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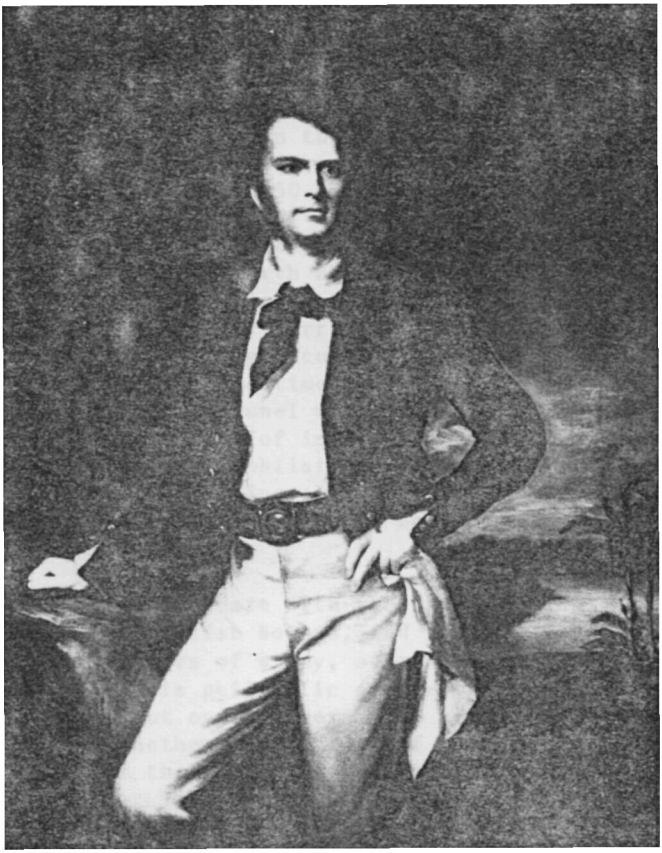
Royal Philatelic Society

London

Thursday 12 June 1997

THE SARAWAK SPECIALISTS' SOCIETY

50th ANNIVERSARY DISPLAY



Rajah Sir James Brooke: the portrait painted in 1847 by Sir Francis Grant

The SARAWAK SPECIALISTS' SOCIETY

As we move to the end of our first fity years, we are most grateful for the honour of being invited to display this selection of our Borneo territories to the Royal Philatelic Society, London.

The story of the Society really begins in 1946, when Donald Castle began looking for, and corresponding with, Sarawak collectors (among whom were Leslie Shipman and Geoff Hansford), hoping to find sufficient to form a Society. By April 1947 there was a nucleus of 15, and Mr Castle decided to advertise in the philatelic press. One columnist was not impressed:

> "A feature of modem collecting which seems to be spreading is the formation of Specialist Clubs for the study of a single country's stamps: the latest is Sarawak, as I nave heard from Mr D. Castle (9 Midfield Way, St Paul's Cray, Kent) who proposes to start with a "News Sheet" on most ambitious lines. Since Sarawak was until recently the chosen field of a very select few, I shall be interested to see how many collectors are interested to-day" ('Stamp Collecting', April 19th 1947).

The 'Philatelic Magazine' (May 16 1947, pg 204) was rather more positive, however, and urged all Sarawak enthusiasts to get in touch with Donald Castle - and many did: by the AGM of 1949 63 enthusiasts had joined, of whom two only are still members - Ken Heselton, who joined in the summer of 1947, and Brian Marshall, who joined two years later. Since those days some 700 have joined, of whom 250 are currently still members.

Although the Society had intended to study Sarawak, and only Sarawak, the stamps of North Borneo and Brunei were being mentioned in the second issue of what was then known as the 'Sarawak News Sheet', for territorial boundaries had been ignored during the Japanese Occupation, and postally the situation was very similar for some time after the war was over. The suggestion to include Brunei was first raised in 1955, but more for the pragmatic reason of increasing membership, though it was not long before the philatelic and cultural affinities of the two countries were being emphasised: so Brunei won the day in 1956, and two years later North Borneo and Labuan were brought into the fold.

Today we are glad to share with you the enjoyment we derive from the philately of British Borneo, and to show you some of the fruits of fifty years of study, search and research; and although there is this philatelic cross-fertilisation (the study of Air Mails is but one more example) yet each territory has its own ambience - whether the romance of the White Rajahs, the quiet dignity of the Labuan Queen issues, the once-despised

/ pictorials

pictorials of North Borneo, or the tranquility of the long-lived Brunei river scene - and we hope you will catch something of this in our display.

Lastly, no Anniversary Display could be complete without mentioning the debt we owe to our "founding fathers" - among whom are Donald Castle, Les Shipman, Alan Dant, Geoff Hansford, Bill Forrester-Wood, and George South - to mention but a few. Today's display is also a tribute to them.

D.H.H.

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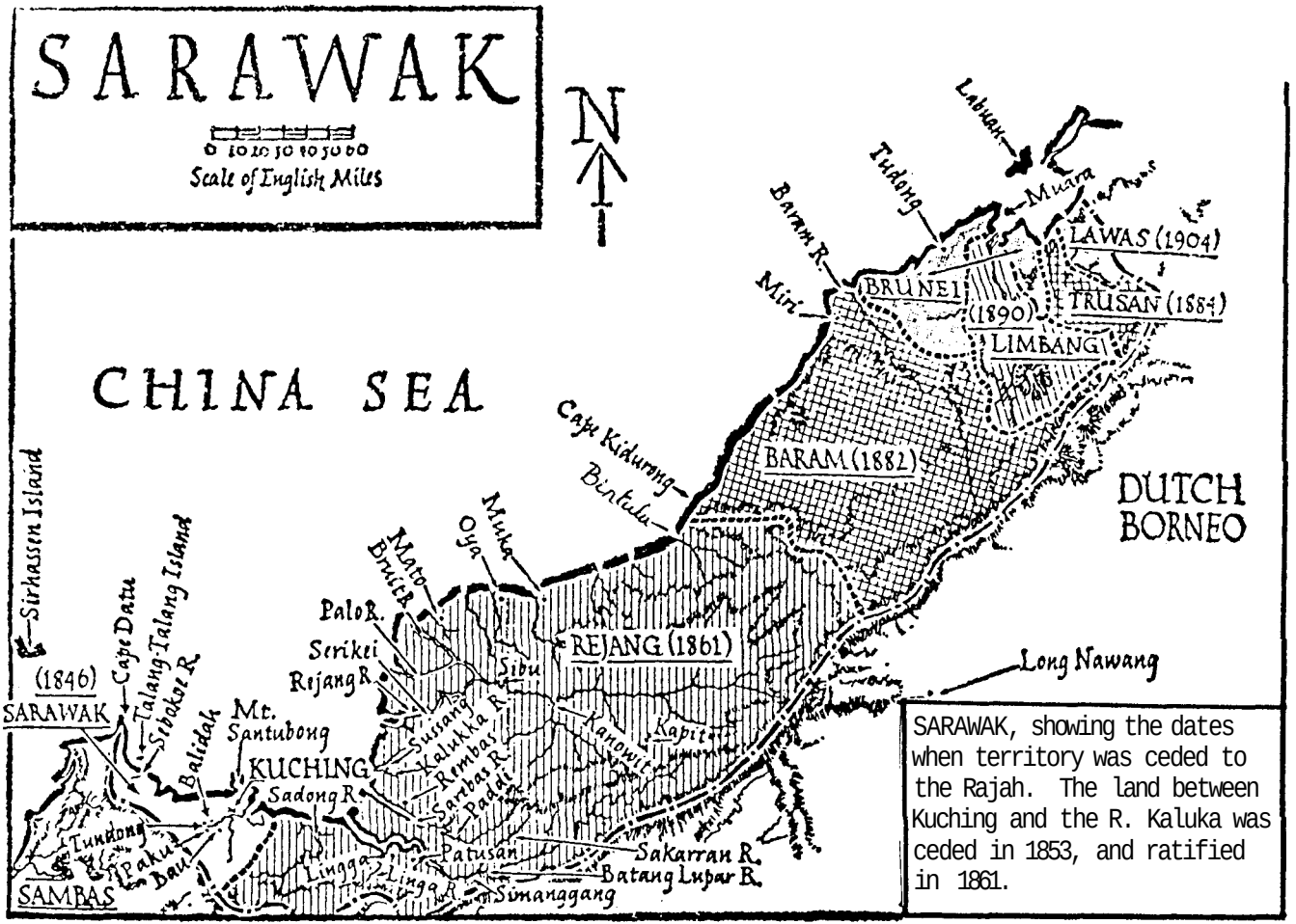
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SARAWAK, showing the dates when territory was ceded to the Rajah. The land between Kuching and the R. Kaluka was ceded in 1853, and ratified in 1861.

The DISPLAY

SARAWAK

INTRODUCTION



Sarawak was formally ceded to James Brooke, the 1st Rajah, in 1841. It remained under the benevolent rule of the "White Rajahs" until 1946 - with the exception of the four years under Japanese occupation during World War II. The damage and financial instability caused by the war resulted in the then Rajah, Vyner Brooke, handing over the country to the British Government as a Crown Colony. In 1963 it became part of Malaysia. During the period of the Brooke rule there were only three Rajahs - Sir James Brooke (1841-1868), Sir Charles Brooke (1868-1918), and Sir Charles Vyner Brooke (1918-1946).

FRAME 1 **The First Issue**

Until Sarawak joined the Universal Postal Union in 1897 it had to use Straits Settlements stamps for all its mail beyond Singapore. Until 1867 even these were Indian. Very few covers are known, and incoming mail of the same period is equally scarce. When the Straits Settlements Government commenced to levy a 3 cents charge on mail arriving by ship from Sarawak, Rajah Brooke ordered a 3 cents stamp to defray the cost. The stamp was engraved by William Ridgeway, and printed by Messrs Maclure, Macdonald & Co. Because of James Brooke's death in 1868 it was issued posthumously. The stamp had a short life of two years, and neither of the known covers can be certified as having been genuinely used during the official life of the stamp.

FRAMES 2 & 3 **The Issues of 1871 & 1875**

During the early years of Rajah Charles Brooke, the need for a postal service increased. A new 3 cents was issued in 1871, followed by five more values in 1875. These were also to the Ridgeway design, and printed by Maclure, Macdonald. Although printed in sheets of two panes, each of 100 impressions, the sheets were divided before dispatch to Sarawak, and gutter blocks, from the reserve stock, are rare. One of the great drawbacks of this issue was the fact that it was sent to Sarawak without interleaving. The heat and humidity caused the sheets to stick to each other, and, when soaked apart, they had lost all their gum.

/Frame 4

FRAME 4 **De La Rue 1888**

Following upon a meeting of notable persons on 11 August 1887, the Sarawak Government decided to take control of and re-organise its postal system. On 21 September "an Inland Postage came into force", and on 11 January 1888 the Rajah wrote to De La Rue for an estimate. With impending British Protectorateship ("The Times", 15 August 1888, page 8) time was obviously ripe for a more up-to-date issue. Here we see the stamps in preparation and in use.

FRAME 5 Perkins Bacon 1895

In July 1894 a new set of four values was ordered from Perkins Bacon. The change from De La Rue was an error on the part of the Acting Treasurer of Sarawak, who placed the order. When the error was discovered an attempt was made to cancel the order, but by that time the dies had been engraved, and the printing plate was nearly complete. It was agreed to accept them, and they were dispatched in November 1894. The issue is noted for the large number of colour trials, and for its experimental use in connection with the Rhodesian "Arms" issue.

FRAME 6 The "Postage/Postage" Issue

After having 'experimented' for a few years with provisional Receipt/Revenue stamps, it was decided that the Postmaster General should have his own (postage) stamps, and the Treasurer should have his own (revenue) stamps. The 1899 Postage/Postage series and a parallel Revenue series were the result. This frame shows their preparation and making ready for use.

FRAME 7 **Provisionals**

At various times between 1874 and 1899, the supply of certain values ran out, or a new rate was called for, for which there was no stamp. To meet the demand, provisionals were made at the Government Printing Office in Kuching, using various values from the 1871, 1875 and 1888 issues. The first provisional, of 1874, has been the subject of much controversy since the discovery of forgeries made by George Kirk Jeffryes in 1891. The three copies shown, together with a forgery, may be three of the five genuine used copies in existence.

FRAME 8 1922-28

1922-23 was an interesting time. First the 1918 postage stamps were reprinted in the correct U.P.U. colours. In addition the stock of 1 cent and 2 cents stamps was running low, and the 10 cents blue and 12 cents purpose (of 1918) became redundant - hence they were surcharged ONE/cent and TWO/cents. The recently installed Government Agent in London

/had to

had to arrange for a reprint of these provisionals for the philatelic market. The situation was finally consolidated with the issue of the 1928 series, which was watermarked, and in panes of 100 for the first time.

FRAME **9** **The Waterlow Issue of 1932**

In August 1929 the Government Agent invited quotations for the printing of postage stamps "in a similar but more attractive design" to those already in use. Waterlow were successful, and De La Rue were informed in a brief letter to this effect. This series is notable for being recess printed, being short-lived (two years), and for being prepared for use on telegrams (available for twelve months, but never used).

FRAME **10** **1934: Bradbury Wilkinson**

In 1934 the Treasury reverted once again to using the same stamps for postage and revenue. There was again a change of printer, this time to Messrs Bradbury Wilkinson. The issue is noted for the changes which it underwent - colour changes to conform with the U.P.U. requirements, and a post-war reissue. [Other changes can be seen in subsequent frames, namely the various handstamps and overprints of the Occupation, and the post-war B.M.A. and Royal Cypher overprints, the latter being on watermarked paper.]

FRAME 11 The **Japanese Occupation**

The invasion of Malaya at Kota Bharu on 7 December 1941 at 5.15 pm GMT was followed at 6.25 pm GMT with the bombing of Pearl Harbour; and on 16 December the Japanese invaded Sarawak, landing at Miri, with Kuching falling on 25 December. Postal communication came to an end, but resumed a few in the Spring of 1942, the earliest date known being 3 March, at Dalat. Handstamped Sarawak values were first issued at Miri on 26 August, and used concurrently with low value Japanese Showas until the end of 1942, after which the use of Sarawak stamps seems to have ended, being replaced by low value Brunei, and the 4 & 8c Batavia definitives. The 'Rajah' stamps were used for Revenue and Receipt purposes, however, and also as 'Seals' on official Registered mail.

FRAME **12** **P.O.W. Mail**

The Japanese occupation of the territories surrounding the Pacific Ocean was swift by any standard, and Borneo was no exception. The problem then was one of communication between the P.O.W. and their families; and the most difficult was for the British and Australian troops who had been sent to

/ P.O.W.

P.O.W. camps in Borneo (and the civilian internees) - no mail reached them for 12 months or more. Only a clandestine organisation at Singapore made any interchange of mail possible.

A small sample of incoming mail and samples of the variety of cards allowed to the P.O.W. are shown. These were permitted on five occasions from Kuching, and four from Sandakan - in the period 1942-45.

FRAME 13 1945 - 1946

Post-war, pre-colonial post. When the Australian forces liberated British Borneo in 1945 they set up a postal service, and for a short time Australian stamps were valid for postage. The British Military Administration took over in December 1945 for four months, and then the Rajah resumed control. Apart from the re-issue of the 1934 stamps, he was also able to issue the long-overdue Brooke Centenary set, which had been due in 1941.

FRAME 14 Colonial Era, 1946 - 1963

Although Sarawak became a Crown Colony on 1 July 1946, the 1934 Brooke set with the Royal Cypher overprint was not issued until nearly a year later. Uniquely, the basic stamps were reprinted on watermarked paper prior to overprinting. Sarawak then became incorporated into the Colonial Omnibus issues for the Silver Wedding, U.P.U., Coronation, and 'Freedom from Hunger'. The King George VI pictorials did not come until 1950, and the Elizabethan pictorials from 1955-1959.

FRAME 15 Air Mails

The development of the Sarawak Air Mail Service commenced with a flight from Sibu to Kuching in 1926. From then it developed steadily, with much help, in the early days, from the RAF, who did Survey and Liaison flights around Borneo, and to Singapore - carrying mail as they did so. Air Mail to Europe went through two stages - the so-called "accelerated service" from Karachi in August 1929, and then the Singapore-London in December 1933.

FRAME 16 Sarawak Postcards

The private postcard was authorised in Sarawak in March 1906. Advantage of this was quickly taken by Mr J.P. Reutens, an accountant in the Treasury, Kuching, who published a set of 12 coloured picture postcards in 1906. He was followed very soon by Mr Ha Buey Hon, a photographer by trade, who produced sepia picture postcards over a period of several years. At about the same time the well known Singapore photographer, Mr G.R. Lambert, also published picture postcards of Sarawk and its people. These three have dominated the scene, their cards being the classics of the business.

/LABUAN

INTRODUCTION

Labuan, roughly triangular in shape, is an island of some 38 square miles, Victoria being its capital, and being now a free port which is the principal trans-shipment point for Brunei, northern Sarawak, and much of western Sabah. It was ceded to the British in 1846, as a base against piracy, becoming a Crown Colony in 1848, administered by North Borneo from 1890-1906, at which point it was incorporated into the Straits Settlements. Occupied by the Japanese on 1 January 1942, but completely in Australian hands by 21 June 1945, after a 12 day battle. In 1946 it became part of the Colony of North Borneo, and subsequently part of Malaysia in 1963. In 1984 its status was again changed, and it became a Federal Territory. During the Indonesian Confrontation (1963-66) it was the headquarters for the Commonwealth forces.

FRAMES 17-21 **1879 - 1906**

This display illustrates a part only of the story of a small island in the South China Sea by its stamps.



The small requisition for stamps, and the few Europeans to use them, account for the difficulty in finding early material (in 1883 only eight Europeans were included on the Census). No multiples of the first issue (the 12 cents) are known to date. The same copper plates which produced the stamps of 1879 were used throughout until 1892, the last printing of this series: hence plating is possible.

In 1890 Labuan came under the jurisdiction of The British North Borneo (Chartered) Company who continued this series up to 1894 when it was produced by lithography owing to the large quantity now on demand by the philatelic market. The notorious oval of bars used at this time is explained, and examples are shown of this mark used by the Post Office in Labuan, and the one used in the the Chartered Company's office in London.

The influence of the Chartered Company resulted in the issue of the pictorial series in 1894, with the word 'LABUAN' incorporated in the vignette plate. With the issue of the "Crowns" in 1902-3 we see a design which is the final conscience indication of the Labuan Colonial status.

The final issue was in 1905 when a small quantity of North Borneo high values was overprinted by hand 'LABUAN', and soon afterwards the Colony was absorbed into the Straits Settlements (authorised 30 October 1906, to take effect on 1 January 1907).

/ Frame 22 ..

FRAME 22 **Postal Stationery**

A short study of the postal stationery available for use in Labuan during its various administrations, from 1881 to 1907.

FRAME 23 **Labuan Postcards**

A selection of postcards used in Labuan during its Colonial period, and subsequently while part of the Straits Settlements.

FRAME 24 **Labuan 1907 - 1944**

Beginning with the overprinted 'Crowns', their use on cover, and an early postcard of 3 January 1907, a selection of covers follows, illustrating various aspects of the the post, such as incoming postage due, Paquebots, Censor Chop, Air Mail, and Occupation mail.

NORTH BORNEO

INTRODUCTION

North Borneo, known to the Sulu pirates as the "Land Below the Wind" because of its position below the typhoon belt, was very much under the influence of the Philippines until Dalrymple, a Scottish voyager, arrived in 1759. Eventually it came under the administration of the British North Borneo Chartered Company in 1881, after lands grants from the sultans of Brunei and Sulu (an act of generosity on the latter's part which was still being regretted as recently as 1963 by the then President of the Philippines, Diosdado Macapagal). Occupied by the Japanese from 1941 to 1945, and a Crown Colony from July 1946 until it became part of Malaysia in 1963.

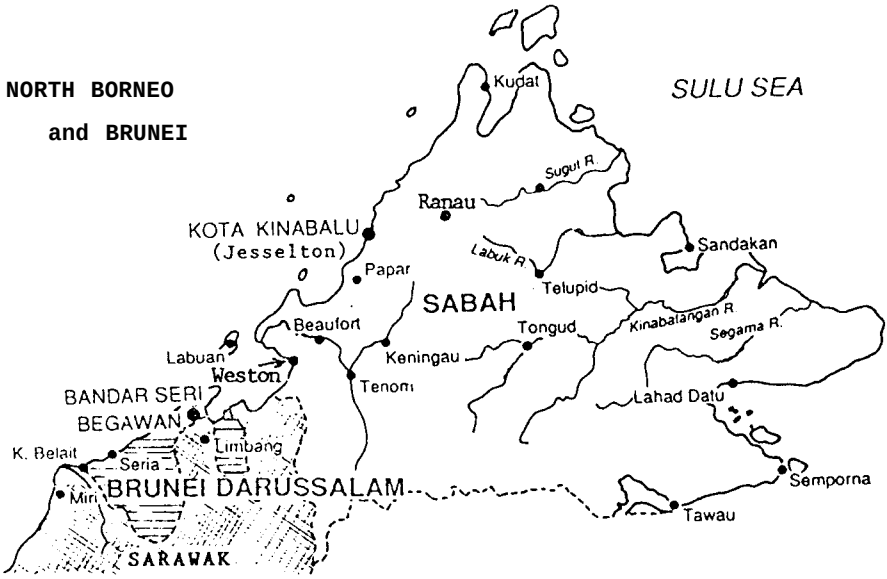
In this section we have tried to give as many members as possible a chance to show their interests in the philately of this country. Contributions have been extracted from Exhibition entries, working/research collections, while others have been specially prepared. Because space is rationed, several areas have been skimmed over, whilst a few have been shown in greater depth.



FRAME **25** **North Borneo Postcards**

A selection of postcards illustrating the land and its peoples.

/ Frames 26 & 7



FRAMES 26 & 27 **The Early Days**

An outstanding selection of the earliest postal items from the Borneo area from 1842 to 1891 which include pre-stamp material, combination covers, and some very rare postal markings.

FRAME 28 **The 'Arms' Issue**

A brief glimpse into the fascination of the 'Arms' stamps. The sheets are from a larger collection chosen to show usage, provisionals, errors and varieties.

FRAME 29 **The Provisionals**

Joining the U.P.U. in 1890 caused a spate of provisionals, in view of anticipated rate changes. This frame is a study of just three of those provisionals produced to alleviate shortages. Inverts and errors are shown, with some fine examples used on cover.

FRAME 30 **Postal Stationery**

Postal Stationery played a brief but important part in the philatelic history of North Borneo. The frame shows the first issue (1889) of postal stationery cards of North Borneo, including a few of the shades and varieties to be found.

/ Frame 31

North Borneo (cntd):

FRAME 31 Pictorials

1894 saw the introduction of a pictorial set of stamps, recess printed by Waterlow & Sons Ltd. This frame begins with two unadopted essays by De La Rue, and continues with some fine examples of the postal history of the period to 1897.

FRAME 32 The 1909 Designs

New pictorial designs were introduced in 1909 which lasted until 1938. This frame gives a simplified view of the stamps, and of the surcharges occurring on these designs.

FRAME 33 1922 Malaya-Borneo Exhibition

Following on from Frame 32, this is part of a detailed study of the 1922 Malaya-Borneo Exhibition overprints.

FRAME 34 Fiscal Use

Sheets have been taken from a reference collection to show just some of the fiscal purposes to which the stamps were put.

FRAME 35 1931: 75th Anniversary Issue

This is an excellent example of work by Waterlow & Sons Ltd, in particular of the art of their engraver, J.A.C. Harrison. This frame gives just a taste of the philatelic gems to be found relating to this issue.

FRAME 36 Postage Dues

The Postage Due stamps, and Forms used to collect monies for the non- or underpayment of postage.

FRAME 37 The Japanese Occupation

Jesselton was occupied on 8 January, and Sandakan on 17 January, 1942, the Governor surrendering on 19 January. The Australians landed at Weston on 17 June 1945, but North Borneo was not fully safe until September. The unoverprinted use of the 1939 issue is shown (which lasted officially until December 1942); and five types of handstamps are shown, the first of which is said to have been issued in September 1942, and the last, an un-authorised one, in the autumn of 1943.. [Not shown are the other stamps which were valid - those of Brunei, and the 4 & 8c Batavia issue, and the overprints of 1944.]

/ Brunei

INTRODUCTION



In the 16th Century Bolkiah, the 5th Sultan of Brunei, controlled almost all of the island of Borneo, the neighbouring islands, and the Sulu Archipelago. Gradually the power of this empire decreased, and in the 19th Century the sultans lost the land now known as Sarawak (see map on pg 4), and their part of North Borneo. Brunei was occupied by the Japanese from January 1942 until it was liberated by the Australians in June 1945. Today, in spite of its small size, it is exceedingly wealthy, because of the discovery of oil and natural gas.

FRAME 38 **1895: The Locals**

John Robertson, manager of the Central Borneo Company of Labuan, obtained a concession to run a local postal service: ten stamps, from ½c to $1, were printed, it is believed, in Scotland, and issued in 1895. Though popular in some quarters, it was dismissed in many others for years, as being of little importance.

FRAMES 39-45 **BRUNEI: 1906 - 1945**

The First "National" Stamps

In June 1906 Brunei joined the Straits Settlements Postal Union and, for the first time, stamps were required whose validity extended beyond the national boundary. Relatively small numbers of the last printing of the Labuan 'Crowns' were overprinted in red with the name 'BRUNEI', and, for some values, a new denomination. A single trial sheet of the 1 cent value was overprinted in black.

Table 1

Value	Numbers Overprinted	Value	Numbers Overprinted
1c	4,900 tin red]	8c	8,000
1c	100 [in black]	10c/16c	9,000
2c/3c	15,000	25c/16c	2,000
2c/8c	5,000	30c/16c	2,000
3c	8,000	50c/16c	2,000
4c/12c	20,000	$l/8c	2,000
5c/16c	5,000		

The First Brunei Design

By June 1906, the design for new stamps specially prepared for Brunei had been agreed, and on 14 September a suggested colour scheme for the new issue was sent to The Crown Agents by De La Rue. The actual sheets of colour trials, labelled "Appendix A",

/ are shown

are shown in the display. All the trials were imperforated proofs of the 1c value in different colours, with the suggested denomination in manuscript alongside. On 21 September these trials were approved and returned to the printers who dispatched the first printing of the five lowest values on 14 November 1906, 732 of each value being overprinted "SPECIMEN".

Table 2

Value	Numbers Printed	Value	Numbers Printed
1c	73,380	4c	34,500
2c	75,480	5c	1,980
3c	23,880		

These were followed by the remaining six denominations, with the same number of specimens.

Table 3

Value	Numbers Printed	Value	Numbers Printed
8c	12,300	30c	8,100
10c	16,320	50c	7,320
25c	8,100	$1	4,640

By Proclamation of 1908, the rate for local letters and for mail to the Straits Settlements, Malaya and Borneo was fixed at 3c per 2oz, and elsewhere 8c for the first ½oz. The registration fee was 10c.

The First U.P.U. Issue

In April 1908, a single colour was adopted for each of the 1c, 3c, and 8c values, to accord with U.P.U. regulations, while the frames of the 2c and 5c values were changed also. This was followed in 1910 by the issue of 4,560 $5, and 4,440 $25 values, which were required so that duties could be paid in adhesive stamps. 413 of each value were overprinted "SPECIMEN". In 1916 when Brunei joined the U.P.U. in its own right, as opposed to being a member through the Straits Settlements Union, further changes were made to the 5c and 8c values. A further consolidation with U.P.U. colours followed in 1923 when a new horizontal design showing Brunei Town from a sketch by the Resident was also issued in 6c and 12c values, to pay, respectively, the foreign and registration rates. Another change to the colour of the 1c value took place in 1926, and to other values in 1831 and 1935.

/The First Airmails

The First Airmails

The first airmail service was operated by flying boats in 1930, the first stage from Sibu to Miri on 29 May 1930, the second from Miri to Jesselton from 31 May to 2 June, the third stage a tour of British North Borneo, and the final stage from Brunei on 1 July. It was not until 19 March 1934 that a weekly Imperial Airways service between London and Singapore enabled letters from Brunei to be sent regularly by airmail.

The First Postal Stationery

This display includes a proof from the De La Rue archives of the special design prepared in 1934 for the 15c registered envelopes, 8,000 of which were dispatched in two sizes on 22 January 1935, with a further 7,000 following on 24 July 1936.

The Japanese Occupation

In late 1941 five values in new colours were shipped to Brunei, but none were issued before the Japanese invaded in January 1942. Consequently, these stamps can only be found used with Japanese overprints since all stocks extant on their arrival were so treated. The rubber handstamp in Kanji script reads "Imperial Japanese Government"; and, in addition, two sheets of the 1c value were further overprinted "Imperial Japanese Post $3". These overprints were forged extensively, partly to cater for demand amongst the liberating troops after the war, and examples of these forgeries are shown. On 4 September 1945, the Japanese offices in Brunei closed, and all their records and remaining stamps were destroyed.

FRAMES 46-48 The Issue of 1947-51

An in-depth study of this issue, with examples of the re-used pre-war plates, the new single plates, and the new double plates; examples of re-entries, in particular to the clouds, and of retouches; and the problems of perforations, due to the irregular spacing of impressions on the old plates compared to the post-war plates, and the fact that perforating heads were becoming worn.

FRAMES 49-50 Brunei Postal Stationery

[Owing to the complications of the post, these sheets may not arrive from overseas in time. In the event of non-arrival, Frames 49-52 will all consist of Airmails.]

FRAMES 51-52 AIRMAILS

A selection of covers stretching across all four territories, and illustrating many of the flights which took place.

The CONTRIBUTORS

Claire Angier	Ivor Moore
# Bill Batty-Smith	Mike Oxley
David Brown	Lars Parsbro
Patrick Cassels	Derek Pocock
Brian Cave	John Rogers
* Peter Cockburn	Stephen Schumann
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Dan Griffin	° Carol Turner
John Higgins	John Warren
David Hubbard	Betty Watterson
Brian Marshall	Neville Watterson

Co-ordinator for the Sarawak part of the display

[0] Co-ordinator for the Labuan and North Borneo section

* Unable to be present, due to family bereavement

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Further details of the Sarawak Specialists' Society may be obtained from the Secretary, Dr Jon Higgins
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