

**Proposed Measurement System.  
Straits Settlements 1 cent Surcharges, 1892,  
Recording the Variations.**

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**Introduction:**

During 1892, various stamp values were surcharged locally 'ONE CENT' in two lines with a bar through the base stamp value. The reasons for so many values are well known to collectors and was amply recorded by Dr. Wood. This issue has not, to my knowledge, been researched in depth since being recorded by Dr. Wood, and this project is an attempt to rectify the situation.

**Values surcharged:**

2 cents rose  
4 cents brown  
6 cents lilac  
8 cents orange  
12 cents dull purple

The main problems for collectors associated with the Straits Settlements 1 cent surcharges of 1892 are the large number of variations of font, horizontal positions of each line of text and space between text and bars that exist.

The wide and narrow letters were classified by Dr. Wood, being the basic types from 'a' to 'h' and two varieties relating to antique letter N's and E's, types 'i' and 'j' which are combined with the base type to give a sub type. In addition to wide and narrow letters, tall letters appear, these currently not being recorded. The wide and narrow letters can be hard to differentiate in some cases, as variations in width occur. In addition, different settings have been identified where minor changes of positioning of the antique letters occur. It may be that many more of the individual settings on the pane were also changed, but it would be more difficult to identify them.

**The types, according to Dr. Wood are:**

- a. 'O' and 'N' of 'ONE' and 'N' of 'CENT all narrow.
- b. 'O' and 'N' of 'ONE' narrow, 'N' of 'CENT' wide.
- c. 'O' narrow, both letters 'N' wide.
- d. 'O' narrow, 'N' of 'CENT' narrow, 'N' of 'ONE' wide.
- e. 'O' and 'N' of 'ONE' and 'N' of 'CENT all wide.
- f. 'O' and 'N' of 'ONE' wide, 'N' of 'CENT' narrow.
- g. 'O' wide, both letters 'N' narrow.
- h. 'O' wide, 'N' of 'CENTS' wide, 'N' of 'ONE' narrow.
- i. Antique 'N'.
- j. Antique 'E' in 'CENT'.

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**The different settings listed by Dr. Wood are as follows:**

**I. 8 cents orange.**

Antique 'N' at positions 11, 18 and 20, 9 mm between the word 'CENT' and bar on the bottom row.

**Ib. 8 cents orange.**

Antique 'N' at positions 11, 18 and 20, 11.25 mm between the word 'CENT' and bar on the bottom row.

**II. 2 cents rose, 4 cents brown, 6 cents lilac, 8 cents orange and 12 cents dull purple.**

Antique 'N' at positions 16, 53 and 57 plus antique 'E' in 'CENT' at positions 18 and 47.

**IIa. 4 cents brown.**

As for setting II, but stamp 40 has changed from type 'e' to type 'c'.

**III . 2 cents rose.**

As for setting IIa with the exception of the first nine stamps which are different types, and the antique 'E' on stamp 47 which has changed to a normal one.

The nine types that have changed are h to c, f to c, f to c, g to b, g to e, g to a, e to g, f to g, and c to e.

**Constant varieties occur on the base stamps, so far on two values, and the positions for these are known. The varieties are:**

1. 4 cents brown, damage to the head plate on the lower left, position Row 10, Stamp 5, lower right pane.
2. 6 cents lilac, 'Slug' flaw, bottom right corner panel and frame, position Row 2, Stamp 4, pane unknown. .

Inverted surcharges and inverted watermarks are not covered here as they add little or nothing to the study of the remainder of normal stamps.

Single stamps, in general, can occupy several positions on a pane of 60, based on type. The exceptions to this are stamps from the left hand and right hand columns. These stamps can normally be identified as the bar on the left or right is shorter than the stamp width. Identifying the type with a short bar can in some cases allow the stamp to be positively positioned on the pane. In many cases, the bottom row of stamps has the bar distanced considerably more from the text above than is found with the rest of the pane. In this case, positioning again is fairly straight forward.

Multiples of stamps make positioning much easier, the larger the multiple the better. Generally, most pairs can be positioned and all blocks of four and above should easily be positioned.

What has not yet been identified are the measurements of each individual surcharge in relation to positioning, left or right, of the two lines of text, and the distance between the text and the bar. On multiples, the individual surcharges can be measured in relation to

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its neighbours. If sufficient measurements were made, and the details placed into an electronic database, it should be possible to identify any single to its position(s) on the pane. Multiples could identify where different settings may possibly exist in addition to those recorded from antique letters.

It is with these problems in mind that a system for measuring and classifying this issue has been developed. A template has been produced (see attached sheet) to assist in the measuring, to give consistent results, especially if more than one person is working on the project, as they would have their own identical template to work with. The templates are available for left handed and right handed researchers, as it needs to be held in position with one hand whilst recording the results with the other.

Examining panes and large multiples has led to the conclusion that the most constant part of the surcharge is the letter 'C' of 'CENT'. As a result, the measuring system has adopted the 'C' as the point of reference for all remaining measurements, the red lines on the template being the equivalent reference point as shown below.



**Aligning the template with the 'C' of 'CENT'**

### **These measurements are:**

1. Displacement of 'O' of 'ONE' from 'C', in all cases apart from one example seen, always aligned or to the right. The measurements are taken from the left of the curve of the letter 'C', see diagram above. (Distance **a** on the template.)
2. Distance from the bottom of the line of text 'CENT' and the bottom of the bar below. (Distance **b** on the template).

These are the only two measurements that can be taken for single stamps, but provide a wealth of data when combined with the surcharge type.

3. On horizontal multiples, the distance from 'C' to the left of the 'C' on the left hand stamp. This measurement is repeated for each stamp to the left, moving the measuring template to the left hand stamp each time and aligning to the 'C' of 'CENT', measured from the left of both 'C's. (Distance **c** on the template.)
4. Distance **x** on the template is the normal height of the two rows of text, 'ONE CENT', top to bottom. No great variation has yet been seen in this measurement.
5. Distance **d** on the template is the distance between 'CENT' on the top stamp and 'CENT' on the bottom stamp, measured from bottom to bottom.

Measurements are to be to the nearest  $\frac{1}{2}$  mm, and where the measurement falls between two points, judgement should be made as to the nearest  $\frac{1}{2}$  mm +/- measurement that should be recorded.

**The following are illustrations of the number of measurements that can be obtained from different formats of multiples, letters as listed above.**

Single: a, b. + type

Horizontal Pair: a, b, a, b, c. + type + type

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Vertical Pair: a, b, a, b, d. + type + type

Block of Four: a, b, a, b, a, b, c, c, d, d. + type + type + type + type

As can be seen, a block of four provides twelve measurements. In addition to the measurements, there are four types based on wide/narrow and antique letters. The arrangement of types can in most cases provide the stamp positions on the pane of 60. This gives a total of sixteen separate pieces of information. This information, plus the value surcharged, will be entered into a searchable computer database. If it is possible, the setting is also entered.

When sufficient information has been stored electronically, it should be a simple matter to allocate a single stamp to its setting and position(s) on the pane by searching on the stored parameters within the database.

It should also be possible to print out all of the stored information to allow anyone carrying out a specialist study to allocate a setting and position for the majority of stamps in their possession from hard copy.

This system would benefit from having measurements recorded from full panes, as that would provide the basis for recognising smaller units. Using this system may indicate that many of the 60 impressions on a pane are unique.

It is also quite possible that differences will be found on the same settings, due to type moving horizontally left or right in the forme. This would also be recorded if sufficient data was made available.

**The proposed data fields in the database would be:**

- (1) Base Value (2c, 4c, 6c, 8c and 12c).
- (2) Type(s) (As per Dr. Wood).
- (3) Pane Position if known (1 to 60).
- (4) Size Vertically (1 to 10).
- (5) Size Horizontally (1 to 6).
- (6) Measurement **a** (In mm).
- (7) Measurement **b** (In mm).
- (8) Measurement **c** (In mm).
- (9) Measurement **d** (In mm).
- (10) Measurement **x**, if not standard (In mm).
- (11) Setting if known (I to III including 'a' and 'b' numbers).
- (12) Reference Number (See below).
- (13) Notes (Text as required).

For single stamps, 4 and 5 would have the values 1 and 1 (1x1), a vertical block of six 3 and 2 (3x2) etc.

Irregular blocks are not catered for, and would have to be entered as more than one block with a note to that effect.

The reference number is to be the unique reference for each individual stamp or block and the source of the supplied information. (e.g. NGM-6-0122). It is important to be able to identify a stamp or block, in the event that there is any reason to re-visit its measurements, and to allocate ownership.

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### **Recorded Data Format:**

The reference number should consist of three initials, the participants first, middle and last name. Where no middle name exists, a dummy letter should be used, perhaps the name you would like to have been called by!

**XXX-**

The stamp base value should follow the initials with a leading zero if not the 12 cents value.

**XXX-XX-**

The running number should follow the base stamp value with leading zero's to make a four digit number. This allows for 9999 specimens from any single participant which should be adequate.

**XXX-XX-XXXX**

The study relies on the study co-ordinator receiving the data outlined above for as many surcharges as possible and entering the data into a database. Once sufficient data has been entered, it will become apparent as to whether or not the system will work and provide a meaningful sort and identification capability. If successful, this method, with a suitably designed template, be used for other surcharges, the 10 cents on 24 cent green being a prime candidate.

Sheets have been produced in Excel for data entry and are attached as part of this system. These should be sent electronically where possible to the co-ordinator.

**Interested parties please study the above proposals and pass back any comments on the proposed system prior to the study commencing, via the MSG Forum. Arrangements will be made to supply templates, which will be free, when requirements are known and the system approved as workable.**

**Mac McLaren,**

**8<sup>th</sup>. June 2009.**