

Stamp collecting or Philately is derived from the Greek root words *philos*, meaning “an attraction” and *ateleia*, meaning “exempt from duties and taxes.” It is usually seen as a schoolboy affliction that one outgrows like mumps and chicken pox. Unfortunately my addiction has turned quite chronic with no signs of abating. On every trip to the UK, I must perform my pilgrimage to Stanley Gibbons at the Strand and prowl the stamp exchange marts among the eclectic stalls at Spitalfields in London’s East End.

The collecting of stamps and the study of postal history of our

and the capital, George Town, thus sowing the seeds of the beginning of British expansion into the Malay States, and into British colonisation in South-East Asia. In 1826, Penang, along with Malacca and Singapore, became part of the Straits Settlements though still under the British Administration in India.

When the Straits Settlements became a crown colony under British direct rule in 1867, they began issuing their own stamps, not least because they adopted a currency based on 96 cents to a silver dollar. Beginning on 1 September 1867, existing stocks of East Indian Company stamps

POSTAGE”. The set of nine values, 2c to 96c, appeared gradually, these being the first stamps of the region.



Nearer home, in 1874, Sultan Abdul Samad of Selangor accepted a British

# Club History

# THROUGH STAMPS

country provides a penetrating and fascinating insight into pre-Independence Malaya.

The history of stamps in our region started with Francis Light’s interest in Penang, when he proposed the idea of a British Port near the Malay Peninsula to the East India Company, the de facto Government of India. Early in the 18th century, Penang was used as a staging post for fresh water and supplies for the very lucrative opium trade between India and China. In 1786, under the British East India Company, he leased Penang Island from the Sultan of Kedah, renaming it Prince of Wales Island,

in Anna values (currency unit formerly used in India and Pakistan) were overprinted with a crown and a new value in Straits cents.



Then, stamps printed by De La Rue for the Settlements started arriving in December of the same year. They are notable for a prominent white frame around the profile of Victoria, inscribed “STRAITS SETTLEMENTS

Resident in a system that allowed the British to govern while the Sultan remained the apparent ruler. The British Administration of Selangor rushed Straits Settlement stamps overprinted with “Selangor” into use.





In a further expansion move, in 1896, largely through the co-ordination of the then Selangor Resident, Frank Swettenham, Selangor united with Negri Sembilan, Perak and Pahang to form the Federated Malay States, with its capital in Kuala Lumpur. The first FMS Resident General was of course Sir Frank Swettenham. Although the Resident General was the real administrator of the Federation, each of the four constituent states of the Federation retained their respective hereditary rulers (sultans). With the Unfederated Malay States of Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu, Johor and Perlis, British domination of Malaya was complete.



In 1893, our Club's founding fathers established The Selangor Golf Club at Petaling Hill, which is now the site of my alma mater Victoria Institution. I have a cover in my postal history collection that was posted on 1 Jun 1893 in Singapore to a Mr Burton Dunn which arrived at Franklin, Pennsylvania on 4

Aug 1893. Those were the days of romantic steamship journeys by "parquebot" (French for mail boats) through the Suez canal, stopping at the Port of Marseille overland to London and then on another ship to New York. It took two months to arrive.

Administration and finally enjoying Independence. The history of our Club and our land mirrors the history of our nation like no other institution. It is an icon for the country.

There are moves reported in the media to change the nature of our Golf Course. However, it must be



On 28 June 1921, seven wise men signed the Memorandum and Articles incorporating the Selangor Golf Club as a Company Limited by Guarantee to take over the lands and liabilities of the unincorporated Club known as the Selangor Golf Club. The move to the new land where we are now situated was complete. In 1920 we were granted this land in perpetuity. We have in our archives the only surviving document (copies were lost during the Japanese Occupation in World War II) signed by the British Resident of Selangor as part of the Federated Malay States. We have also a copy of The Certificate of Incorporation dated 28 June 1921.

Our Club was founded in the early days of the British Administration of Selangor. Our course on this present land was granted during the administration of the Federated Malay States. We endured the Japanese Occupation which turned the course into farm land, days of British Military

understood that our Club and our land are inextricably intertwined. Civilisations tell their stories through their history, which is why people who are obsessed on destruction, target it. Removing places and things that have helped to give people a shared sense of history and identity only undermines social cohesion and makes reconciliation less likely.

Let us hope there remains space for places like our Club with evocative slices of pre-independence history. As an organisation, we must work to raise ourselves to a more visible and influential position. We must interact more with the media to make the public more aware of our history and its relevance to the history of our nation. We must be able to protect our own cultural assets for future generations of Members.

See you in the Club. ●

**Wong Lee Ming**  
Captain