

The Malaya Study Group

By Martin Roper

50 years after the formation of Malaysia and the introduction of its first stamps, members of the Malaya Study Group present a mixed medley of articles highlighting the benefits of studying this unique region. Martin Roper gets things underway with an introduction to the Study Group itself.

There are over 420 members of the Malaya Study Group (MSG) spread around the world, 25 per cent in Malaysia and Singapore, 8 per cent in the USA, 7 per cent in Australia, but the main block of over 50 per cent are in the UK. There are activities that involve all the members as well as local events in different parts of the world.

The MSG exists for collectors of the stamps, postal stationery and postal history of the states of Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore. Many MSG members also collect and study the eastern states of Malaysia. Geography and politics are very much part of the understanding of the philately of this area with different groupings of states forming different postal administrative areas throughout its history. The group's main tool for dissemination of philatelic knowledge is *The Malayan Philatelist*.

Publications

The Malayan Philatelist is now a quarterly publication containing articles, questions and answers submitted by the members. It was started in April 1959 by Howard J Selzer in the USA as a bi-monthly publication. He concluded his first editorial with 'The ship is launched, it is now up to the crew to make a successful voyage.' It has remained at the centre of the MSG since then under the editorships of Gordon Peters, who took over from Howard in 1970, and Len Stanway, who is steering it through the current decade. The MSG has prepared a DVD containing the first 50 volumes of *The Malayan Philatelist* which is available to members.

A regular article in *The Malayan Philatelist* is the 'New Issue Column' covering the stamps and postal stationery of Malaysia and Singapore. The MSG has recently published the Malaysian information and more in the three volume set, *Malaysia and The Federation of Malaya Their Stamps & Postal Stationery* by L C Stanway FRPSL. Volume 1 contains general background information, The Malayan Postal Union Postage Due Stamps and Federation of Malaya (1948 to 1963), Volume 2 covers the years 1963–1994 and Malaysian Postage Dues, with Volume 3 covering the years 1994–2009, Revenue Stamps and miscellaneous material such as 'first flight' covers.

Philatelic research carried out on behalf of the group is reflected in some of the most recent publications. *Malaya in the British Library Philatelic Collections* by Susan McEwen, published in 2012, documents all the items in the British Library collections that relate to Peninsular Malaya. The CD of *Postal Information Extracted from the Malay Government Gazettes* contains historical information on the postal and transport systems in Malaya from 1886 to 1941. This information has been extracted from the Government Gazettes of the Straits Settlements, the native states of Negri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak and Selangor and the Federated Malay States. The MSG has also published *Malaya Postal Stationery 1937–1947*, the result of a project to which many members of the MSG contributed. The resulting publications are reference documents which will answer many questions about Malayan philately.

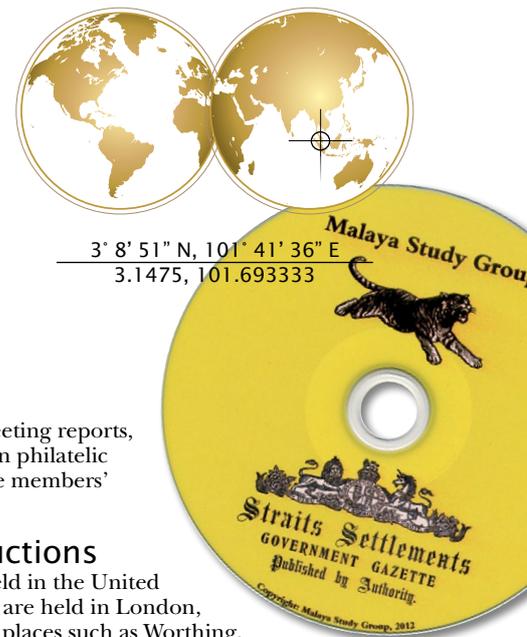
A newsletter is sent to all members four times a year. This contains information of forthcoming meetings, detailed reports of meetings and of displays, members' activities in competitions, changes of membership and information relating to the running of the group. It is the newsletter for all members and tries to cover activities on the different continents.

A dedicated website

This range of content is also published on the group's own website at www.malayastudygroup.com. The website details information about how to join, how to obtain the full list of MSG publications, contact details; and is regularly updated to include details of forthcoming events and reports of events, group and members' activities. It also

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Where In The World?



contains an archive of meeting reports, various sources of Malayan philatelic information and hosts the members' on-line Forum.

Meetings and auctions

About 12 meetings are held in the United Kingdom each year. Most are held in London, but some are also held in places such as Worthing, Leicester, Milton Keynes, Glasgow and/or Edinburgh. Most meetings have a display by members around a published theme. The meetings also include two room auctions each year, with postal bids being accepted from distant members. About two thirds of the auction material goes to postal bidders. There is also a system of exchange packets that are circulated amongst the members.

The members in Australia meet four times a year in either Melbourne or Sydney. The meetings basically are displays, and informal discussion. They also arrange meetings at some of the major National Exhibitions, and this enables members from outside Sydney and Melbourne to attend. Over the years they have met at Exhibitions in Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane.

There are also overseas representatives in USA, Malaysia and Singapore who coordinate the memberships in those countries, holding occasional meetings, especially in conjunction with special events.

For further information, visit the group's website www.malayastudygroup.com

