

BALDWIN'S AUCTIONS: THE SINGAPORE PHILATELIC MUSEUM COLLECTION

In March, Baldwin's Auctions will offer collectors the opportunity to obtain rare and highly coveted Singapore material when it presents the first part of the Singapore Philatelic Museum Collection. *GSM* spoke to Robert Smith, the Commonwealth expert at Stanley Gibbons responsible for describing the lots in the sale, about some of the many important items that the collection holds.

After fierce competition from auction houses across the globe, Baldwin's Auctions will host a landmark philatelic sale of important Singapore items from the former Singapore Philatelic Museum. The sale, which has been curated by the experts at Stanley Gibbons, will be offered across two parts in 2024. The first part, covering Queen Victoria material, will take place at 399 Strand on 28 March.

The stand out item in this first part of the auction is unquestionably the Malaya Straits cover (Lot 9). It is described by Dr Philip Kinns, Emeritus Director of Philately and grantee of the Royal Warrant, as: 'A truly wonderful exhibition item of unparalleled importance' featuring, as it does, each of India's first four stamps on the front.

Iain Murphy, Managing Director of Baldwin's Auctions, acknowledges the prestige of the Malaya Straits cover as: 'One of, if not the most important item the auction house has ever had the honour to present'.

GSM spoke to Robert Smith, the Commonwealth expert at Stanley Gibbons responsible for describing the items in the sale, about the auction's star lot, as well as other important items in the wider collection.

Q. How often would material like this appear on the general market?

The collection has a number of very rare items. These are less likely to come up at auction and might only be offered once in a generation. General items from the collection might appear every few years at auction.



The star item in the sale is the Malaya Straits cover which features a full set of India's first stamps (Lot 9)



Lot 24 in the sale is a block of four of the Straits Settlements 1867 6c. on 2a. yellow

Q What are the standout items in this collection?

The most valuable item, and the most exciting is the Malaya Straits cover (Lot 9), sent from Singapore to Ireland on 2 December 1855. This cover features each of India's first four stamps on the front, making this the complete set on cover. It is very rare to get all four values on one cover as the opportunity to use one of each stamp was limited. This certainly adds to its value. It is of great interest to collectors, and especially desirable to collectors of early Indian stamps.

Another important item is Lot 24, a block of four of the Straits Settlements 6c. on 2a. yellow (SG 5). This block is from the first issue of Straits Settlements stamps from 1867 and is one of just four recorded blocks of the 6c. value. The underlying stamps are from India, which the authorities in Singapore overprinted with a crown and surcharged with a new face value, which invalidated the Indian stamp. The collection contains one of each value in a block, with the exception of the 2c.

Another important item included in the collection is a magnificent block of 12 of the 1867 Straits Settlements 24c. on 8a. rose (SG 8) (Lot 28). This is one of the largest recorded blocks of this value and was previously in the collection of Milo Rowell.