BREWERY HISTORY

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The Brewery History Society
Brewery History (2023) **196**, 10-20

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

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Introduction

This Part III addresses beer and brewing in the former British Malaya and Singapore following the Japanese victory over British arms in February 1942. It continues after Britain re-took control of the Colonies in September 1945, and concludes with the introduction by Malayan Breweries in May 1946 of Tiger Cub, a low alcohol version of Tiger Beer. As will be shown, the launch of Tiger Cub was accompanied by a particularly imaginative advertising campaign.

Beer at the door of defeat

From the standpoint of British Malayan beer history, it can be said beer formed part of the very capitulation of Singapore and Malaya to Imperial Japan in February 1942. Shortly after the British surrender on the 15th that month all European civilians — men, women, and children — were subject to interrogation by Japanese authorities and thereafter moved to internment camps for the duration of the war.[1] Civilian detainees as well as British and Australian military prisoners were held in a complex of camps on the Changi peninsula near Singapore.[2] The camps were established in a former British Army barracks, in Changi Prison built by the Colonial Government just before the war, and other facilities nearby.[3]

The civil complement at Changi consisted of a cross-section of the pre-war European population who had not escaped or been evacuated including, 'senior colonial officials and civilians, junior civilians and young merchant seamen closely packed'.[4] This community organized itself into a surprisingly complex, self-governing mini society despite many challenges, foremost the scanty food. The prison newspaper went by different names over time including the *Changi Guardian*.[5] Its 1 April 1942 issue contained an account by, 'H. Fraser, Former Colonial Secretary, S.S.' outlining his role in the British surrender, entitled, 'Last Days of Singapore'.[6] He was Hugh Fraser (1891-1944), an Oxonian who had joined the Malayan Civil Service in 1913. In January 1942 he was appointed Colonial Secretary (Acting), reporting, in his words, to 'His Excellency' at Government House. There, the irresolute Sir Shenton Thomas (1879-1962) presided over the fading British imperium in Malaya.[7]

In an impactful account marked by drollery and understatement, Fraser described a perilous journey by car to the nearby front lines to present the government's proposal to the rapidly advancing Japanese. The British wanted Japan to agree to a ceasefire, following which the parties would negotiate terms for Britain to lay down arms. When Fraser met the Japanese military, who came 'out of the rubber' with an interpreter and 'cine-cameras', he was told Japan would not accept a British surrender until its terms were signed 'on the dotted line'. Fraser was given a letter to deliver to his superior setting out those terms. Fraser took the letter and commenced a harrowing trip back to Government House, dodging shells and skipping over mines. He stopped first at Fort Canning, recalling:

> The shelling … had become much more accurate and, just before I left to report to His Excellency, a stick of bombs fell in unpleasant propinquity.
>
> It was, by and large, an interesting experience but one which, like the Pahang Floods, of 1926-1927, I never wish to go through again.
>
> But, say, did that quart of beer that H.E. gave me sizzle down — or did it?[8]

Malnourished captives reading this had to feel hollow both from bitter defeat and now limitless privation of a balm once indissoluble from daily life. The 'European' members of Fraser and Neave and its subsidiary, Malayan Breweries, were held under harsh conditions in Japanese internment camps until the end of the war.[9] During their absence the Japanese occupiers would control the Fraser and Neave

businesses, including the two breweries on Alexandra Road, Singapore.

Japan overlords Malaya

Japan's rule of Malaya and Singapore lasted from 15 February 1942 until August 1945, when Emperor Hirohito surrendered to the Allies in the wake of the atomic bombings. Britain's loss of its colonies for three and one-half years had a historic impact on Malaya's, indeed the region's, future course, not least the accession to independence of the Malaya Federation in 1957. Iskander Mydin, of the National Museum of Singapore, put it this way in his essay, '1942 and the Fall of Singapore':

> The first months of 1942 marked the peak of the Japanese military conquest not only of Singapore, but also of the European colonial territories in the Pacific region.
>
> The conquest in 1942 marked the end of one formative phase of Singapore's history and the beginning of another. The earlier phase began in 1819 when the island was established as an entrepot by the British and Malay chiefs. It had developed into Southeast Asia's premier city by the time of the Japanese invasion. The Japanese victory overthrew more than 120 years of continuous colonial rule and abruptly ended this phase in Singapore's history.
>
> 1942 also marked the beginning of the phase in Singapore's history that could be considered as a generative process. The abrupt break from colonial rule in 1942, coupled with the experiences of defeat and occupation, contributed to a process of political awakening. This was reflected in the struggle for decolonization over the decade following the surrender of Japan in 1945.[10]

Under the Japanese joug Singapore was re-named Syonan, alternately called Shonan, meaning Light of the South. The *Straits Times* as the main newspaper in English, 'reappeared on 20 February as the *Syonan Times* [and] later became the *Syonan Shimbun*'.[11] From November 1942 both English and Japanese editions appeared under editor Tatsuki Fujii, formerly with the *Singapore Herald*.[12] In this guise the paper, never comprising more than a few pages and tightly censored, reflected policies and perspectives of the Japanese Military Administration of Singapore and Malaya (JMA).[13]

The JMA, part of the Japanese 25th Army, henceforth had control of Singapore island, peninsular Malaya, and Sumatra, all directed from Syonan, an authority that overrode all civil jurisdictions.[14] To this writer at any rate, the term Syonan carries an otherworldly or futurist aura, suggestive of an order where peace and prosperity will reign among all the diverse elements of Malayan society, the injustices of British rule forever obviated. The reality was quite otherwise under Japanese diktat, marked by bouts of cruelty and an environment of 'fear and hunger', on which account Singaporeans welcomed the return of the British in 1945.[15] That said, the inability of the British to defend Malaya in 1942, combined with some impact from Japanese propaganda, doomed especially in the eyes of younger Malayans the old colonial system, which set the stage ultimately for Malayan independence.[16]

The short but impactful Japanese takeover has been studied from numerous perspectives including the control of Malaya's economy.[17] Historians have noted that Malaya, on arrival of the Japanese, had a relatively small manufacturing base, mainly supplying its own territory with some regional exportation.[18] The two breweries in Singapore fell into this category.

Japanese occupation and the Singapore breweries

The present writer described the origins and operations of Malayan Breweries Ltd. and Archipelago Brewing Co. in Part I of this article. Hiroshi Shimizu in his (2008) *Japanese Firms in Contemporary Singapore* summarised their fate under Japanese occupation:

> … the Japanese Army expropriated all the production facilities of Fraser & Neave, and ordered Kirin Breweries Ltd. and Dai-Nippon Breweries Ltd. to produce beer at the factories of Malayan Breweries Ltd. and Archipelago Brewery Company, respectively ...[20]

While correct as a general statement their management by large, Japanese-based breweries did not commence until December 1942, for Malayan Breweries, and approximately the same time, for Archipelago. Earlier, Malayan Breweries had been inactive from (at least) the British surrender on 15 February 1942 until its re-opening in early April 1942. The news story, 'Time for a Tiger', *Shonan Times* (*Syonan Shimbun*), 2 April 1942, explained:

> Closed down since the 'Fall of Singapore', Malayan Breweries have been re-opened recently under the orders of the Nippon Military authorities and Mr. Y. Nakai and a comrade are superintending the work.[21]

This report states Tiger Beer now sold at retail for 40 cents per quart, a controlled or fixed price. In an amusing passage that unintentionally evokes the rhythms and emotions of poetry the journalist assured readers familiar with reputed Japanese beers that Malayan Breweries' product was as good as when produced under British aegis:

… those who have been initiated into the realms of bliss, heights of folly, or periods when nothing matters, engendered through indulging in potions of Asahi, Kirin, Soopooru or Sakura Beers, may rest assured that present products from the brewery will rival those turned out formerly.

As this writer reads the statement, a resumption of local brewing meant the need for Japanese brands, which perhaps cost more or were harder to find, declined. Although April 1942 was early days for the Japanese occupation in Malaya, it is noteworthy, as the article mentions, that Malayan Breweries continued to brand its beer by the Tiger name. 'Dealers and agents' were solicited for, 'Tiger Beer and Stout' in the *Shonan Times* (*Syonan Shimbun*), 4 April 1942.[22] Hence, by mid-1942 Malayan Breweries was supplying the general market in addition to the military demand, which is further discussed below.

Despite the re-start of Malayan Breweries in April 1942, in December 1942 the JMA called in the well-known and venerable Kirin and Dai-Nippon brewing concerns of Japan to manage brewing in Singapore, presumably to secure a higher degree of professionalism. The well-known Sapporo and Asahi breweries were key components of Dai-Nippon at the time.[23] Very unusually, considering the depredations of the Pacific war on local and Japanese business and administrative records,[24] we can know today details of brewing at Malayan Breweries and Archipelago Brewing, both ahead of and after the British defeat. This is due to the 2018 publication of the book *World War II Singapore: The Chōsabu Reports on Syonan*.[25] The reports of the title were prepared in 1942 and 1943 by a Japanese research body, the Chōsabu, brought from Japan to study Malaya's economy and advise on its development by Japan. The group was comprised of a large number of, 'Japanese academics and civil servants'. The editors explain, by way of larger context, that as a major Southeast Asian city Singapore was:

… fundamental to Japan's plans for control of Southeast Asia and its realization of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.[26]

The Chōsabu's efforts furthermore were intended to:

… contribute to the military struggle ,,, [and] help achieve wider and long-term aims in the enlargement of a Japanese empire in East Asia. Even as late as the end of 1942, and certainly during pre-war and early wartime planning, it seemed possible that Japan, as part of an enhanced empire, would control a large part of Southeast Asia for the foreseeable future.[27]

The Chōsabu reports on the Singapore breweries clearly were meant to advance the war effort, as under the JMA production was directed mainly, and at times only, to the Japanese military.[28]

Chōsabu visits Archipelago Brewery, 365 Alexandra Road, 9 February 1943

This report is entitled 'Dai-Nippon Beer Company, Syonan Factory'.[29] It notes the factory was established in 1932 by, 'a German company', and used by Malayan Breweries as an 'auxiliary factory' after Malayan Breweries bought Archipelago 'as a result of the war between England and Germany'.[30] Hence, by this time Dai-Nippon was already running the plant. The report does not state when such control started, unlike the report for Malayan Breweries (see below), but it had to be between December 1942 and February 1943.

Some salient points from the Archipelago report:

- Monthly capacity was 700,000 'large bottles', *i.e.*, quarts,[31] with current production at 480,000 bottles
- All production was sold to the 'military' and delivered to the 'Supply Regiment Depot'
- Bottles were sometimes in short supply in part because the brewery paid five cents per bottle while the black market fetched eight cents
- 'the first part of the process' of manufacture was 'excellent' but the latter part, including 'storage' and 'bottling', 'not so good'
- A brewing batch was 9,000 litres, 'very small' as compared to brewing in Japan
- Brewing tanks (meaning probably aging tanks) were still made of wood
- 'If I the [inspector] may speak ill of this factory, there seems to be a jumble of facilities' [!]

The report added the malt used was (pre-war) stock, 'Australian', and once exhausted new malt would be procured from Japan. The hops were from, 'Tasmania', with two years' stock remaining in this case, but quality was, 'poor'. Further, 112 kg. of malt made 200 gal. of beer, and 'four percent of the ingredients are extracts' (i.e., final gravity). Alcohol content was, '4 per cent', almost certainly by volume. One can infer the standard lager of the brewery in 1942 had a starting gravity of about 12 Plato, finishing about four Plato, with alcohol about 4.0% abv. This report makes no reference to malt adjuncts.

Chōsabu Inspects Malayan Breweries, 948 Alexandra Road, 24 February 1943

This report, longer than the Archipelago one, is titled, 'Kirin Beer Company, Syonan Factory'. It states the brewery commenced operations in 1931 and, 'began business in December [1942]' when 'Kirin was commissioned for management by the Military Administration'. The phrase, 'began business',



Figure 1. 1940s poster in Malay and Chinese encouraging Malayans to learn Japanese. Wikimedia Commons https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Belajarlah_Pakailah_Bahasa_Nippon.jpg

should be understood in the context of Kirin's appointment as manager in December 1942.

This report states a brewing required 1,000 kg malt, 300 kg of, 'crushed rice', and 100 kg of, 'sugar'. Hence, at this site, beer was made using malt adjuncts. Part I of this paper cited 1930s press accounts describing beer-making at both breweries in which adjuncts are not mentioned, only malt.[32] Advertisements into mid-1940, both in Malaya and Hong Kong, state Tiger was made from malt, hops, and yeast, sometimes indicating a European importation for the malt and hops.[33]

This does not necessarily mean, however, that adjuncts were not used before the European war. For many breweries internationally at the time, at any rate outside the United States, the employment of adjuncts was omitted from, or minimised in brewery publicity. Journalists' (inevitably) favourable accounts of a brewery following a personalised tour were simply another channel for such publicity. This was especially so in the non-American Anglosphere, where for a century or more popular lore had it the best beer was made from malt and hops, nothing else. However, an Australian news report shows that in November 1941 sugar was used as an adjunct at both plants of Malayan Breweries. An item in the *Townsville Daily Bulletin* of Queensland, Australia, 26 November 1941, stated:

> The raw material for the beer, hops, and barley, were secured from Australia, with the sugar from Java and Hongkong.[34]

An executive of Fraser and Neave revealed the information when explaining a beer shortage, resulting, he said from the, 'great demand for draught beer among the different troops'.[35] No mention was made of rice. After the British defeat, perhaps the Japanese brewers now in charge introduced rice as a second adjunct. The Japanese had long employed rice in European-style brewing, and of course rice was central to the national sake tradition.[36] As to the sugar evidently in use in November 1941, either such use existed in the 1930s albeit not mentioned in beer adverts or other publicity, or it was adopted after mid-1940 as a wartime expedient. After all, Britain was at war in Europe, which cut off European supplies of malt and hops, apart the war's effect on merchant shipping generally.

As to hops at 948 Alexandra Road, the report states they were from Tasmania. For the malt it states the brewery still used British-period stocks, and when exhausted malt would be shipped from Japan. The report does not state the stocked malt was Australian, but the *Townsville Bulletin* reported it was.[37]

Some specifications and procedures at this plant: 'malt yield', meaning probably dry weight extract, was 80%. 1000 long tons of malt were used by the brewery per annum. Yeast was added, 'at 6 degrees'. 100 litres of yeast were used to ferment 9,000 litres of beer. Aging took, 'two to three months', at, '0 degrees'. Carbon dioxide generated in fermentation was siphoned off and, 'used' (probably to adjust final carbonation in the packages). In the processing of draught beer, after secondary fermentation the beer was filtered through, '4 cm thick cotton'. For bottled beer:

> The beer is „, bottled by bottling machine and warmed to a temperature of 60 degrees to disperse the remaining yeast and produce bottled beer.

This probably refers to pasteurisation, as expected the draught beer was not pasteurised. For the beer types made, the report states the brewery made 'beer', or in other words lager, and, 'stout', with the difference the stout used 'surface fermentation yeast' and the beer, 'bottom fermentation yeast'. Further, the stout employed, 'well-roasted barley malt' to obtain 'the dark colour'. The 'primary fermentation' (i.e., original gravity) for the stout was '17 to 18 degrees', with secondary fermentation starting at '6 degrees'. The strength of the stout was '8 per cent', 'higher than the 4 per cent of beer'.

For a stout (this writer asserts) starting at 18 Plato and finishing at 3.5, a beer of about 8% abv would result. This is appropriate for the type of stout that was still extant in the British colonial world, an inheritance of the 19th century. Evidently Kirin kept to the traditional British way to mash and ferment stout. The stout clearly was based on Malayan Breweries' Tiger Stout brand, launched at beginning of 1939.[38]

Regarding personnel matters, the report states the plant employed 150 people, 100 men and 50 women. 'Many' 'engineers' were, 'Indian' while, 'clerks' were, 'Eurasians'.[39] The report mentions a plan to build a bottle-making plant in a former Ford (vehicle) factory on Bukit Timah Road, near the Syonan River, where sand was available with silica. The proposed bottle plant is discussed further below.

Breweries and beer in public eye, 1942-1945

When the JMA ruled Malaya, the English Malayan press carried little mention of beer and brewing. As the Chinese population formed much of the beer-drinking element, the Chinese Malayan press, not canvassed for the present article, probably covered beer and brewing in a similar way.[40] The paucity of coverage, known and inferred, resulted from a variety of factors: first, the main market for beer, European civilians and the British and Australian military, had fled,

been interned, or were killed or imprisoned. Second, difficulties to obtain raw materials and prioritising of Japanese military supply meant no or less beer for the civilian market.

Beer that was available was subject to regular price increases. The *Shonan Times* (*Syonan Shimbun*), 7 April 1942, stated the retail price for a quart was 50 cents, plus five cents refundable deposit for the bottle.[41] A press report of 1 May 1942 stated that the price per quart of Tiger beer, as then still termed, had risen five cents, with stout selling at $4.56 for 12 pints.[42] There was enough beer in this period for the, 'Cherry Blossom Beer Garden' located at 307 East Coast Road to advertise its, 'usual Sunday cold beer'.[43] Another retailer, Sohan Singh, advertised, 'cold beer or stout' at his establishment on Coleman Street and invited those, 'while in town' to drop in, perhaps an elite clientele connected to the JMA.[44]

Regarding bottle stocks, an item in the *Shonan Times* (*Syonan Shimbun*), 17 December 1942, stated Kirin Kaisha would build a bottle-manufacturing plant along a stretch of the Singapore River (the old name of the river was used) capable of producing 10,000,000 bottles per year.[45] It stated this would keep the money within Malaya to buy bottles and provide jobs for the local populace. The equipment to build the plant was already in the country, as a firm called Hume Pipe had imported it before the war, intending to build the plant at a different location, deemed less desirable by the JMA. It seems however under the Japanese occupation the bottle plant was not built. As to the quality of Malayan Breweries' output under Kirin's control, a favourable opinion was expressed by Mamoru Shinozaki, author of the memoir *Syonan, My Story*. As quoted in *World War II Singapore: The Chōsabu Reports on Syonan* Shinozaki recalled:

> … the reasonably priced and very tasty Kirin beer … brewed by the Kirin Beer Kaisha on the premises of Tiger Brewery, off Alexandra Road.[46]

1943

A story in the 20 April 1943 *Shonan Times* (*Syonan Shimbun*),[47] as corrected by the same paper six days later,[48] highlighted the inconsistency of beer supply to the general market. It noted supply had been 'restricted' but as 'fresh malt' was expected from Japan Kirin Kaisha would produce beer for the general populace. Taking this with the Chōsabu reports, it is evident ordinary civilians were deprived of beer in early 1943 due to the military priority. The same story gives further details on Kirin's role, noting it had brought a five-person team from Japan to operate Malayan Breweries headed by S. Tsuruda, who had been with Kirin in Yokohama for 20 years. The report added no further breweries would be built in Malaya, as Kirin Kaisha in Singapore would supply all Malayan needs.[49] The Archipelago arm of Malayan Breweries, functioning in February the same year as noted earlier, is not mentioned in these articles. Perhaps it was closed to centralise and rationalise production at Malayan Breweries, especially in view of its lesser technological capability.

Numerous retailers got in trouble in 1943 under the regime of controlled pricing, as shown by regular reports of convictions or guilty pleas obtained for 'profiteering'. Ng Chiow Koon, the owner of a shop in Jalan Besar, pleased guilty to selling 11 dozens of beer at $11.00 each instead of the set price of $5.40 per dozen.[50] The frequency of successful prosecutions for which fines or imprisonment terms were imposed suggests beer remained in tight supply through 1943, and likely for the rest of the war.

The *Syonan Times* also reported on beer and brewing elsewhere in the Japanese empire. Perhaps it was felt readers discomfited by ongoing beer shortages in Malaya would be allayed learning Japan brewed beer in other Eastern territories. The *Shonan Times* story previously mentioned noted, further burnishing Kirin's reputation, that it operated breweries in 'Djakarta' and 'Sourabaya'.[51] An item entitled, 'Agriculture in Manshukoku, Huge Projects', *Shonan Times* (*Syonan Shimbun*), 20 April 1943, stated the, 'Manshukoku Hops and Beer Company' had acquired a, 'plantation' in the Hulunbair Plains, the land, 'still covered in snow and ice'.[52] It noted the brewery was one of numerous industrial concerns in Manshukoku (*i.e.*, Manchuria) that required, 'farm products for business'.

Since 1931 (readers should be aware) Manchuria, then a Japanese fief, had undergone heavy industrialisation in a mix of private and especially state-owned enterprise.[53] The modern successor to the Manshukoku brewery is the mega-size, state-owned. Chinese brewery CR Snow.[54] The *Shonan Times* (*Syonan Shimbun*) on 24 June 1943 lauded Japanese success at growing wheat in Djawa (*i.e.*, Java) at high altitudes, stating the Dutch had tried but failed to do so. The story seemed to imply grain might be grown in Malaya for brewing, although this did not occur, apparently.

To the extent ordinary civilians could get beer in Singapore in 1943, it seems retailers viewed as friendly to the government were favoured with supply. The wartime Swing Restaurant in Serangoon Road may be an instance. It placed an advert promising, 'Delicious Food for all Nationalities', 'Cakes' and, 'Hot and Cold Drinks Including Cold Beer'. The ad vouchsafed, '[a] Special Gala Night of Nippon Songs' and invited guests to, 'Come and pick up some of the songs ...[56]



Figure 2. Sapporo, the successor of Sakura brewery, issues a limited edition Sakura can every year. Public domain: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sapporo_Sakura_Beer_2021.jpg

1944

Beer was largely absent from the Malayan English press in 1944, which likely reflected a worsening war for Japan and the related, increased difficulties of everyday living in Singapore and the peninsula, especially the lack of food. This led to using any available plot of land to grow vegetables, encouraged by the JMA to save resources. A chatty column in the *Shonan Times* (*Syonan Shimbun*), 7 July 1944, stated:

> Talking of the widespread spontaneous planting up of all garden plots on this island with produce for the table, I am greatly struck by the changed appearance of the former 'Sakura Beer Garden' in East Coast Road (no connection with Sakura-san). Gone are the mounds in the miniature gold course which always reminded me of a graveyard. Instead the whole of this ground is now covered with a mass of various kinds of table vegetables all growing very healthily. One bed had a plant I could not identify. Perhaps the owner is secretly experimenting on raising hops here, with a view of eventually resuming his beer business. Froth-blowers will pay for its speedy success.[57]

Some interpretation: East Coast Road ran along the south-east coast of the island, part of Marine Parade and its network of habitations and gardens.[58] On the road stood a miniature golf course, established in mid-June 1942.[59] Next to the golf course was a beer garden. Sakura means cherry tree, the type whose distinctive blossoms of pink and white are a world-renowned emblem of Japanese culture. The Japanese blossom is not native to Singapore, but a flowering species of similar mien grows on the island. By the reference to 'sakura-san' it appears readers were being told the beer garden featured a Sakura-like flower, but not the real thing.

'Sakura' was also a notable Japanese beer brand and brewery. The brand was well-known in the Singapore market c.1920 and possibly up until about 1941.[60] In mid-1942, under the JMA, the Sakura Beer Garden clearly provided an outlet for this beer. Due to financial difficulties in Japan Sakura Brewery merged with Dai-Nippon in July 1943, joining its main partners Asahi and Sapporo.[61] If Sakura Beer Garden was still operating at that point, presumably the beer came from the Archipelago facility, now under man-



Figure 3. Tiger Beer Cub cartoons, 1947. Used in accordance with Terms of Use of the source: www.apbstories.com

agement by Dai-Nippon. In any case, by 1944 no beer was being sold there. The reference to hops was probably humorous as it seems doubtful miniature brewing had occurred there, as opposed to miniature golfing.

1945-1946

It is likely Malayan Breweries and perhaps Archipelago continued to trade until the Allies victory over Japan in August and September that year. As one index, the JMA published a regulation in March 1945 requiring beer retailers and manufacturers to obtain a license upon payment of the requisite fee.[62] Also, when Fraser and Neave, a major shareholder of Malayan Breweries, recovered the breweries at war's end the latter's staff greeted their former managers now out of internment, ready to brew under their direction.[63] This suggests the plant(s) had operated at least intermittently in 1944-1945.

Hence, following Japan's unconditional surrender to the Allies, the pre-war owners of Malayan businesses that were superintended by Japanese commercial and industrial interests under JMA rule re-assumed their direction and management. A surviving cadre of 17 Fraser and Neave executives came out of internment to helm anew its various operations, especially brewing and mineral water production.[64] In the last three months of 1945 all brewery output was reserved for Allied prisoners-of-war and civilian internees who had not yet departed the internment camps, with the intention 'shortly' to supply 'Services and the civil population'.[65]

Shortly after the war a War Damages Claims Commission was created to assess claims from qualifying owners in Malaya and Singapore for losses incurred under the Japanese occupation. The compensation ordinance was quite restrictive as it excluded, 'diminution of profits and earnings' and, 'confiscation'. Since the JMA had seized and continued to operate the two Singapore breweries, and these were recovered after the war, Malayan Breweries' owners probably received little or no compensation for the years of lost operations — perhaps, at most, the value of any bottles, beer, malt, hops, and adjuncts on hand when Britain surrendered in 1942[66]

Tiger Cub

In 1946, although full peacetime now reigned, pre-war Tiger Beer was not immediately brewed. Rather, an unusual economy version was issued for a temporary period, cleverly titled Tiger Cub. As the name suggests this was a weaker, lighter version of the standard Tiger lager. This came about due to a world-wide shortage of barley malt and other grains in 1945-1946, connected to the late war in that European and Asian agriculture had not rebounded as quickly as hoped.[67] *APB Stories*, a historical website of Heineken Asia Pacific Breweries, states:

> With the ravages of World War Two, Tiger Beer faced a severe shortage of raw materials. Hence, a lighter beer called Tiger Cub was brewed.
>
> Tiger Cub beer was brewed and sold to the public until 1947 when it was retired to make way for the real Tiger Beer.[68]



Figure 4. Tiger Cub beer. Used in accordance with Terms of Use of the source: www.apbstories.com

As discussed earlier, under Kirin Kaisha, Tiger beer was 4% alcohol in February 1942. The level perhaps declined as the war progressed. For its part Tiger Beer became stronger, which occurred in two stages, as a series of adverts emphasised pictorially. One series showed a cub tiger standing on a scale, the indicator showing his weight in May 1946, a higher weight in September 1946, and a higher one still in January 1947 (*Sunday Tribune*, 16 February 1947).[69] Together with adverts employing other visual metaphor to similar effect the ad was headlined, 'Tiger Beer – Gathering Strength'.[70] Tiger Cub perhaps had gone from 3.5% on release, to 4.0% in September 1946, to 4.5% in February 1947, or something along these lines.

On 12 April 1947 a *Straits Times* article announced that Malayan Breweries had made last shipments of Tiger Cub on 15 March, and full-strength Tiger was now back.[71] The article explained that when, 'malt was under world food control' the brewery, in line with other Empire countries, reduced the strength of Tiger but now it was possible to produce Tiger at the original strength. Steadily from June 1947, Malayan press adverts trumpet the restored Tiger. From the *Malaya Tribune*, 28 June 1947:

> Tiger beer Full Strength is consistently fresh and sparkling. Best in quality. Best in price.[72]

Tiger Cub had, in the interim, served its purpose. The genius of Malayan Breweries and its advertising agency was to turn the ostensible liability of an inferior, weak beer into a benign, even attractive alternative, all by means of a winsome baby tiger. Come March of 1947, Tiger Cub was all grown up, and bounded unqualified into the market, as Tiger Beer.[73] The brand continues to this day as a mainstay of Heineken Asia Pacific Brewery.[74] While Tiger Cub's time in the market was short, functioning as it did as a locum, the accompanying ad campaign was notable for its creativity and charm.

Strength of restored Tiger

This writer estimates that Tiger Beer as re-launched in March 1947 was between 4.8% and 5%. Direct statements of Tiger's alcohol content have proved elusive for its early history, but a good idea of the pre-war strength, hence as restored in mid-1947, can be understood from the Silver

Prize awarded to Tiger Beer in 1939 at the Brewers' Exhibition in London, Empire Division.[75] Tiger competed in the category of 1048 original gravity or under, per a story in Melbourne's *The Argus*, 16 November 1939 that listed awards made to Empire contestants in different brackets.[76] A typical alcohol yield for a 1048 O.G. pilsener-style beer, it may be noted, is between 4.7% abv and 5%, with a finishing gravity between 1012 and 1010.

A contemporary taste note for Tiger appears from the novel *China Servant* by C.S. Archer, published in 1946, although whether Tiger Cub or regular Tiger was meant is unclear. The book is a tale of the 1930s coastal shipping trade in China, and a character states, 'They drank Tiger beer — pale thin lager from Singapore, but pleasant'.[77] The novel was published in a year when regular Tiger was not available, only Tiger Cub. Quite possibly, though, the character had pre-war Tiger Beer in mind, given its Ulster-born, English-educated author had spent the 1930s working in the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, experience that evidently assisted to plot the novel.[78] Archer likely knew Tiger from that period, but this said, he joined the Royal Air Force during the war, serving in Calcutta, Imphal, and Colombo. The last Tiger he drank before the novel was finished may have been Tiger Cub, or whatever Malayan Breweries brewed under Fraser and Neave immediately after war ended. Whatever version of Tiger it was, the verdict, 'thin but pleasant' for an international-style lager is not unreasonable for one brought up on traditional British beer.

Conclusion and next part

In their article, 'The Fall of Singapore and the Anglo-American Conflict Over the Indian Question', Manish Sinha, Nripendra Kr. Shrivastava and Manish Sinah sum up well a larger theme, adverted to earlier in this paper:

> During the Second World War, Singapore surrendered on the 15th February 1942. The loss of Singapore was a disaster for the future of the British empire. Commenting on the seriousness of the collapse of Singapore, Churchill said, 'years have passed and many of the witnesses are dead. It may well be that we shall never have a formal pronouncement by a competent court upon the worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history'. With the fall of Singapore, the British prestige in the far-east suffered a grave damage. The charisma on which the British rule had rested for over a hundred years and which the British military planners had been so anxious to preserve was destroyed forever.[79]

Despite this momentous development, for which the term 'world-historical' is probably not too strong, under Japanese occupation brewing had carried on largely as it had before, even using the Tiger name.[80] Beer, a par excellence British cultural datum, appealed no less to Malayans[81] and the new overlords of Nippon, who on home soil eagerly adopted European brewing earlier.[82] Beer was churned out on Alexandra Road after, just as before the British debacle of 1942, even the hyper-British stout which largely had lost its historic market at home. The continuity of beer and brewing during the JMA's governance, only possible due to British and European imperialism in the Far East to start with, set the stage for the renewal of brewing in Singapore after the British returned in 1945. The revival was hobbled for a time by a continuing shortage of raw materials, which explained the appearance for a time of Tiger Cub on the market. By mid-1947 conditions permitted the return of full-strength, pre-war Tiger.

The final part of this paper will continue the story from that point until 1957, when the Independent Federation of Malaya came into existence, which then included Malaya.

References

1. Gillman, G. (2020) 'An Outline on Beers and Brewing in British Malaya. 1827-1957. Part I'. *Brewery History*, Autumn, 2020, Number 184, pp.2-21.
2. *Madras Daily Mail*, 16 July 1908.
3. *Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 1 August 1908.
4. See author's blogpost, 'Early Brewing Venture in Calcutta – Damp Squib? Part IV', 21 March 2022, and further references therein. (Retrieved from https://www.beeretseq.com/early-brewing-venture-in-calcutta-damp-squib-part-iv/, accessed 10 June 2023).
5. *The Straits Times*, 14 August 1908.
6. Litigation (successful) followed by an unpaid supplier, see *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (Weekly)*, 6 May 1909.
7. See Note 4 and other posts in the series.
8. *Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle*, 11 December 1939.
9. See *The Straits Times*, 1 February 1941. The non-preference imported category would have risen at least to $1.80 but the report did not reference this aspect. Its significance was now much less with the end of the Phoney War phase and greater impediments to seaborne travel.
10. Per the news report cited in Note 8 the Malayan government gained an additional $2,000,000 from the 1939 increase, part of which it directed to the Imperial war effort.
11. There was probably some overlap.
12. *Malaya Tribune*, 27 September 1940.
13. *Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle*, 15 June 1940.
14. *The Straits Times*, 3 July 1941.
15. 'Possessing the characteristics of Genuine British Beer'. This phrase was likely thought necessary since the ad explained Blue Label was 'new'. But in other words, it seems clearly to have made the trip from London. 16. *Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle*, 18 August 1941.
17. The Straits Times, 5 July 1941.

18. Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle, 11 July 1941.

19. The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 16 December 1941.

20. While Malayan Breweries was a joint venture controlled and owned in the main by Fraser & Neave of Singapore and Heineken N.V. of The Netherlands, the public owned part of the shares. The prospectus printed in the Malaya Tribune, 23 April 1931 states 206,250 management shares were issued, a type with restricted trading rights held by directors and senior officers, and 793,750 ordinary (common) shares, of which 312,494 were reserved for the public. All such shares carried a par value of $1.00 each. Hence, the company was capitalised with an issued capital of $1,000,000.

21. See in The Straits Budget, 20 March 1941.

22. Details have been elusive to us: an area worthy of separate investigation.

23. The Straits Times, 5 November 1940.

24. Only the year before, in 1938, the longstanding, annual Brewers' Exhibition in London created an international section: Daily Herald, 31 October 1938.

25. Malaya Tribune, 2 September 1940. One cannot help observing, of the three figures in the ad, only the Asian rickshaw worker was walking.

26. The Straits Times, 13 March 1940.

27. Malaya Tribune, 2 December 1940.

28. Malaya Tribune, 25 January 1941. The report indicated many locals were employed, and a goal in continuing the brewery was not to throw them out of work.

29. In other words, the additional shares were sold for $3.00 each since the shares carried a par value of $1.00. See Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle, 5 April 1941. The report also states Malayan Breweries was still trying to reverse the duty equalization imposed in December 1939, but when Malaya fell to Japan in February 1942 it was still in place.

30. Malaya Tribune, 16 July 1940.

31. The Straits Times, 20 February 1940. The strike ended later in February.

32. For details of the Australian troop expansion see the webpage Anzac Portal-a Bitter Fate-Australians in Malaya and Singapore, a publication of the Department of Veteran Affairs of the Australia Government. (Retrieved from https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/resources/bitter-fate-australians-malaya-singapore, accessed 12 June 2023).

33. We have documented many aspects of the military affection in our website Beer et Seq. See for example 'N.A.A.F.I Beer in Japan. Part III'. (Retrieved from https://www.beeretseq.com/n-a-a-f-i-beer-in-japan-part-iii/, accessed 12 June 2023) For Australian attachment to beer in general, still growing in 1939, see Docherty, J.C. (2010) The A to Z of Australia, p.48. (Retrieved from https://www.google.ca/books/edition/The_A_to_Z_of_Australia/1VYk8YfLdmgC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=The+A+to+Z+of+Australia&pg=PA476&printsec=frontcover, accessed 12 June 2023).

34. The Straits Times, 29 June 1940. The latter ad included Cyrano's, a fashionable restaurant in Singapore that established early in 1940 an English pub component, the Pig and Whistle. Almost certainly then this pub carried Tooth's 'K.B.' in this period. See our blogpost of 14 June 2023 which gives further background on the pub and its connection to Cunard liner pubs for the crew. (Retrieved from https://www.beeretseq.com/the-pig-and-whistle-from-sea-to-sea/, accessed 17 June 2023).

35. The original carried the bold type.

36. Courier-Mail, 10 July 1941.

37. The Sun (Sydney), 1 September 1941.

38. The Straits Times, 8 May 1941.

39. S.R. Carver's Overseas trade and customs and excise revenue. 1940/41. Bulletin No. 38 (Retrieved from https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.c2626848&view=1up&seq=3&q1=beer, accessed 15 June 2023).

40. The Straits Times, 3 August 1941.

41. The Straits Times, 7 December 1941.

42. For this and further details how the Malayan Peninsula and Singapore were lost to Japanese arms, see Chapter 4 of (2002) The Second World War: Asia and the Pacific, ed. T.E. Griess (Retrieved from https://books.google.ca/books?id=NbXccb3rkSUC&pg=PA69&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false, accessed 16 June 2023).

43. According to Robert Morley's (2018) Canteen Army: The NAAFI Story, Chapter 10 (Kindle edition, unpaginated), there were 90 canteens on the Peninsula when the Japanese invaded, hence not counting those in Singapore. They were progressively abandoned as British and Allied forces retreated south. The NAAFI at Kota Bharu, where the first Japanese force landed, is pictured in the text.

44. Malaya Tribune, 16 August 1941.

45. Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle, 23 April 1941. Incidentally, most of the players' names, reproduced in the coverage, were Chinese.

46. Malaya Tribune, 12 July 1940.

47. Morley, R, (2018) op. cit., Chapter 10.

48. ibid.

49. Malaya Tribune, 19 December 1941.

50. It is reasonable to read the news report this way, excepting for service staff. The term 'Asiatics', for its part, was not necessarily pejorative. The phrase 'Asia for Asiatics' regularly appeared in Japanese propaganda, for example.

51. The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 13 December 1941.

52. (Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Brooke-Popham, accessed 17 June 2023).