

## MODERN SARAWAK POST OFFICE CANCELS

This short display provides an overview of the different types of postmarks introduced into Sarawak post offices in the past twenty years. This has been a period of rapid expansion in the postal service and has been characterised by the opening of large numbers of small “mini post offices” some of which proved to be short lived, leading to a large scale introduction of new cancellers.



Collectors of Sarawak postal history post World War II will be familiar with the “Star” postmark used by almost all offices for many years. A few survived into the 1990s having been in continuous use for over 40 years. Two late uses of star cancellers – a postal use from Long Lama in 1991 and an unaddressed cover from TPO4 from 1994.

The rapid expansion of the postal service in Sarawak starting in the 1980s led to a large increase in the number of post offices. This short display begins by showing the various standard cancellers obtained by the Malaysian postal authorities post independence in 1963 and then traces the wide variety of temporary cancellers provided to the large number of new, and sometimes short-lived, new post offices and agencies.



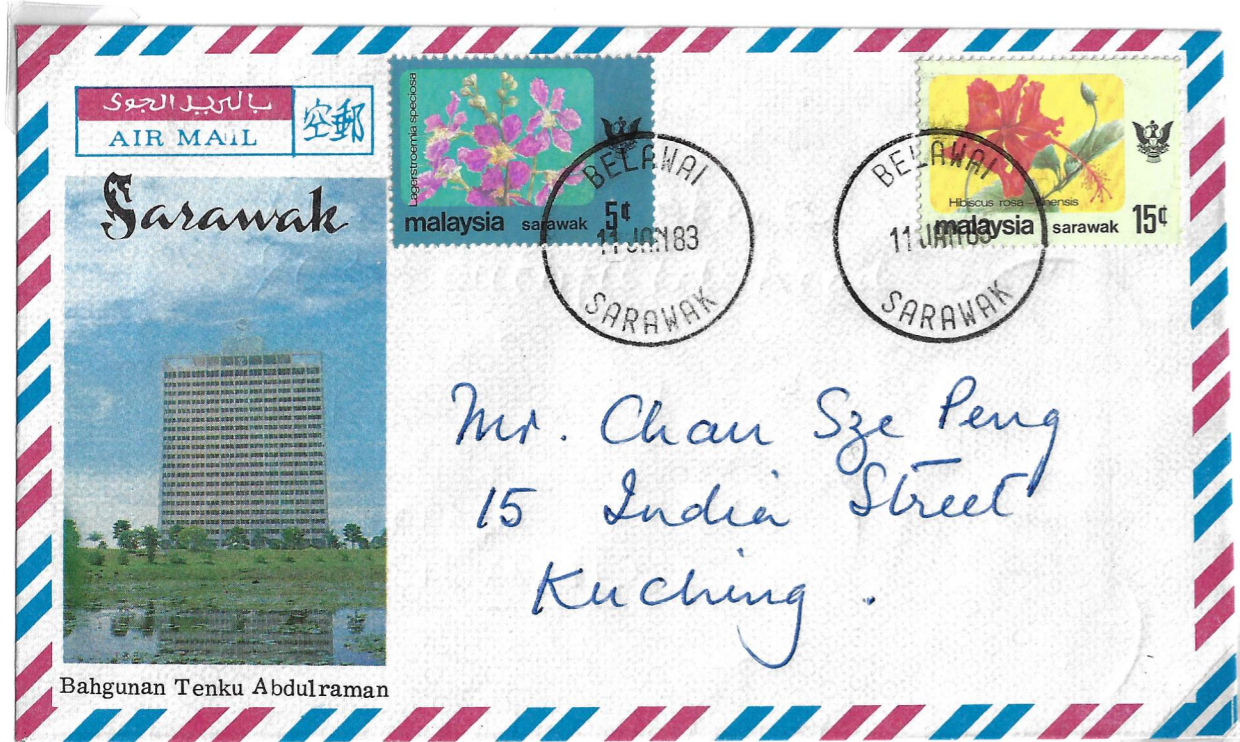
The *Single Line Datestamp* (SLD) was made in Italy and was first used in the mid-1970s. It was not successful in remoter areas where its date rollers rapidly jammed. Around 1990 the postal authorities decided all cancellers should show a 4-digit year in the year 2000 and started to replace the remaining cancellers of this type.

Clockwise from top left

1. Very early example of an SLD from TPO 8 in 1975
2. Very late example on a Postal Order from Miri in 1999
3. Only known example after 2000, an official Post Office registered cover from Kanowit in 2008



The second group of cancellers were originally called Malaysian since they were presumed to have come from there but following close examination they were seen to be engraved “Made in England” and are now referred to as the “English” type. These cancellers are characterised by the rounded tops to the letter “A”. The first of the five sub-types has the largest font. The date format is “DD MMM YY” and is set using rollers. As with the previous SLD cancellers, the two digit year led to their withdrawal prior to 2000 although at least two were used in 2000 and one is known used in 2008.



The earliest type of English canceller was first used in late 1982. Around 1990 the postal authorities decided all cancellers should show a 4-digit year in the year 2000 and started to replace the remaining cancellers of this type.

Clockwise from top left

1. Early example from the village of Belawai in January 1983
2. Two offices, including Sebuyau, continued to use these cancellers into 2000
3. Only Lingga used an English canceller after 2000, in April 2008, possibly as a temporary measure

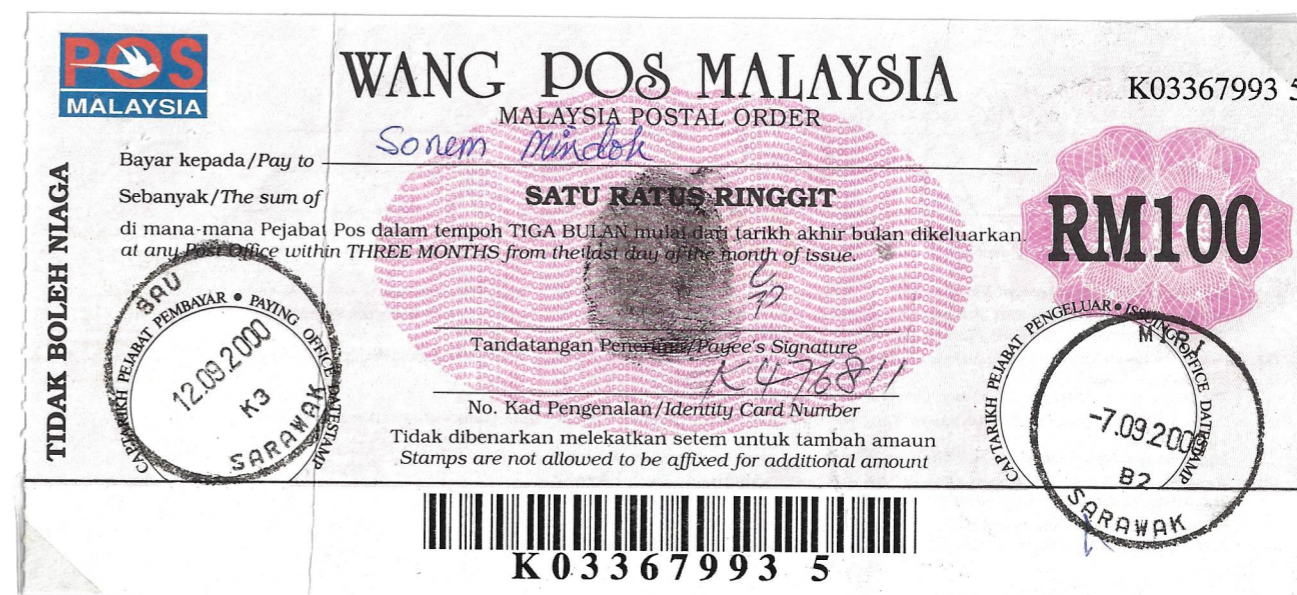
In the mid 1980s a new form of English canceller, Type 2, was introduced using a smaller font for the town and country names. Except in the smallest offices, they each featured an index letter and number. Index letter K indicating use on the counter, M for the Mail section, P for registered mail, and B for Parcels. They again used the date format is "DD MMM YY" set using rollers. As with the previous SLD cancellers, the two digit year led to their withdrawal prior to 2000. From the early 1990s, new cancellers, Type 3, featured a four figure year ready for 2000. The month changed from three letters to two digits, giving a DD.MM.YYYY format.



Type 2 cancellers mostly disappeared by 2000 and were superseded by Type 3 cancels with four digit years

Clockwise from top left

1. Miri Type 2 cancel, index K-1 on 1991 airmail cover to Switzerland
2. Sebuyau Type 3 index M1 cancel on registered letter to Kuching in 2000
3. Postal order with two examples off Type 3 cancels in 2000, Miri Index B2 and Bau Index K3 signed by the recipient with a finger print



In 1986 five offices received new cancellers supplied by Reiner from Germany. The Reiner cancellers are readily distinguished from the English types by the pointed top to the letter "A". The Reiner cancellers followed a similar pattern to the English cancellers. Type 1 had a two digit year and were withdrawn by 2000. From 1990 onwards, new cancellers, Type 2, had a four digit year and all those in larger offices had index numbers and letters. From 1994 all cancellers supplied by Reiner, Type 4, included rollers for the time giving a "DD.MM.YYYYHHMM" format.

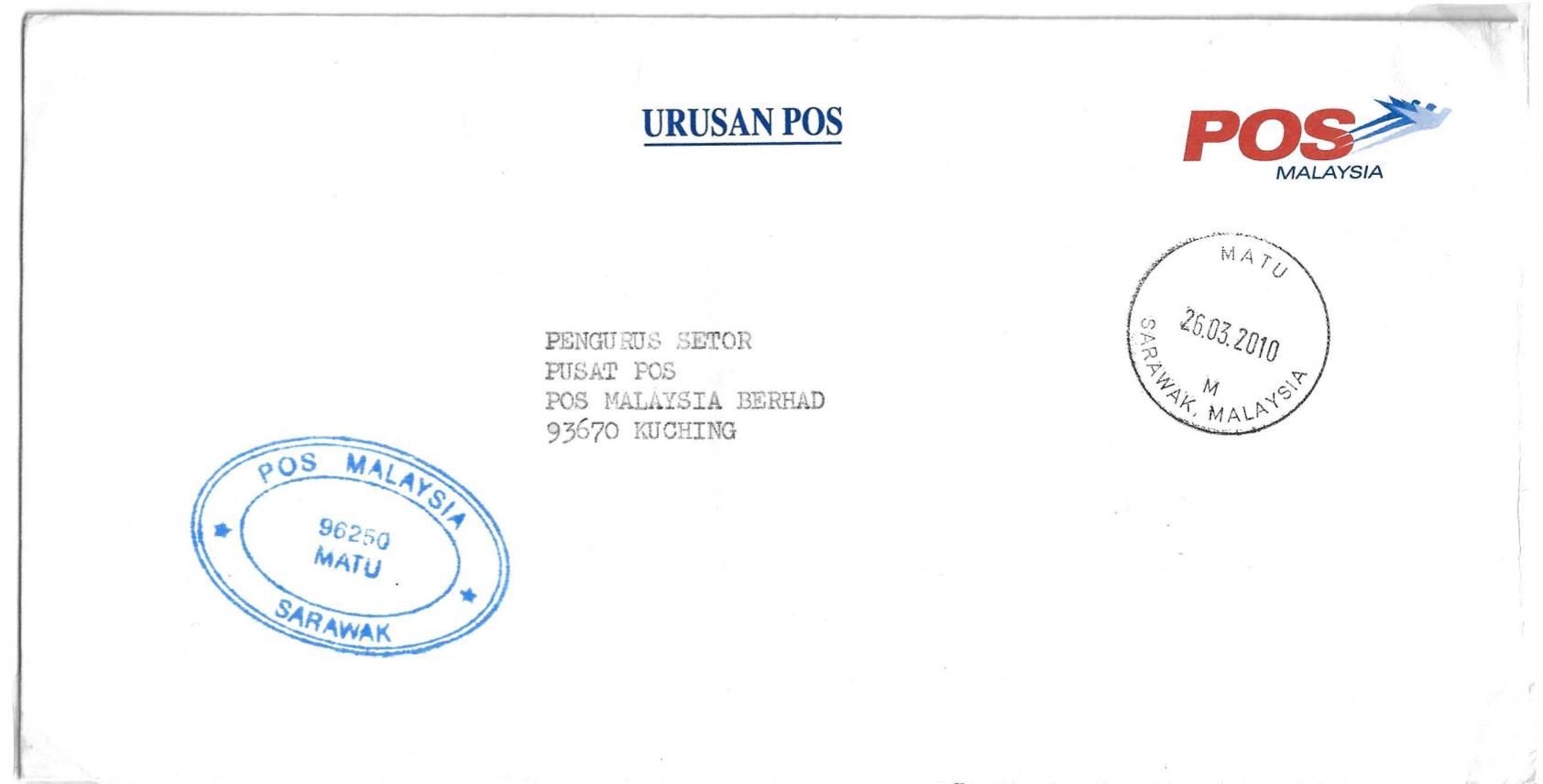
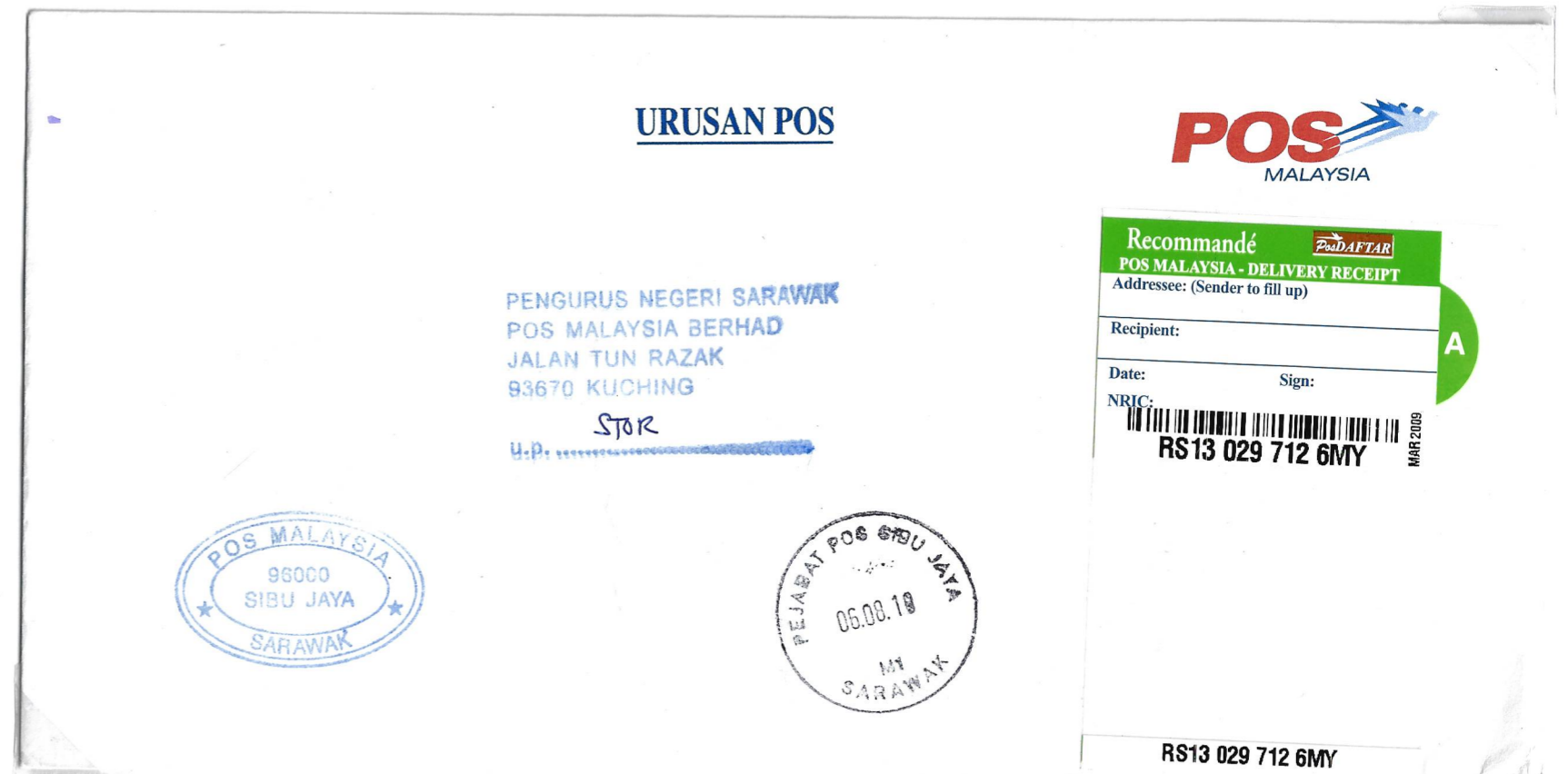


All of these cancellers are still in use except where small offices have closed.

Clockwise from top left

1. Penrissen Camp Type 1 Index K1 in 1986
2. Sarikei, Type 2 Index K1 in 2000 on a Postal Order
3. Kelulut, a very small village, Type 3 timed canceller, in 1994

In 2005 a new pattern of canceller was introduced again from Reiner, Type 4, with lettering inset from the ring and reverting to a "DD.MM.YY" date format. They were issued mostly to the Mail sections of large Post Offices, and hence with M index letters. Almost all the cancellers of this type include the words PUSAT MEL or PEJABAT POS (Mail Centre or Post Office in English). In 2010 a further group of cancellers, Type 6, appeared. They are similar to Type 4 but have a four digit year date and show only the office name and SARAWAK, MALAYSIA rather than just SARAWAK at the foot.

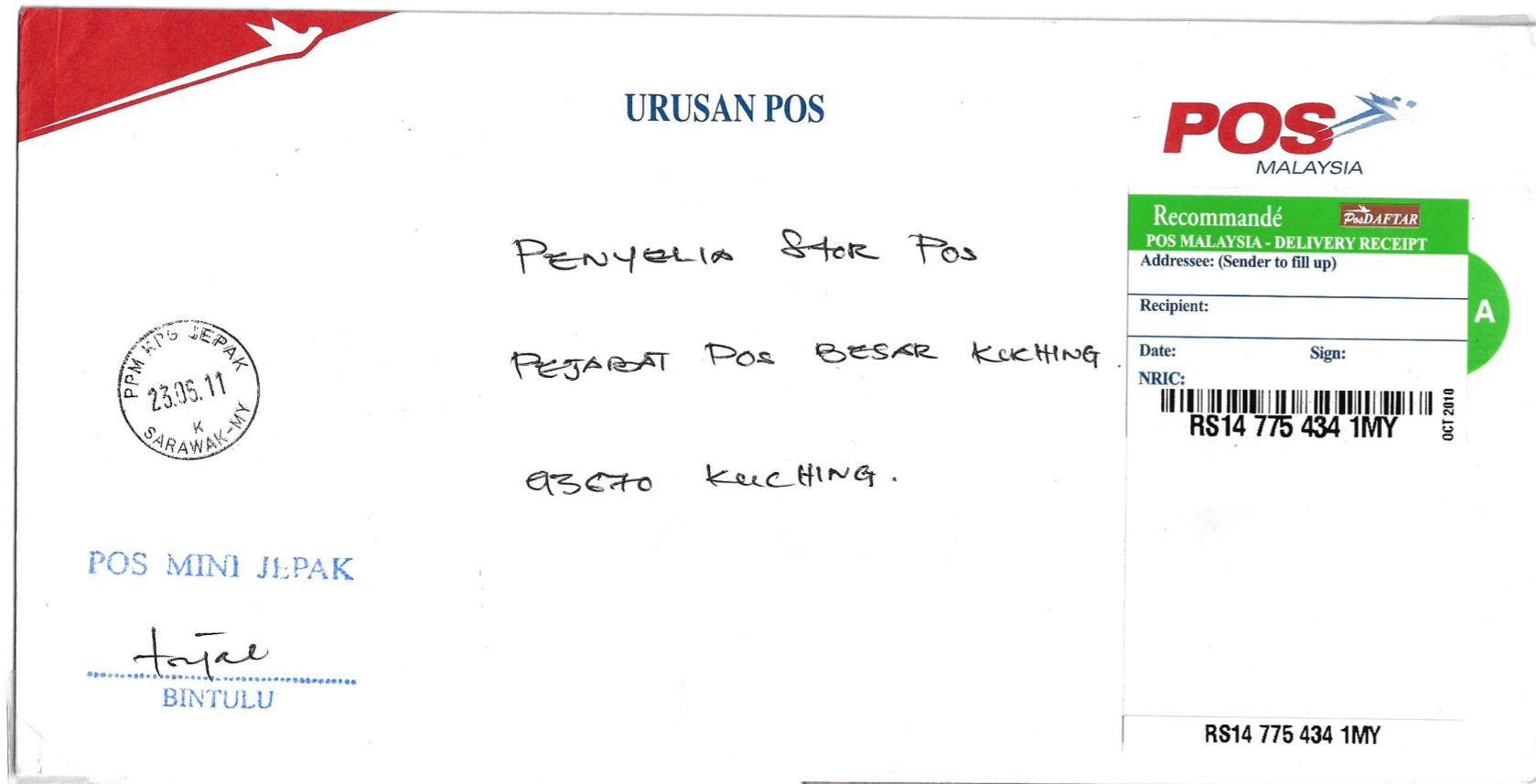


All of these cancellers are still in use except where small offices have closed.

Clockwise from top left

1. Pusat Mel Miri Index M2 Type 4 in 2008
2. Pejabat Pos Sibu Jaya Index M1 Type 4 on a Postal Service cover dated 2010
3. Matu Index M Type 6 on a Postal Service cover dated 2010

In 2008 a remarkable new canceller started to appear in Sarawak. Once again it was supplied by Reiner and became Type 5. At just 20mm in diameter it is the smallest CDS ever used in Sarawak and must be amongst the smallest in use anywhere! Their small size requires clerks to cancel at least alternate stamps which cannot please post office staff. They have been introduced in significant numbers to both large and small offices. In almost every case they have been issued for use on the counter with a K index letter.



1. PPM Kampong Jepak Index K. Postal Service registered letter to Kuching from a mini post office (PPM) in near Bintulu
2. PPM Jalan Rambutan/Rubber Index K. This is the reverse of a commercial cover to the UK from a mini post office (PPM) in Kuching showing the consequences for the post office staff of using the small diameter canceller

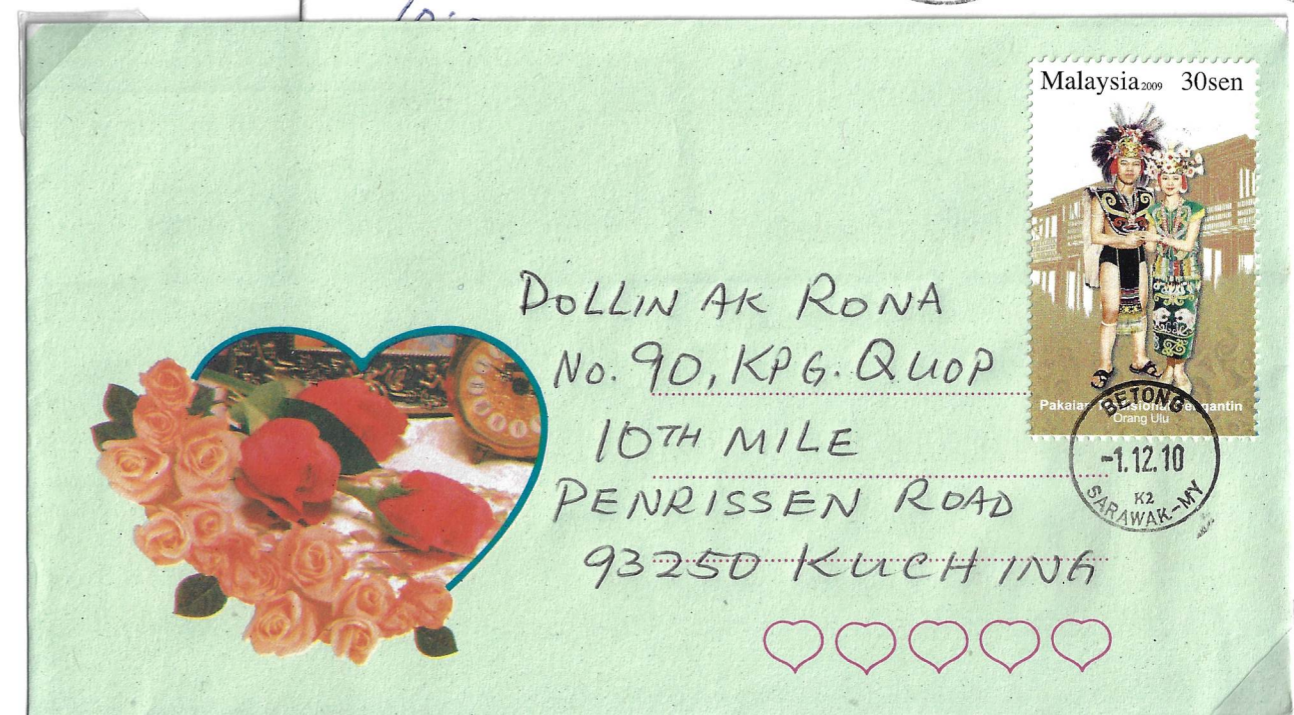
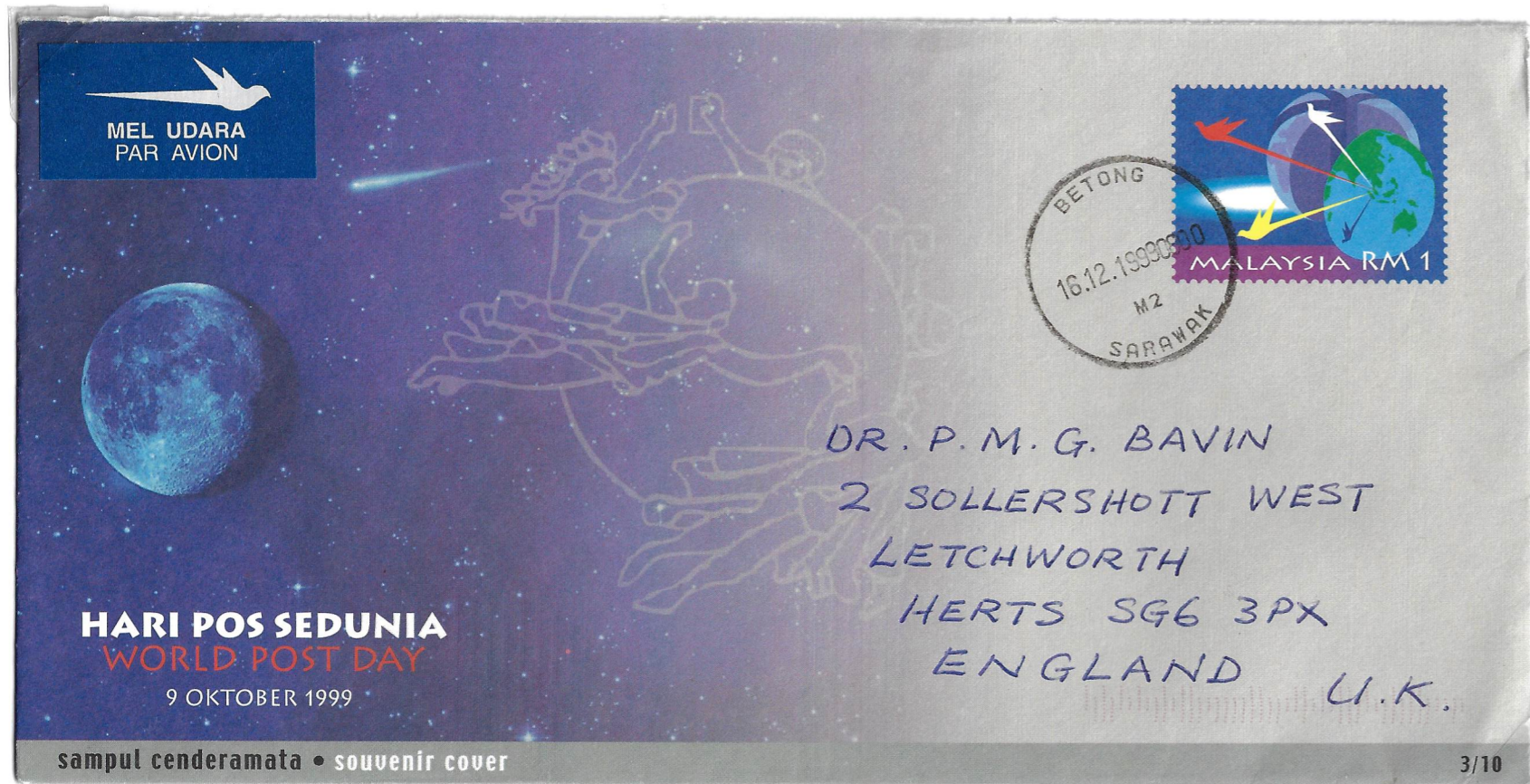


Starting in 2003 about ten offices were issued with distinctive cancellers purchased from China. They do not seem to have proved successful as only a few were issued, mainly to new mini post offices over the next few years.



- Clockwise from top left
1. Jalan Pujud 7D mini post office dated July 2003
  2. Siburan post office index K1 dated August 2003
  3. Petronas Matang mini post office Rare commercial cover to Kuching dated June 2010.

Although many post offices received several new cancellers in the 1990s they were not in general manufactured by the same supplier. Betong post office provides a good example of the variety encountered.



During the 1990s all Betong's postmarks were renewed.

Clockwise from top left

1. English Type 4 Index M2 dated 1999
2. English Type 3 No index dated 1998
3. Reiner Type 2 Index K1 dated 1996
4. Reiner Type 6 Index K2 dated 2010

Cancellers are issued in accordance with the likely volume of business. The basic allocation is two Counter cancellers – K1 and K2 and a Mail section canceller M1. Here is the set of cancellers issued in 2000 to Penrissen Kem (formerly Penrissen Camp). Uncommonly all three cancellers are of the same type, in this case English Type 3. Unfortunately an extra “E” has been inserted in the post office name – PenErissen.



Temporary rubber datestamps (TRDs) have been a feature of post office life for many years in Sarawak, usually associated with the opening of new post offices. The rapid expansion of the postal service with the opening of mini post offices and postal agencies (often in shopping parades as shown in the photos) has produced many examples in numerous styles. Many of the TRDs had short lives due either to the arrival of a permanent canceller or damage due to the perishing of the rubber due to chemical interactions with the ink.



From left to right  
 1. Taman Hui Sing Mini Post Office in Kuching which opened in 1996. The TRD lasted until 2004.  
 2. Choice Super Mall in Kuching which opened in 2000. The TRD was replaced around 2010.

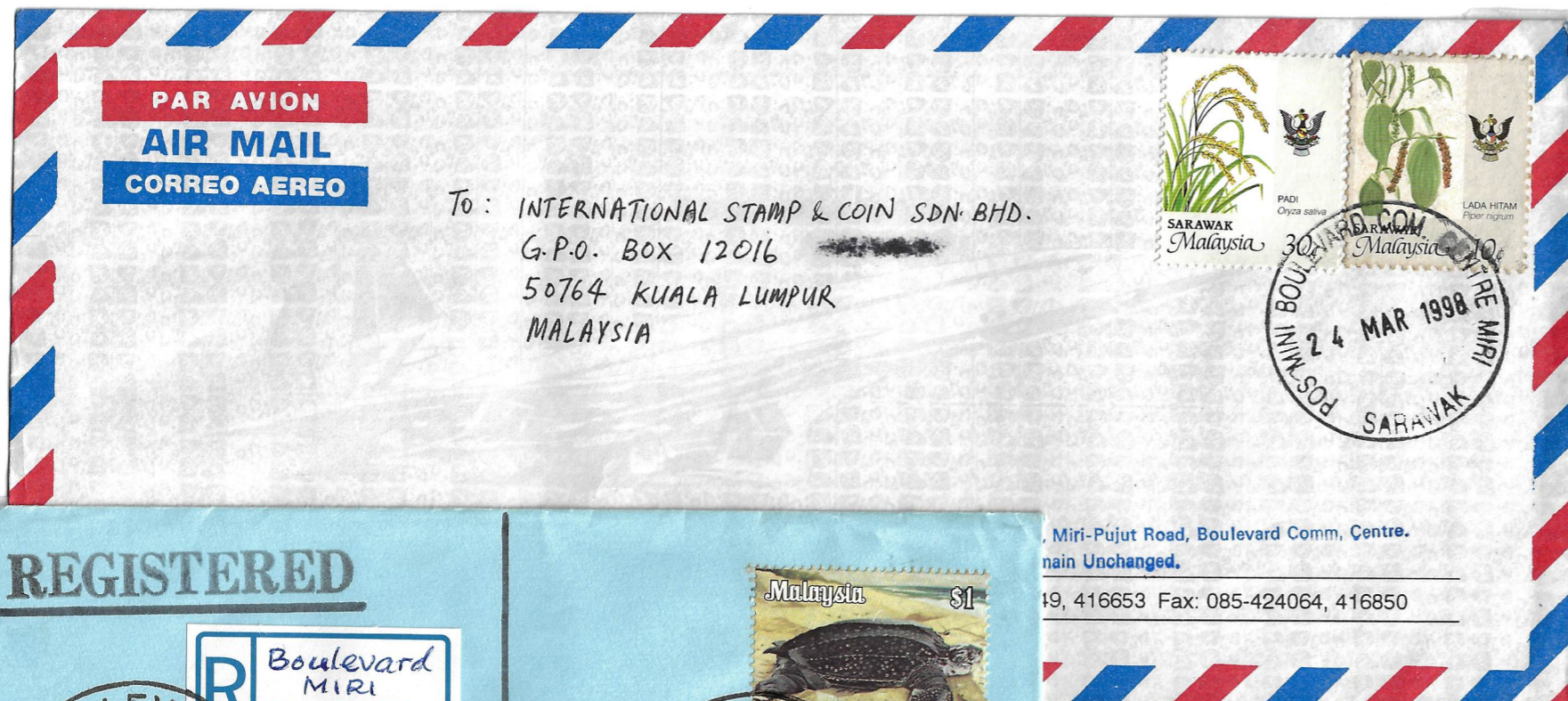
Temporary rubber datestamps (TRDs) come in all shapes and sizes. The three covers on this page show one style of large canceller which was issued around 2007 to a number of new mini post offices when first opened. The lifetime of these cancellers was variable and often they were not taken back when replaced. Consequently some post offices accumulated disused cancellers as shown below.



From left to right

1. Petronas Petra Jaya dated March 2008.
2. Stutong Baru dated March 2008.
3. Jalan Rambutan/Rubber Philatelic cover dated April 2008 showing a skeleton datestamp, a Temporary Rubber Datestamp and Reiner Type 5.

Temporary rubber datestamps (TRDs) come in all shapes and sizes. The widest variety comes at the mini post office at the Boulevard Commercial Centre in Miri and illustrates the short lives of some cancellers. The office had six cancellers recorded in ten years – three TRDs, a China canceller and Reiner types 4 and 5.



NO STAMP REQUIRED  
 SETEM POS TIDAK DIPERLUKAN

PP BOULEVARD  
 13.08.08  
 K2  
 SARAWAK

YAR

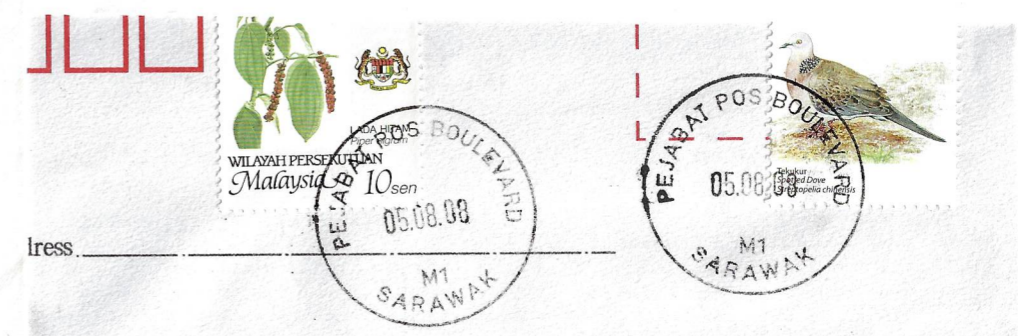
TY FUND



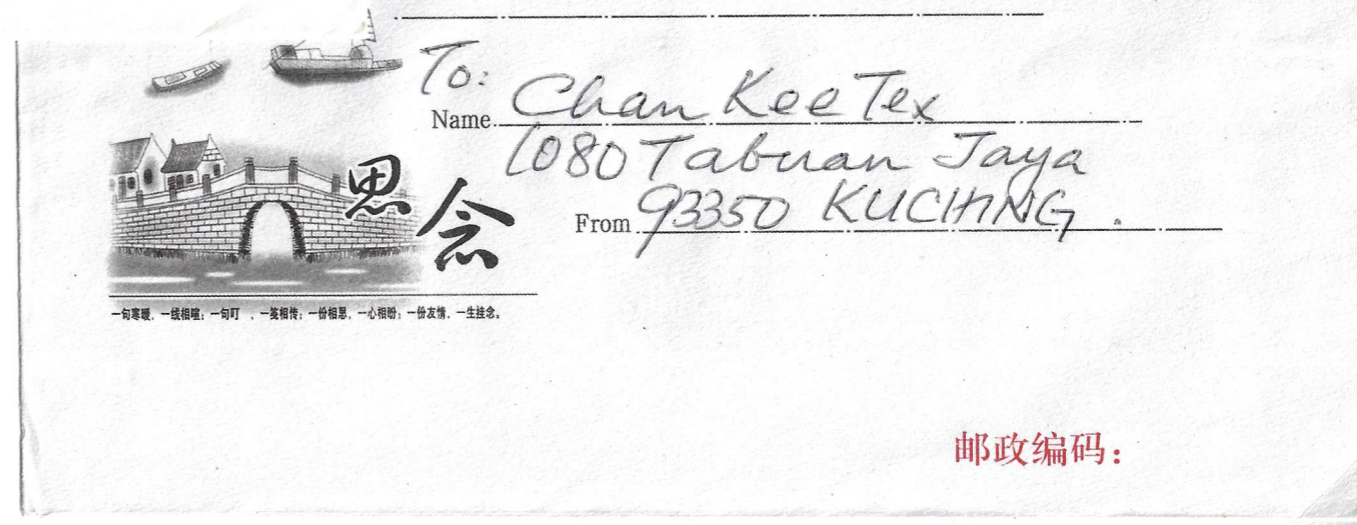
Perahu Burung

BOULEVARD  
 27.03.2008  
 K1  
 SARAWAK

Chan Kee Tex,  
 Tabuan Jaya,  
 Kuching.

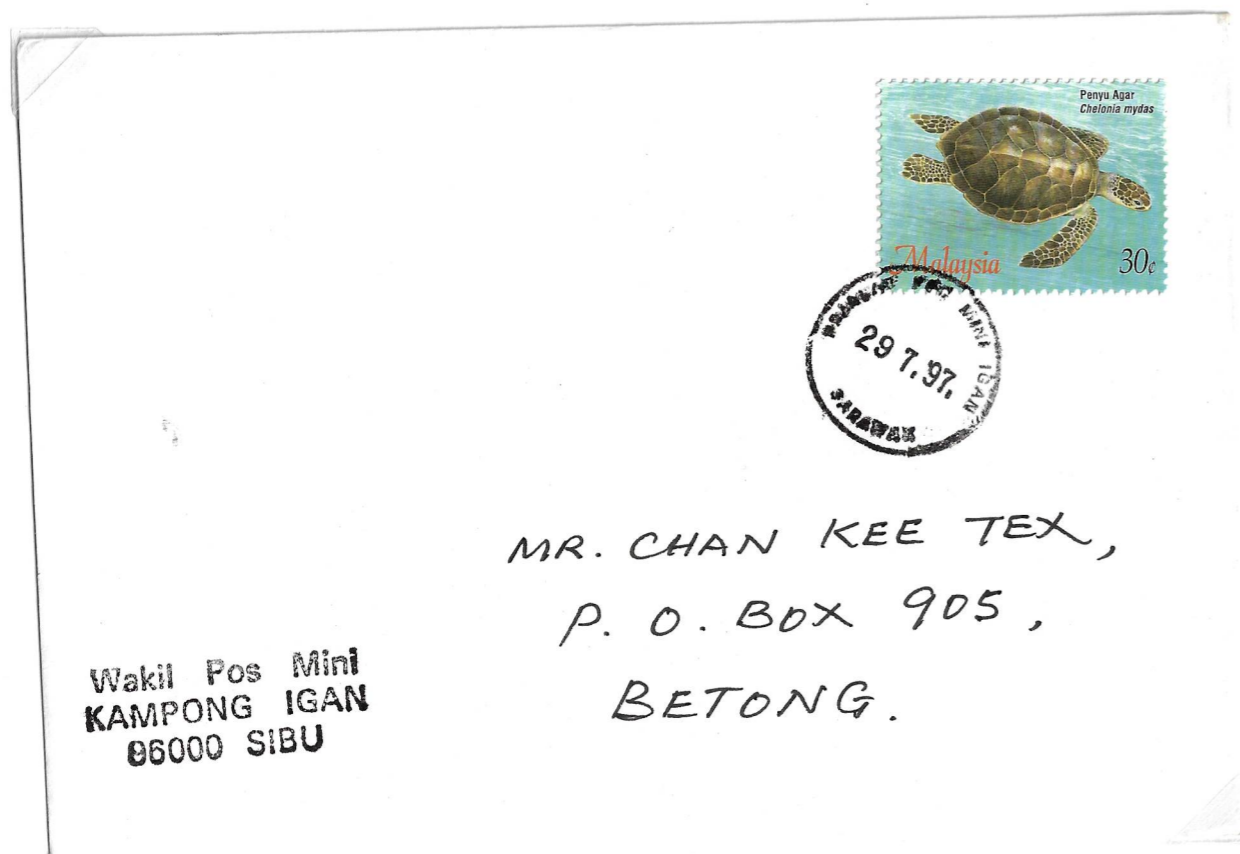


- From left to right, top row and bottom row
1. TRD on commercial cover dated March 1998 and used until 2000
  2. TRD dated Dec 2000 and used until 2001
  3. Reiner type 5 Index K2 dated August 2008
  4. TRD dated March 2001 on a registered cover to Kuching
  5. China type Index K1 dated 2008
  6. Reiner type 4 Index M1 dated August 2008

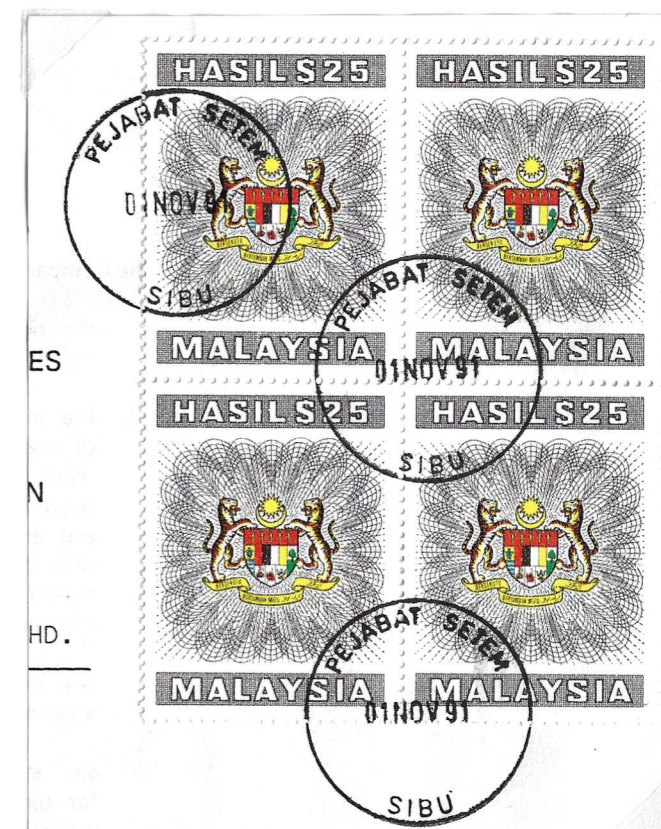


邮政编码：

Two unusual cancellers have been recorded which are different to any others. A 1997 cover from the mini post office at Igan has an unusual TRD canceller of a type otherwise unrecorded. The rubber stamp at the bottom left refers to the office as a Postal Agency so the canceller may be a temporary one after the office's upgrade to a mini post office. The other cover is from the Telaga Air postal agency in Kuching, opened in April 1998 and had a very large canceller of a unique design used here on a registered cover in 2001.



Not strictly post office cancellations but having much in common and in some places taxes are payable in post offices. The examples shown are inscribed “PUSAT SETEM” (Stamp Centre) or “PEJABAT SETEM” (Stamp Office).



Clockwise from top left

1. Kuching Pusat Setem oval rubber cancel dated 1989
2. Kuching Pejabat Setem Reiner type 2 cancel dated May 1991
3. Sibu Pejabat Setem Reiner type 2 cancel dated November 1991
4. Miri Pejabat Setem English type 3 cancel dated 1993