

CHAPTER SEVENTY-NINE

MALAYAN RAILWAY / KERETAPI TANAH MELAYU

Newspaper Parcels Stamps.

The survival rates of railway stamps were very low, so most issues are known only from small samples. No source of official printing information has been located.

Forerunners:

The Selangor Government Railway (opened 15 September 1886) issued parcels stamps for items such as newspapers sent by train. A 5c. in black on green is known. ¹

It is likely that similar stamps were issued by the Perak Government Railway, the Singapore-Kranji Railway and the Sungei Ujong Railway, but no examples have been recorded. Of these, the Singapore-Kranji Railway is known to have operated a newspaper parcels service during its independent period (1903-1912) with effect from 1 April 1904, but no stamps had been recorded at the time of writing.

Federated Malay States Railways:



On 1 July 1901, the Federated Malay States Railways officially took control of the Perak and Selangor Government Railways, but reorganisation as a single railway had to await the physical joining of the lines on 15 August 1903. The Malacca Government Railway had no independent operating existence as it was taken over by the FMSR on its opening day in 1905. The independent Sungei Ujong Railway was purchased by the FMSR in 1908. The Johore Railway is thought unlikely to have issued its own stamps between its opening in 1908 and its takeover by the FMSR in 1912, as it was largely operated in practice by the FMSR, but this cannot be ruled out.

The FMSR probably issued parcels stamps from its inception although none are known to survive. The FMSR Rule book was amended on 22 December 1916 as follows:

“Parcels of newspapers and periodicals will be conveyed between all stations on the Federated Malay States railways. Charges are at owner’s risk. Packages of newspapers and periodicals conveyed under these arrangements must be clearly addressed in English, open at both ends to allow of examination. Newspaper stamps to the value of 1, 2, 4, 7 and 10 cents, respectively can be obtained in sheets of 50 from the Railway Administration and stamps to the required value as per schedule must be affixed to the packets of newspapers before despatch (by senders) and such packets must be handed in at the Railway Parcels Office. No single parcel exceeding 100 lb. (pound) in weight will be accepted for conveyance.”

	up to 1 lb.	2 lb	3 lb	4 lb	5 lb	6 lb	7 lb	9 lb	10 lb	12 lb	14 lb
30 miles	4	7	7	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
50	4	7	7	10	10	10	14	14	14	14	14
100	7	10	10	14	17	17	17	21	21	21	21
200	10	10	14	17	17	21	21	25	28	32	32
over 200	11	11	15	18	18	22	22	28	32	35	39
	Up to 16 lb.	17 lb	18 lb	19 lb	20 lb	21 lb	22 lb	24 lb	25 lb	26 lb	27 lb
30 miles	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	14	14	14
50	14	17	17	17	17	21	21	21	25	25	25
100	21	25	25	28	28	28	32	32	35	35	39
200	32	32	32	35	35	39	39	42	46	46	50
over 200	42	42	46	46	50	50	53	53	57	60	60
	Up to 28 lb.	29 lb	30 lb	32 lb	33 lb	34 lb	35 lb	36 lb	37 lb	38 lb	40 lb
30 miles	14	14	14	14	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
50	25	28	28	28	32	32	32	32	35	35	35
100	39	39	42	42	46	46	50	50	50	53	53
200	50	53	53	57	60	60	64	64	67	67	71
over 200	64	67	67	71	75	78	78	82	85	85	85

	Up to 41 lb.	42 lb	44 lb	45 lb	46 lb	48 lb
30 miles	20	20	20	20	20	20
50	39	39	39	42	42	42
100	56	57	60	60	64	64
200	75	75	78	82	82	84
over 200	92	96	96	96	96	96

Over 48 lb, 1c. was charged per extra lb., irrespective of distance.

From 1 October 1920, charges were "Passenger's Luggage and Parcels : 15 cents minimum up to 25 miles up to 1 'catties'² (*sic*) rising to \$5.50 up to 100 'catties' over 400 miles then 50 cents per 10 'catties'."

Newspaper rates were increased from 26 November 1921 to "Minimum 5 cents: weight not exceeding 1 kati, distance not exceeding 30 miles; rising in varying steps from 1 cent; up to 48 katis over 200 miles \$1.28, then 1 cent per kati. [8lb. equivalent to 6 katis.]"

From 25 January 1924, rates quoted by the FMSR's Penang Hill Railway, and probably applicable throughout the FMSR, became "Rates for Penang Hill Railway parcels of newspapers and periodicals. 1 kati 1 cent, 2 & 3 katis 9 cents, 4 to 24 katis 13 cents, 25 to 32 katis 19 cents, 33 to 40 katis 23 cents, 40 to 48 katis 27 cents then 1 cent per 1 kati. General regulations for parcels state limits of 50 katis and 3 cubic feet."

A major boost to traffic in March 1930 would have been the decision by the Straits Times to send each evening's editions on the Night Mail from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur to achieve sale in KL next morning and in Penang by the same evening.

From 1 January 1931, the rate was "Minimum 10 cents: up to 5 katis up to 20 miles; rises in five cent increments; up to 50 katis up to 50 miles 45 cents."

At least eleven values of 45mm x 35mm (nominal – see note below) newspaper stamps are known (1c., 2c., 4c., 5c., 7c., 9c., 10c., 13c., 15c., 20c., 30c.) printed in black on different coloured papers. The stamps were of similar rectangular dimensions to the later issues below, except for the 5c. which also existed in a much wider format. Numbering ran down the columns. Unlike the later stamps, the number appeared above the word "NEWSPAPER".

They were printed in sheets of 50 (probably 5 x 10), using letterpress, probably by the FMSR's own printing department with outer edges of the sheet imperforate, at least at top and right (left and bottom edges not seen). They were probably numbered from top left down the successive columns.³ They were crudely and irregularly perforated line 11-12.

FMSR stamps recorded included:⁴

Value	Colour	Recorded numbers	Notes
1c.	white	40828, 61793. 70646, 73805/14 ⁵ , 82965;	
2c.	green	10902, 39091, 68284;	
4c.	blue/green	3687, 5913/15 ⁶ , 10695, 11822, 11944, 12558/66-68 (green), 12854 (green), 25671, 41092-94 (green), 59592 (green), 69012 (grey), 74203 (pale blue-green ⁷), 94616 (grey ⁸), 94791-92 (grey);	
5c.	brown	69912 ⁹ ;	
5c.	pale pink	1957;	Large format
7c.	pale pink	3914 (yellow, used 1926 at Tank Road ¹⁰) 40295 ¹¹ ;; 94305 ¹² ;	
9c.	grey-blue	61573 (grey-green), 88177 (pale blue)	
10c.	pink/red	1642 (salmon, Tank Road ¹³), 4966-67 (salmon, vertical pair used at Tank Road, blind perforated), 28313 (salmon), 28786-89 (deep salmon), 30179 (salmon), 32892 (salmon; Tank Road ¹⁴), 65408 (brick red);	
13c.		47014	
15c.	cream	2108	
20c.	white	17709 (Tank Road ¹⁵).	
30c.	rose.	9789 (Tank Road ¹⁶). A 30c. without number was overprinted "CANCELLED" and reprinted on the back as a platform ticket for Gemas station.	

c. 1948.

MR issue.



The FMSR and the other railways of the Malay Peninsular were restructured by the Railway Ordinance 1948 to form the Malayan Railway Administration, using the name Malayan Railway.

A landscape format (approximately 43mm x 34mm¹⁷) 5c. newspaper stamp in black on shades of green, similar to the normal smaller FMSR format, was in use in 1959¹⁸ inscribed “Malayan Railway” and other values have been reported.¹⁹ The design was similar to the pre-war one, but with altered and rearranged text. The stamps were straight-line rouletted within the sheet, with guillotined outer edges to the sheet without selvedge. Stamps were handstamped with a five-figure number in serif font (the 15c. was sans-serif) from bottom to top of each column working from the bottom left. Values were expressed as “CENTS” at the left and “cts.” in the centre.

MR stamps recorded included:

Value	Recorded numbers
5c.	56285, 56315
9c.	24878
15c.	22553-22555
20c.	93400

The designer was not recorded, but it was probably adapted from the FMSR design by a member of MR staff. They were printed in sheets of, it is believed, 50, by an unknown printer (probably the MR itself) using letterpress in black. No sheet markings are known as the edges of the sheets were guillotined imperforate. The paper had no watermark. The line roulette gauge has not been recorded.

Stamps were supplied to Station Masters un-gummed and pasted to parcels using any gum available. They were normally cancelled by a cross in red or blue pencil.

No.	S.G.	I.S.C.		Mint	Used
48N.1.1	-	-	5c. black on green (shades reported include green-buff or pale blue green).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48N.1.2	-	-	9c. brown on pale blue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48N.1.3	-	-	15c. black on salmon-brown.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48N.1.4	-	-	20c. black on (yellow?).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c.1957.

KTM issue.

Following Malayan independence on 31 August 1957, the Malayan Railway was officially renamed Keretapi Tanah Melayu, although both titles remained in concurrent use.

10	KERETAPI	No. 34725
CENTS	NEWSPAPER 10 cts. STAMP	
10	TANAH MELAYU	

Type A (artists impression)

20	KERETAPI	No. 20928
SEN	SETEM 20 sen. SURAT KHABAR	
20	TANAH MELAYU	

Type C (artists impression)

5	KERETAPI	No. 48680
SEN	NEWSPAPER 5 sen. STAMP	
5	TANAH MELAYU	

Type B (artists impression)

50	KERETAPI	No. 38051
SEN	SETEM 50 sen. SURAT KHABAR	
50	TANAH MELAYU	

Type D (artists impression)

Types:

The Malay language progressively displaced English as stamp reprints were ordered. There are consequently at least 4 types of stamp text, as shown above:

- A. By February 1967 (and probably much earlier), the newspaper stamps bore “KERETAPI” at the top and “TANAH MELAYU” at the bottom with values in “CENTS” at left and “NEWSPAPER / (value) cts. / STAMP” in the centre.
- B. At a later date, the values were changed to “SEN” at left and “NEWSPAPER / (value) sen. / STAMP” in the centre.
- C. At a later date, the central text became “SETEM / (value) sen. / SURAT KHABAR” .
- D. A sub-type has “SURATKHABAR” as one word.

Values:

At least five values have been recorded:

1. Value in cents:
 - 10c. black on light blue (range 10753 to 34725 - Type A) or lighter blue (94462 used February 1967);
 - 50c. black on salmon pink (Type A);
2. Value in sen:
 - 5s. black on light greenish blue (28001 seen) or light blue-green (range seen 48680 to 50121 - Type B);
 - 20s. black on white (20928 - Type C);
 - 50s. black on salmon pink (range 30120 to 38051 - Type D).²⁰

The designer was not recorded, but they were probably adapted from the MR design by members of KTM staff. They were printed in sheets of, it is believed, 50, by and unknown printer (probably the KTM itself) using letterpress in black. No sheet markings are known as the edges of the sheets were guillotined imperforate. The paper had no watermark. The line roulette gauge has not been recorded.

Used stamps are usually seen cancelled with a violet handstamp including the station name.

No.	S.G.	I.S.C.		Mint	Used
57N.1.1	-	NP1	5s. black on light greenish blue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57N.1.1a	-	-	- light blue-green. (Type B)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57N.1.2	-	NP2	10c. black on light blue. (Type A)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57N.1.3	-	NP3	20s. black on white. (Type C)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57N.1.4	-	-	50c. black on salmon pink. (Type A)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57N.1.4a	-	NP4	50s. black on salmon pink. (Type D)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Official Postal Stationery

As the railway was a government department, its correspondence was official mail and thus exempt from postage. Postage stationery inscribed “OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE ONLY” or “ON GOVERNMENT SERVICE” was produced, some bearing the KTM emblem, for use from the Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Singapore offices, and probably from stations, freight depots and other locations.

NOTES

- ¹ Reported by Mr. T. Goodbody in Railway Philately Vol.38 No.3 June 2004.
- ² The Catty or Kati is a traditional Chinese unit of weight measurement, equal to 1.33 Avoirdupois ounces. In Malaysia, it is defined as 604.79 grams; in Singapore, 604.8g.
- ³ Based in a top right stamp ending “...91”.
- ⁴ Unless otherwise stated, recorded in the collections of Mr. G.P.T. Peters, Mr. A.F. Norris or the author, or reported by Mr. J.H. Newman in TMP27/72.
- ⁵ Status auction, December 2016.
- ⁶ Status auction, December 2016.
- ⁷ eBay March 2010.
- ⁸ Reported by Mr. J.H. Newman May2017.
- ⁹ Status auction, December 2016.
- ¹⁰ eBay December 2012.
- ¹¹ Status auction, December 2016.
- ¹² Reported by Mr. J.H. Newman May2017.
- ¹³ De Lacy Spencer sale.
- ¹⁴ eBay December 2012.
- ¹⁵ De Lacy Spencer sale.

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- ¹⁶ De Lacy Spencer sale.
¹⁷ Stamp sizes vary considerably, particularly in the case of marginal copies.
¹⁸ Reported by Mr. H.C. Allen in TMP8/49.
¹⁹ 9c. and 20c. illustrated by Mr. J.H. Newman in TMP28/40.
²⁰ Reported by Mr. H.P. Yates in TMP 9/23. 38051 Type D at MSG meeting Jan05.