

COLONIAL OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO BRUNEI 'DESTROYED UNDER STATUTE' 1906–1934

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ABSTRACT

In this paper the author scans the registers of correspondence relating to Brunei (1906–34) held in the National Archives at Kew. An annotated checklist of documents is provided. It is concluded that useful data can be yielded; and that, in a case such as Brunei, where documentation is in short supply, no potential source of information should be neglected. The exercise raises issues about the preservation of historical records. Suggestions for further research are provided.

Keywords: Brunei, historians, registers of correspondence, source material, vandalism.

INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with documentation relating to Brunei during the period 1906–1934 which has been 'destroyed under statute'. The data have been derived from the Registers of Correspondence (CO 352/7 and CO 777/1–3) which are (or used to be, at any rate) available for inspection at the UK National Archives (formerly 'Public Record Office' or 'PRO') at Kew, London.

The sultanate remained a British Protectorate between 1888 and 1983, when the United Kingdom was responsible for its foreign policy and defence. Meanwhile, between 1906 and 1959 Whitehall also controlled Brunei's *internal* administration through the agency of a British 'Resident' or administrator.

The lists (*infra*) detail correspondence received by the Colonial Office from various sources [the British High Commissioner for Brunei (the Resident's immediate boss), based in Singapore; the Admiralty; the Foreign Office; and so on]. There are four columns. The number in the first column provides the Colonial Office registration number of the document, the numbering starting from scratch at the beginning of each new year; the date the despatch

was received appears in the second column; whilst the third furnishes a summary of the contents as recorded in the registers. The designation 'last' refers to the immediately preceding document on the same subject, 'next' refers to the immediately subsequent one. The present writer's annotations are provided in a fourth column.

It is clear that a vast amount of material has been weeded out; and the researcher cannot but regret the loss of these papers. Some of the destruction was pure vandalism. On the other hand, the clues contained in the remaining indices, whilst seldom conclusive in their own right, may on occasion offer a vital pointer. A case in point is the item "Individuals: Warner and Company, 27313/1919", *infra*. In the light of existing knowledge, this raises the possibility that the Island Trading Company acquired Gadong Estate in 1919.

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Several themes emerge from the inventories. One noteworthy early topic is the role of Sir Edward Sassoon MP (1856–1912), who tabled a series of parliamentary questions on Brunei during the years 1906–1908. This campaign formed part of Rajah Sir Charles Brooke's unsuccessful attempt to persuade the British Government to abandon the new Residential System in the Abode of Peace and to permit Sarawak to take over the sultanate instead.

A second concern is health, beginning with the Admiralty documents dating from the smallpox epidemic of 1904. The need for a medical officer cropped up in 1912 (HC 8844/1912);¹ but in fact nothing was done. The problem resurfaced in the late 1920s (F 20086/1926 and File 31725/1927); and a doctor permanently resident in Brunei was eventually appointed in 1929. Hitherto, health matters there had been overseen from neighbouring Labuan.

During the First World War, two continuing stories may be highlighted. First, the Island Trading Company engaged in a protracted correspondence in the hope of obtaining licences for the importation into the United Kingdom of Brunei cutch. After the war, their main worry switched to discriminatory tariffs being imposed on their product by France and the United States.

The second story was the extraordinary case of a Mr. DH Jones, who was evidently somewhat unbalanced. He is listed first

¹ For a list of abbreviations, *vide infra*.

under 'Miscellaneous Offices' (28413) in 1917, then under 'Individuals' in 1917 and 1918. Apparently seeing himself as a protector of the people of Brunei, one entry has him "demanding a conference and his expenses paid, with threats". The Colonial Office ignored him, because the summary "[Jones] requests reply" occurs more than once. A letter received on 27 May 1918 is intriguing: "[Jones] requests replies to his letters and recognition as representative of Brunei" (25672). The next and final letter (73174), in December 1918, talks of a "liberation movement" and "requests some definite assurance from Prime Minister". It would be fascinating to discover further information about this Mr. Jones, in particular the nature of his contacts in the Abode of Peace and whether he had any local supporters (and, if so, who they were).

Turning now to other matters, the registers confirm the non-retention by the PRO of many of Brunei's Enactments. On the other hand, an entry from 1924 (HC 38521) suggests that Lincoln's Inn Library may have a run of Brunei's laws. (It does). Interestingly, in 1922 the High Commissioner felt himself obliged to apologise for the delay in the transmission to London of Brunei's Enactments. Instructions were issued to ensure that a similar failure would not recur (CO 777/1: HC 47630).

The estimates of Government income and expenditure were also weeded, as also were many of the quarterly reports on the oil industry (1911 onwards). Some later quarterly reports survive.

The mapping of the Bornean sultanate is a matter which materialised more than once. The theme is first mentioned in 1911 (Admy 30942), although a map was not actually produced until three years later. The question re-emerged in a different guise in 1924–1925, when the British Malayan Petroleum Company was anxious to carry out aerial surveys in Brunei and Sarawak. The Admiralty (Admy 10874/1924), for its part, was interested in producing charts of the coast.

Another long-running correspondence (in 1920–1924) concerned the transfer to Brunei Bay by Rajah Vyner Brooke of the Muara farm rights.

Other noteworthy points include the following:

1. the telegraph service (HC 17076/1915; HC 45666/1920; HC 43650/1923; and file 3829/1926);
2. military service during the Great War (HC 56727/1915; MO 46839, 47968/1918);

3. the examination ordered by the Colonial Office into the validity of Sarawak and British North Borneo's treaties with Brunei (HC 8539/1914 and FO 28941/1915);
4. the fact that EE Abrahamson, an important businessman in the sultanate, was naturalised a British citizen in North Borneo (FO 51475/1919);
5. rumours in 1919 to the effect that Brunei was to be transferred to Sarawak (Douglas 57401/1919);
6. negotiations with the BMPC *re* mining operations (HC 33735, 53924, 55324/1923; BT 8473/1923);
7. Brunei's (spurious) claim against the BNBC (27310/1915 and 26156/1916);
8. a visit of the then sultan of Brunei (Muhammad Jamalul Alam II, r 1906–1924) to Labuan to celebrate the 1911 coronation of HM King George V (r 1910–1936) of the United Kingdom (HC 28049/1911);
9. naval intelligence returns (HC 8750/1919);
10. an enquiry in August 1916 from the Brunei Rubber and Land Company concerning whether reports on plantations were submitted by the British Resident in Brunei; and, if so, where they could be obtained (CO 777/1: MO 41099);
11. the form in which the annual report was printed (item 20430, dated 02.11.1926);
12. the proposed establishment of a hospital in Brunei (item F 20086, dated 27.10.1926).

In short, a perusal of the registers may provide important snippets of information unavailable elsewhere.

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The 'table of documents' which follows is divided into four parts, thus:

- Part I: CO 352/7, Register of Correspondence, Brunei, 1904–1914.
- Part 2: CO 777/1, Register of Correspondence, Borneo, 1915–1923.
- Part 3: CO 777/2, Register of Correspondence, Borneo, 1924–1926.
- Part 4: CO 777/3, Register of Correspondence, Borneo, 1927–1934.

Within this framework the documents are arranged according to the various agencies of the British government, at home or abroad, which were in correspondence with the Colonial Office. Many of the destroyed despatches originated from the British High Commissioner for Brunei, based in Singapore, who doubled as 'British Agent for British North Borneo and Sarawak'. Among Whitehall departments featured are the Foreign Office, the India Office, the Admiralty, the Crown Agents, Home Office, the Board of Trade, and the Treasury. Some questions about the sultanate were also raised in the British Parliament. Various companies or individuals also appear in the lists.

The documentation now follows; and at the end of the paper there is a summary, conclusion, and suggestions for further research. Before proceeding, however, perhaps it should be mentioned that the exchange value of the Straits' dollar was 1s 10½d in 1904, two shillings (£0.10) in 1905, and 2s 4d from 1906 onwards (Emerson 1964: 522). The pound sterling was fixed against the gold standard at US\$4.86 prior to the First World War and again from 1926–1931.

TABLE OF DOCUMENTS (WITH ANNOTATIONS)

PART I: CO 352/7 REGISTER OF CORRESPONDENCE, BRUNEI, 1904-1914

DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DOCUMENT DETAILS	ANNOTATION
(i) Despatches from the High Commissioner, 1906–1914			
36821	06.10.1906	Post of Assistant Resident: requests approval of the appointment of FAS McClelland on £540-£600 and special allowance of £100 per annum.	McClelland (1873–1947) served as Assistant Resident in Brunei from May 1906 to May 1907. See also CO 273/331 (33045). He joined the FMS Civil Service in November 1896 (Class 1B, 1919; Class 1A, September 1922). His later, more senior posts included Auditor-General, FMS; Commissioner of Lands, FMS; and Acting Resident, Perak.
1987	16.01.1907	Oil: Anxious for a reply to telegram of 10 January.	CO 531/1 (1331). This matter concerns an application by CE Gadelius for a mining lease (which was not actually issued until 1909). See further <i>Sarawak Museum Journal</i> 1995: 88.
18577	23.05.1908	Land and Mining Enactments: certain amendments were required in the former – but hopes there will be no long delay in passing both measures.	The Mining Enactment was passed in 1908; the Land Code did not get through until 1909. <i>Vide infra</i> for further Enactments passed in 1908.
34424	21.09.1908	Estimates 1908: sends printed copies.	Actual revenue in 1908 was only Str\$43,539, actual expenditure \$75,738.
34425	21.09.1908	Report on Brunei 1907.	Now held in CO 824/1.
47501	28.12.1908	Courts Order in Council – were gazetted 10 November; copies of three Orders by Governor in Council were forwarded in Straits Despatch 26 November (last, Governor 46547; next, HC 39359/1909)	See, further, <i>British and Foreign State Papers</i> (101): 100.

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DOCUMENT DETAILS	ANNOTATION
8124	06.03.1909	Commission as Consul-General for North Borneo and Sarawak: returns (next, FO 10783).	The Consul-General for North Borneo and Sarawak was renamed 'British Agent' for the same (Tarling 1970: 33).
28129	23.08.1909	Enactment No. 5 of 1908: Coin Import and Export: sends.	
28130	23.08.1909	Enactment No. 6 of 1908: Buffaloes: sends.	
31947	27.09.1909	Enactment No. 2 of 1908 (Mining), No. 3 (Revenue Farms), and No. 4 (Stamps).	
34153	18.10.1909	Enactments 1908: 6 bound copies.	
2172	22.01.1910	Land Code 1909 – sends – with copies of letters from Resident (last, HC 40185; next, HC 26804).	<p>A Land Code, based upon that in force in the Federated Malay States, had originally been enacted by His Highness the Sultan-in-Council in April 1907 (<i>BAR</i> 1907: 8). It was necessary to pass such a law, the Resident explained, "to provide some means of ascertaining and verifying claims to land put forward by natives [<i>sic</i>]. The result of the passing of the Land Code containing provisions for a system of land settlement and registration of titles, was that the Land Office was inundated with an extraordinary number of claims, most of them extremely vague and many of them apparently fraudulent, to all easily accessible land in the state. The process of weeding out these claims and settling disputed ownership, will take a great deal of time" (<i>BAR</i> 1907: 8).</p> <p>A further Land Code was in preparation in 1908 and passed in 1909 in order to provide "for a simpler method of title than that at present in force" (<i>BAR</i> 1908: 7).</p>

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DOCUMENT DETAILS	ANNOTATION
26676	29.08.1910	Estimates 1910 (last HC 1169/1910).	<p>This law was the occasion of a good deal of friction between His Highness Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam II and successive British Residents.</p> <p>Actual revenue in 1910 was Str\$77,051, actual expenditure \$73,513, the first time a budget surplus had been achieved by the Residency. Surplus balances were also achieved in 1912 and 1913. National debt at the end of 1910 stood at \$300,000, however, and worse was to come in this respect.</p> <p>The year 1910, the Resident claimed, "saw the small state of Brunei, as administered under British protection, definitely emerge from its former comatose condition into a sphere of active expansion" (BAR 1910:1).</p>
39930	31.12.1910	Estimates 1911: sends; estimated deficit of [Straits] \$6,685.	Actual revenue in 1911 amounted to Str\$109,430 compared to expenditure of only \$79,318 (CO 824/1 <i>Brunei Annual Reports</i>).
28049	28.07.1911	Coronation celebration, visit of Sultan of Brunei to Labuan – sends translation from the sultan on the subject of.	<p>The destruction of this document was sheer vandalism.</p> <p>The coronation in question was that of HM King George V of the United Kingdom, 22 June 1911 (Longford 1976: 51–2).</p>
29281	21.04.1912	Tanah Brunei Company – is now in liquidation (last, HC 25392).	The TBC was a fledgling rubber company, which failed to survive infancy. See <i>The Planter</i> , 69(809), August 1993: 379.
8844	15.03.1913	Medical officer for Brunei: states action taken as regards appointment of a (last B26590/1912).	'B' here = 'Butterworth', the manager of the catch factory, better known as the author, 'Peter Blundell' (1875–1952).

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			<p>Prior to the establishment of the Brunei Medical Department in 1929, health matters there had been overseen by the Labuan doctor. The person concerned, Dr RE Adamson, died on 24 July 1912, which prompted Butterworth to raise the matter with the High Commissioner (CO 531/4, B26950/1912). In 1919 arrangements were made for Adamson's successor, Dr TCA Cleverton, to visit Brunei at least once a month; and experts also came from Singapore to offer advice. The postal clerk doubled as a resident dresser in the capital; and in 1918 a travelling dresser was engaged to visit the outstations. These constituted the entire medical staff employed by the government as late as 1926.</p>
8539	07.03.1914	Affairs of Borneo: requests one copy each of two volumes 1893–1899 and 1900–1905 for British Resident (Next FO 95252).	This might have been in connection with the Brooke claim to exclusive mineral rights in Brunei. See <i>SMJ</i> 1992: 240–3, 253–5.
(ii) Despatches from the Admiralty (to the Colonial Office), 1904–11			
27263	02.08.1904	Smallpox at Brunei: copy tells of, to despatch HMS <i>Rinaldo</i> to Brunei with medical assistance.	On the smallpox epidemic, see Kimball 1979: 276–278. HMS <i>Rinaldo</i> (1900–1921), sloop, 980 tons; 180 x 33 feet; six 4-in guns; launched at Laird shipyard, 29 May 1900; sold on 21 October 1921 to W Thomas, Anglesey (Colledge 1987: 291).
31507	09.09.1904	Ditto – extract from letter of OC Sirisu respecting outbreak of. See FO 29639 and FO 32336.	

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DOCUMENT DETAILS	ANNOTATION
26602	14.08.1911	Thanks for action in calling for reports on progress quarterly. They will indicate how far Gadelius has carried out obligations of his case (last, Admy 22867; next HC 37916).	This is important because it demonstrates that quarterly reports on the Brunei oil industry commenced in 1911. On Gadelius, an oil prospector, see <i>the Brunei Annual Reports</i> , 1907–17; and <i>SMJ</i> 1995: 88.
30942	23.09.1911	Boundary map – requests map drawing existing relative boundaries of Brunei, North Borneo, and Sarawak (last HC 18971; next HC 22604).	A map was eventually produced in 1914 following the hydrographic survey performed by HMS <i>Merlin</i> in 1911 (<i>BAR</i> 1911: 9; <i>BAR</i> 1914: 6). See further, below, HC 10937/1915. HMS <i>Merlin</i> (1901-1923), sloop, 1,070 tons, 185 x 33 ft, 6-4 in guns. Launched at Sheerness Dockyard on 30 November 1901. Became a survey vessel in September 1906. Sold on 3 August 1923 at Hong Kong (Colledge 1987: 226).
(iii) Despatches from the Foreign Office (to the Colonial Office):			
4635	10.02.1904	Consul-General for Borneo – concurs in terms of notification to be published in <i>London Gazette</i> as to appointment of Sir John Anderson, new Straits Governor, as (last MO 2411).	Sir John Anderson (1858–1918): Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner for Brunei, 1904–11. Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, 1911–16. Governor of Ceylon, 1916–18. The <i>London Gazette</i> is one of three official journals in the United Kingdom issued by authority twice a week. It comprises public notices, such as lists of government appointments (<i>Oxford Illustrated Dictionary</i> 1970: 333, column 3).
13276	18.04.1904	Acting Consul at Brunei: Hewett has left; asks when McArthur will take up appointment (last, Governor 12050).	Godfrey Hewett (1859-1932), a member of the BNBC Service in the 1880s and 1890s, officiated as British Consul for the Borneo Territories between 1900 and 1904.

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DOCUMENT DETAILS	ANNOTATION
			McArthur arrived in Brunei on 3 May 1904 (Saunders 1994: 101; Tarling 1971: 506). Malcolm Stewart Hannibal McArthur (1872-1934). Acting British Consul in Brunei, April-November 1904 and October-December 1905. British Resident, Labuan and Brunei, 1906-8. Ended his career as acting British Adviser in Kedah, 1919-22.
18133	22.05.1906	Presence of Rajah of Sarawak: concurs that no necessity exists for communication to Rajah as to his presence in Brunei (last HC 17422; next HC 26871).	For more details about this episode, see Stubbs 1968: 111; and <i>BMJ</i> 1986: 116-124. Sir Charles Brooke (1829-1917) ruled as Rajah of Sarawak from 1868 until his death nearly half a century later. By 1906 he had been very keen for some years to absorb within his own country the territories remaining to Brunei.
19073	28.05.1906	Dutch mining concession in Borneo - sends a copy despatches from and to The Hague respecting alleged transfer to Germany of (next FO 23359).	It would be worth pursuing this matter.
20174	06.06.1906	Expenses of Residency at Brunei: contribution will be paid on receipt of reply from Governor as to date when Resident took over charge of consulate (last FO 18134; next Governor 36819).	The salary of the Resident continued to be paid by the British Government until 1927 (CO 717/58/29220 and CO 717/59/ 52345).
34299	27.09.1907	British Consulate General - extra allowance for clerical assistance. Allowance of £60 can only be paid from FO vote unless Treasury specifically sanctions the increase being so paid (last Treasy 32676; next Treasy 35306).	

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DOCUMENT DETAILS	ANNOTATION
41281	22.12.1909	Japanese consul for North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak: sends copy letter to Japanese Ambassador as to jurisdiction of consul at Singapore (last FO 39318; next Governor 3612/1910).	This should have been retained.
(iv) Correspondence from the India Office (to the Colonial Office):			
39445	1912	Indian immigration to North Borneo.	In the case of Brunei, there was a significant immigration of several hundred Tamil labourers to work on plantations there during the mini rubber boom of the mid-1920s. By 1931, however, during the depth of the depression, only five remained. Tamils were also repatriated from Sarawak at about the same time (<i>vide</i> Ooi Keat Gin 1997:285, note 104).
4544	1913	Likewise.	
(v) Parliament:			
16467	10.05.1906	(Sassoon) alleged disturbances: to ask if any information as to - has been received from British Resident (last 15561; next HoC 27294).	See <i>The Times</i> (London), Saturday 14 April 1906: 3c; and Monday 7 May 1906: 6b. On Sassoon, <i>vide</i> Stubbs 1968: 110-12, 114-16. Sir Edward Albert Sassoon, second Baronet (1856-1912), was a prominent supporter of Rajah Sir Charles Brooke at Westminster. Succeeding his father in the baronetcy (cr 1890) in 1896, he was Liberal Unionist MP for Hythe from 1899 until 1912 and a sometime President of the Folkestone Chamber of Commerce. He

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DOCUMENT DETAILS	ANNOTATION
	06.07.1906	(Sassoon) Sarawak and Brunei: to ask FO whether questions should be addressed to CO or FO.	married Aline (d 1909), a daughter of Gustave, Baron de Rothschild. The Sassoons were wealthy Jews originally from Baghdad, and the extended family included the famous poet, Siegfried (1886-1967). Runciman 1960:199.
27204	25.07.1906	(Sassoon) Affairs of Brunei - to ask FO whether any statement can yet be made as to - and to present position with regard to the [word illegible] mining contract.	
44754	05.12.1906	(Sassoon). (1) Cost of British Residency; (2) Annexation by Sarawak; to ask as to (1); whether petition for (2) has been received and whether it is proposed to assent (last HC 36819; next HC 40678).	Stubbs 1968: 110-111, 116.
7736	01.03.1907	(Sassoon) Transfer of administration [of Brunei] to Sarawak: to ask whether petition in favour of has been received by HC and if so what answer has been given (last, 45446/1906; next, B[rooke] 34640).	Stubbs 1968:111-12.
7737	01.03.1907	(Sassoon) Sarawak police in Muara. To ask whether the Secretary of State was aware of terms of concession to Rajah Brooke of Sarawak when letter was directed to withdraw - whether force has been replaced by equally efficient force conversant with language (last HC 5866; next Governor 20553).	Stubbs 1968: 114-15.

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DOCUMENT DETAILS	ANNOTATION
26854	24.07.1908	(Sassoon) Trade and tax in Brunei: to ask value of trade for each year for which figures can be obtained, whether \$2 poll tax imposed on Kedayans in Muara district and if so by what authority, whether it was proposed to tax annually the Malays, and whether proposal was stopped as Malays proposed to emigrate.	Stubbs 1968: 114. The fledgling nature of administration in Brunei during the early years of the Residential Era rendered unreliable such trade figures as were gathered. The poll tax was not abolished until the end of 1936.
26855	24.07.1908	(Sassoon) Position of HMG in Brunei: to ask from what source expenses of British Residency are defrayed – how much money has been defrayed from Straits or FMS and on what terms.	Government expenditure outstripped revenue every year between 1906 and 1909, sometimes drastically so. It was not until 1910 that even a small budget surplus was achieved (revenue Str\$77,051 against expenditure of \$75,513). Loans totalling Str\$500,000 were negotiated from the FMS during the years 1906–11, but \$60,250 of the final instalment was never drawn. In 1914 the National Debt stood at \$439,750, partly secured on Brunei government buildings, including the Residency (<i>bumbungan duabelas</i>) (BAR 1917: 1) A further \$20,000 was borrowed from the Straits Settlements in 1922, when the National Debt peaked at \$444,500. Indebtedness did not cease until 1936.
(vi) Miscellaneous Offices			
7870	15.03.1912	Tanah Brunei Rubber Company: Requests interview to discuss difficulties encountered.	The Tanah Brunei Company collapsed later in 1912. See also, HC 29281/1912, <i>supra</i> .

PART 2: CO 777/1 REGISTER OF CORRESPONDENCE, BORNEO 1915–1923 (DOCUMENTS 'DESTROYED UNDER STATUTE')

DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
(i) Despatches from the High Commissioner:			
10937	01.03.1915	Sketch map of Brunei – sends.	<p>This was presumably the one produced as a result of activities of HMS <i>Merlin</i> (see above, HC 30942/1911).</p> <p>The 1914 map showed "that the sketch maps forming part of those of British North Borneo or Sarawak were very incorrect. The Temburong Valley proves to be larger than was imagined whilst those of Limbang and Trusan are much smaller" (<i>BAR</i> 1914: 6).</p> <p>An earlier sketch map, at a scale of approximately six miles to one inch, accompanied McArthur's mid-1904 "Report on a Visit to Tutong and Belait" (see FO 881/8567, reference by courtesy of Mr Simon Francis).</p> <p>No map was printed with the <i>Brunei Annual Report</i> until the 1928 edition.</p> <p>For a Sarawak version, see the map in the front and back endpapers of Hose 1988 (1926).</p>
17076	11.04.1915	Enactment No 1 of 1914: Post Office. Enactment No 2 of 1914: Telegraphs.	"A Postal Enactment and a Telegraph Enactment were passed in order to place these services on a legal basis. The FMS Enactments were adopted together with an addition to control wireless on steamers within the waters of the state" (<i>BAR</i> 1914: 5).
17107	13.04.1915	Oil industry.	An oil strike had actually been made in Belait District in late 1914; but it proved to be a false dawn, and oil exporting did not get properly under way until the early 1930s.
40750	03.09.1915	Small scale map of Brunei.	See just above.
41756	09.09.1915	Oil Industry.	See <i>BAR</i> 1915:6.

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
56727	09.12.1915	FW Douglas: military service.	<p>Francis William Douglas (1874–1953) was acting British Resident in Brunei and Labuan between November 1913 and January 1915.</p> <p>He became a temporary second lieutenant in the Royal Army Service Corps [now known as the Royal Corps of Transport] in October 1915. Promoted Captain, December 1915. Demobilised in July 1919 with the rank of Major (<i>CO List</i>).</p> <p>He became a Class III officer of the FMS CS in 1912, Class II in 1919, and Class IB in June 1921, ending his career as acting BR Perak for a few months from May 1927. Staying on in Malaya, he was appointed in 1937 Secretary to HH the Sultan of Selangor, who granted him the title of <i>Datuk</i> in 1937.</p>
50655	13.10.1917	Licences of Shanghai Langkat Oil Company: Company has abandoned prospecting arrangements and licence lapsed on 1 August 1917.	<p>This is an important document which ought not to have been destroyed.</p> <p>The Shanghai Langkat company, sniffed the <i>BAR</i> 1917: 4, "early in the year abandoned work on their East Tutong Prospecting Licence and devoted nine months to the leisurely removal of their material".</p>
1436	07.01.1919	War contribution: voluntary income tax: further draft of £162 6s 3d as further contributions by Europeans in Brunei.	<p>An earlier contribution, in 1917, had raised £123 4s 6d from around twenty Europeans in Brunei. The tax varied from one per cent to six per cent (CO 531/11, item 10762 1917/18; see also Treasury 13466?1918, <i>infra</i>).</p>

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
			These two amounts, taken together, would total £285 10s 9d. This figure is at a slight discrepancy from the one given in CO 273/498, item 7434, where it is said to have been £285 8s 4d.
8750	10.02.1919	Naval intelligence returns.	
53945	18.09.1919	Oil industry in Sarawak and Brunei.	See <i>BAR</i> 1919: 3.
29966	07.06.1920	Saluting stations.	None existed in Brunei.
45666	14.09.1920	Government telegraph code – requests copy for use of British Resident.	
9982	02.03.1921	Estimates 1921.	See next entry.
31762	03.07.1922	Estimates 1922.	The actual revenue in 1921 amounted to Str\$165,890, expenditure to \$197,469. The figures for 1922 were \$209,702 and \$188,250. A loan of \$20,000 having been secured from the Straits Settlements during the latter year, the national debt peaked at \$444,500.
44696	07.09.1922	Possibilities of trade with Italy.	
47630	25.09.1922	Delay in transmission of Brunei Enactments – regrets, and has caused instructions to be issued to ensure that it will not recur.	
54306	01.11.1922	Farm rights in Muara Damit: considers it is not necessary to print deed as only six copies required.	See further <i>BMJ</i> 1992: 1–17.
33735	06.07.1923	British Malayan Petroleum Company [BMPC]: commencement of exports: Brunei Government has no objection to the request of the company and will afford facilities for transport.	The BMPC was founded in 1922 and is now known as the Brunei Shell Petroleum Company (established 1957).

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
43650	03.09.1923	International Radio Telegraphs Convention of 1912 – no objection to accession to.	Brunei's wireless telegraph station was built in 1920-1 (<i>BAR</i> 1920: 5; and <i>BAR</i> 1921: 5). Str\$3,101 was spent on 'construction of wireless telegraph stations' in 1921 (<i>BAR</i> 1921: ii, footnote)....
53924	08.11.1923	Lease to BMPC in Tutong District: Government of Brunei agrees and HC concurs in proposed grant of a second lease.	In November 1922 the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company's prospecting licence in Tutong District was renewed under the name of the 'British Malayan Petroleum Company' (<i>BAR</i> 1922: 4), both units forming part of the Royal Dutch/Shell Group. Then, on 28 July 1923 agreement was reached whereby the BMPC took over the interests of the British Borneo Petroleum Syndicate in Belait district (<i>BAR</i> 1923: 4). In 1924 the BMPC received further extensions of their prospecting licence in the Tutong area pending the completion of a new agreement with the Crown Agents acting in London on behalf of the Brunei Government (<i>BAR</i> 1924: 5). Whereas previously the two prospecting licences had been held by different companies, now they were held by only one. This raised problems. Although separately the two licences might have complied with certain restrictions in force in the sultanate and in the British Empire, collectively they no longer did so. The prolonged negotiations in 1923-5 concerned whether the Belait and Tutong concessions should be regarded as separate entities or taken together as one; the area of any mining leases which might be granted under the existing prospecting licences; and minimum rental and royalty rates (CO 531/17-19).

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
55324	15.11.1923	Tel: Tutong [oil] licence: no objection to extension for period necessary to complete negotiations now proceeding.	
55711	19.11.1923	Brunei Farm Rights: requests to be furnished with copy of draft deed of surrender assignment.	See HC 54306/1922 (above).
(ii) Despatches from the British Agent for British North Borneo and Sarawak²			
18701	18.04.1921	Price of <i>chandu</i> : states that Government of British North Borneo has been informed that price of <i>chandu</i> in Brunei and Labuan will be raised conjointly with price in British North Borneo. Rajah of Sarawak approached but no reply received yet, but as increase proposed is so small, joint action by Sarawak is not indispensable.	' <i>Chandu</i> ', or <i>candu</i> in modern Malay, is prepared opium (KT).
(iii) Admiralty (to CO)			
54850	04.11.1921	Activities of Kuhara Mining Company: requests information on points specified (next, MO 57624).	"No boring was done during the year on the Belait Oil field [thus] (but some geologists of the Kuhara Mining Company made an examination of the land leased to the BBPS" (BAR 1921: 3, paragraph 26). More to the point, perhaps, it was thought at the time that 'the Japanese Admiralty are behind Kuhara' (CO 531/15, item MO57624).

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² The British High Commissioner for Brunei in one of his additional roles.

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
(iv) Crown Agents			
33404	11.07.1922	British Borneo Petroleum Syndicate.	This concern was quoted on the London Stock Exchange until 2000. The BBPS merged with Hardy Oil and Gas in 1998 to form 'British Borneo Oil & Gas' and the combined concern was taken over in 2000 by the Italian multinational corporation, ENI S.p.A, i.e. the <i>Ente nazionale idrocarburi, società per azioni</i> , or National Hydrocarbon Agency, joint stock company (<i>The Daily Telegraph</i> , London, Monday 12 October 1998: 27, <i>DT</i> Tuesday 21 December 1999: 32; <i>The Sunday Telegraph</i> , London, 11 April 1999:B8; the ENI website, accessed on Wednesday 23 March 2005; and the Collins Sansoni <i>Italian-English Dictionary</i>).
50527	17.10.1923	New Brunei postage stamps.	According to Stanley Gibbons catalogues, new sets of stamps were issued in Brunei on 31 March 1922 (Malaya-Borneo exhibition) and again in February 1924 (including a six-cent stamp depicting the water village). Previous issues took place on 1 October 1906, 26 February 1907, and 12 June 1908. Apart from fresh denominations added to the original issue of 1924, no new stamps appeared in Brunei until 2 January 1947 (unless the BMA overprints of 1945-1946 are included).

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
(v) Correspondence from the Foreign Office			
28941	23.06.1915	Brunei-Sarawak treaties: FO record office have been asked to allow Douglas to examine FO correspondence down to 1869.	On FW Douglas, <i>vide supra</i> , HC56727/1915. With regard to Douglas's proposed examination of Brunei-Sarawak treaties, in 1914 Sarawak had put in a claim to exclusive mineral rights in Brunei. It might be speculated, therefore, that, had Sarawak pursued the matter 'too far', Whitehall might have brought Brooke Sarawak's <i>own</i> title-deeds under the microscope. The Sarawak side eventually accepted that their claim to mineral rights in the sultanate was unfounded.
51475	23.09.1919	Passport Office: passport for Mrs AM Abrahamson, who stated husband – the late EE Abrahamson was naturalised as a British subject in North Borneo.	Mrs Anna Maria Abrahamson was born in about 1866 and survived until 1947 (detail by courtesy of Mr Simon Francis, who has extensively researched the history of the Abrahamson family. Edward Ellis Abrahamson (born c.1860) was a businessman with interests (cutch, rubber) in Brunei during the early years of the Residential Era. Previously a magistrate at Sandakan, he died in 1915 leaving estate valued at £11,486 10s 8d (gross) and £8,829 5s 2d (net) (Probate Registry, York, letter to the author, 29 February 2000).
36063	25.07.1922	Mangrove bark extract: sends copy [?]BR to BoT re proposed increase in duty on importations into USA (last, BoT 35472; next MO 41660).	On the cutch industry in Brunei, see Blundell 1923. Cutch is a 'water-soluble substance obtained from tropical plants' (CTFCD 2000:254), such as, in Brunei's case, mangrove bark. The manufactured was used in textile mills for dyeing purposes (CO 273/448, item 12474) and for the curing of fishing nets (see below, 49381/1917). There are also medicinal uses (CTFCD 2000:254). Alternative English-

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
			language forms of cutch are 'catechu' and 'cachou', all derived from the Malay word <i>kacu</i> .
(vi) Home Office (to CO)			
61978	14.12.1921	French import duty on cutch – no observations but desires to be kept informed of developments.	
(vii) Parliament			
19558	19.04.1923	(Sir H Brittain). Maintenance of British Borneo trade.	Sir Harry Brittain (1873–1974); MP (Unionist) for Acton, 1918–29; Vice-President, Institute of Export, 1938–44; KBE 1918, CMG 1924; LLD MA DL Barrister-at-Law; Freeman of the City of London, 1938; autobiographies published in 1945 and 1949; died 9 July 1974.
(viii) Board of Trade			
58371	23.11.1921	French import duty on cutch – observations by ITC.	ITC = Island Trading Company. Further details are proved under item MO20566/1917. See also, Blundell 1923.
321	03.01.1922	Ditto: points out that letters from the firms concerned do not contain the necessary information required before the possibility of taking useful action can be considered. Discusses differential treatment of British colonial tanning extracts and Argentine product. Does not consider HMG [His Majesty's Government] is at present in a position to initiate negotiations for more favourable treatment of Empire products in France.	

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
35472	21.07.1922	Customs duty on mangrove bark extract - fr [?further] copy to ITC and promises further communication (next MO 924).	
45015	09.09.1922	Mangrove bark extract imported into USA - sends copy to ITC re proposed revision of US tariff on tanning extracts (last, MO 41954; next, FO 45635).	
8473	17.02.1923	BMPC: application for an oil licence; requesting copy of prospecting licence and lease (next, Admy 9952).	
(ix) Treasury			
13466	18.03.1918	War contribution by Europeans in Brunei: desires to be associated with proposed message of appreciation. Proposes to draw attention of Parliament to gift when next General Minute is laid on subject of war contributions (last, HC 10762; next, HC 59316).	See also, HC 1436/1919 (<i>supra</i>).
(x) Miscellaneous Offices (to CO)			
41099	30.08.1916	Brunei Rubber and Land Company: reports on plantations. Asks if ... are submitted by British Resident Brunei and if so where they can be obtained.	If would be interesting to see the reply to this letter. A concise 'biography' of Labu Estate (Temburong District) might be as follows: Abrahamson's representative commenced planting there, 1908. Brunei (Borneo) Rubber and Land Company floated n London to run the estate, 11 May 1909. First estate in Brunei

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
			to commence tapping, 1914. 1,073 mature planted acres by 1940. Paid-up capital peaked at £58,000. Dividends of 5% or more paid in 1920, 1925-7, 1940 and 1950-6. BRLC sold Labu estate to the Brunei government, 1958. BRLC went into voluntary liquidation, 6 August 1959. First in, last out.
12808	09.03.1917	ITC. Manufacture of boiler parts.	
15553	26.03.1917	ITC. Priority instruction 5 issued (last MO 12808).	
15852	27.03.1917	ITC: importation of mangrove bark extract into the –requests assistance in obtaining licence for full amount required (next, BoT 19831).	
20566	21.04.1917	ITC: mangrove bark extract for UK – asks if facilities for importation can now be granted (last, BoT 19831; next, MO 28949).	The ITC owned the catch factory in Brunei Town. A large proportion of the capital's population depended upon it for their livelihood (<i>BAR</i> 1917: 2). The year 1917 marked the peak, however, of unrestricted German submarine warfare. By April 1917 one in four ships leaving British ports never returned. The introduction of the convoy system during the year reduced this calamitous figure to one in a hundred. Conversely German submarine losses started to exceed replacement levels (Taylor 1963:169, 177, 180, 181; see also Livesey 1994:111–12, 116–19 and Strachan 2003:71–80, 215–24, 283–5). There were also 'end-user' issues, in other words whether the ostensible purchaser in a third country was trading with the enemy (see, for example, CO 273/448, items 4658/1916 and 12474/1916).

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
			Cutch production in Brunei slumped from 48-52,000 hundredweights per annum in 1914-16 to only 35-38,000 in 1917-19. But the value increased from Str\$285,400 in 1916 to \$330,700 in 1917 and a record \$361,501 in 1918.
28413	04.06.1917	Royal Historical Society – Borneo – sends letter from a Mr DH Jones asking for help in obtaining information etc which will assist in improving position of people of ... (next, Jones 28579).	See under 'Individuals' (<i>infra</i>).
28947	07.06.1917	ITC: lack of freight – notifies probability of operations at factory, which will displace greater part of native labour employed (last, MO 20566; next, 30980 or 30985). ³	On the ITC's difficulties in 1917-1918, see <i>BAR</i> 1917: 2 and <i>BAR</i> 1918: 3.
30980 or 30985	18.06.1917	ITC: importation of cutch into UK: sends copies of correspondence with BoT and requests support to claim for reconsideration to allow ... (last, MO 28947; next 34653).	Evidently the ITC was experiencing difficulty in securing access to the British market.
32459	21.06.1917	ITC: quebracho industry. Calls attention to speech by Chairman of Forestal Land, Timber and Railway Company as to retaining ... as a British Key Industry, and submits comments on it.	'Quebracho' seems to be used here as a synonym for 'cutch'. The dictionary definitions of 'quebracho', a word of immediate Spanish origin (but ultimately a Latin-French compound), are as follows: "1. either of two anacardia-ceous South American trees, <i>Schinopsis lorentzii</i> or <i>S. balancae</i> , having a tannin-rich hard wood used in tanning and dyeing; 2. An apocynaceous South American tree, <i>Aspidosperma quebrachoblanco</i> , whose bark yields alkaloids used in medicine and tanning; 3 the wood or bark of any of these trees;

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³ My transcription error.

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
34653	10.07.1917	ditto: further representations as to the importance of ... and urges reconsideration of decision as to provision of tonnage.	4 any of various other South American trees having hard wood" (CTFCD 2000: 1264); from Latin, <i>crepare</i> , to rattle, + French, <i>hache</i> , axe (ibid.) The last point probably refers to wartime shipping restrictions (cf. <i>BAR</i> 1917: 2 and <i>BAR</i> 1918: 2).
39427	08.08.1917	ITC: importance of cutch into UK: understands from Singapore that cutch is now priority cargo; asks for import licence for 50 tons during September.	
40154	13.08.1917	Ditto: reports steps taken to reduce output to avoid cessation of industry – requests assistance in obtaining permits for ...	
41859	22.08.1917	Freight space for mangrove extract: ITC ... requests assistance in obtaining import licences.	
43883	04.09.1917	Importation of cutch: asks whether licences can now be granted.	
43883	06.09.1917	ITC: import of cutch: has applied twice to Bd Agriculture but no reply has been recd: asks if import licences can be granted.	
46003	18.09.1917	ITC ditto: ... is again applying to Dept of Import Restrictions: asks that application may be supported.	

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
49381	10.10.1917	ITC: ditto: has been unable to secure freight space: asks that representations be made in proper quarters: urges that Bd Agri be induced to recommend BoT that cutch should be imported for curing of fishing nets etc.	
49889	10.10.1917	ITC ditto: has heard from BoT direct: desires to import 100 tons a month for curing of fishing nets, in addition to 100 tons a month for which space is already allotted.	
51203	18.10.1917	Ministry of Shipping: cutch importation into UK: ... ITC have written direct to SoS and copies of their letters have been sent to the Far East Lines Committee for investigation. Liners from Far East lifted 33 tons cutch in September.	The matter now disappears; so presumably the ITC got their way at last – a lesson in persistence.
15381	28.03.1918	HM Petroleum Executive: grant of oil concessions in Protected States: proposes to hold meeting to discuss.	As mentioned in the introduction, Brunei remained a British Protectorate for slightly more than ninety-five years, between September 1888 and the end of 1983.
17987	13.04.1918	Petroleum Executive: concessions held by BBPS: enquiry (last, HC 14046; next, HC 25302).	
46839	28.09.1918	Brunei Rubber and Land Company: release of LG Lee from military service. Requests assistance in obtaining the ... as estate will be deprived of all European supervision at the end of the year.	The BRLC ran Labu estate in the isolated Temburong District of Brunei. See also, MO 41099/1916 (<i>supra</i>). Lee was assistant manager of the estate (SSD 1916, 1917, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923), subsequently becoming Manager of the same (SSD 1925, 1926, 1927; please note that SSD 1913–1915 and 1918–1919 are not available to the present writer; the BRLC does not appear in SSD 1924; and Lee is not listed in SSD 1928, 1929, 1930). Along with his wife, Lee was

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
			a victim of the Long Nawang massacre in 1942 (CO 874/1106 f.33). He had joined SBRAS in 1921 and subsequently became a Life Member of MBRAS. In 1933 his address given as Ladang Geddes, Bahau, Negeri Sembilan.
47968	05.10.1918	Min. of NS [?National Service]: LG Lee: reports interview with Mr Dolbey and Mr Lee: as latter has been accepted for military service in Singapore, question of his release is one for War Office to whom offer is being made.	The Dolbey family was prominent in the BRLC.
13334	28.02.1919	Colonial official: message for Cator: draft to HC forwarding (tel. to HC, 28 February).	Geoffrey Edmund Cator (1884–1973) was BR Brunei, 1916–1921. Knighted 1946.
20937	07.04.1919	ITC: JH Goldschmidt of Copenhagen: asks if there is any objection to resuming business relations with.	The Foreign Office had prohibited trade with the said Goldschmidt in 1916 (CO 273/448, item 4658).
22774	07.06.1920	Institute of Petroleum Technologies: petroleum production: requests statistics 1910–1919.	This concerns Miri, Sarawak, presumably, rather than Brunei. Oil was not discovered in the Abode of Peace until April 1929.
55090	05.11.1921	ITC: French import duty on cutch: represents hardship caused by the duty imposed on mangrove bark extract cutch entering France from Borneo, while Burmah cutch is allowed to enter free of duty.	
61671	13.12.1921	ITC: ditto: enclosing, copy letter from Roberts, Evans and Woodhead and asks that further representations may be made to BoT.	As at 1915 the Roberts, Evans, and Woodhead company was based at African Chambers, Old Hall Street, Liverpool. The ITC described the firm as 'our buyers' (CO 273/436, item 24660).
924	07.01.1922	ITC: further representation.	

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
3972	25.01.1922	ditto: ITC requests intervention with BoT in order that French import duty on cutch may be the same as that on quebracho extract.	
12874	18.03.1922	Ditto: ITC refers to recent reduction of ... but asks that SoS will continue to endeavour to get the co-efficient, which is still retained at 4, taken off altogether.	
15356	31.03.1922	ITC ditto: expresses thanks for representations made for reduction of 'co-efficient of increase', applied to ...	
21213	05.05.1922	ITC: ditto: enquires whether any information has yet been received from BoT or from French Govt.	
25176	26.05.1922	Ditto: asks that question may be taken up again with the French Govt.	
31060	27.06.1922	Petroleum Dept: Fuel for Japanese Navy.	
32563	06.07.1922	Duty on cutch: proposal of American Government to increase ...: ITC asks that representations may be made in order to bring the product into America under the 'most favoured nation clause'.	
41660	22.08.1922	ITC: French duty: asks whether any reply has yet been received from HM Ambassador at Paris.	
41954	23.08.1922	ITC: US duty: encl. copy letter from their representative in America and requests that matter may be taken up again with BoT.	

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
(xi) Individuals			
B 44868	08.09.1922	Burchells: Brunei v Rajah of Sarawak. In order that necessary assignment and surrender may be published, enquires who will execute this document on behalf of the Sultan of Brunei (last, R 39294; next, R 44872).	Here 'R' = JF Rowlett (1869–1932), Secretary of the Sarawak State Advisory Council. 'Burchells' were solicitors to the Colonial Office. Charles Tufnell Dyne Burchell (1858–1937) was admitted as a solicitor in July 1882. From 1882 to 1937 he was a member of 'Burchell & Company', later renamed 'Burchells'. He died on 18 February 1937. The practice was then run by Alfred William Burchell (1866–1953), who had been admitted a solicitor in December 1899. From then until his death on 15 March 1953 he was a member of Burchells & Company. ⁴
B 56206	21.11.1922	Burchells: Brunei farm rights: returns the draft agreement (last, HC 55870; next, B 59411).	
B 27589	01.06.1923	Burchells: Brunei farm rights: states that Messrs Torr [solicitors to the Rajah] and Company will be informed in the sense indicated.	
C 35297	16.07.1921	GE Cator: certain rights of the Rajah of Sarawak.	This concerns the same matter at an earlier stage of negotiations.
D 57401	10.10.1919	FW Douglas: cession of Brunei to the Rajah of Sarawak. Enquires if there is any truth in the rumour re the ...; is so, requests interview.	Douglas has been encountered already (FO 28941/1915 and HC 56727/1915).

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⁴ Data by courtesy of Mrs D Chilton (Law Society), letter to the author, 28 October 1988, paragraphs 2-3, taken on trust. The then style of the law firm was Dale and Newbury, 202 High Street, Brentford, London TW8 8AH.

DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
J 28579	05.06.1917	DH Jones: improvement of the conditions in Borneo (last, MO 28413).	
J 34837	11.07.1917	Ditto: demands a conference and his expenses paid, with threats.	
J 36999	23.07.1917	Ditto.	
J 37978	30.07.1917	Ditto: requests reply.	
J 38786	03.08.1917	Ditto.	
J 52291	25.08.1917	Ditto.	
J 56423	16.11.1917	Jones, ditto: further representations from Jones (received via the Prime Minister; see J 16041 / 1918).	The Prime Minister at the time was David Lloyd George (1863-1945).
J 24694	21.05.1918	Ditto: requests interview and reply by phone.	
J 25672	27.05.1918	Ditto: requests replies to his letters and recognition as representative of Brunei.	
J 73174	27.12.1918	Ditto: liberation movement: asks how matter stands and requests some definite assurance from the Prime Minister.	
S 27310	14.06.1915	Stephenson, Harwood and Co: Claim of Sultan of Brunei against BNBC - requests permission to inspect original documents.	Stephenson and Harwood were solicitors to the BNBC.
S 26156	03.06.1916	Ditto: the BNBC's investigations are not completed but there will be as little delay as possible.	
W 27313	06.05.1919	Warner and Company: exchange of titles, ITC ... requests copy of Land Code 1909.	This could be a vital clue. Does this refer to the ITC's acquisition of Gadong Estate?

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DESCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
W 29507	16.05.1919	Ditto: Land Code 1909: asks whether ... are available, and, if so, if they can see them or obtain copies.	
W 46088	17.09.1923	Whyte, Ridsdale and Company: exportation of goods to Brunei: requests information in connection with.	

Other items listed in CO 777/1 "destroyed under statute" include

- (a) all the quarterly reports on the oil industry, 1918-23;
- (b) each *Annual Report* (these are in CO 824/1);
- (c) financial estimates - every year except 1916 (the minutes are usually available);
- (d) Enactments 1914-22.

PART 3: CO 777/2 REGISTER OF CORRESPONDENCE, BORNEO 1924–1926 (DOCUMENTS 'DESTROYED UNDER STATUTE')

DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DETAILS OF DOCUMENT	ANNOTATION
(i) Despatches from the High Commissioner			
5370	04.02.1924	Estimates 1924.	Actual revenue (\$268,024) and expenditure (\$247,614) set new records in 1924, but at year-end the national debt still stood at \$435,500. Indeed, it was not until 1933 that annual government income exceeded the national debt for the first time. That said, the mid-1920s were a comparatively prosperous time in the sultanate thanks to a mini-boom in rubber.
38521	13.08.1924	Copies of Brunei Enactments for Lincoln's Inn Library.	To be noted.
49408	20.10.1924	Seventh International Conference on Oil Production – does not wish to be represented at.	
16875	17.03.1925	Annual Medical Report for 1924.	See CO 824/1.
18163	21.04.1925	Proposed concession to BMPC – no objection to extension of 12 months asked for by company.	
10311	17.05.?1926	Report of BR Brunei ... reports shipment of 1,000 copies addressed to SO.	Note the size of the print run. SO = n.a. ['Stationery Office', presumably].
20430	02.11.?1926	Annual Report: form in which it is printed. Instructions have been noted. Scale of import duties such as press on the poorer classes are being examined with a view to reduction.	Very interesting. It is true that in the mid-1920s the <i>BAR</i> was reduced to smaller sized pages, although the <i>number</i> of pages showed a tendency to increase. Note also the instruction on import duties.

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DETAILS OF DOCUMENT	ANNOTATION
(ii) British Agent			
10082	03.03.1924	Prohibition of import and export of prepared opium [<i>candu</i>] from and into Sarawak.	
30339	26.06.1924	Opium control in Sarawak.	
10859	09.03.1925	Aerial survey by BMPC – the Governments of Sarawak and Brunei have no objection to offer to the proposal.	On aerial surveys generally, Yergin (1991: 219) notes that "During the Great War, aerial surveillance had been used by the combatants in Europe for troop spotting. The technique was quickly adopted by the oil industry, making possible a broad view of surface geology that simply was not available to someone on the ground. As early as 1919, Union Oil hired two former lieutenants, who had done aerial work in France for the American Expeditionary Force, to photograph sections of the California landscape. Another important innovation was the analysis of microscopic fossils - micro-palaeontology ...".
3560	13.03.1926	Second opium conference: Rajah agrees to the inclusion of Sarawak.	"In 1924 [Ooi Keat Gin 1997:275], conforming to the policies laid down by the League of Nations, Vyner's government reassumed full control of the opium monopoly that 'included the registration of opium smokers, the closing down of numerous retail shops and their replacement by a few Government divans' without undue opposition or difficulties. A Chinese Advisory Committee was constituted to assist the authorities. The government undertook direct control of the importation, preparation, distribution, and sale of opium".

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DETAILS OF DOCUMENT	ANNOTATION
			<p>The ethics of governmental reliance such a product as opium for revenue became a matter of international concern. At the first International Opium Conference held at The Hague in 1912, it was agreed that, in future, the manufacture and sale of opium would be monopolised by the State. Hence, after 1 January 1913, the Brunei administration received all <i>candu</i> imported into the country from the government factory in Singapore, and a Monopolies Department, headed between 1913 and 1919 by Mr EG Goldfinch, was created. It was feared, however, that the ease of smuggling would complicate the enforcement of the international opium policy. Finally, the Brunei <i>Candu</i> Enactment of 1912 confined the sale of <i>candu</i> in the sultanate to adult male Chinese. Shops and customers had to be registered.</p> <p>The Geneva Conference of 1925 envisaged the complete suppression of opium smoking within fifteen years of the date when smuggling should have been completely suppressed. The date of the latter, which was to be announced, was to be not later than 1935: hence total abolition was scheduled for 1950 at the latest. The British government remained sceptical of such rapid progress.</p> <p>Opium was a major source of government revenue in Brunei. In 1925 the Resident of Brunei proposed to earmark twenty per cent of opium revenue to an Opium Revenue Replace Fund every year until 1927,</p>

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DETAILS OF DOCUMENT	ANNOTATION
			and thereafter the whole of such revenue. The fund stood at \$201,903 at the end of 1940. Although consumption of opium had been in decline for some time beforehand (12,660 <i>tahil</i> in 1926 to only 6,000 <i>tahil</i> in 1938, with one <i>tahil</i> being equivalent to 0.083 lbs), the Japanese occupation (1941-5) indirectly and finally solved the evil of opium-smoking in Brunei 'by killing off or curing all addicts'. After 1946 the <i>candu</i> monopoly was not re-established.
(iii) Admiralty			
56805	24.03.1924	Concession to BMPC in respect of Tutong District – no objection to Aerial Survey (next, MO 56970).	
10874	27.05.1926	Admiralty survey of area of North coast of Borneo – HMS <i>Herald</i> has been detailed to carry out – asks that necessary facilities may be given (next, Gov SS, tel., 10 June 19264).	HMS <i>Herald</i> (1918-1942; 1942-1944) certainly visited Brunei in 1927 (<i>BAR 1927</i> : 8). Formerly HMS <i>Merry Hampton</i> . Minesweeping sloop, '24' class (i.e. 1,320 tons, 267½ x 35 ft, and probably two four inch guns.) ⁵ Blyth SB, 19 December 1918. Renamed HMS <i>Herald</i> in February 1923, survey vessel. Scuttled February 1942 at Seletar; raised by the Japanese and commissioned in October 1942 as the <i>Heiyo</i> . Mined on 14 November 1944 (<i>Colledge 1987</i> : 227).

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⁵ Twenty-four of this sort of vessel were ordered by the Royal Navy in 1917 (*Colledge 1987*:15).

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DETAILS OF DOCUMENT	ANNOTATION
(iv) Crown Agents			
22777	14.05.1924	Brunei farm rights: Burchells and asks wherer SoS approves of payment of £29 11s 0d from Brunei funds (last, HC 18928; next HC 39619).	
55296	26.11.1924	Concession of BMPC in respect of Tutong District: requests instructions with respect to the aerial photographic survey of certain party of Brunei and adjacent states. Sends copy correspondence with the company regarding area to be covered by prospecting licence contemplated under proposed new agreement (last, CA 21989; next, CA 55396).	
55396	26.11.1924	BMPC: two copies further corres with the company and awaits instructions of SoS in regard to the proposed aerial survey (next, Admy 56805).	
57144	06.12.1924	BMPC: proposes with SoS approval to agree to company being granted twelve months in which to select the area of 150 square miles (last, MO 56970; next, Admy, 59055).	This evidently concerns the area of land which the company wished to acquire for its prospecting licence.
60717	30.12.1924	BMPC: [rest illegible] (last, Admy 59055; next, CA 2267/1925)	
6504T	22.01.1925	Indent for drugs: states that an export licence for item No 55 reqd: in circumstances perhaps HO may be asked to issue necessary licence without the usual import certificate.	

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DETAILS OF DOCUMENT	ANNOTATION
13906	26.03.1925	BMPC: states that 18 prints of the agreement are being forwarded and encloses copy of the further correspondence with the company with regard to the changes to be covered by the prospecting licence.	
(v) Board of Trade			
5925	07.02.1925	Oil industry in Brunei and Sarawak: states that there would appear to be an error in the quarterly returns; ... (last, HC 59954/1924; next, HC 18164).	
23530	23.05.1925	Brunei Enactment No 1: for observations (last HC 18996; next, -).	Brunei Enactment No 1 of 1925 was the Inventions Enactment.
(vi) Miscellaneous Offices			
9382	27.02.1924	Ministry of Health: White's report on prevalence of epidemic disease in the Far East.	Re a report presented to the Health Committee of the League of Nations, Geneva, by Dr FN White (1877-1964).
56970	05.12.1924	Concession to BMPC: no objection to company carrying out aerial survey.	A comprehensive geological survey of a very large part of the state was effected but little real prospecting activity was carried out in Tutong District. At Belait however great strides were made (BAR 1924:5).

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DETAILS OF DOCUMENT	ANNOTATION
F 20086	27.10.1926	ITC: medical services in Brunei, inadequacy of: requests interview in order to discuss ... suggests establishment of hospital in Brunei to which local industries could contribute (next, MO 27110).	<p>The first government hospital in Brunei was begun in the capital in November 1928 and opened by Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin in the following September. It was originally designed to contain thirty beds for third class patients.</p> <p>The Brunei Medical Department was established in 1929. The first SMO Brunei was Dr KV Veerasingham, who held office from February 1929 until May 1930. No further biographical particulars are available to the annotator at the moment.</p>
(vii) Quarterly Reports on the Oil Industry			
11554/1924	n.d.	Fourth quarter 1923.	
26485/1924	n.d.	First quarter 1924.	
42813/1924	n.d.	Second quarter 1924	
58540/1924	n.d.	Third quarter 1924.	
18164/1925	n.d.	Fourth quarter 1924.	
26201/1925	n.d.	First quarter 1925.	
40888/1925	n.d.	Second quarter 1925.	
57490/1925	n.d.	Third quarter 1925.	
(viii) Enactments			
27202/1924	n.d.	Indian Immigration Enactment (1924)	Enactment No 1 of 1924.
50383/1924	n.d.	Excise Enactment (1924).	Enactment No 2 of 1924.

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DETAILS OF DOCUMENT	ANNOTATION
1851/1924-25	n.d.	Small Offences (Amendment) Enactment; and Traction Engines and Motor Cars Enactment (both 1924).	Enactments Nos 3 and 4 of 1924. The first motor car was introduced into Brunei in 1924 by the then Resident, Mr EEF Pretty. Pretty (1891-1967) was British Resident, Brunei, 1923-8 and 1948-51. He was appointed CMG in 1951 and made a Brunei <i>dato</i> eleven years later.
18996/1925	n.d.	Inventions Enactment (1925)	Enactment No 1 of 1925.
3829/1926	n.d.	Lights and Small Shipping (Amendment) Enactment (1925); and Telegraphs (Amendment) Enactment (1925).	Enactments Nos 2 and 3 of 1925.

PART 4: CO 777/3 REGISTER OF CORRESPONDENCE, BORNEO 1927–1934 (DOCUMENTS 'DESTROYED UNDER STATUTE')

DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DETAILS OF DOCUMENT	ANNOTATION
31703	1927	Opium and Dangerous Drugs: BNBC	The Arms and Explosives Enactment was Enactment No 1 of 1927, which appears to have been the only piece of legislation during that year.
31710	1927	Brunei Enactments 1. Forwards copies of Enactment No 1, Indian Immigration (Amendment) Enactment of 1926; 2. Arms and Explosives Enactment, 1927 (previous, HC 27202/1924; next, Sec 62376/1929).	Oil was not struck in Brunei until April 1929.
31722	1927	Oil industry in Brunei: Quarterly returns.	
31725	1927	Medical Officer for Brunei. 1. HC to CO, recd 3 May 1927: agrees that resident Medical Officer should be appointed, but thinks for the reasons stated, that the appointment should be postponed till the spring of 1929; 2. to Brunei Rubber Company, 10 June; 3. to ITC, ditto; 4. to HC, 15.06.1927; 5. ITC to CO, received 14.06.1927: expresses satisfaction and hopes appointment will be expedited. 6. CO to HC, 22.06.1927; 7. Gov to CO, received 05.08.1927, seeks approval for new appointment and requests selection of candidate; 8. Gov 431, 14.09.1927. See also 28027 SS.	SG (December 1988): 17 and 19 (fns 9–10).

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DOCUMENT NUMBER	DATE RECEIVED IN CO	DETAILS OF DOCUMENT	ANNOTATION
62692	1929	Miscellaneous (last, 52618/1928; next, 72605/1930). Mr E Combe, 05.04.1929, enquires as to situation.	
62620	1929	Opium and Chandu Orders HC No 32, 16.11.1929.	
13605	1933	Imperial trade correspondent at Kuching.	
33615	1934	Mui tsai.	There was only one such individual in Brunei. On <i>mui tsai</i> in Malaya, see Allen 1983: 130-1.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this paper attention has been drawn to documents 'destroyed under statute'. The key message is that the registers can yield valuable snippets of information and that their use should not be neglected. It was pointed out, first, that much of the material which has been lost would have been of great interest to historians. It is a useful lesson in humility. Students of the past rarely get the full story: the process of sifting has already begun long before they see the evidence and is a handicap to obtaining a complete understanding of the past. All this raises common-place concerns about the preservation of historical materials: who should decide what is worth keeping and what is not? At least the registers furnish us with some idea of what is missing.

On a more positive note, secondly, indications are found about where to look for further information: for example, to Lincoln's Inn Library for copies of Brunei's legislation. Guidance is given about whereabouts in Hansard parliamentary proceedings relating to the sultanate might be found. The registers also furnish the names of people who might not otherwise have been suspected of having a Brunei connection (such as Sir Harry Brittain). It is also possible to follow, for example, the struggle of the Island Trading Company to get shipping space for its catch exports, which was one of the sultanate's leading products in the early years of this century. So, thirdly, the indexes yield certain clues which, combined with existing knowledge, can help of fill in certain lacunae. No doubt the positive results of all this are often fairly marginal; but in a case like Brunei, where historical materials tend to be scanty (particularly so, curiously enough, for the first half of the twentieth century) every and any scrap of information is welcome.

With regard to the way forward, there is no doubt that other PRO series of files relating to Brunei (e.g. CO 717 Federated Malay States) also include documents "destroyed under statute". Similarly CO 992/1 (Register of British Borneo correspondence, 1942–1946) reveals that several files were either destroyed or suppressed beyond the usual thirty-year time-span. One would particularly like to have seen CO 531/31/14, sub-file 7, 'Special instructions *re* Sultan of Brunei', relating to the end of the war. It would be valuable, therefore, to continue the search beyond the period 1906–1934 for Brunei itself and perhaps to extend the approach to the history of other countries of South-East Asia as well.

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I am grateful to Mr Simon Francis for his assistance in the preparation of this paper, particularly in supplying data relating to the Abrahamson family and photocopies from the *Singapore and Straits Directory*. The usual rider applies.

In a thorough review of this paper Francis comments (message to the author by electronic mail, 9 September 2005 16:44:07h BST):

1. Files relating to the Tanah Brunei Company and to the ITC may be found in BT31 (Board of Trade series, No. 31), held at the National Archives in Kew.
2. Ships' logs for the visit of HMS *Rinaldo* and other vessels will be in the ADM (Admiralty) series at the National Archives.
3. The text of all Parliamentary Questions and Answers are in Hansard, which is indexed.
4. Several bulky files relating to Brunei oil concessions, including texts of agreements and leases, are to be found in the COAG (Crown Agents for Overseas Governments) series at the National Archives.

Mr Francis has also generously allowed me to see the results, thus far unpublished, of his researches in to the history of the Abrahamson family.

ABBREVIATIONS

A/C	Aircraft
Admy	Admiralty
<i>BAR</i>	<i>Brunei Annual Report</i>
BBPS	British-Borneo Petroleum Syndicate
BMA	British Military Administration
<i>BMJ</i>	<i>Brunei Museum Journal</i>
BMPC	British Malayan Petroleum Company
BNBC	British North Borneo (Chartered) Company
BoT	Board of Trade (UK)
BR	British Resident
BRB	British Resident, Brunei
BRLC	Brunei (Borneo) Rubber and Land Company
BSPC	Brunei Shell Petroleum Company (previously BMPC)
CA	Crown Agents
CO	Colonial Office; Colonial Office series of documents, PRO
corres	correspondence
<i>CTFCD</i>	<i>Collins English Dictionary</i> , twenty-first century edition (2001 reprint).
DL	Deputy Lieutenant.
FMS	Federated Malay States
fn	footnote
FO	Foreign Office; Foreign Office series of documents, PRO
Gov	Governor
HC	High Commissioner
HMG	Her/His Majesty's Government
HMS	Her/His Majesty's Ship
HO	Home Office
HoC	House of Commons (UK)
ITC	Island Trading Company (previously ITS)
ITS	Island Trading Syndicate (later ITC)
<i>JMBRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Malayan/Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
<i>JSEAS</i>	<i>Journal of Southeast Asian Studies</i>
MBRAS	Malayan/Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
MO	Miscellaneous Offices

MP	Member of Parliament
n.d.	no date
PRO	Public Record Office, Kew
recd	received.
SBRAS	Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
SG	<i>Sarawak Gazette</i>
SoS	Secretary of State
SS	Straits Settlements
SSD	<i>Singapore and Straits Directory</i>
Tel.	Telegram
Treasy	Treasury
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

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- CO 717 Malay States.
- CO 777 Register (for CO 531).
- CO 786 Register (for CO 717).
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