

Envelope fails to sell at auction

The stamps were among the first to be issued from the Straits Settlements. An envelope posted from the Far East to Northampton more than 140 years ago has failed to sell at auction.

The letter inside is missing, but the envelope has three first-issue stamps from the Straits Settlements - now part of Malaysia.

It was sent to a Mrs Isted at Ecton Hall, near Northampton, in 1868.

The envelope, for sale by V.T. Nathan, president of the Philatelic Society of Malaysia, had been expected to fetch more than £1,500 at Spink in London.

Red Sea

The Straits Settlements became a British crown colony in 1867 but was later dissolved as part of the British reorganisation of its Southeast Asian dependencies after World War II. Senior stamp specialist at Spink, Nick Startup, said: "The stamps are first-issue stamps from when the Straits Settlements became a crown colony.

"These were part of one of the first sets that were issued.

"Unfortunately the letter is not with it, which is usually the case with these old letters, and means it is hard to know the story around it.

"The letter would have come over by boat, it was before the Suez Canal was open so it would have gone through the Red Sea then taken across land, then on another boat to Southampton and up to London, then Northampton."



The month of April gave us the privilege of having John Lee of Froggery Cottage Gardens, Desborough giving us a very interesting talk on Penstemons. John has the worlds largest collection of over 450 varieties on show of these plants. His garden is open to the public during the summer with lunches and teas served.

That evening all of us who attended managed to purchase one of these plants. They have a very pretty flower which lasts for many months outdoors. So Ecton gardens should have a good show this year.

The next meeting is the AGM Tuesday 5th May followed by a walk, weather permitting.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Denise Collcott