

AN OUTLINE ON BEERS AND BREWING IN BRITISH MALAYA: 1827-1957. PART I

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Introduction

This article offers a history of beers and brewing in British Malaya from the 1820s until approximately 1939, the start of World War II. A second part, to appear later in this journal, will continue the story to 1957, when Malaya became an independent federation except for Singapore.¹ Part I will review the aptness for beer of the various communities in Malaya, and the types and sources of beer consumed from the 1820s until 1939. It will show that, in tune with other colonies in British Asia, British ale and porter were great favourites until partly displaced by lager from Continental Europe in the last quarter of the 1800s. British lager met some of this new demand but never had the quality image of Continental lager, especially German. Yet, conditions related to both world wars, and other circumstances, sometimes affected the fortunes of European lager.

Part I will review, as well, the two breweries set up in Singapore in the early 1930s: their ownership, types of beer made, methods of production, market success, and advertising styles. The traditional military affection for beer is also part of this story, including how the Navy, Army, and Air Force Institutes (N.A.A.F.I.) functioned in Malaya. Retail venues where beer was consumed, characteristic of the different social classes, will also be considered. To set the scene we first present background pertaining to the geopolitics of Malaya, and its demographic make-up over time.

Geopolitical backdrop

The political structure of the former British Malaya has been justly described as ‘peculiarly complex’.² For the purpose of this paper British Malaya and Malaya mean primarily the territory that comprised the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States, and the Unfederated Malay States. The Straits Settlements consisted mainly of Penang island, Province Wellesley, Singapore island, Malacca, and the

Dindings, and were under direct control of Britain as a Crown Colony from 1867. In the latter part of the 1800s and early 20th century the federated and non-federated Malay States also came under British control, with protectorate status for the former and suzerainty (a lesser form of control) for the latter.

Malaya hence formed the polities on or alongside the peninsular mass now known as West Malaysia, save that Singapore has been an independent city-state since mid-1965. The former Crown Colonies of Sabah - formerly British North Borneo - and Sarawak, on northern Borneo island, 400 miles across the South China Sea, now form East Malaysia. West Malaysia was settled in much larger numbers and has always encompassed the main cities. In contrast, East Malaysia has been characterised by ‘a notably lower level of economic development’ with only modest urban development.³ British Malaya was a key asset of the British Empire in Southeast Asia. Emphasizing its shipping and trade importance, the following was noted in the early 1930s:

Forming as it does one shore of the Straits of Malacca, British Malaya commands the principal sea-route connecting the Indian with the Pacific Ocean, and her two great ports of Penang and Singapore (the latter especially) are important transshipment and distributing centers for trade between Europe and the Far East on the one hand, and the East Indian islands and Australasia on the other.⁴

This perspective was certainly a factor in the founding of the Straits Settlements, to protect Britain’s China trade in particular. Penang was occupied by Francis Light on behalf of the British East India Company, which had sent three ships to the area in 1786. Rights were negotiated with the Sultan of Kedah resulting in the founding of the capital, George Town. The principal remaining Straits Settlements were successively colonised by the 1820s, notably Singapore in 1819. Why did Britain intervene progressively in Malaya? In 1971 the scholar Hideo Yamada described West



Figure 1. From Swettenham, F.A. (1907) *Account of the Origin and Progress of British Influence in Malaya*. London: Lane. Public domain:

Malaysia as ‘the greatest tin and rubber-producing center in the world’ and stressed the ‘objective’ importance of the tin-mining states to the Colonial economy.⁵ Other causes have also been put forth, including that Britain intervened in Malaya to prevent Germany from doing so first, hence to impede its expansion in Southeast Asia.⁶

Demographics

In 1849 the population of Malaya was 59,043 of which 198 were European, 304 Eurasian, and 24,790 Chinese.⁷ Hence the European and Eurasian population was very small at the outset, as it remained in percentage terms throughout the history of British Malaya. Data is also available following relatively systematic censuses in 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1947, 1950 and 1955. The population categories often utilized in published analyses are Malay, Chinese, Indian, and Other - a simplification given the diversities within each group and general polyglot nature of Malaysian society.⁸ A 1901 count of Malaya, exclusive at the time of Singapore,

had a total population of 1,733,700. The Malays were 1,088,900; Chinese, 508,500; Indian, 107,700; and Other, 28,600.⁹ ‘Other’ was hence under 2%. Information as presented from the 1931 census, including Singapore, had a total population of 4,303,279. The breakdown was Malays, 1,892,601; Chinese, 1,682,761; Indian, 618,978; European, 17,543; Eurasian, 16,072; and Other, 74,874.¹⁰ The Chinese population had evidently gained considerably in relation to the Malays. Data as presented from the 1947 census had a total population of 4,893,000. The Malays were 2,418,000; Chinese, 1,871,000; Indian, 531,000; and Other, 73,000.¹¹ The Chinese were still significant in numbers but viz. the Malays, had fallen in percentage terms after the war.

Beer drinkers and the different communities

Beer in the European sense was not a tradition in Chinese or Indian communities, although other alcohol could be, and was proscribed in formal terms by Islam, the faith of most Malays. Therefore, however one might define the Other,

European, and Eurasian categories, the market for beer seemed to hold limited promise, especially at a time when beer was not the 'international' drink it is today. Nonetheless, a comparatively robust market emerged characterized by good variety.

The British community, representing most of the Europeans, was a natural constituency for beer. In British Malaya, a well-established drinking culture existed as described by Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper in their book *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941-1945*. The authors cite the *stengah* (whisky-and-soda) and *pahit* (gin-and-bitters) as emblematic.¹² Anthony Burgess' *Malayan Trilogy* – comprising of *Time for a Tiger*, *The Enemy in the Blanket* and *Beds in the East* – for its part, ends as a semi-valentine to beer. Margaret Shennan's *Out in the Midday Sun: The British in Malaya 1880-1960* mentions beer consumption on numerous occasions, e.g. in 1930s Johore for a 'Christmas Eve bachelor party for Waifs and Strays without families' and at a 1926 house-warming in Pahang state, along with other drinks.¹³

The Eurasian group was derived from relationships between a Southeast Asian and a European. It was quite diverse unto itself, due in part to the varying European and Asian descents: Dutch, Portuguese, German, British, Indian, Chinese, etc. Despite this heterogeneity, in Malaya the Eurasians generally spoke English, practised Christianity, and bore British surnames.¹⁴ Banks, commercial enterprises and the civil service typically employed them, although not usually at senior levels.¹⁵ Against this background, the Eurasians typically followed the social mores and cultural habits of the British, which extended to matters of diet and drinks.¹⁶ Some Chinese, Indians, and Malays, for whom beer was not a cultural *acquis* as noted, partook as well.

Another factor for beer was the sizeable numbers of British, Empire or Commonwealth Forces at times in the colony. In 1937-38, before a build-up for WW II, the garrison stood at four infantry battalions, miscellaneous volunteer and other units, R.A.F. personnel at a few fields, and naval personnel mainly in Singapore – perhaps 15,000 in total.¹⁷ At the height of the 1948-1960 'Malaya Emergency', the Communist insurrection that was ultimately defeated, 40,000 British and Commonwealth forces were based in Malaya.¹⁸ The penchant of the Forces for beer, at least in the periods we are discussing, is without controversy in beer historical studies.¹⁹ The propensity for beer such as it was in Malaya was encouraged by print advertising by exporters and, later, local breweries. The establishing of two breweries in Singapore in the 1930s increased the market, in part due to their favourable pricing. Still, a fairly broad range of imports was kept up due to the military factor, but also growing tourism.

Beers during the 19th Century

A review of beer adverts in the 19th century Malayan press²⁰ suggests that the taste for beer dates from Singapore's founding, consistent with the Far East colonial pattern.²¹ At first, ale and stout held sway. By the end of the century lager accounted for about half of the market. Much of it was German or other European, but by now Britain also sent lager to Malaya.

Only eight years after Sir Thomas Raffles founded the Singapore settlement in 1827, Hodgson's Pale Ale appears in town in casks – the famous London-made I.P.A. of Raj lore.²² In 1829-1830 the port of Singapore recorded entry of 553 gallons of 'beer' (packaging not stated), and a further '180 casks, 296 hogsheads, 265 dozens, and 19 cases'.²³ In 1835 Hodgson's Pale Ale appears again in cask in Singapore, 'fine fresh' to boot.²⁴ Two years later Allsopp's and Hodgson's beers are available both in cask and bottle in Singapore²⁵ and in 1847 the merchant John Steele & Co. vaunted the Bass, Allsopp and Tennent's ales, the stock bottled variously in Liverpool, 'Europe' or Singapore itself (the latter said to be 'quite up', or fizzy), with Bass and Allsopp's in cask also offered.²⁶ In December 1848 the local press is promoting the October 1847 brewing of Hodgson and Abbott's 'Indian Pale Ale, in Wood' ('strongly recommended').²⁷

The Adelphi Hotel on High Street, in 1851, advertised its beef, mutton, liquors, wines, and billiards rooms to the 'gentry and Merchants of Singapore', with bottled beer at \$0.50 per bottle.²⁸ The brewer Salt & Co. of Burton evidently had a good market in the Straits for its pale ale, as shown by a lengthy advert in *The Straits Times* in 1852.²⁹ In 1854 a merchant requested supply 'in wood' of Bass, Allsopp's, Salt's 'or other good brands', as existing supplies were all 'cleared'.³⁰ All were classic India Pale Ales. Ten years later Robinson & Co. advertised in Singapore availability of 'ale and porter' from Bass, Allsopp, and Guinness, as well as 'other brands'.³¹ In 1877, Guinness and Barclay Perkins' porter are in the market, plus Allsopp and Bass again in cask or bottle.³² Some adverts made clear the market was also an export one. One noted, 'The demand for exportation and supply of shipping has increased the consumption considerably'.³³ Considering the quantities mentioned in mid-19th century adverts, consumption was likely growing among the non-British groups, but we must also factor the re-export market: Singapore was an entrepôt from earliest days, in beer no less than other commodities.

From about 1875 lager is increasingly advertised. The reign of just ale or porter to that point was forever altered. Among the first examples are Danish Carlsberg and Tuborg, both as



Figure 2. Tottenham label. Source: <http://breweryhistory.com/wik/>

early as 1877.³⁴ This Carlsberg was surely lager, rather than some sort of top-fermented beer, and the Tuborg sent to Malaya in 1877 was likely also a lager. The Carlsberg brewery has long been known for its familiar ‘crown’ label, adopted in 1904.³⁵ An earlier label featured a crown protruding from the top edge, and a swastika. It was utilized in some international markets including Singapore into the mid-1930s.³⁶

For an index of lager’s increasing ubiquity in Malaya, the German St. Pauli ‘Girl’ Brand is advertised in 1895,³⁷ and Frankfort Brewing Co.’s Pilsener in 1889.³⁸ The Pilsener was said in the advert to be comparable to an ‘English Bitter Beer’ save for a lower original gravity, higher final gravity (‘attenuation or fermentation has not been carried as far’), and ‘greater sense of fullness to the palate’ yet lacking the ‘bitterness and dark colour’ of ‘stout’. The message: a pale, medium-gravity pilsener from Continental Europe was supe-

rior to a British pale ale. In 1895 an advert appeared for Tottenham Export Pilsener: hence a British brewer was seeking to meet the European challenge.³⁹ British brewers also tried to parry lager’s appeal by advertising their own ‘light’ ales. Bass Green Diamond was an instance, differentiated from, yet sometimes paired in adverts with, the old stand-by Bass Pale Ale (Red Triangle). In 1900 a merchant, John Little, touted E. & J. Burke’s bottlings of ‘Bass’s Indian Pale Ale – do. Green Diamond Ale’.⁴⁰ A similar, if not the same, Green Diamond was advertised in 1890 by the bottler Robert Porter. Next to the copy line ‘Bass & Co.’s Light Oriental Ale - Specially Brewed for Tropical Climates’ appeared a diamond form. The advert adds that the beer has the ‘delicacy’ and ‘lightness’ of ‘Pilsener Ale’ – withal, a clear pitch for the lager market.⁴¹ Also in 1890, two bottlers, Robert Porter again for Bass Light Oriental Ale, and Stone for Bass Green Diamond, tout their beer as suitable for tropical climates.⁴² ‘Delicate flavour’ and a

'refreshing' quality characterised Porter's beer, while Stone's beer is 'lighter than German beer'.

In 1890 in Singapore, 'iced, 'draught' McEwan's ale is advertised by Temple Bar Hotel of High Street, Singapore at \$0.06 per glass; whatever its character, it was served in the manner of draught lager.⁴³ Draught Guinness is also extensively advertised in the 1890s, e.g. in 1892 at the same hotel in Singapore.⁴⁴ In 1896, according to an annual statistical report for the Straits Settlements, Germany exported 258,000 gallons of 'beer' while Britain sent 264,000 gallons of 'ale and beer' and 'porter and stout' (combined); hence the two countries were basically neck and neck. The source is less clear on the British percentage of the total market, it appears at a minimum it was 44% in 1896.⁴⁵ From a duty standpoint, in this period for Singapore and the other Settlements all imported beer ('malt liquors') paid the same duty, \$0.18/gal.⁴⁶

The pattern was set for the early 20th century: an inherited taste for ale and stout was now partly displaced by lager, especially German lager.

Beers from 1900-1931

The lager wave kept coming, semi-literally when in July 1900 the Sarkies of Raffles hotel fame announced that 'The Celebrated "Wickuler" brand German draught iced beer' had just arrived on the mail steamer Konig Albert.⁴⁷ They continued to advertise the beer for the next four years, at least. British ale brewers continued to pitch to the lager market by 'brewing light', although their regular pale ales were also available. In 1907 'Bass' Red Pyramid, so termed in this case by E. & J. Burke, and 'Bass' Green Diamond Light Bitter Ale were advertised together.⁴⁸ But lager remained an obvious gambit for Britain. Ind Coope of Burton advertised in 1903 its 'British lager beer' made from 'pure malt and hops' (as the best European lager was then).⁴⁹ For its part, the Scottish brewer J. & R. Tennent manfully covered all angles in 1907 with its 'Munich' (i.e., dark lager), Pilsener, Pale Ale, and Stout. The advert contained the pointed invitation to 'Support British Beers', reinforcing the message that Continental brewers did not have a lock on brewing lager. In 1908, we find a box advert by wine and spirit merchants Caldbeck, Macgregor & Co. for Amstel Lager Beer, another powerful force in brewing from the Netherlands at the time.⁵⁰

The shipper, C.G. Hibbert, in 1913, advertised both its own-name lager and Peter Walker's Boy Brand of Noltings Munich Lager.⁵¹ A 1915 advert in the *Malaya Tribune* headlined 'British Beer' again touted pilsener, this time Samuel

Allsopp & Sons', the 'well-known brewers of Burton-on-Trent'; war in Europe was likely assisting British lager in Malaya.⁵² But Japanese lager also entered the market early and would only grow in importance. In 1904 an advert appears for Asahi lager in *The Straits Times*.⁵³ The agent named, Shibuya & Co. of High Street, Singapore, was making an evident push for the brewer, Osaka Beer Brewing Co., as in 1904 the same newspaper received a 'daintily illustrated booklet' on the brewery. The journal subsequently printed an item noting that Asahi beer was known 'throughout the East'.⁵⁴

In 1915 the *Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* re-printed a short piece, 'East India Pale Ale', from the *Globe* in London. It stated that 'German beer [had] ... captured the ... market' in India, a fact 'rather curious' since India Pale Ale had been developed for the India market. Notice was taken too that Japanese brews were gaining on the German; war conditions surely played a role here.⁵⁵ The article had to suggest in readers' minds a parallel with Malaya itself.⁵⁶ In 1918 an 'American Pilsener Beer' from Ballantine, New Jersey, appeared in Singapore, but it seemed a trial without result.⁵⁷ The following year, Jeffrey's Pilsener (from Scotland) made the unoriginal but no doubt effective claim of 'refreshing'.⁵⁸ In 1921, Hackerbrau 'Axe' from Munich was touted in the *Malaya Tribune* as 'brown and lager', and also the 'cheapest in the market'.⁵⁹ Two years later John Little tried a new tack, stating that his Tropical British Lager, brewery not mentioned, was ideal for the taste 'midway between the ordinary "Bass" quality and a German pilsener'.⁶⁰ Real German lager was available a plenty in 1920s Malaya. Kloster,⁶¹ Beck's,⁶² and St. Pauli Girl⁶³ each provides an example, and indeed together, a 'family' instance.⁶⁴ Australia also had a hand in the market. In large type, the words 'Resch's Australian Beer' headlined an outside bottle of the brand in *The Straits Times* in 1923.⁶⁵

In 1924 the Canadian government publication *Commercial Intelligence Journal* reported on the Malayan beer market, among others.⁶⁶ It offers good detail on the main exporting countries and forms a useful comparison with the 1896 data. The report pegged the value of the total beer market in Straits Dollars as \$675,000. Britain had \$245,428; Japan, \$188,665; Germany, \$125,074; Holland, \$37,152; Denmark, \$33,875; Australia, \$5,444; and Canada, \$191, 'the latter practically a sample shipment'. Hence, Britain had only 36% of the total market, a drop from 1896. Japan's rise was evident, in part probably attributable to interrupted German sales during WW I. The article noted how British brewers had introduced 'tropical' ales to compete with German beer, yet 'for palatability and lightness the German brands are, however, in greater favour'. This statement is notable given



Figure 3. MacEwan's label.

Source: <http://breweryhistory.com/wiki/>

the opportunities German brewing lost in WW I. The report also named the following leading brands in the Peninsula:

Bass's ordinary and tropical brands, Tennent's "T" brand, Ross' Pilsener, and "Bull Dog"; the Australian ... Swan and Resch's; Ny Carlsberg ... the Danish brand; ... Beck's "key" brand and the St. Pauli "Girl" brand ... from Germany ... [and] A light beer called Z.H.B. ... from Holland.

Despite the fallen German market share, the report noted German brands 'were again coming into greater demand'; this was probably due to receding war memories. In a 1925 advert that still bravely claimed 'British Beer is Best' Samuel Allsopp tried to differentiate its 'British Pilsener'.⁶⁷ Carlsberg was still in the market,⁶⁸ and Tuborg,⁶⁹ some 60 years after they first reached the Peninsula. In 1927, the British H & G Simond's Light Pale Ale, as well as San Miguel Pilsener from the Philippines, were advertised on the same page of *The Straits Times*.⁷⁰

Java received many of the same imports as Malaya. An Australian visitor rated three as follows: draft Girl brand first (St. Pauli Girl), next Amstel, finally Kloster. Acknowledging Kloster's high reputation among his own countrymen, he wrote:

We stayed for luncheon, and sampled a couple of pots of Amstel bier (Dutch), which we had not tasted previously. We liked it better than the German bier obtained elsewhere along the route. One of the earliest warnings given to a tourist in Java is to beware of drinking water. I must confess that the sacrifice was not a difficult one to make. On our arrival at Sourabaya a few days ago we had our first taste of Kloster bier, the virtues of which have been extolled by many Australian visitors to Java. We were all disappointed with it. On making enquiries, we found that, the hotel served a draught ale brewed in Germany, and called vatbier. We tried it, and since then "Girl brand Vatbier" has been the unanimous order of the party at all stopping places.⁷¹

Either Kloster, as many famous names of our time, didn't quite rate for the discerning drinker, or the batches sampled weren't in good condition, from over-age or poor handling.

Bass Purple Triangle Pale Ale

Between the wars, Bass of Burton-on-Trent was still promoting a light bitter ale, now billed as Purple Triangle. A Bass 'light' ale, alternative to its famous Red Triangle pale ale, had been marketed in various eastern Colonial markets since the mid-1800s.⁷² However, none of these instances

disclosed a Purple Triangle connection, label or other. Bass first marketed Purple Triangle in 1922 as a beer specially adapted for export. In his *"The Greatest Brewery in the World": A History of Bass, Ratcliff & Gretton, C.C.* Owen states that Bass made an agreement with the shippers Read Bros., T. McMullen, and C.G. Hibbert to bottle Purple Triangle. Furthermore, Hibbert's bottling capacity was increased 'to process up to 7,000 dozen pint bottles per week'. In addition, Bass used a 'special 90-barrel aluminium rail tanker'.⁷³ This suggests the beer was brewery-conditioned, or bright beer. The technology was of the moment, as bright beer was being shipped the same year to publicans by road tanker for draught dispense from tanks in the cellar.⁷⁴ Purple Triangle was likely processed in similar fashion, except bottled, in tune with the sediment-free, bottled ale increasingly distributed in Britain at the time.

An early Purple Triangle advert (1922) states: 'There is no beer like BASS and it tastes as good as in an English tavern if you insist on the "Purple Triangle" bottling ... The "Purple Triangle" is Bass' special brew for the Tropics'.⁷⁵ In a 1923 advert, the copy line 'At the sign of the Purple Triangle' was bracketed with 'Bass' shown in the 'signature' design long associated with the brand.⁷⁶ Pictured was a rustic English tavern from which extended a triangular sign, marked 'Light'. The advert read: 'Bass Light Export Ale. Kangaroo Brand, The Bass of the Tropics.'

Clearly, money and time went into Purple Triangle, as shown by a string of adverts for the brand in the 1920s. The Kangaroo branding again appeared in 1926, with the bottler's name clearly legible: 'C.G. Hibbert & Co. Ltd., London and Southampton'.⁷⁷ A 1930 advert was more stripped down - no kangaroo, no shipper's name, simply: 'Mine's a "Bass". "Bass Purple Triangle" - Specially brewed for the Tropics'.⁷⁸ A similar advert in 1930 added the following: "'BASS" Purple Triangle is NOT heavy. Specially brewed for the Tropics, it is light but not watery like many export beers. A really satisfying drink. Ask for it at your Club. On sale at all hotels'.⁷⁹

The language points to a beer with more body than regular Bass, and other export pale ales. The 'watery' character of the latter was likely a reference to their increased attenuation from prolonged bottle-maturation, especially in a warm climate. In contrast, Bass Purple Triangle was probably filtered and quite possibly pasteurised, hence preserving the body one would expect in metropole's 'tavern'.⁸⁰ Yet, a non-watery beer was still 'light'. How could this be? It perhaps meant Purple Triangle was not unusually strong from prolonged attenuation, and/or lighter in colour or hop flavour than standard pale ale, *a la* pilsener. It is interesting, too, that 1930 is (apparently) the first year Bass Blue Triangle is

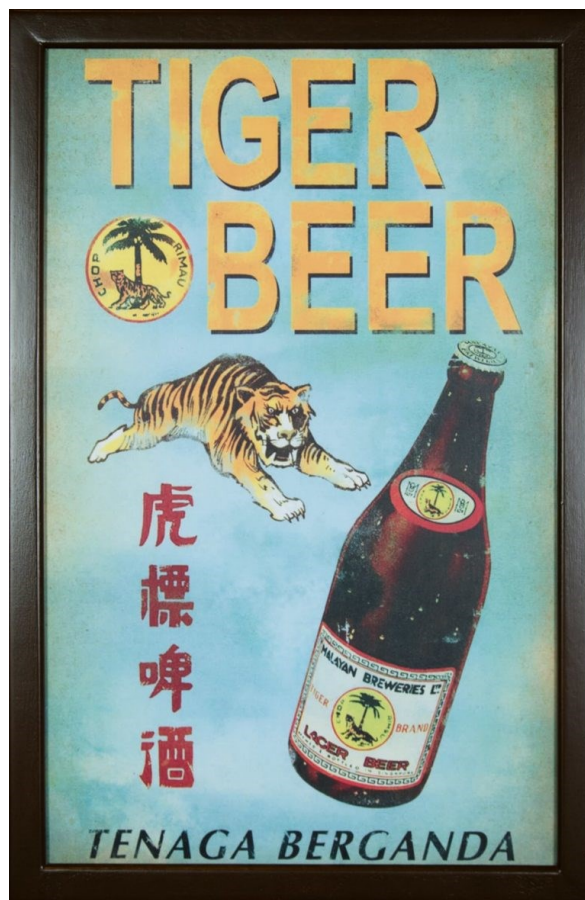
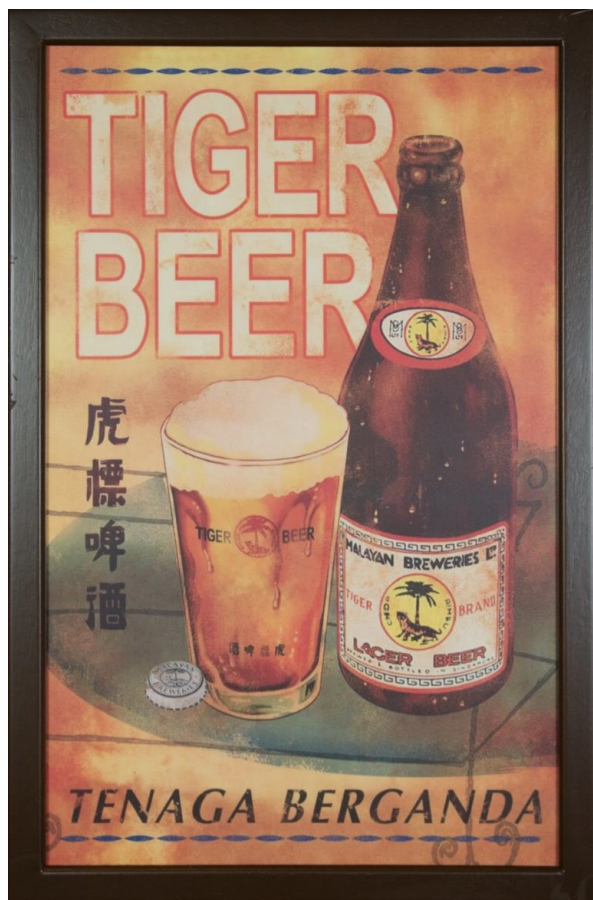
brewed in Britain.⁸¹ Blue Triangle was a filtered, pasteurized version of Bass Red Triangle.⁸² By definition its character was stable on leaving the brewery gate. Blue Triangle was possibly the domestic version of a beer trialled earlier in a distant market, Purple Triangle. Still, the various Bass pale ales in any given period may have shared a single recipe, at least in the 1900s. A differing character may have been imparted to each simply by varying the conditioning or maturation. This level of inquiry must await an examination of brewing records in the Bass archive.

Other imports in the late 1920s, early 1930s

Asahi beer, introduced in Malaya before WW I, followed up via adverts through the 1920s, e.g. in 1928 in *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*.⁸³ In 1930 London-brewed Reid's Lager is waiving the flag for British lager.⁸⁴ Heineken Lager Beer is also advertised that year, possibly for the first time in Malaya,⁸⁵ but Heineken would soon make a much bigger play in the market. In 1930 Simonds promoted its milk stout, one of many adverts for the beer in the interwar years.⁸⁶ And Whitbread in 1931, its 'Old English Beer' line of Pale Ale, Double Brown Ale, and London Stout, no lager.⁸⁷ Many Guinness adverts appeared in this period, e.g. in 1930 for the Dog's Head bottling,⁸⁸ and 1931 for rival Robert Porter's Bulldog Guinness.⁸⁹ Somewhat contrary to expectation, given the marked success of 'light' beer in most of Asia, stout was far from a spent force in Malaya, as we see further below.

Establishment of two local breweries in early 1930s

In 1928 the *Malaya Tribune* printed details from a prospectus for a new brewery in Singapore, the Singapore Brewery, Ltd.⁹⁰ One of the promoters was Fraser & Neave, the long-established, Singapore-based manufacturer and distributor of aerated waters and other drinks.⁹¹ The 1928 plan was not realized but is of interest still due to market and financial details disclosed. The intention was to raise \$450,000 (Straits Dollars) for land, plant, and working capital. The selling price of the beer, not disclosed, was intended to undercut imports. Further, in 1927 beer was imported to a value of \$2,200,814 for ale and beer, \$2,134,595 for porter and stout. This represented, said the story, 121,000 cases, and the venture expected to sell 25,000 cases at a profit of 25% of issued capital. Hence, the plan was to capture some 20% of the exporters' shipments. The percentage of porter and stout sounds high but likely was explained by a demographic change, namely a significant rise in the Chinese population.⁹² In this regard, a 1938 article in *The Straits Times* notes that 'liquor' consumption in 1937 was 17% higher



Figures 4 and 5. Tiger Beer – Tenaga Berganda Advertisements. Used in accordance with Terms of Use of the source: www.apbstories.com

than the previous year, and further: ‘Sales of stout are rising steadily in Malaya. Most of it is sold to Chinese who consider with Nathaniel Gubbins’ Mrs. Miffin, that stout has “nourishing qualities”’.⁹³

Also cited to explain the 17% increase was greater tourism resulting in part from the war in China, and a 26% rise in the Forces’ consumption of imported draught beer, due to an enlarged British garrison. The beer writer, Michael Jackson, in *The World Guide to Beer*, highlighted the importance of stout to Chinese Malaysian communities, especially at holiday times.⁹⁴ Hence, generalities about lager’s rise in the 20th century must be qualified by documented instances to the contrary.⁹⁵ This is not to say lager did not have continued appeal in Malaya - it evidently did, as Part II of this paper will further show, but stout clearly enjoyed a spike in the 1930s.

The first venture to address is Malayan Breweries Ltd., a public company (flotation) like the failed 1928 plan. Fraser

& Neave Ltd. was still involved but this time concluded a joint venture with Heineken. The two controlled the brewery for many decades until Heineken took sole control in 2012.⁹⁶ The venture raised more money, \$1,000,000 in capital, than the 1928 flotation, which may have contributed to its success.⁹⁷ Heineken wanted to offset German brewers’ gains in Asia and other export markets, especially by Beck’s (Bremen) and Lowenbrau (Munich). Germany was late to the game in promoting its beer internationally, in part because its colonization program started later than for Britain and the Netherlands. Heineken had growing export sales, especially in the Dutch East Indies, but German brewing quality soon made up for the Germans’ tardy export drive. Heineken needed to respond. It chose to do so in Malaya with a partner as ‘sharing the spoils with a local partner proved a profitable undertaking’.⁹⁸ Thus began, state the authors, ‘the beginnings of Heineken’s worldwide expansion’.⁹⁹ Some may wonder why a British brewer - in a British

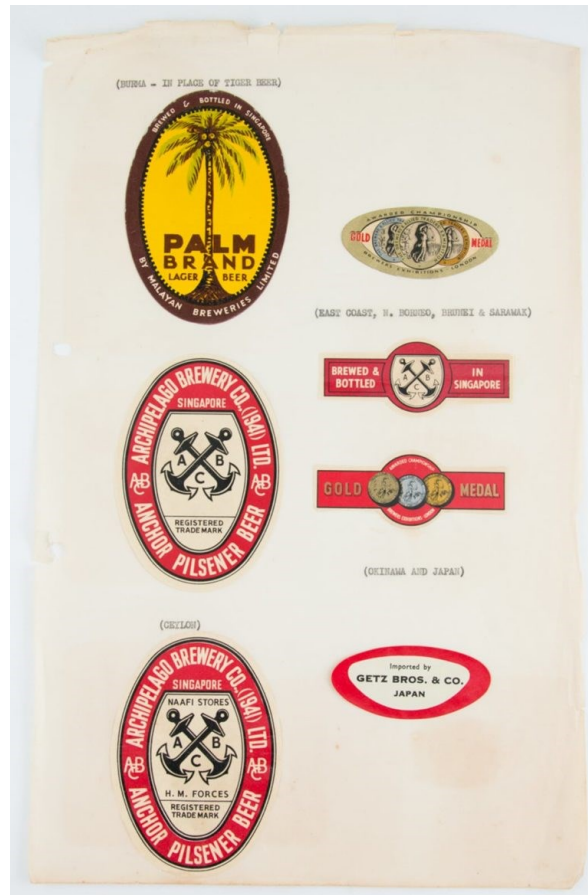


Figure 6. Labels for Palm Brand Lager Beer and ABC Anchor Pilsener Beer
Used in accordance with Terms of Use of the source: www.apbstories.com

colony - didn't do what Heineken did, or simply set up a wholly-owned subsidiary.¹⁰⁰

The Heineken-Fraser Neave brewery was built on Alexandra Road, Singapore, near the harbour and rail station.¹⁰¹ Its most famous product, then and now, was a lager, Tiger Beer - Tiger stout was not introduced until 1939. The opening of the brewery at the start of 1932 proved of great interest in Singapore. In time-honoured fashion local journalists were trooped through the brewery. One such report, from October 1932 in the *Malaya Tribune*,¹⁰² noted a 'Munich brewmaster' had charge of the brewing. Malt and hops only are mentioned, no adjuncts such as corn, rice, or sugar.¹⁰³ The beer was cooled by a combination of 'surface-cooler' and 'another special cooling plant'. Evidently a combination of open cooling and heat exchanger was used but the former step used 'purified air' to avoid contamination. Interestingly, the brewery felt 'air-cooling [had] a subtle effect on the quality of the beer'.

In 1933 a story in *The Straits Times* stated that after experiments in its laboratory and experimental brewhouse, Malayan Breweries hit on a blend of 'Czecho-slovakian' hops and 'East Kent' (*i.e.*, English) hops.¹⁰⁴ Perhaps the idea was to benefit in part from preferential duty treatment on the hops, and/or encourage Britons familiar with the East Kent taste to switch to Tiger lager. A 1934 story stated that 'beer fresh from the maturing cellars' was superior to beer undergoing a '10,000 mile journey from Europe through extremes of temperature'.¹⁰⁵ Four to five months cold aging was given the beer, an impressive period consistent with 19th century brewing doctrine.

The October 1932 article stated that the retail price would be \$0.26/pint, lower than for imported beer due to 'preferential duty and the fact that there are no transport charges'.¹⁰⁶ Another story in 1932 stated that the lower price would represent a reduction of 30% on the imported beer price.¹⁰⁷ Yet a further article the same year detailed

the revised Malayan duties on beer: the new rate was \$1.30/gal. for imported beer, \$1.20/gal. if imported from Britain, its possessions, and certain associated territories, and '7/10ths' of the latter rate, or \$0.84, for local brewers.¹⁰⁸ Therein lay the advantage for Malayan Breweries along with savings in shipping costs, as noted in the *Malaya Tribune*.¹⁰⁹

In 1934, the hotel price for a half bottle of domestic beer was \$0.45 and for a half-bottle of imported Allsopp's, \$0.60. The hotel's cost was \$0.26 for the first, and \$0.31 for the second. A letter-writer to the *Malaya Tribune*, citing these figures, pointed out the hotels realized a profit margin of 94.5% on imported, and 70.5% on domestic beer and called on hotels to lower their price on imported beer to equalize the margins.¹¹⁰ Presumably, the hotels felt they could get way with charging a premium for the type of product historically brought from '10,000 miles' away. While all malt and hops were imported for brewing in Malaya, with the associated costs, overall a competitive advantage was clearly secured for local brewers. In 1938, Malayan Breweries doubled its production capacity, reflecting the steady increase in business.¹¹¹

At the 1932 annual meeting of Malayan Breweries the Chairman noted that another brewery would open in Singapore.¹¹² This was Archipelago Brewery Ltd. He stated that after being made aware of the other venture, his company tried to reach agreement with it to work cooperatively. A preliminary arrangement was worked out in 1930 but implementation still awaited final legal advice. The subtext here is undoubtedly a potentially illegal combine.

Archipelago Brewery Ltd.

A news article in November 1933, 'Tiger's Rival', stated that Archipelago Brewing Co. had just completed construction on Alexandra Street of a 'million dollars brewery' – hence, a second brewery would open on the same road as the first, for a similar investment.¹¹³ O. Wehry & Co. of Batavia (now Jakarta) were stated as owner in association with Beck's brewery. As we have seen Beck's had a long history of exporting to Malaya. Later press accounts suggest it was the sole owner, so either it always was, or perhaps early on Beck's bought the interest of O. Wehry & Co. The news item indicated Archipelago would brew a 'light pilsener' using 'Australian malt' and 'English hops'. This was clearly the Anchor Beer. A journalist touring Archipelago in 1934 reported that (as for Tiger beer) the brewery used malt and hops only and received months of aging.¹¹⁴ Beck's beer, for its part, continued to be sold in Malaya as shown by a stylish 1934 advert.¹¹⁵

Anchor Beer with its distinctive, crossed-anchors label was the leading product of Archipelago, but its stablemate, ABC Stout, aka Lion Stout, had decades-long success as well. A 1936 story claimed that Archipelago was the first brewery to make stout in the East, and that ABC Stout, first released in 1936, resulted from 'a great deal of research work'.¹¹⁶ The brewers interviewed credited 'scientific America' with worldwide interest in canning beer which they stated the company was investigating.¹¹⁷ The story noted as well that, some 30 months after its start-up, Archipelago had to order 21 new storage tanks of 27,000 litres each to accommodate rising turnover, hence demonstrating a 'phenomenal success'.

Another early product of Archipelago was Diamond Beer, like Anchor advertised extensively in the 1930s. An advert series portrayed a well-suited man proffering a partly-filled, English-style, 'handle glass' of Diamond.¹¹⁸ This beer was probably a lager like Anchor, but how they differed is impossible to project without a review of the brewing records. Perhaps Diamond was intended for a more upscale market than Anchor; while anodyne enough the name is suggestive in that regard.

Beer exports, market pooling, and market share

The tension of having two modern breweries in Malaya, recognized from the start by Malayan Breweries, caused both breweries to enter into a definitive pooling arrangement by the late 1930s. Rajeswary Ampalavanar Brown's *Capital and Entrepreneurship in South-East Asia* described how this was achieved. For example, in 1938 the market for stout, in Malaya and later for certain export markets, was allocated 30% to Tiger and 70% to Anchor.¹¹⁹ Interestingly, Malayan Breweries only introduced its Tiger Stout in 1939, evidently after a pact was concluded.¹²⁰ Export strategies were deemed critical to the success of both breweries.

A bubbly 1935 story in *The Mercantile Free Press and Commercial Advertiser* reported that Malayan Breweries had penetrated the Hong Kong and Burma markets.¹²¹ Albeit that Heineken was a partner with Fraser & Neave in Malaya, the export ambitions of both Heineken and Malayan Breweries occasionally brought them into conflict. Heineken agreed not to expand sales in Malaya, Siam, and British North Borneo in return for Malayan Breweries keeping out of Java and India.¹²² Indeed, there appears to be no adverts in the 1930s Malayan press for Heineken after a (seeming) initial sortie in 1930, as noted above.

Such market allocations would be highly questionable today under modern competition (anti-trust) laws. An impression



Figure 7. Tiger Stout advertisement. Used in accordance with
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abides of ‘that was then, this is now’, but more conclusiveness must await a separate study. At day’s end, by late 1939 Archipelago Brewery and Malayan Breweries had captured an impressive 70% of the Malayan market.¹²³

‘Cosmopolitan’ pre-war beer advertising

Adverts in the 1930s Malayan press suggest Anchor Brewery aimed overall for a less upscale market than Tiger. An advert placing Anchor beer in a naval setting, of which a ‘middy’ was centrepiece, supplies an example.¹²⁴ In many Anchor adverts no human figures appear at all, simply the well-displayed brand name and double-anchor logo. Anchor associated its brand with the New World Cabaret, ‘Malaya’s Premier Dancehall’, a mid-market venue.¹²⁵ Some adverts did picture human figures, notably in the form of ‘Archi Pelago’, a stout, top-hatted, comic figure; he seemed a lampoon of captains of industry more than anything else.¹²⁶ In contrast, a 1932 advert for Tiger Beer pictured a smartly dressed, executive-type man standing with a glass next to a large wooden cask.¹²⁷ A legend stat-

ed: ‘There’s not a thickhead in a hogshead’. The double entendre emphasized the target market: the upwardly mobile, managerial class, who do brain work. Other Tiger adverts similarly portrayed activities seeming to target the upper echelon, e.g. via sporting or leisure scenes. A 1937 series pictured together a dignified older stockbroker (‘Fuller Bull’), a female tennis player (‘Mrs. Love-Smashem’), and ‘The Drummer’, a bugler in a parade.¹²⁸ The last is the most popular to be sure. Tiger had its share of simple, declarative adverts as well, but in general seemed to favour upscale settings.

These adverts would have been read by many Chinese, Indians and Malays who had learned English to function in the Colonial economy. To them, one can argue a model was presented of aspirational living, whether mid- or upmarket. Adverts for consumer products in this period often posited a shared, aspirational, cross-ethnic ethos, idealistic as it may seem. In her article ‘Cosmopolitanism and the Modern Girl: A Cross-Cultural Discourse in 1930s Penang’, Su Lin Lewis explored how advertising in Penang’s English press, whether for film, fashion, drinks, or food, evoked:

... a shared, multi-ethnic mode of belonging rooted in the globalist environment of the late colonial port-city. [She adds] Advertisements - from Kloster beer to Cadbury chocolate and Japanese pearls - suggest a readership plugged into global consumer networks. American 'Modern Girls' flashed Pepsodent smiles, while Japanese mogas advertised pearls from Tokyo and Eurasian women showcased exquisite dresses.^{129 & 130}

Lynn Hollen Lees argues that steadily growing urbanization and the early introduction of a wide range of consumer goods:

... attracted immigrants from multiple ethnic groups and exposed them to an international array of consumer goods and cultural styles. The towns gave residents a taste of the technologies and messages of modernity The result was an urban cultural potpourri that introduced town dwellers to an international consumer culture and to multiple forms of entertainment. British Malaya was a hybrid space where at least the educated and more affluent town dwellers crossed cultural borders in their daily life.¹³¹

Against this background, the advertising of beer in Chinese and even Malay newspapers gains fuller context. Jan van der Putten analysed illustrated advertisements for Tiger beer in *Majlis*, a Malay newspaper and noted that while 'inconceivable today', some adverts promoted drinking Tiger beer after traditional games, despite the fact that alcohol did not '[conform] to the regulations of Islam'.¹³² In his view, such adverts, together with those in *Majlis* for cigarettes and other western-style goods or services, were inviting Malays to participate in a budding consumer culture. In a similar study, 'The History of Tiger Beer Advertisements in the 1930s', Audre Ang studied 1930s Tiger Beer print adverts in English, Chinese, and Malay newspapers.¹³³ She concluded that what business studies today would term 'market segmentation' was being skilfully practised. Thus, in the English adverts:

Tiger ... explicitly promoted itself as a premium drink for the modern, well-to-do gentleman/ businessmen. ... Tiger Beer was portrayed to be quite atas,¹³⁴ with white-collar job guys endorsing it. [Further:] In contrast, advertisements that catered for other racial groups — who were usually less affluent — did not depict the product to be 'premium', but turned to other themes such as tradition and family instead. For instance, print advertisements that catered for Chinese communities promoted the product as a family drink.¹³⁵

Ang notes that while Chinese figures are represented realistically in these adverts (presumably to accord respect), English adverts employed spare, cartoon-like figures. She argues that in *Majlis* Tiger beer was represented as part of a 'traditional and semi-rural' way of life, including as to dress.

She concludes that the 'themes and aesthetics' of Tiger adverts in the different media were varied to reflect the distinctive character by and large still retained by these groups. She states that 'a few English-educated Asians' read media such as *The Straits Times*, although of course how many is hard to know without further study. Perhaps, one concludes, these bilingual Asians formed a 'hybrid space', as termed by Holley, in the racial divide detected by Ang in the advertising, one that brewers banked on. Certainly, it seems that Malay consumption of alcohol was more common at the time than today.¹³⁶ It could be argued that market segmentation was also being applied intra-culturally, a common technique in consumer advertising. Anchor's and Tiger's adverts in the 1930s English press reflect this, as noted earlier. Last but not least, it may be noted that the catchphrase 'Time for a Tiger', of some literary and advertising fame, originated in 1937 in a series dealing with sporting subjects. A horse-jumping competition provided one such setting.¹³⁷

Upstairs, downstairs: 1930s venues for beer

In her sensational 1938 memoir *To beg I am Ashamed - the Autobiography of a London Prostitute* the pseudonymous Sheila Cousins described social life in Thirties Singapore.¹³⁸ How this came about was, although born 'a lady', her upbringing and early adulthood in England were highly unsettled. She married a between-prospects, Malayan-born British planter in London and after a number of interludes, commenced life with him in Malaya.¹³⁹ Cousins noted the following of entertainment facilities in Singapore:

Singapore has ... [a] graded range of social meeting-places. Highest come the ballrooms and lounges of the Raffles and Adelphi hotel, where only the inhabitants of the Tanglin estate feel themselves fully at home. Combining the qualities of the pub and the palais de danse are the Great World and the New World, where nobody minds if a man spills his beer, thumps on the table, or hurls abuse at the manager ...¹⁴⁰

Of course, this is one opinion but the Great World, with its sister operations New World and Gay World, were evidently places of popular resort where beer was consumed in quantity. In fact, Anchor beer was a sponsor of New World as we saw above. The names of these establishments are a further clue to their comparatively democratic character. According to a modern account:

The Great World Amusement Park (Chinese: 大世界) also known locally as "Tua Seh Kai" in Hokkien, was the second of three former amusement parks in Singapore, along with New World (established 1923) and Gay World (established 1936). It was established in 1929 and closed down in 1978. It provided



No. 230 Squadron R.A.F. Badge, Copyright British Crown, used under fair Use terms. Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>

entertainment and leisure to people, catering especially to the middle- and lower- income groups of citizens ...¹⁴¹

Raffles in contrast was upmarket all the way, famously then, famously now. Known for its Singapore Sling at the Long Bar, the hotel had an impressive beer list in 1939, the period of Cousins' sour recollections. These are the beers, and ciders:

Kloster Beer
 Beck's Key Beer
 Beck's Dark Beer
 Salvator Munich (Dark)
 Thomas Brau Pilsner Lager
 Allsopp's Beer
 Allsopp's Dark Beer
 Carlsberg Beer
 McEwan Red Label Beer
 Whitbread (Light) Beer
 Tennent Beer
 Tiger Beer
 Diamond Beer
 Anchor Beer
 Pabst Canned Beer
 Budweiser Canned Beer
 Guinness Stout
 Simmond's Milk Stout
 Gaymer's Cider
 Whiteway's Dry Cyder
 Whiteway's Whimpe Cyder (Medium Sweet)¹⁴²

The list is a capsule of 100-plus years of beer history in British Malaya. Notable as 'new kids on the block' are

American Budweiser and Pabst, to please surely Americans on the East Indies tour circuit and U.S. businessmen in town. Most of the beers are lagers, including the McEwan's Red Label.¹⁴³ The main beers from the local breweries were available, and stout in two forms, given its continuing popularity in Malaya. Munich dark beer was still offered, a survival of 19th century tastes. The German Kloster is there, the Penang Girl's beer in a temple of cosmopolitanism, no surprise. Also no surprise, Kloster was fashionably a pilsener, as confirmed in a 1927 advert.¹⁴⁴ A Japanese brew seems conspicuous by its absence from the list. This likely resulted from the boycott of Japanese products in Malaya between 1937 and 1941.¹⁴⁵ Based on a Tooth's "KB" advert that listed various top hotels as outlets, an Australian beer made the Raffles list in 1940.¹⁴⁶ The presence of Australian troops in the country by then must have helped.

The Straits Times reported in 1938 that Tanglin Barracks was 'reputed to ... [have] the heaviest drinkers of draught' while 'Royal Air Force men ... prefer bottled beer to draught'. The journalist was puzzled at the airmen's taste, believing with J.B. Priestly that 'bottled beer "does not but fill ee up with gaas"'. A photo showed wood casks being loaded at warehouse for trucking to canteens in Malaya. This beer was described as Scottish, and seems to have been the traditional, cask-conditioned form.¹⁴⁷ Pace Priestly, the official badge of R.A.F. Squadron No. 230, based at the time at Seletar, Singapore, confirms the news account. It shows a tiger shown under a palm tree, similar to the graphic art of the Tiger beer label. A R.A.F. historical website states:

In March 1937 the Squadron Badge was approved by HM The King. Inspired by the label on a bottle of the local brew (Tiger Beer)

it featured a tiger under a palm tree which was adapted with the addition of the motto in Javanese ‘Kita Chari Jauh’ – translated as ‘We search far’ or ‘We seek afar’.¹⁴⁸

In 1936 *The Straits Times* offered a useful report on N.A.A.F.I. activities in Malaya. There were 10 Regimental Institutes (with ‘ale in the cellar’), one naval canteen, seven grocery shops and a warehouse.¹⁴⁹ As regards social life in the higher echelons of the Army and civilian society, Lt.-Gen. A. E. Percival, General Officer Commanding of Malaya 1941-1942, stated in a post-war report made to the British government:

One just lived an ordinary decent life much the same as one does at home, but with a little additional comfort added by an excellent Chinese house staff. And that was the type of life lived by most of the people with whom I came in contact. Malaya has become notorious for its “whisky-swilling” planters and the gaiety of its night life. While admitting that the consumption of alcohol is higher in a country like Malaya than it is at home, yet this is equally true of all hot countries, and there are many, among whom I am one, who believe that in those climates a whisky and soda in the evening is no bad tonic after a hard day’s work. And as regards the gaiety of night life—well, why shouldn’t people enjoy themselves in moderation provided they have the means to do it and don’t carry it to excess? The fact remains that there were very few “drunks” in Malaya.¹⁵⁰

From a different corner of the vertical mosaic, some *kopitiam* of the 1930s also offered beer.¹⁵¹ Operated by the Chinese community, these were originally simple coffee bars that with time had transmuted to inexpensive restaurants. Some were resorts of prostitution. Shennan states that in the inter-war period beer was available at a ‘Malay kip-shop’ (brothel) on Batu Road in Kuala Lumpur.¹⁵²

Market position of imports just before the war

A clear picture of imports between 1936 and 1938 appears from a table in *Economic Conditions in Malaya* by the Great Britain Department of Overseas Trade.¹⁵³ In 1936 Britain had about half the imports of beer and ale, or 237,806 gal. By 1938 the percentage had risen to 60%, or 403,004 gal. This was due to ‘the increase in the military garrison in Singapore’. Total imports of beer and ale were 477,793 gal. in 1937 and 656,637 gal. 1938. Total imports of stout and porter, almost all of it from Britain (only a little now from ‘Eire’ due surely to the preferential tariff) rose from 257,389 gal. in 1936 to 494,178 gal. in 1937, but fell in 1938 to 313,978, due, the study said, to increased local production.

For beer and ale, the total amount imported between 1936 and 1938 from Denmark, Germany, Japan, and China re-

mained about constant, but was re-allocated to the benefit of Denmark and detriment, mostly, of Japan. This probably had to do with the boycott of Japanese goods that began in 1937. While Britain’s exports of beer and ale steadily increased as we saw, it is an interesting question whether local production slowed that rise. Perhaps not in the canteens, since the troops and airmen seemed to prefer (respectively) draught and bottled British beer. Still, the Forces must have drunk some beer outside the bases. This probably reduced sales to a degree for British brewers. As noted earlier, total beer imports in 1939 did not exceed 30% of Malayan beer consumption. A much smaller import market now existed in percentage terms due to the success of the domestic brewers.

A second part will take this study through the war years that heavily impacted Malaya (1941-1945) and the postwar period until 1957, when Malaya (outside Singapore) became an independent federation. Part II will continue the discussion of N.A.A.F.I., including the beer proclivities of the Forces that combatted the Communist-led insurgency between 1948 and 1960.

Acknowledgment

Many thanks to Tim Holt for his guidance and help throughout on this project.

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20. We focus mostly on English-language Singapore newspapers, indeed throughout for this study, as well as other sources in English. Singapore was the main commercial and financial centre in Malaya and the most important port. That said, we also reference beer advertising in some Chinese and Malay media of the 1930s.

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[about-the-carlsberg-group/our-rich-heritage/](#) (Accessed 16 September 2020).

35. Many sources confirm this, see e.g. the historical page in the Carlsberg Website, *op. cit.*, at <https://www.carlsberggroup.com/who-we-are/about-the-carlsberg-group/our-rich-heritage/> (Accessed 16 September 2020).

36. ‘NY Carlsberg Beer (“Crown Brand”)’ is advertised, sans image in this case, in *The Straits Times*, 4 August 1902, p. 1. For an example with image, see *The Straits Times*, 13 January 1904, p. 6. By the later 1930s Carlsberg bottles in Malaya bore the later label, sans swastika. See e.g. the *Morning Tribune*, 20 October 1936, p. 10. (All retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

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53. *The Straits Times*, 6 December 1904, p.7. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

54. *The Straits Times*, 18 February 1904, p.5. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

55. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 15 March 1915, p.10. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

56. There are continual articles in the Malayan press in the first quarter of the 1900s, usually originating in Australia or India, commenting how lager especially from Germany, absent unusual conditions, was displacing British beer in Asia. See e.g. in 1922 in *The Straits Times* ‘Drinks in the East: a Dissertation on Liquid Refreshment’: *The Straits Times*, 14 March 1922, p. 3. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

57. See e.g. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 9 November 1918, p.1. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020). Perhaps Ballantine, known in the American market particularly for its ales, should have sent its XXX or another ‘light ale’ to Malaya. Perhaps that was considered coals to Newcastle.

58. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 25 February 1919, p.2. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

59. *Malaya Tribune*, 9 July 1921, p.2. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

60. *The Straits Times*, 23 January 1923, p.8. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

61. *The Straits Times*, 14 January 1927, p.3. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

62. *The Straits Times*, 3 October 1930, p.13. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

63. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 28 September 1923, p.3. Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

64. Kloster was in fact brewed by Beck’s, as a 1933 press account, ‘New Brewery Opened’, makes clear. See *Sunday Tribune (Singapore)*, 5 November 1933, p. 4. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020). St. Pauli Girl, still marketed today, has also long been associated with Beck’s.

Interestingly, Kloster continued its Asian career into the 1990s. It was last brewed in Thailand under a licence granted by Beck's current owner, Anheuser-Busch In Bev. Currently, the brand seems defunct.

65. *The Straits Times*, 22 January 1923, p.14. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

66. Canadian Department of Trade and Commerce (1924) *Commercial Intelligence Journal*, Vol. XXIX, No. 1014, 7 July 1923, pp. 71-72. (Retrieved from <https://books.google.ca>, accessed 16 September 2020).

67. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 18 December 1925, p. 8. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

68. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 22 April 1925, p.6. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

69. *Malayan Saturday Post*, 24 December 1925, p.11. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

70. *The Straits Times*, 29 September 1927, p.13. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

71. Spehr, A.L.E., 'Our Colored Neighbors. A trip to the East', *The South Eastern Times*. 30 September 1927, p. 1. (Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au>, accessed 1 October 2020).

72. See in my blog *Beer et Seq*, 'Bass Light Bitter Ale aka Oriental' at <http://www.beeretseq.com/bass-light-bitter-ale-aka-oriental/> (Accessed 16 September 2020).

73. Owen, C.C. (1992) "*The Greatest Brewery in the World*": *A History of Bass*, Ratcliff & Gretton, p.156. (Retrieved from <https://books.google.ca>, accessed 16 September 2020).

74. Paul, A.H. (1922) 'The Delivery of Beer in Bulk', *Journal of the Institute of Brewing*. (Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>, accessed 16 September 2020).

75. *The Straits Times*, 20 July 1922, p. 2. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

76. *The Straits Times*, 5 June 1923, p. 13. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

77. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 19 October 1926, p. 8. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

78. *The Straits Times*, 12 April 1930, p. 20. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

79. *The Straits Times*, 28 April 1930, p. 18. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

80. In brewing historian Ron Pattinson's blog post of 10 May 2020, 'Bass Pale Ale 1851-1994', at <http://barclayperkins.blogspot.com/2020/05/bass-pale-ale-1851-1994.html> (accessed 16 September 2020), his data for the 1920s attributes to standard Bass Red Triangle a finishing gravity (FG) of between 1008 and 1013. The data is somewhat sparse, but I infer that in the hot tropical climates of the Far East the FGs would be on the low end of that range. Data in his table for circa 1900 has some Bass FG very low, say Dog's Head at only 1003.3, a bottling marketed in British Malaya. Even if control of fermentation had been improved

by the 1920s, which is questionable in my view, the foregoing gives an idea what Purple Triangle adverts likely meant by 'watery'. A 'domestic' Bass, on the other hand, certainly in draught form, was probably higher in FG, I estimate around 1013. Purple Triangle, not mentioned in Pattinson's table, likely was closer to domestic Bass in FG, hence 'as good as in an English tavern'.

81. Bass Pale Ale 1851-1959, op. cit., Pattinson's table referenced earlier. The table, for years prior to 1930, does not include a second form of Bass, i.e., beyond standard Red Triangle. Therefore, one can't tell whether the alcohol of Purple Triangle, or Green Diamond Bass earlier, was lower or the same as for Red Triangle, or compare their FGs. For the 1930s and later the table includes analytical data for Blue Triangle and Red Triangle; it appears they were about equal in alcohol. The data is too sparse to conclude if the FG of Blue Triangle was on average higher than for Red Triangle. I suspect that it was, especially in regard to Red Triangle that was distantly exported. As noted in the text, only a full examination of the Bass brewing archive can clarify these questions. To date this resource has not been made available to brewing researchers.

82. Owen, C.C. (1992) op. cit., p.162: 'The introduction of chilled and pasteurised 'blue triangle' ale in 1934 proved popular ...' As to 1934 vs. 1930 (see Note 80 and related text), data recorded before 1934 may have pertained to test brewings.

83. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 17 January 1928, p.11. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

84. *Malaya Tribune*, 16 September 1930, p.13. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020). Watney, Combe, Reid had amalgamated from its component firms in London in 1898.

85. *Malayan Saturday Post*, 11 October 1930, p.39. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

86. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 25 September 1930, p.10. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

87. *The Straits Times*, 23 December 1931, p.12. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

88. *Malaya Tribune*, 26 March 1930, p.1. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

89. *The Straits Times*, 6 May 1931, p.10. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

90. *Malaya Tribune*, 27 November 1928, p.10. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

91. For a good short account of its background see 'Fraser & Neave (F&N)' by Alvin Chua, on the Infomedia page of the Singapore Government Agency Website, at https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1792_2011-03-04.html (Accessed 16 September 2020).

92. See Note 10 and related text.

93. See 'Why the Colony Drank More Last Year', *The Straits Times*, 26 June 1938, p. 2. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

94. Jackson, M. (1977) *The World Guide to Beer*. Toronto:

Ballantine Books of Canada, p.234.

95. For a parallel in another former British colony, see our discussion of the ale and stout made by the first modern brewery in Iraq in our blogpost 'Mild ale on the Main, Part II', at <https://www.beeretsq.com/mild-ale-on-the-main-part-ii/> (Accessed 16 September 2020).

96. See Astley, M., 'F&N accepts Heineken's S\$5.6bn Asia Pacific Breweries Offer', *Beverage Daily*, at <https://www.beveragedaily.com/Article/2012/08/20/F-N-accepts-Heineken-s-S-5.6bn-Asia-Pacific-Breweries-offer> (Accessed 16 September 2020).

97. The background to Heineken's interest in Malaya is explained in Verstl, I. and Faltermeier, E. (2016) *The Beer Monopoly: how Brewers Bought and Built for World Domination* (Unpaginated). (Retrieved from <https://books.google.ca>, accessed 16 September 2020).

98. *ibid*.

99. *ibid*. In *The World Guide to Beer*, *op. cit.*, p.234, Michael Jackson states that in 1929 Heineken turned its eye to Singapore after failing to reach agreement with the Dutch Colonial Government to set up a brewery in Java.

100. A complex question. General factors probably include the 1930s world slump that affected Britain deeply, with marquee U.K. breweries exiting the market or consolidating. A factor specific to Malaya may have been the shock of the 1915 Singapore Mutiny. According to one account: 'Contrary to official British colonial authorities, the mutiny was not an isolated case of a purely local affair but was instead part of a wider anti-British and pro-Muslim battle'. See '1915 Singapore Mutiny', at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1915_Singapore_Mutiny (Accessed 16 September 2020). An alcohol business can be a flashpoint from this perspective. It proved to be such, or ultimately, for Barclay, Perkins in Sudan. See our blogpost 'The Blue Nile Brewery (1956-1983)' in <http://www.beeretsq.com/the-blue-nile-brewery-1956-1983/> (Accessed 16 September 2020).

101. See 'Malayan Breweries Limited. Annual Meeting. Competition From the Other Company', *The Straits Times*, 21 March 1932, p.14. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020). In the article the role of Heineken as technical advisor is stressed. Indeed, the Chairman called the Alexandra Street plant a 'replica' of Heineken breweries in Amsterdam and Rotterdam 'only, of course, on a much smaller scale'.

102. See 'The new Singapore Brewery. An Intricate Process of Manufacture', *Malaya Tribune*, 3 October 1932, p. 7. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

103. In 2020, the website for Tiger Beer states that malt, hops, and sugar are used, see <https://www.tigerbeer.com/global/en/tiger-original-product-page>. (Accessed 16 September 2020).

104. *The Straits Times*, 9 October 1933, p.12. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

105. 'At the Home of Popular "Tiger". The Malayan Breweries', *Malaya Tribune*, 4 May 1934, p.8. (Retrieved from

<https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

106. 'The new Singapore Brewery', *op. cit.* See, also, Findlay, C. and Garnaut, R., (eds.) (2019) *The Political Economy of Manufacturing Protection: Experiences of ASEAN and Australia* (Unpaginated). (Retrieved from <https://books.google.ca>, accessed 16 September 2020). The authors explain that the British preferential tariffs introduced following the 1932 Ottawa Conference were intended to parry Japanese competition, not protect Malayan-based industry as such, since, apart from tin, rubber, certain engineering works and port facilities, the British had little manufacturing in Malaya. Nonetheless, the authors state the policy had the 'incidental' effect of protecting some local industry, including liquor, cigarettes, matches, and textiles. The new Malayan breweries evidently benefited.

107. See 'Two Breweries for Singapore', *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 2 January 1932, p.22. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

108. 'New Duties on Liquors. Small Preference'. *Singapore Daily News*, 18 October 1932, p. 6. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

109. This finally changed with the advent of WW II, when local brewers were put on a basis of parity with exporting brewers operating under British preference. We address this in more detail in Part II to follow.

110. "British and Best" [the letter author's pseudonym], 'Beer Prices', *Malaya Tribune*, 9 April 1934, p. 2. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020). By our calculation, the domestic price, at least in hotels, represented a 25% discount from the import price, not 30% as some brewery publicity had announced.

111. 'Malayan Breweries Best Year yet', *The Straits Times*, 27 March 1938, p.2. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

112. See Note 101.

113. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 6 November 1933, p.3. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

114. See 'The Brewing of Anchor and Diamond Beer', *Sunday Tribune (Singapore)*, 8 April 1934, p.17. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020). In *The World Guide to Beer*, *op. cit.*, Michael Jackson, writing some 40 years later, stated that both Tiger and Anchor were 4% abw (5% abv) and Tiger was more hoppy than Anchor.

115. *Malaya Tribune*, 29 March 1934, p. 18. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020). The advert portrays a man in evening dress admiring a bottle in his outstretched hand. He may have been a waiter, but an upmarket context is suggested in any case. It seems by this time Beck's was brewed by Archipelago Brewery Ltd. The current website for the Beck's brand states that in 1931 brewing of Beck's commenced in both Singapore and Batavia. See: <https://europecareers.ab-inbev.com/brands/beck> (retrieved 3 November 2020).

116. 'Progress of Brewing in Singapore', *Morning Tribune*, 31

March 1936, p.11. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

117. Reports on the feasibility of canning beer appear in the same period for Malayan Breweries.

118. See e.g. the *Malaya Tribune*, 11 December 1935, p.24. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020). All this said, the engraving on the glass is rather central European in style.

119. Brown, R.A. (1994) *Capital and Entrepreneurship in South-East Asia*, pp.246-248. (Retrieved from <https://books.google.ca>, accessed 16 September 2020).

120. 'Malayan Breweries to Market High Quality Stout', *Malaya Tribune*, 31 March 1939, p.16. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

121. 'Singapore's Model Brewery', *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 3 May 1935, p.34. Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

122. Capital and Entrepreneurship in South-East Asia, op. cit., p.247.

123. 'New Taxation on Liquors and Tobacco', *The Straits Times*, 12 December 1939, p.11. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

124. *The Straits Times*, 7 December 1936, p.17. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020). A midshipman is the most junior rank of naval officer.

125. *Malaya Tribune*, 27 January 1934, p.8. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

126. *The Straits Times*, 9 April 1934, p.13. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

127. *Malaya Tribune*, 28 September 1932, p.12. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

128. *The Straits Times*, 30 May 1937, p.23. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

129. Lewis, S.L., (2009) 'Cosmopolitanism and the Modern Girl: A Cross-Cultural Discourse in 1930s Penang', *Modern Asian Studies*, pp.1385-1419 (quotation from Abstract).

130. *ibid.*, p.1395.

131. Being British in Malaya, 1890-1940, op. cit., at p.85.

132. van der Putten, J. (2010) 'Negotiating the Great Depression: The Rise of Popular Culture and Consumerism in Early-1930s Malaya', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, pp.31-32.

133. See the page entitled 'The History of Tiger Beer Advertisements in the 1930s' at the website <https://medium.com/@audreang/the-history-of-tiger-beer-advertisements-in-the-1930s-1c8f9847e17e>. (Accessed 16 September 2020).

134. Singapore vernacular for upper echelon, preppy, posh.

135. *ibid.*

136. Olivier, B. (2020) *Islamic Revivalism and Politics in Malaysia: Problems in Nation Building*, p. 139 ('very common decades ago'). (Retrieved from <https://books.google.ca>, accessed 16 September 2020). Ang points out in her paper, however, that beer advertising in *Majlis* apparently ceased after a few months in 1933, quite possibly (she states) due to pressure from Muslim opponents of same.

137. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 13 September 1937, p.16. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020). Many of the adverts involved boxing.

138. Cousins, S. (1938) *To Beg I am Ashamed - the Autobiography of a London Prostitute*. (Retrieved from <https://archive.org>, accessed 16 September 2020).

139. The book was a succès de scandale. The eminent writer Graham Greene was apparently an advisor or co-ghostwriter. A good precis is offered in the blog Readerships and Literary Cultures 1900-1950, at the Special Collection of Sheffield Hallam University. See <https://reading19001950.wordpress.com/2019/03/23/to-beg-i-am-ashamed-1938-by-sheila-graham/> (Accessed 16 September 2020). The book indeed suggests a practiced novelist, e.g. Singapore is 'Hendon Central with the sea'. How odd that Greene, connected via family links to brewing - Greene King of Suffolk - bears on a book I cite in relation to beer and Malaya. Even odder, Greene King was bought in 2019 by a wealthy Hong Kong family - in a manner of speaking matters had come full circle.

140. *To beg I am Ashamed*, op. cit., p.243.

141. See 'Great World Amusement Park', https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_World_Amusement_Park. (Accessed 16 September 2020).

142. 'Raffles Menu', archived at the New York Public Library, see http://menus.nypl.org/menu_pages/62541/explore. (Accessed 16 September 2020).

143. See *Morning Tribune*, 27 April 1940, p.3. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020). In the background figures are shown in 'active life' playing tennis, golf, or rugby. A couple shown dancing are wearing evening dress.

144. *The Straits Times*, 14 January 1927, p.3. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020)

145. Soo Jin Koh, D. and Tanaka, K. (1984) 'Japanese Competition in the Trade of Malaya in the 1930s', reproduced at *Semantics Scholar*, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Japanese-Competition-in-the-Trade-of-Malaya-in-the-Koh-Tanaka/2a5f255669bffa200e53a44ce59cac6ae6ba4310?p2df>. (Accessed 16 September 2020).

146. *The Straits Times*, 2 July 1940, p.9. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

147. See Note 93.

148. 'Nato Tigers Hard to be Humble', the Nato Tigers website, <https://www.natotigers.org/tiger-units/230-squadron> <https://www.natotigers.org/tiger-units/230-squadron>. (Accessed 16 September 2020).

149. 'The "Services Housekeeper"', *The Straits Times*, 1 March 1936, p.18. (Retrieved from <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>, accessed 16 September 2020).

150. See Note 17.

151. Gin, O.K. (2018) *Historical Dictionary of Malaysia*, 2nd. (ed.), p.234. (Retrieved from <https://books.google.ca>, accessed 16 September 2020).

152. See Note 13. She adds that beer was also available at other

entertainment facilities where prostitution might figure, including a higher class of 'Japanese hotels'.

153. Wilmot, R.B. (1939) *Report on Economic and Commercial Conditions in Malaya*, pp.38-39. (Retrieved from <https://books.google.ca>, accessed 16 September 2020).