
Ost-Timor
Syrien
Turkmenistan
Australien und Ozeanien
Französisch-Polynesien
Neukaledonien
Afrika
Gambia
Guinea-Bissau
Kap Verde
Komoren
Libyen
Mauritius
Réunion
São Tomé und Príncipe
Seychellen
Sudan

List 1 (cont.): List of countries with no postal service from Germany as at October 16, 2020

Society Spring Weekend Auction

The next auction is planned for a day in June or July 2021 at Tiverton. Text copies of the catalogue have been prepared and sent to all SSS members with a current e-mail address. Scans of lots are now available on the Society's web site. If you haven't received your copy of the catalogue, contact the Webmaster, Roger Johnson.

Labuan: the Eight Cents Surcharge of 1881

Jon Higgins

Price (1991) illustrates three settings of this surcharge and there may be four. Single copies of the 12c stamp can be plated which allows sheets to be reconstructed from single copies.

First Setting (Price p.81)

Sheets of ten surcharged using a forme of ten units. The setting included the 'Eighr' error and stamps from the setting are scarce as only a few sheets with the error were produced. Position 10 is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1

Corrected First Setting (Price p.83)

The Eighr error has been corrected. The top row has clogged type and C of Cents is deformed. The bottom row has thinner more precise type. Complete sheets as in Figure 2 are scarce. The Taping Collection in the British Library has an example.

Second Setting (Price p.85)

In this setting, both rows of the surcharge are thick, and C is well-formed. Possibly printed from a forme of five units struck twice. Only two complete sheets are known. Figure 3 on the next page shows a reconstructed sheet.

Third Setting (Price p.84)

Price makes a brief mention that there may be a 3rd setting which he was not able to describe.

Fourth Setting

A setting in which the *bottom row* is surcharged with the clogged type identical to the top row of the corrected first setting. I have not seen any stamps from the top row i.e. plated 1 to 5 surcharged with the thin type. Stamps surcharged with the thin type are much scarcer



Figure 2: Corrected First Setting



Figure 4: Reconstructed sheet of the Second Setting



Figure 5: Surcharged stamps from the Bottom Row of the Sheet of ten (plated as positions 6 to 10)

(5 to 10% of the total) which suggests that there is a setting in which both rows were surcharged with clogged type. Figure 5 on the next page shows a strip of five of this setting, plated as stamps 6 to 10.

Watermark Inverted and Reversed

Neither Price nor Stanley Gibbons record this variety (Figure 6).



Figure 6

Reference

Price, Raymond (1991). *Concise Guide to the Queen Issues of Labuan*. Sarawak Specialists' Society.

Message from the Web Master

E-mail contacts

E-mails to Vince Cutting (UK) and Richard Parker (Aus) have been returned to the Society. Members who are not getting SSS emails (such as auction catalogues and notices of meetings) should send a current e-mail address to the Secretary at secretary@s-s-s.org.uk

Sarawak

in London



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