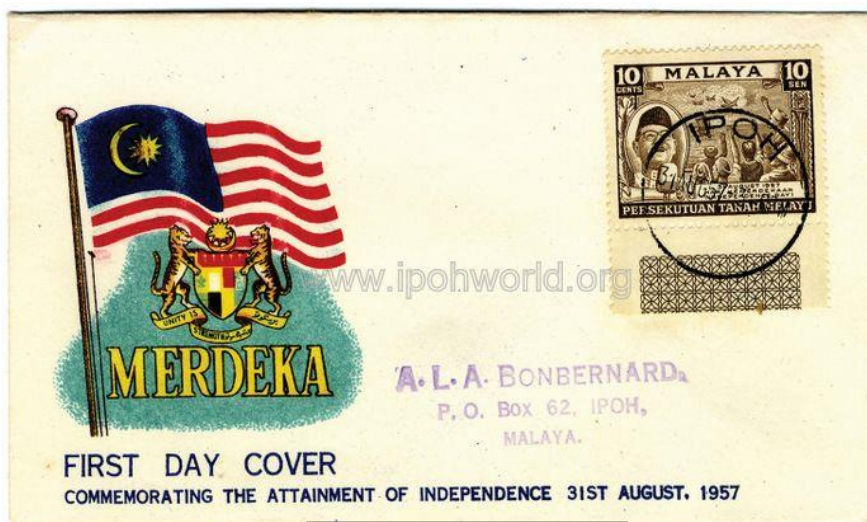


# Heritage Merdeka Heritage

As the sixty-second Merdeka approaches, the commercial instinct to make money wherever possible has come to the fore as it does every year. For example, this year there are several different patterns of shirts to wear marking the day. Motorcycle crash helmets, in vivid colours, are also available and as the August 31 draws near, there is no doubt that more souvenirs will appear to tempt our citizens to dig in their pockets and join the Merdeka scene. Interestingly, a similar thing happens in the second-hand collectors' markets where stallholders dig out souvenirs from years gone by and label them with surprisingly high prices as heritage items, which of course they are.

However, there is a school of thought that says that a real heritage piece is something that you personally received on the actual day. But back in 1957, there was not the same commercial frenzy as we see today. There was a first-day cover from the post office. It bore a special 10 cents stamp featuring the first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman. ipohWorld have one such example in their archive. It was postmarked Ipoh with the time it entered the postal system, "31AUG57-3.00PM" addressed to A.L.A Bonbernard, PO Box 62, Ipoh, Malaya. The envelope and contents also cost 10 cents.

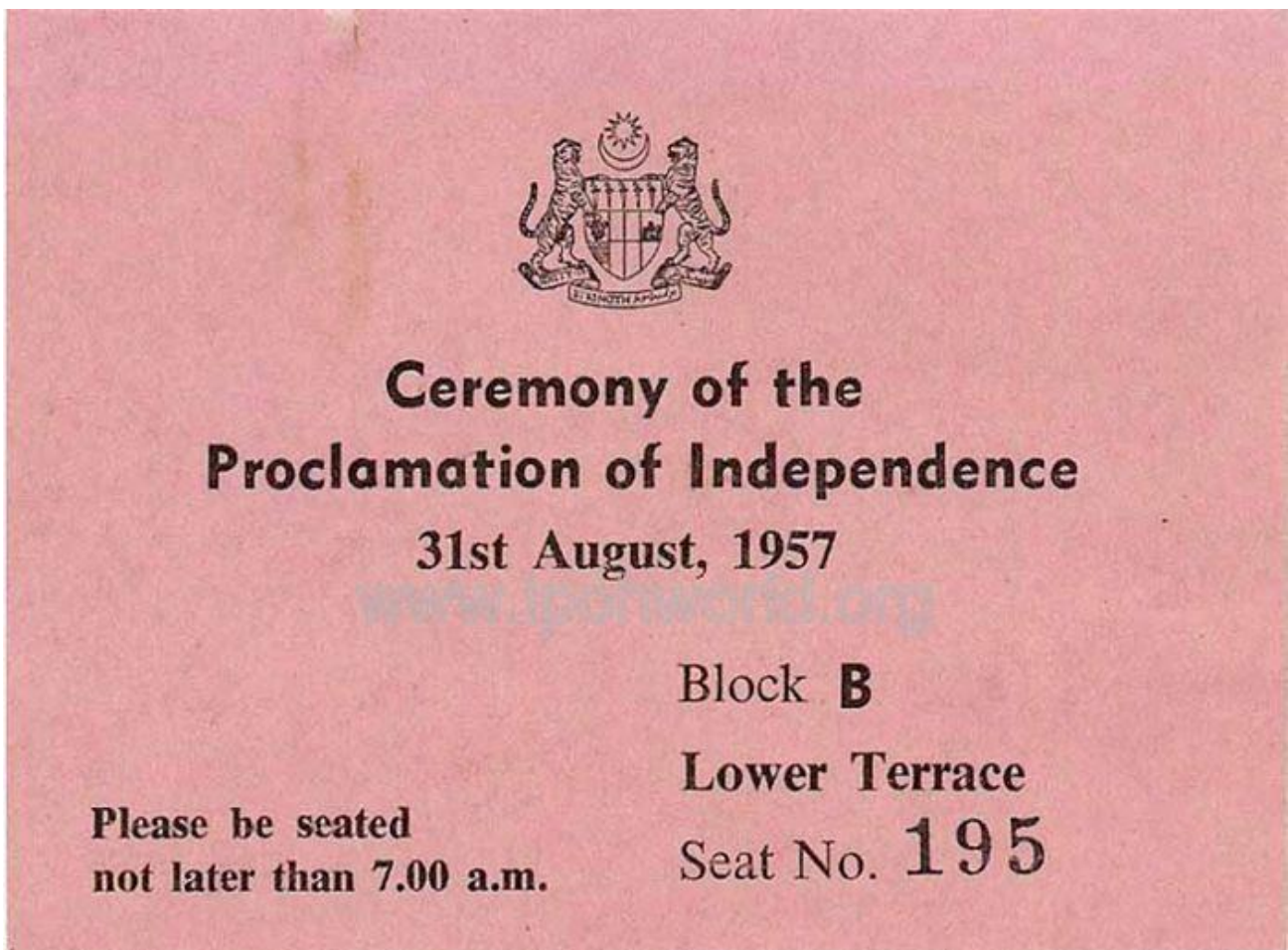


FDC 31 August 1957

Apart from the official first-day cover, lapel badges could be bought. The Singapore Standard and the Straits Times also produced Special editions, the former currently available on the Internet for RM1000 plus postage! The breweries also produced special glasses which have

become very collectable and also command high prices today. But let the buyer be aware; with today's technology, there are many modern copies of the old originals being made and there is a site on the Internet that specializes in producing duplicates to order. In principle, there is nothing wrong with such items provided they are recognised for what they are, but it is the unscrupulous trader that passes such items as genuine who is the criminal.

But for those lucky ones who were actually part of the celebrations, there are certain items, just simple pieces of paper that will recall their attendance on the big day. In Ipoh, there does not appear to have been a great deal of celebration in 1957. Sure there was a parade on the Padang and the streets were decorated as they were in most towns in Perak, but apart from these activities, there is little evidence of great celebration. The low key approach was probably that everybody that was important had received a ticket to the memorable occasion in the Merdeka Stadium in Kuala Lumpur. There, our first Prime Minister led the ceremony, while Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth was represented by the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester and Prince William.



A Ticket to Merdeka Stadium

For these, chosen few, probably the most important piece of Merdeka heritage they could ever have to share with their children and grandchildren would be their ticket into the stadium on the day when Malaya became a nation. Naturally, ipohWorld have one in their archive!