

## Striated coating in Malayan and West Indies stamps

When a certain type of paper is described without proper images to go with, misunderstandings easily pop up!

The description of „striated paper“ usually has „horizontal parallel lines“ which is completely wrong in the first place. And I will show you why!

The latest explanation given by Yangchen Lin assumes a rather obsolete concept of paper manufacturing. In Stampboards [Australian philatelic internet forum] in the thread - Exactly what is „Striated Paper“ or „Marmorizado“ paper?? - Malaya [Yangchen Lin] wrote on Tue Apr 21, 2020 05:29:24 am

*„Robert Hisey and I have proposed a mechanism for the formation of striated paper. The striations started out as random cockling of the paper as it was being dried. This was independent of the grain of the paper. Then, when the paper was gummed, it became wet again and the cockling was amplified but it was still in random directions. Finally, the paper was calendered to smooth it out, and this produced the horizontal striations. A detailed explanation can be found here.“*

Lin, Y. & Hisey, R. 2020. A theory of striated paper formation. The Malayan Philatelist 61:33–35.

Mechanically made stamp papers since the 1860-ies were made in reels to be cut later in sheets to be stored in reams. The individual sheets were gummed later on - often after printing the stamps. Around 1907 the reels of paper meant for stamp printing got gummed mechanically [after which the gum was immediately broken] and kept in reels for some time. When stamp paper was needed it depended on the type of printing - sheet-fed or reel-fed - the reel was cut up in sheets or not. In the case of the letterpress printing by De La Rue only sheet-fed printing was used.

The above explained type of striation would have caused myriads of examples in the 1860-1910 era and even later till deep in the 1950-ies [Indonesia printing by G.Kolff]..

The breaking of the gum implies breaking mechanically with sets of diagonal lines in TWO directions - both ascending and descending.



If that was not enough other forms of breaking could be applied such as the vertical or horizontal „ribbing“ of the 1927 Palestine pictorials printed by Harrison&Sons in letter-press.



The coated stamp paper De La Rue used in the 1930-ies is characterized by its deep watermark impression at the back. The gumming seems to be applied sheet-wise as there is no sign of gum-breaking.

The Coronation omnibus of 1937 printed in recess by De La Rue shows gum breaking which means the stamp paper was probably delivered in reels from the paper mill and cut into sheets by the printers.





Having stamp paper in reels causes the paper to „remember“ the reeling and that is why individual used stamps when soaked and dried again do NOT curl along the direction of paper i.e.along the long axis of the stamp in portrait position, but curl across!

The 1935 KGV definitives of the Straits Settlements show this axial curling still but some items already curl across! All KGV I [and later] definitives curl across.



When the premises of De La Rue were bombed and destroyed on 29.12.1940, the printing of stamps in letterpress was continued for a while by SUBSTITUTE printers like Harrison&Sons, Williams Lea and Bradbury Wilkinson. The letterpress printing by De La Rue was resumed probably in late 1941 somehow as there is no straight-forward quoting in philatelic literature that this happened as apparently no philatelist cared to research this and write it down

In the late 1940 and early 1941 for Malaya the 2c orange, 3c green, 6c red, 8c grey and 15c ultramarin were new colours and values to be printed.

These stamps show best the paper problems De La Rue had due to the restrictions as to the use of chalk in the coating and therefor had to deal with other options like non-chalk coated paper and uncoated paper. Philately not caring much for the distinction in these types of paper came up with the term „substitute“ or even worse „ordinary“.

Clear is that misunderstandings had to arise!

Uncoated paper used for Straits Settlements stamps exist in TWO versions and stamps on it were printed by Harrison&Sons. One with sheet-wise applied gumming and the other originating from pre-gummed paper in reels. Apparently ungummed sheets of uncoated were available in late 1940.

In the publications of the Geosix Study Group we find an almost hidden remark about the „striated paper“ in an article by Susan McEwen in WN 246 in December 2013 -

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De La Rue's Paper Issue books are also in the British Library and have been consulted for this article. They record and reconcile the number of sheets issued for each Duty value on each requisition. Sadly they do not confirm the watermarks, nor do they give any mention as to the source of the paper. For the new portrait 8c stamp, requisitions 1162/3 and 1228/1 have descriptions of the paper as "White thick". A very few entries describe the paper as "Medium white" the vast majority give no description at all. The paper known by philatelists as "striated paper" is a thinly coated chalky paper where the coating was applied unevenly due to war-time supply problems. Johore 10c, 50c, \$1, \$2, \$5 and \$10 are known on this paper. The De La Rue correspondence files of letters to and from the Crown Agents in 1941 - 1942 about Johore make no mention of paper at all and give us no help on the source of this paper.

The only plate number known with this "striated paper" is plate 5, which is understandable, in fact any other plate number would be most surprising! All the values listed in the paragraph above are known overprinted by the Japanese confirming that they reached Malaya before the Occupation. The Japanese overprints on these values are "Dai Nippon 2602 Malaya" for fiscal use. The 50c + \$2 were also overprinted in 1944 for the Red Cross issue.

JOHORE The Printings of 1936-41 Issue:

„A very few entries describe the paper as "Medium white" the vast majority give no description at all. The paper known by philatelists as "striated paper" is a thinly coated chalky paper where the coating was applied unevenly due to war-time supply problems Johore 10c, 50c, \$1, \$2, \$5 and \$10 are known on this paper. The De La Rue correspondence files of letters to and from the Crown Agents in 1941 - 1942 about Johore make no mention of paper at all and. give us no help on the source of this paper.“

Harrison & Sons having available uncoated AND ungummed paper in sheets, could have made an experiment doing a simultaneous gumming AND coating.

Why simultaneously? Mallard in the already mentioned Stampboards thread shows a part of a sheet where the coating and the gumming stop at more or less the same position. Obviously this is sheet-wise gumming.



Harrison & Sons had their own paper supply for the UK stamps they were printing since 1934. However, all these stamps were printed in photogravure on either uncoated paper [UK] or on coated paper [British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada and Seychelles since 1938].

Where did they get uncoated AND ungummed paper for letterpress from in 1941?

And in 1941 they had already gummed REELS of paper as well?

So far, we have THREE types of paper for Malayan stamps in 1941,

- striated coating paper
- uncoated paper gummed sheet-wise
- uncoated paper pre-gummed from reels.

In the 1941-1945 period we see non-chalk coated paper used for the Indian Ocean archipelago Seychelles and the West Indies Virgin Islands - both printed by Harrison & Sons in photogravure. This type of paper has a gumming that was broken mechanically with sets of diagonal lines in TWO directions - both ascending and descending. The coating was applied rather roughly. The earlier [1938] printings do NOT have this broken gum.

A similar type of coating can be found for the BMA stamps of the Straits Settlements in the 1945-1947 period. And these stamps ALSO have the broken gum.

It is obvious that we miss the 1942-1944 period of De La Rue's letterpress printing for the colonies that weren't occupied by the Japanese! Our so-called „striated“ paper is also found in a few high value stamps of the Bahamas.

Philatelists of the Malayan area do not care about the Leewards Islands and vice versa.



Having spread out our lack of information on the 1940-1945 period or rather our lack of research done, we may go back to the so-called striated paper with obvious examples.

Good examples were show in that same Stampboards thread: Exactly what is „Striated Paper“ or „Marmorizado“ paper??

Malaya [Yangchen Lin] shows excellent examples:



Quite clearly the „lines“ are NOT parallel! They'd rather follow a „TREE“ with splitting branches from right to left.

Also Mallard's Selangor block shows a margin with tree-branches:



And slightly darkened by me while scanning the 2c orange



BTW the following 25c BMA stamps also shows the „dots“ around „Straits“!





As well does the strip Tod Moore in the same Stampboards thread shows:



Focussing on the 6c:





Can there be any doubt that we are dealing with a tree-like striation starting at the right??

In the case of Selangor the striae are vertical:





To show that the striated coating is not restricted to the Malayan area a Bahamas stamp that shows the tree as well:





A similar phenomenon can be seen in photogravure stamps. The below examples are from Switzerland

The photogravure phenomenon that shows a similar tree-like flow - this time from left to right:





A Seychelles example in photogravure:



### Conclusion

The coating substance of the Malayan stamps was applied by some kind of roller or cylinder from left to right whereby the fluid coating ran the other way like the photogravure ink in the Swiss stamps does.

The exact explanation of that phenomenon I leave to the physics scientist.

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Leiden, 03.05.2021