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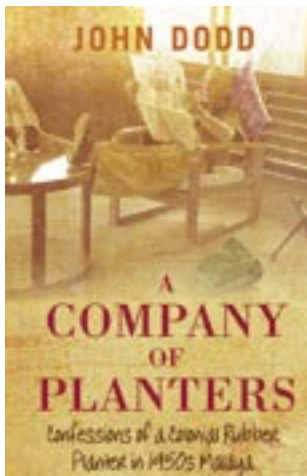
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With true stories that would make even Somerset Maugham blush,
we discover what life was really like for young colonial planters in late-1950s Malaya

A COMPANY OF PLANTERS

Confessions of a Colonial Rubber Planter in 1950s Malaya



SINGAPORE, 10 APRIL 2007—Through a collection of letters written to his best friend and father in England, and from his own personal diary entries, the young rubber planter John Dodd has bequeathed us a fascinating, and often hilarious, memoir of life as a colonial rubber planter.

Dodd was only twenty-one years of age when he left England for the Far East. He had some farming experience in Africa under his belt but had never worked with rubber. And he knew nothing of Asia.

With true stories and confessions that would make even Somerset Maugham blush, we discover what life was really like for young colonial planters in late-1950s Malaya. Increasing daily rubber output may have been their goal but for the young planters the bigger picture of chasing girls and finding a “keep” was of much greater importance.

But life was more than just a series of *stengahs* in the clubhouse, dalliances in the Chinese brothels of Penang and charming “pillow dictionaries” — there were strikes, riots, snakes, plantation fires and deadly ambushes by Communist terrorists to contend with. Set against the backdrop of the Emergency period, the rise of nationalism and Malaya’s subsequent Independence, *A Company of Planters* is a very personal, moving and humorous account of one man’s experiences on the frequently isolated rubber plantations of colonial Malaya.

Dodd was intending to stay in Malaya for just one four-year tour of duty but fifty years later he is still living in Kuala Lumpur. Over seventy years old, he still acts as an independent plantation consultant and regularly wakes at 5am to inspect plantations as far as Johor in the south of Peninsular Malaysia to Sarawak in East Malaysia. In 1991 Dodd was awarded an MBE by Queen Elizabeth II for services to agriculture.

The author is available for interview by email, and can be contacted direct at: john@jarland.net. Photographs are available from the publisher (phil@monsoonbooks.com.sg).

A COMPANY OF PLANTERS is available in Asia from April 2007 and in USA from August 2007.

About the Author

John Dodd worked on a mixed farm in the UK and then in East Africa before leaving for pre-independence Malaya at the age of twenty-one to work on a rubber plantation as an assistant manager. He planned on staying for only one four-year tour of duty, but remained there for almost thirty years, working with oil palms, cocoa and coconuts. This was followed by a transfer to the Congo where he worked in a senior plantation position until his retirement eight years later. Now semi-retired and living permanently in Malaysia, he works as a self-employed, independent planting advisor for various companies and has worked on plantation projects in Sabah, Sarawak, Sumatra, Kalimantan, PNG and Côte d'Ivoire. He was awarded an MBE in 1991 for services to agriculture.

About the Publisher

Monsoon Books is a Singapore-based independent publisher of fiction (literary and commercial) and creative nonfiction (biography and autobiography, memoir, true crime, narrative nonfiction, travelogue and literary journalism)—often with an Asian theme—with distribution throughout Asia, the United States, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand. We publish quality books from outstanding European, Asian, Australasian and North American writers and we have several regional bestsellers to our name. Through sublicenses with our colleagues overseas, Monsoon's titles are translated into and published in various languages around the world. Under the direction of publisher Philip Tatham, Monsoon Books offers an exciting, innovative and distinctive alternative to commercial publishing; our mission is to be unique—to find new talent and put publishing in Asia at the heart of the literary world.

A COMPANY OF PLANTERS

By John Dodd

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