

The Emirates in the 1960s

by Geir Sør-Reime

A current map of the UAE, showing the location of what were individual nation states and stamp issuers in the 1960s and early '70s.



In the early 1960s, I saw a notice in a small local newspaper that had a stamp-collecting editorial entitled “Stamp Problems around the Gulf”. In brief, it told the story about how the seven emirates of the Trucial Coast, now the United Arab Emirates, got their own, individual stamps.

That story has fascinated me ever since, and although collecting the stamps of the “sand dune” countries was condemned by almost everyone at that time, they have always been among my favorites. And compared to the stamp output of some stamp-issuing entities of today, the number of stamps issued by the emirates was not particularly high, at least not during the 1960s. The last issues of the emirates were made in 1972, maybe some in 1973, but from April 1, 1973, all the issues lost their postal validity and were replaced by the joint issues of the United Arab Emirates. As the first UAE stamps were released January 1, 1973, combined franking with stamps of the UAE and the individual emirates was possible.

British influence in the Gulf area, and especially on the Arab side, dates from the early 19th Century, when British vessels were attacked by the tribes living in ports like Ras al Khaima, Sharjah, Ajman etc. In 1820, Britain managed to have a truce treaty signed with the Sheikhs of Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al Qiwain, Ras al Khaima, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and several others, also including Bahrain. This treaty not ending all hostilities, a new treaty was signed 1835 with Sharjah, Dubai, Ajman and Abu Dhabi, and in 1853, the Perpetual Treaty of Maritime Truce (hence Trucial Oman) was signed. Fujeira was recognized as an independent sheikhdom in 1952.

The Trucial States were in fact British protectorates, but in 1968, Britain under Harold Wilson declared a British withdrawal “East of Suez” and talks between the emirates started. In 1968, the two largest emirates, Abu Dhabi and Dubai in principle agreed to a union, and negotiations for a nine-state union (the seven Trucial States in addition to Bahrain and Qatar) started. In 1969, Qatar and Ras al Khaima left the negotiations, and then also Bahrain, leaving six sheikhdoms to form the United Arab Emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Ajman, Sharjah, Umm al Qiwain and Fujeira on December 2, 1971. Ras al Khaima decided to join February 10, 1972, after the seizure of Ras al Khaima islands (Abu Musa, Greater and Lesser Tunbs) by Iran.

The commercial center of the area was and still is Dubai. That’s also the place where the first post-office of the area was established, in 1909, when an Indian post-office was opened. After the split of British India into the independent states of India and Pakistan, for a

brief period, a Pakistani post-office operated in Dubai, before the British took over April 1, 1948. Originally, unoverprinted Indian stamps were used in Dubai, then for the brief Pakistani period, unoverprinted Indian stamps continued in use from August 15, 1947 until Indian stamps



Letter fragment postmarked Dubai 1932



Letter fragment postmarked in Dubai 1947

overprinted PAKISTAN were issued in October 1947.

British stamps surcharged in Indian currency were introduced April 1, 1948 (the same stamps that were now used in Oman). These stamps were replaced January 7, 1961, by stamps inscribed Trucial Oman, and issued by the British authorities. These were in-

tended for use in all seven sheikhdoms, but due to objections from other rulers, they eventually were only used in Dubai. In Dubai, they were



Letter fragment postmarked Dubai Nov 1947 with stamps overprinted Pakistan



1949 UPU issue surcharged in Indian currency (Sc.31)



Dubai 1963, Sc.13

replaced by distinctive stamps from June 14, 1963.



1960-61 surcharged in new Indian currency (here Sc.87)

To Be Continued

The Emirates in the 1960s, Part 2

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A post-office was opened on Das Island, part of the Abu Dhabi emirate, in 1960, selling the British stamps surcharged in Indian currency. Letters were postmarked in Bahrain, however. A post-office opened in Abu Dhabi town in 1963, using the same stamps, as the ruler of Abu Dhabi refused to use the Trucial States stamps.

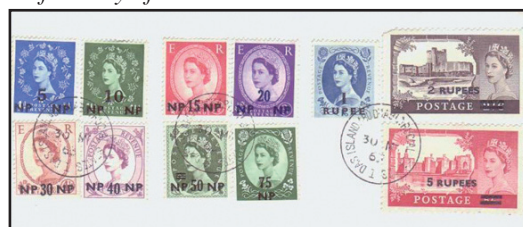


1955-57 high value surcharge (Sc. 64)



Sc. 58-64 (listed under Oman) on March 30, 1963 first day of use in Abu Dhabi

This office also postmarked Das Island mail, until a distinctive Das Island canceller was introduced in 1966.



Sc. 58-64, March 30, 1963 first day of use on Das Island, using Abu Dhabi canceller

Abu Dhabi issued its own distinctive stamps March 30, 1964 in formats and colors similar to the 1961 Trucial States stamps. The British stamps overprinted in Indian currency remained valid, however, until the end of 1966, when Abu Dhabi introduced a new currency, the Abu Dhabi Dinar.



Abu Dhabi 1964 sheikh and gazelle (Sc.1), oil rigs (Sc. 11), 1966 surcharges in Bahrain currency (Sc.15-25)

No official post-offices existed in any of the other five emirates prior to 1964, although mail seems to have been handled at the Sharjah airport, the original airport of the area that opened in

1932. Several letters exist, though, with a boxed SHARJAH cancel, applied by the local agent of the Imperial Airways at the airport, for letters handed in there. During WWII, a Royal



1937 cover from Sharjah airmailed to England bearing three India 2 annas purple with a boxed "SHARJAH" violet handstamp

Air Force base was established there, and field post letters from the base are known. The airport was moved farther outside the town in 1977.

The first independent postal administration issue for any of the emirates was the Dubai

June 14, 1963 issue. This issue has an interesting story, which we



Dubai 1963 air post series (Sc. C1); and 1963 10r high value (Sc. 17)



will provide in a later installment, and which also relates to the first stamps of Ajman, Fujaira and Umm al Qiwain.

A post-office was opened in Sharjah July 10, 1963, and the first stamps of that emirate were issued on the same day. There is an interesting story behind this issue, too—which we will cover later—linking it with Royalist Yemen and the State of Oman through Bruce Condé.

After these two, the first stamps inscribed Abu Dhabi were issued March 30, 1964 (but were issued by the British authorities, see photos in the adjacent column).

Post-offices then opened in Ajman November 29, 1963, Fujaira November 22, 1963, Umm al Qiwain November 27, 1963, but stamps were first issued by Ajman June 20, 1964, by Fujaira September 22, 1964 and by Umm al Qiwain June 29, 1964.



Sharjah 1963 1st issue (Sc. 1)



1964 1st issue (Sc. 5)

To Be Continued

The Emirates in the 1960s, Part 3

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Ras al Khaima was the last emirate to issue stamps, with the first one (in formats and colors similar to the Trucial States issue) appeared December 12, 1964.



Khor Fakken 1965 overprint on Sharjah issue (Michel 1)

and Sharjah stamps overprinted Khor Fakken were put on sale there from March 20, 1965.

On July 5, 1966, Ajman opened a post-office in its dependency of Manama; at first issuing Ajman stamps overprinted MANAMA, later distinctive stamps.

The first stamps of Dubai were designed by M.M. Arthur for the Beirut-based Barody Stamp Company, who held a contract with the Dubai authorities to produce their stamps. Several essays of the issued and also of alternative designs have been published on the web, and

A post-office was opened at Khor Fakken

(at that time an autonomous part of Sharjah) February 20, 1965,



Ras al Khaima 1964 1st issue (Sc. 1)



1966 Manama overprint on new currency surcharge on Ajman's 1st issue (Michel 1)



Photo essay used for press release of 1st issue – issued stamps differ considerably from these photo essays

The stamps were printed by N.C.R. Joseph Chalhoub in Beirut. From 1966, Dubai stamps were produced and marketed by the Crown Agents Stamp Bureau in England.

Before the Ajman, Fujaira and Umm al Qiwain stamps were eventually issued, essays had also been prepared by the Barody Stamp Company for all three states. A few of the designs prepared for Dubai's first issue were in fact used for these essays.

These essays are partly stamps of the British post-agencies (British stamps surcharged in Indian currency) with further overprints reading AJMAN, FUJAIRAH or UMM AL QAIWAIN (note the differing spelling for the two latter emirates), and partly, stamps in similar designs as the first issue of Dubai.



Left to right: Barody essays, overprints on British Postal Agency stamps with names of individual emirates: AJMAN, FUJAIRAH, UMM AL QAIWAIN

Eventually, Barody sold the agency rights to J.H. Stolow in New York, and the first stamps of these three emirates were printed in Spain by Heraclio Fournier in Vittoria-Gasteiz. The designs of the issued stamps however, are based on the original designs prepared by M.M. Arthur for Barody.



Barody essay for Ajman



Barody essay for Fujaira



Fujaira essay Camels



Fujaira 1964 air post issue (Sc. C1)



Design used in first issue (partly in modified form)



Dubai 1963, Sc. 14

there also exist some trial prints of the issued and rejected designs. Barody held the contract for Dubai stamps until 1964.

To Be Continued

The Emirates in the 1960s, Part 4

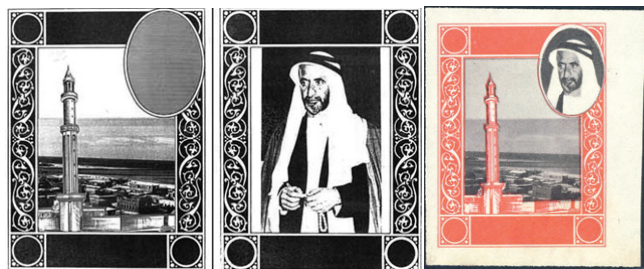
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We know many details about the first Dubai issue, as R. Howard Courtney had a lengthy correspondence with Michael Stephan of the Barody Stamp Company. Stephan sent Courtney copies of original artwork, also of the three other emirates of Ajman, Fujaira and Umm al Qiwain. Information about this is posted on Courtney's website:

<http://www.rhcourtney-collector.com/Tableofcontents.html>

Courtney also purchased a number of essays of these issues from a dealer source in the U.S.

There exist preparatory essays from various artists, and there also exists prints of some essays by a Mr. M. Kamoo.



Left, center: Essays by Kamoo; right, printed version of one

These differ very much from the issued stamps, whereas drawings by Mr. M.M. Arthur were used in original or modified form for the first Dubai issue. Other essays were used for the first Ajman, Fujaira and Umm al Qiwain issues (in modified form).

The first issues for the three latter emirates were originally laid out very similar to Dubai's first issue, but when the contract was sold to Stolow, the designs were re-worked and the stamps were printed in multicolor photogravure. Several proofs exist



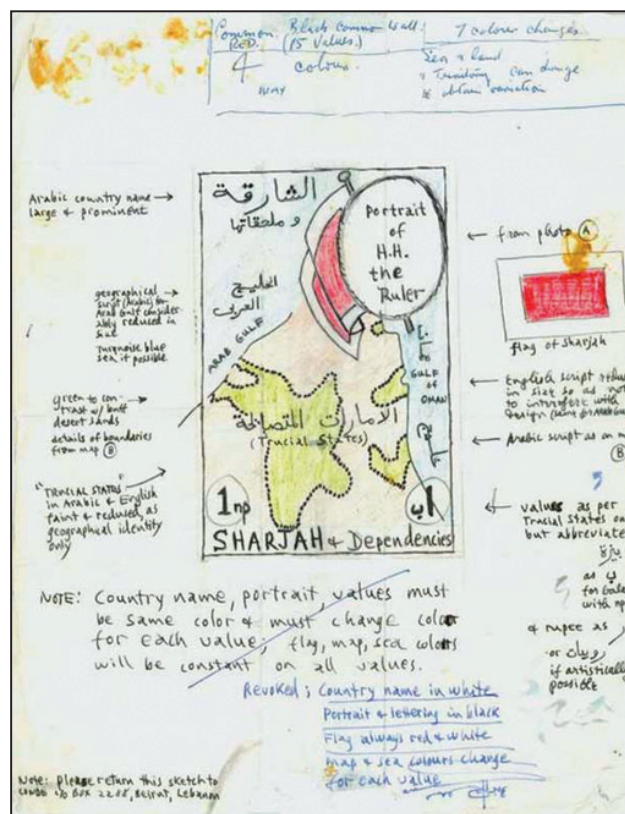
Left, 1964 1st issue, Sc. 10; right, 1964 air post stamps (Sc. C9)



Color separations for Ajman Sc. C5

of these, originating from the archives of the printers Heraclio Fournier.

The first Sharjah issue was designed by Bruce (AKA Abdurahman) Condé, who eventually was responsible for the postal service of the Yemen royalist forces (and who was involved in the production of the first stamps of the Oman Imamate State). Unlike the Barody Stamp Company, Bruce left the production of the stamps to well-known stamp printers Harrison's in England,



Bruce Condé's essay for the 1st Sharjah issue

and no proofs or essays are known on the market, although his original design has been published on the web.

The first issue of Ras al Khaima echoes the designs of the Trucial States issue, but were printed in photogravure by Harrison's.



Left: Developed essay for Sharjah 1963 First Issue; right, Sc. C15 as issued

To Be Continued

The Emirates in the 1960s, Part 5

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Coinage problems

In addition to the challenges posed by the postal services, the Trucial States in their first years also experienced a coinage challenge. On June 6, 1966, India devalued its Rupee, and that also affected the Persian Gulf Rupee (XPGR), specially created by the Reserve Bank of India for use in the Gulf.

To avoid the devaluation, all the Trucial States except Abu Dhabi and Ras al Khaima used the Saudi Riyal from June 16, 1966 to September 17, 1966. Only Sharjah (and its dependency Khor Fakkan) issued stamps denominated in the Saudi currency (using surcharges on previous stamps).

On September 17, the Saudi Riyal was replaced by the new Qatar-Dubai Riyal, which remained in use in the six sheikhdoms until 1973, when



1966 Saudi currency surcharge (Michel 249)



Sharjah 1966 metal foil stamps reproducing 1965 Kennedy coin: left, as originally issued in Indian currency; right, surcharged in Qatar-Dubai currency (Michel 202 and 314).



Ajman 1967 surcharge in Qatar-Dubai currency (Michel N104)



Ras Al Khaima 1966 surcharge in Qatar-Dubai currency (Michel F105)

Qatar introduced its own currency, and the other emirates introduced the United Emirates Dirham on May 19, 1973.

In addition to the Qatar-Dubai banknotes and coins, the five emirates of Ajman, Fujeira, Ras al Khaima, Sharjah and Umm al Qiwain issued their own commemorative coins, linked to the Qatar-Dubai Riyal. Only Sharjah issued a commemorative coin (in memory of John F. Kennedy) linked to the Gulf Rupee, in 1964.

It could also be noted that the coins of Umm al Qiwain have the emirate's name spelled as Um ul Qaiwain and on Fujeira coins, the emirate is spelled Fujairah.

Abu Dhabi in 1966 adopted the Bahrain Dinar, and continued using it until the UAE Dirham was introduced in 1973.

In fact, Ras al Khaima for one month in 1966 (from August 1) also used the Bahrain Dinar, until the Qatar-Dubai Riyal was introduced there too.

In August 1966, Ras al Khaima surcharged all its previous issues in Bahrain currency, but these were replaced November 1966 with surcharges in Qatar-Dubai currency.



Ras Al Khaima 1966 surcharge in Bahrain currency (Michel 82)

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