

Carrying the Mail from Victoria

Purpose

This exhibit explains the development of early foreign mail from the Australian colony of Victoria. The purpose is to illustrate how:

- improvements in maritime transport changed Victoria's outgoing mail routes;
- speeds, routes and schedules of mails were altered by economic events and wars;
- changes in rates and postal treaties influenced a sender's mailing options.

Scope & Organization

The period shown begins in the 1830s, when what is now the state of Victoria was the Port Phillip District, a relatively undeveloped part of the British colony of New South Wales. It continues through the Crown's recognition of Victoria as a separate colony in 1850, and ends with Victoria's 1891 membership in the UPU.

The covers are organized first by transportation era, as defined by the predominant types of ships available at the time. The progression of these eras demonstrates the evolution of mail conveyance from reliance entirely on private, unscheduled sailing ships to contract steamships plying a number of different routes. The time spans of each era were influenced by geopolitical factors outside of Victoria's control.

Within each era, covers are organized by route and carrier. It is important to recognize that rates and routes can span the boundaries between eras. For example, a cover's outgoing ship fee was the same whether conveyed under sail or by steamer. The date brackets for the four transportation eras shown are approximate, and overlap:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| • The Age of Sail: Private Ships & Toulmin Packets | 1837-1853 |
| • The First Contract Steamship Service | 1852-1856 |
| • Return to Sail in the Crimean War: The Clipper Ships | 1854-1857 |
| • Return of Contract Steamship Service | 1856-1891 |

Background

The first few Port Phillip District settlers arrived in 1835, grew to 224 by November 1836, and to 3,511 by late 1838. The population of the District—an area the size of Minnesota—did not surpass 50,000 until late 1848. ***This explains why letters from Victoria before the 1851 gold rush are uncommon. Letters sent before the late 1840s are rare.*** Important covers are framed in **bright blue**.

The first post office opened in April 1837 in Melbourne, the primary port and departure point for nearly all foreign mail, whether direct or via Sydney. Overland mail to Sydney was available from January 1838, but took more than four days and was subject to aboriginal attacks, so most mail to Sydney went via ship.



Port Phillip District / Victoria

The red route is the path from Sydney of Sir Thomas Mitchell's 1836 land survey, which opened southwestern New South Wales for settlement.



Noncontract Sailing Ship

Via Cape Horn

Via Melbourne & Sydney



8 May 1838, Weribee, Port Phillip District

3d ship-letter fee paid

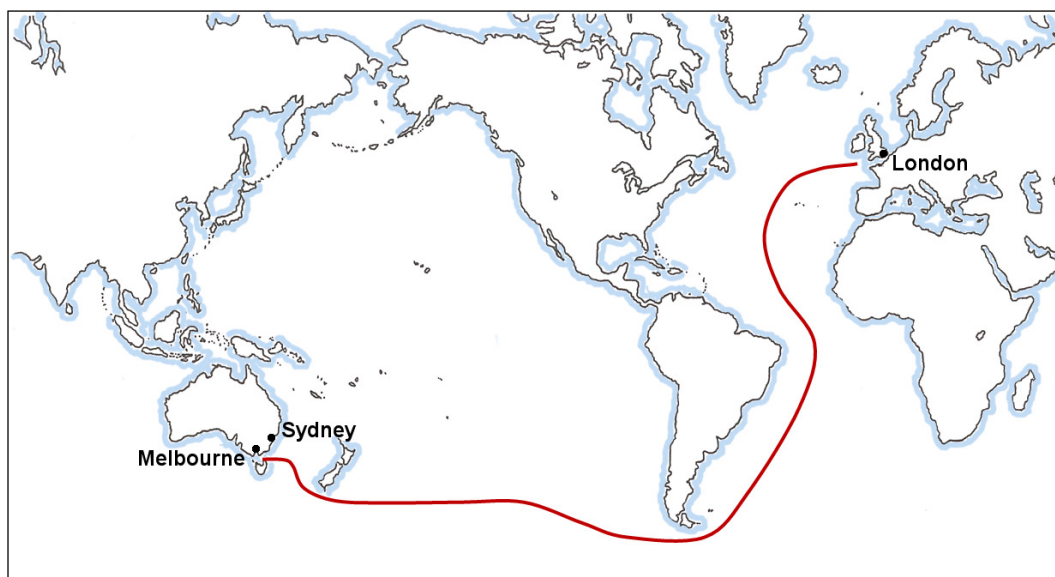
Revenue cutter *Prince George*, Melbourne 21 May to Sydney

Barque *Cecilia*, Sydney 8 September to Deal, arrived 22 January 1839

London rated 1/4 due: 4d India letter rate, 1s inland from Deal to Exeter

Received 26 January 1839 260 days

Only two earlier foreign-mail letters are known from the Port Phillip District



The fastest route to England passed below New Zealand's South Island to ride the Southern Ocean's strong westerlies, the "roaring forties" and "furious fifties". In the North Atlantic the route veered westward to avoid adverse winds and currents along the African coast.

The Age of Sail

Noncontract Sailing Ship

Via Cape Horn



Melbourne, 18 May 1841

Paid 3d ship-letter fee
 Barque *Platina*, 18 May to London, arrived 25 October
 London rated 8d due for ship letter
 Received 25 October 161 days

Act 2 Vic c 17, Effective 25 September 1838

Inland Letters		Ship Letters	
Up to ½ oz., not exceeding:		Up to ½ oz.	
15 miles	4d	Intercolonial & foreign	3d
20 miles	5d	Intracolonial, by sail	4d
30 miles	6d	Intracolonial, by steam*	4d
50 miles	7d		
80 miles	8d		
120 miles	9d		
170 miles	10d		
230 miles	11d		
300 miles	1s		
each add'l 100 miles	1d		

* Melbourne-Sydney coastal steam service became available in June 1841. The 4d rate was increased to 1/3, for this service only, on December 14. Vessel owners were entitled to 25% of the rate. The maximum rate was 2/6.

Prior to 1855, when Victoria adopted the uniform rate of 6d per ½ ounce for door-to-door service to anywhere in the British Empire, a ship fee was charged for all letters by ship, whether incoming or outgoing. **The fee paid for no part of a letter's journey**, and was simply a revenue source for the post office.

The Age of Sail
Noncontract Sailing Ship

Via Cape Horn



Melbourne, 26 March 1842

3d ship-letter fee paid

Brig *Sarah Bell*, 4 April to Liverpool, arrived 13 August

Liverpool rated 8d due for ship letter

Received 15 August 163 days



Via Sydney by Overland Mail

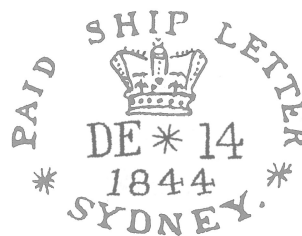


Melbourne, 30 November 1844

Endorsed per *Shamrock*, but too late for sailing so sent to Sydney for *first ship*
Paid 1/6: 1/3 overland to Sydney, 3d ship-letter fee
Brig *Hind*, 17 December for London, arrived at Deal 29 June, London 30 June
London rated 8d due for ship letter, then added 1d for inland to Edinburgh
Received 1 July 1845 214 days



Melbourne
(reverse)



The Challenge of Sending Mail by Private Ship

Shamrock, a 200 ton coastal steamer, had departed for Launceston and Sydney the day before this letter was posted. Of the six ships in Melbourne harbor on 30 November, the earliest planned departure dates of the two bound for England were February and April 1839. Hence, the sender had to spend six times more to post this letter than were Melbourne to have had more frequent departures.

The Age of Sail

Noncontract Sailing Ship

Via Cape Horn

Paid 7d:

4d ship to Melbourne
3d ship-letter fee

Ship *Royal George*
Melbourne 14 February
Deal 30 June

London rated 8d due for
ship letter, and sent
to Scotland

Arrived at Leith 2 July

145 days



Geelong, 8 February 1845

Double Rate



Melbourne, 11 December 1846

Paid 1/2, double rate
8d ship to Geelong
6d ship-letter fee

Ship *Palmerston*
Geelong 20 Dec.
London 9 May

London rated 1/4 due
2 x 8d ship letter

Arrived at Paisley
11 May

151 days

Wreck of the Achilles



Melbourne, 15 March 1847

Paid 6d, double 3d ship-letter fee, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 oz.

Barque *Achilles*, Melbourne 19 March, wrecked on the Brazilian coast on 21 June
Mails transferred to Rio de Janeiro Packet *Express*, arrived at Falmouth 29 July, mail at London 31 July
London rated 5/6 due: double 2/9 packet rate from Rio
Received at Glasgow 1 August 140 days

The only recorded cover from this wreck, which is not listed in Peace's "Australasian Wreck Mail"

PACKET LETTER

London, reverse

"The barque Achilles, of London, from Port Phillip, got on the English Bank at Pernambuco, on June 21, and by assistance from the Express was got off, but in a sinking state: her cargo would be discharged: her mails are come home by the Express."

London Daily News, 2 August 1847, p. 2

The Age of Sail

Noncontract Sailing Ship

Via Cape Horn

Via Tasmania and Sydney—Mails ashore at Torbay, Devonshire



Melbourne, 12 July 1847

Paid 3d ship-letter fee

Steamer *Shamrock*
Melbourne 13 July
Launceston 16 July

Barque *Maid of Cashmere*
Launceston 25 July
Sydney 30 July

Ship *Thos. Arbuthnot*
Sydney 27 August
London 18 January

London rated 8d due for
ship letter

Arrived 19 January

161 days

Via Sydney

Paid 7d
4d ship to Sydney
3d ship-letter fee

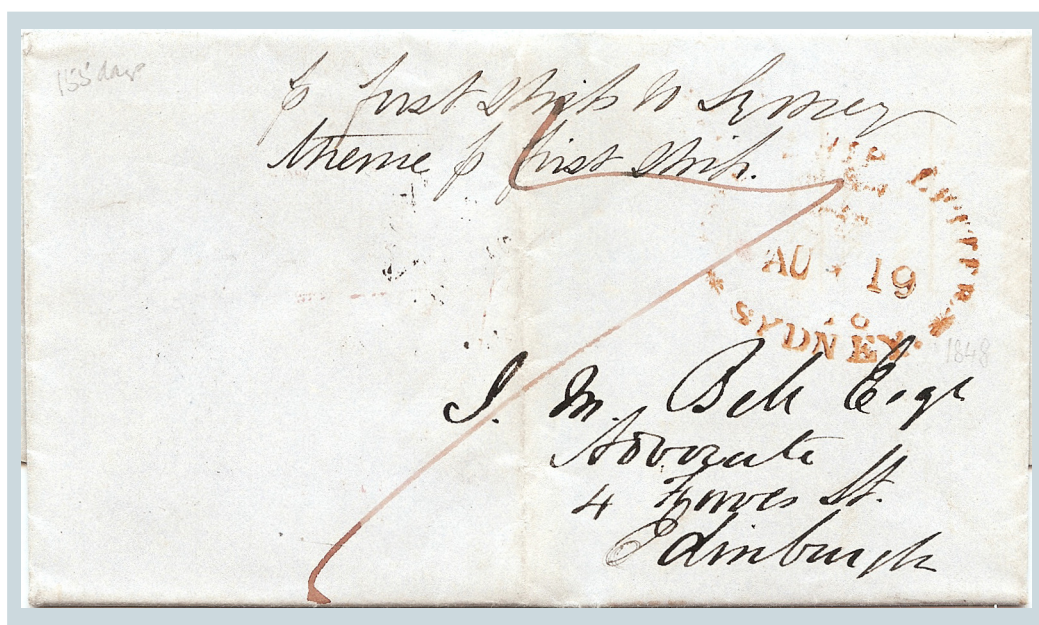
Schooner *Phoebe*
Melbourne 17 August
Sydney 23 August

Ship *Robert Seyers*
Sydney 3 September
London 19 January

Not rated in London

Arrived 20 January

162 days



Melbourne, 11 August 1848

The Age of Sail
British Contract Sailing Ship

Via Cape Horn

The Toulmin Packets

Privately to Sydney
where sent unpaid

Packet *Caledonia*
Sydney 5 April
London 28 August

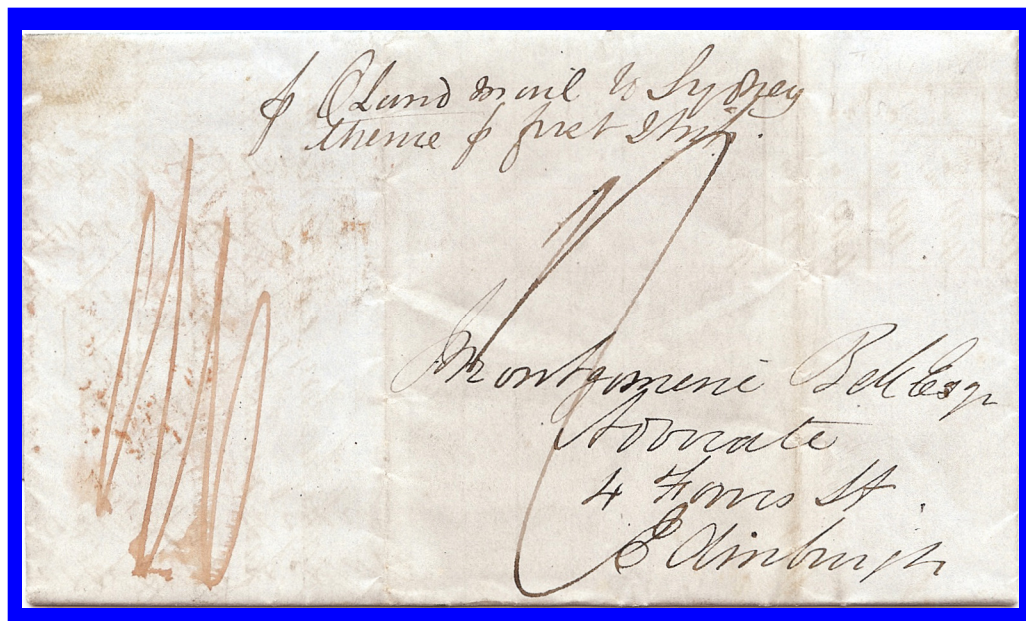
London rated 1/- due
for unpaid packet letter

Received 28 August

162 Days



Melbourne, 20 March 1847



Melbourne, 14 November 1848

Paid 1/6 to Sydney
1/3 overland
3d ship-letter fee

Packet *Sir Edward Paget*
Sydney 12 December
Gravesend 26 April

London rated 1/- due
for unpaid packet

Received 28 April

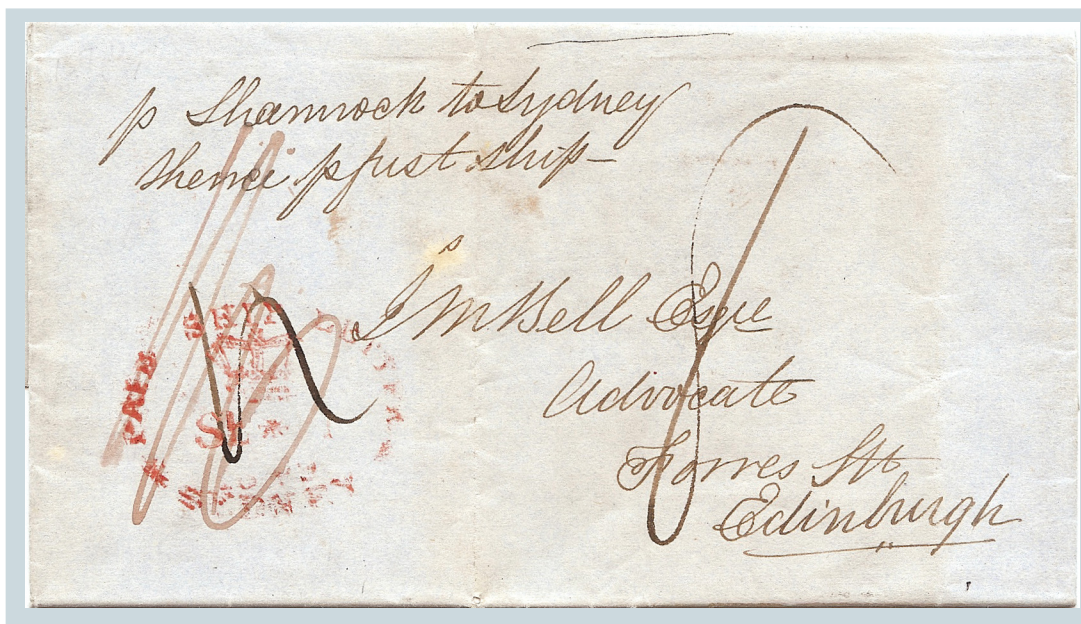
167 days

In June 1843, Brothers Henry and Calvin Toulmin signed a contract with the Admiralty to provide monthly service from Gravesend to Sydney at £100 per voyage. Mail to all other Australian destinations would continue to go by private ship. Return packet service was not included until January 1846. The Admiralty terminated the contract with the intent to connect Sydney with the P&O line to China at Singapore. This connection did not materialize.

The Age of Sail
Noncontract Sailing Ship

Via Cape Horn

Rate Increase for Coastal Steamer



Melbourne, 27 August 1849

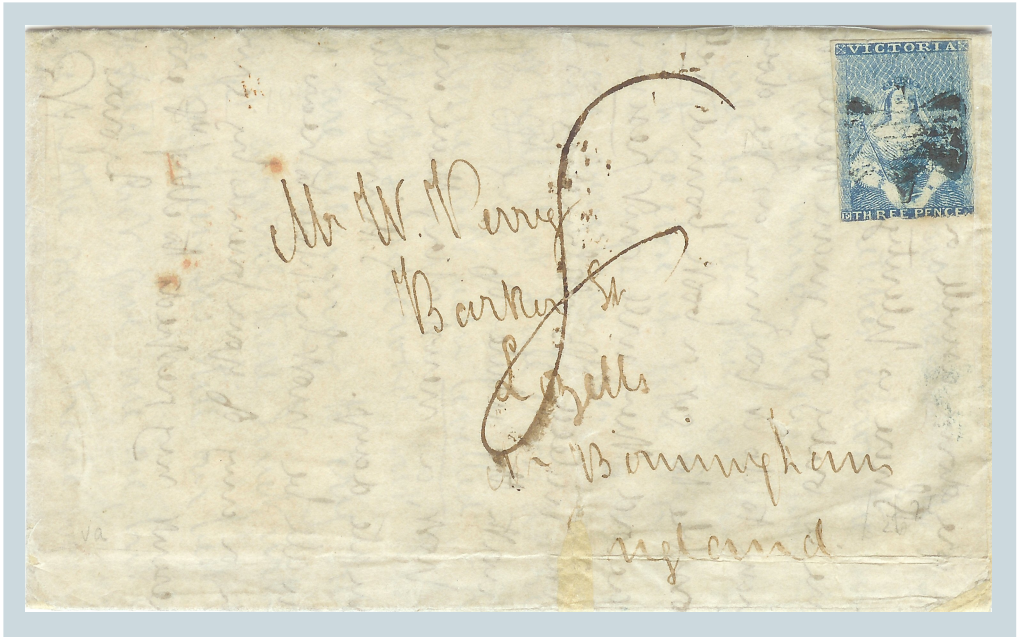
Paid 1/6: 1/3 steamer to Sydney, 3d ship-letter fee
Coastal steamer *Shamrock*, Melbourne 27 August, Sydney 31 August
Barque *Mary White*, Sydney 11 September, Deal 4 February
London rated 8d due for ship letter
Received 5 February 1850 163 days



Rate Increase for Steam Service to Sydney

The 1841 rate increase from 4d to 1/3 for steam service to Sydney resulted in equal postage costs for overland and steam conveyance of letters to that port. Ship owners had complained of inadequate compensation, and the shrinking volume of the more expensive overland mail was near or below the cost of operating that route.

The New Colony of Victoria



Melbourne, 8 February 1850

Paid 3d ship-letter fee
Barque *Senator*, Melbourne 11 February, London 7 June
London rated 8d due for ship letter
Received 8 June 1850 121 days

Earliest recorded use of an adhesive on Victorian foreign mail

Act 13 Vic c 38, Effective 1 January 1850

Separation From New South Wales

In 1849, Great Britain assented to a request for separation of the Port Phillip District from New South Wales and its designation as the new colony of Victoria, effective 1 July 1851.

An Act passed in October 1849 set a new rate structure based on weight rather than distance. It also required that all postage be prepaid. Adhesive postage stamps were to be issued on 1 January 1850, but their use as prepayment was not required until 1 January 1855.

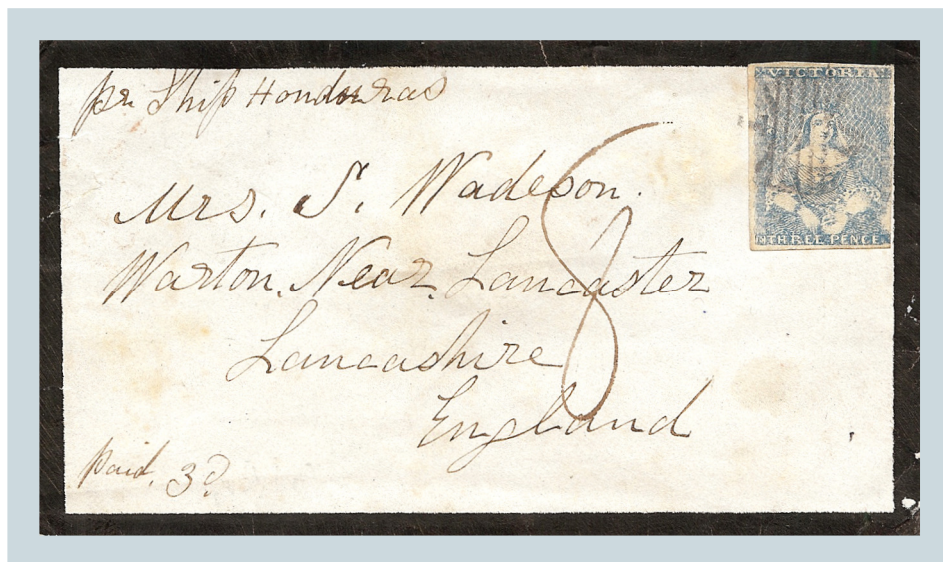
Despite having to wait until 1851 for colonial status, the Governor General in Sydney required Victoria to produce its own postage stamps.

Inland Letters	
Up to 1/2 oz.	2d
1/2 up to 1 oz.	4d
Each add'l oz.	4d
Ship Letters	
Up to 1/2 oz.	3d
1/2 up to 1 oz.	6d
Each add'l oz.	1/-
Newspapers	
No weight restriction	1d

The Age of Sail Noncontract Sailing Ship

Via Cape Horn

First Shipment of Australian Gold



Melbourne, 5 July 1851

Paid 3d ship-letter fee

Barque *Honduras*
Melbourne 29 August
Gravesend 2 January

London rated 8d due
for ship letter

Received 3 January

156 Days

Paid 5d
2d inland to Melbourne
3d ship-letter fee

Ship *Thomas Lowry*
Melbourne 15 October
London 20 March 1851

London rated 8d due
for ship letter

Received 20 March

125 days



Seymour, 15 October 1850

Thomas Lowry had previously operated as a Toulmin Packet.

Newspaper Wrapper



Geelong, 25 January 1851

Paid 1d newspaper rate

Ship *Nile*, Geelong 2 February, mails ashore at Falmouth, Gravesend 6 June

London rated 1d due for newspaper, sent onward to Dublin

Received date unknown 133+ days

Three pre-1860 newspaper wrappers are recorded



reverse

The Age of Sail

Via Cape Horn

Noncontract Sailing Ship British Contract Steamship

Paid 3d ship-letter fee

Ship *Lysander*
Melbourne 28 January
London 23 May
Steamship *Asia*
Liverpool 24 May
New York 4 June

London debited 32¢ to U.S.
16¢ ship letter
16¢ transatlantic packet

New York rated 37¢ due
32¢ debit from London
5¢ inland to Missouri

Received 7 June 134 days



Melbourne, 25 January 1851



Melbourne, 30 June 1853

Paid 3d ship-letter fee

Ship *Marlborough*, Melbourne, 3 Jul., London 29 Sep.; Steamship *Asia*, Liverpool 1 Oct., Boston 14 Oct.
New York rated 37¢ due: 32¢ debit from London for ship letter & British packet, 5¢ U.S. inland

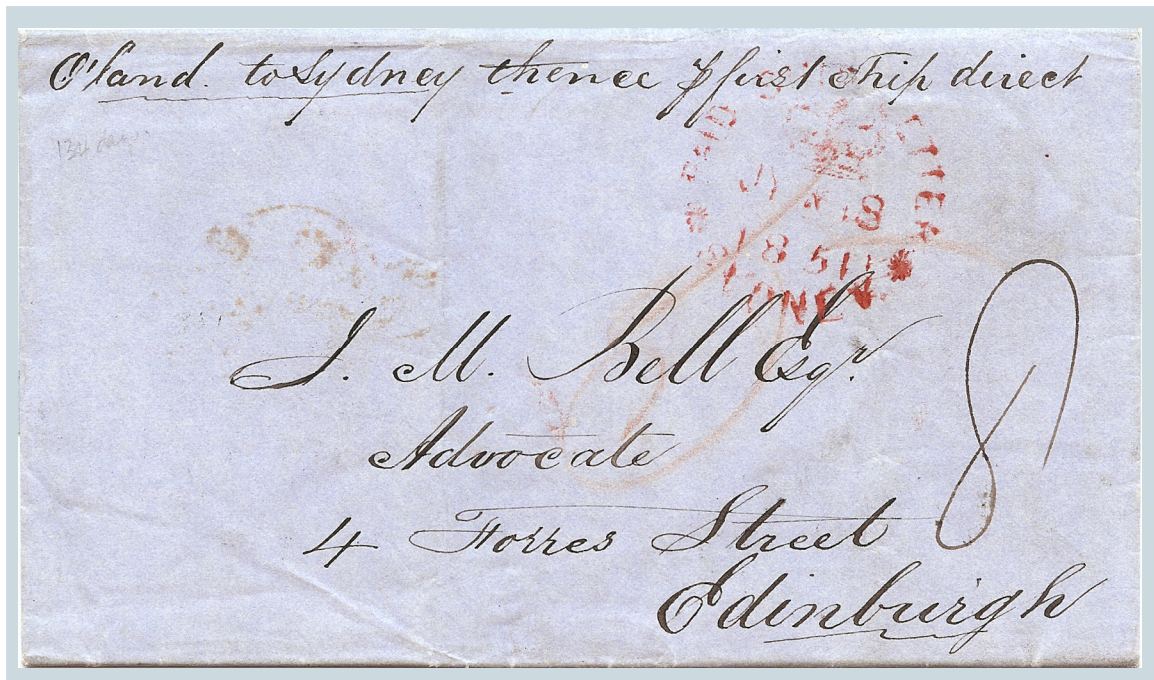
Received 15 October 108 days

Earliest recorded use of New York's 37 handstamp
Winter & Forster record 15 Australian covers conveyed at this rate

The Age of Sail
Noncontract Sailing Ship

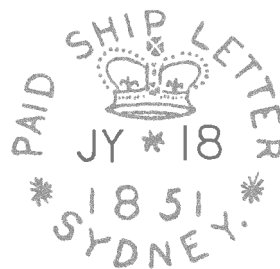
Via Cape Horn

Rate Reduction for Overland Route to Sydney



Melbourne, 10 July 1851

Paid 5d: 2d inland to Sydney, 3d ship-letter fee
Ship *Mary Bannatyne*, Sydney 24 July, London 29 November
London rated 8d due for ship letter, sent onward to Edinburgh
Received 30 November 144 days



The rate reductions of 1849 (Act 13 VIC No. 38) reduced the intra-colonial inland rate to 2d. This rate continued in force until 1852 for overland mail to Sydney, well after Victoria's separation from New South Wales. The sender of this letter thus enjoyed a 70% reduction in the inland portion of their postage.

The Age of Sail

Noncontract Sailing Ship

Via Cape Horn



Paid 1/- ship-letter fee

Ship *Essex*

Melbourne 8 May

Plymouth 1 September

London sent onward in
open mail, unpaid

Paris 3 September, rated
15 decimes due for
transit and inland

Received 8 September

129 days

Melbourne, 3 May 1854



Melbourne, 5 February 1854

Paid 3d ship-letter fee, Ship *Kent*, Melbourne, 28 February, London 24 May

London debited 19¢ to U.S.: 3¢ inland 16¢ transatlantic

Cunard *Niagara*, Liverpool 27 May, Boston 8 June

Boston rated 24¢ for unpaid packet letter

Received 8 June

124 days

The Age of Sail

Via Peru

Noncontract Sailing Ship
British Contract Steamship



Melbourne, 21 May 1851

Paid 3d ship-letter fee, endorsed via Callao

Barque *James T. Foord*, Melbourne 22 May, Callao arrival date unknown

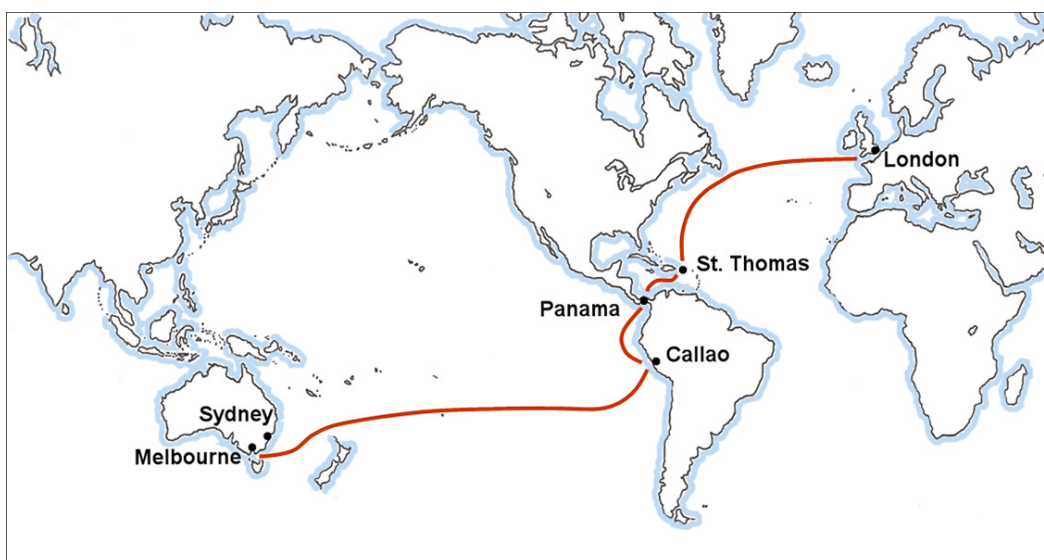
Pacific Steam Navigation Co. *New Granada*, Callao 6 August, Panama 18 August

Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. *Avon*, Chagres 25 August, Southampton 23 September

London rated 2/- due for a packet letter from Panama

Received 25 September 1851

128 days



This route forfeited the advantage of high winds below 40°S, but was safer, and more than made up lost time because sailings from Callao onward were by scheduled steamships.

The Age of Sail

Via Peru

Noncontract Sailing Ship
Contract Steamship

Mails Delayed in Callao



Melbourne, 20 July 1853

Paid 3d ship-letter fee

Ship *Woodstock*
Melbourne 20 July
Callao arrival 17 September

Pacific Steam Navigation Co. *Bogota*
Callao 11 Nov., Panama 20 Nov.

RMSP *Medway* and *La Plata*
Chagres 24 Nov., St. Thomas 1 Dec.
St. Thomas 1 Dec, Southampton 16 Dec.

London rated 2/- due, packet from Panama

149 days



Yackandandah, 23 August 1858

Paid 1/9, overpaying the 1s8½d prepaid rate via England

Ship *Caspian*, Melbourne 22 August, Callao 14 October

Unknown PSNC ship, Callao 26 November, Panama 5 December

Pacific Mail Steamship Co. *Golden Age*, Panama 15 December, San Francisco 28 December

Received 31 December 131 days

During the 1850s postal authorities in Callao delayed British closed mail bags, which were being transferred from one British ship to another, in a dispute about whether such mails should be charged a ship fee. Delays lasted 4-6 weeks. No record of how disagreements were resolved has been discovered.

The Age of Sail Noncontract Sailing Ship

Via Peru

Paid 5d:

2d inland, 3d ship-letter fee

Ship *Bavaria*, via Callao
Melbourne 27 August
New York 26 November

New York rated 7¢ due
2¢ ship, 5¢ inland

Received 28 November

95 days



Geelong, 24 August 1853



Melbourne, 21 October 1853

Carried privately, probably by ship captain
Ship *Rockland*, Melbourne 22 October, Callao arrival unknown
Unknown PSNC ship, Callao to Panama, where mistakenly placed in California bag
New York arrival unknown, rated 40¢ due for mail from the west coast

The Age of Sail

Via Peru

Noncontract Sailing Ship
Contract Steamship

To Sweden, 1852 Anglo-Prussian Convention

Danish P.O.
In Hamburg

Hamburg
city post

Swedish &
Norwegian
P.O. in
Hamburg



Melbourne, 1 June 1854

Paid 2/-, double 1/- ship-letter fee effective 1 May 1854

Ship *Abel Gower*, Melbourne 1 June, Callao 25 August, where delayed 60 days

PSNC *Santiago*, Callao 26 October; Panama 4 November

RMSPC *Dee*, Chagres 8 November; *Magdalena*, St. Thomas 15 November, Southampton 1 December

London debited 4/8 to Prussia: double 2/- packet rate from Panama, 8d Belgian transit

4 riksdalers due in Sweden included 54 silbergroschen debit from Prussia

Hamburg 5 December, Stockholm 6 December 189 days

Earliest recorded Victorian cover to Sweden

The Age of Sail
Noncontract Sailing Ship
Admiralty Packet

Via India



Melbourne, 8 October 1842

Paid 6d, double the 3d ship-letter fee to Sydney, ½ to 1 oz.

Ship *Candabar*, Sydney 6 October, Colombo 14 January, Bombay 1 February 1843

Ship *Atlanta*, Bombay 3 February, Suez 21 February

Admiralty steam packet *Great Liverpool*, Alexandria 25 February, Malta 3 March

Admiralty steam packet *Acheron*, Malta 3 March, Marseilles 8 March

London 13 March, where rated 6/2 due: 2 x 1/10 British rate; 3 x 10d French transit

Received 14 March 158 days



reverse



applied at Bombay

From at least 1842, private sailing ships were advertised as available to carry mail northward to India. From there the route was overland from Calcutta to Bombay to catch the Far East mails conveyed by the P&O Royal Mail Packets bound for Suez. Only a few voyages went to Bombay, with or without a stop in Ceylon. After an overland trip across Egypt mail could go to Southampton direct or via Marseilles, also by P&O packets. Early mails via India thus left Australia as ship letters and arrived in England as packet letters.

The Age of Sail

Via India

Noncontract Sailing Ship

Admiralty and Contract Steamships



Mount Macedon, 21 September 1851

Paid 5d: 2d inland, 3d ship-letter fee

Ship *Troubadour*, Melbourne 4 October, Galle 7 December, Bombay arrival unknown

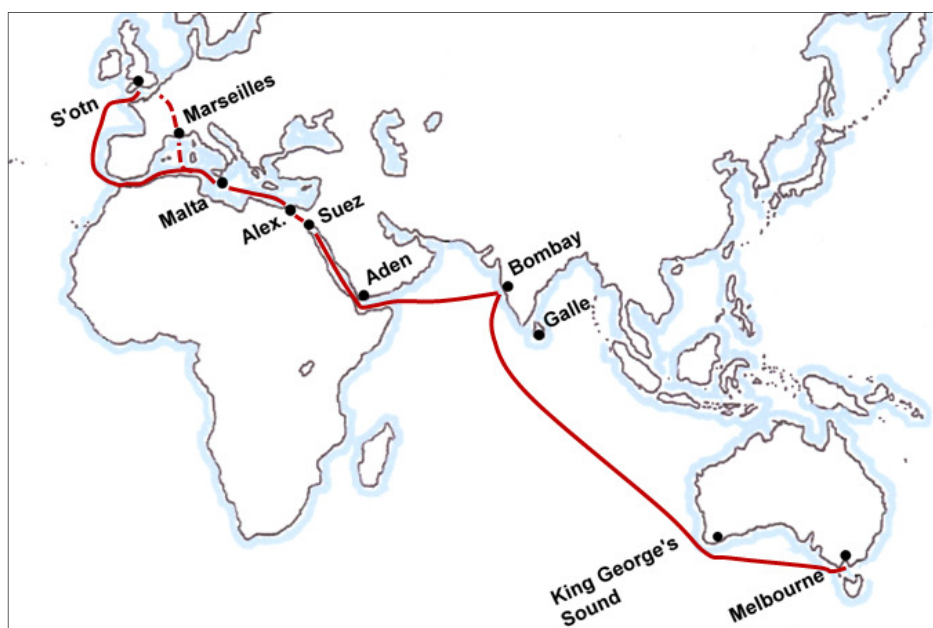
P&O *Achilles*, Bombay 17 February, Aden 25 February, Suez 4 March

Admiralty packet HMS *Medusa*, Alexandria 21 March, Malta 26 March

P&O *Sultan*, Malta 26 March, Southampton 5 April

London rated 1/4 due: 1/- packet rate, 4d for "beyond India"

Received 5 April 197 days



Ships on this route sometimes called at King George's Sound, Galle, or Aden.

**The First Steam Packets
British Contract Steamship**

Via Cape of Good Hope

The Australian Royal Mail Steam Navigation Co.

First shipment of Australian gold



Geelong, 21 September 1852

Paid 5d: 2d inland, 3d ship-letter fee

ARM *Australian*, Melbourne 28 September, Plymouth 11 January 1853

London rated 1/- due, the packet rate

Received 12 January 114 days

***Carried 210,00 ounces of gold, including the famous 328 oz. Victoria Nugget
The first of only three ARM contract voyages from Australia***

The Rise and Demise of the ARM

The advent of steamships made the Cape of Good Hope route practical despite unfavorable winds. Hence the stipulation of this route in the ARM contract, signed in June 1852. Port calls required were as shown on the adjacent map, with the option of returning to Plymouth via Cape Horn.

The contract required making Melbourne in 73 days from Plymouth. This term was never met, so in April 1853 the Admiralty terminated Australian Royal Mail's contract for non-performance. Consequently, letters carried on ARM voyages are rare; just six voyages conveyed mail from Melbourne, only three of which were contract sailings.

The First Steam Packets
British Contract Steamship

Via Cape of Good Hope

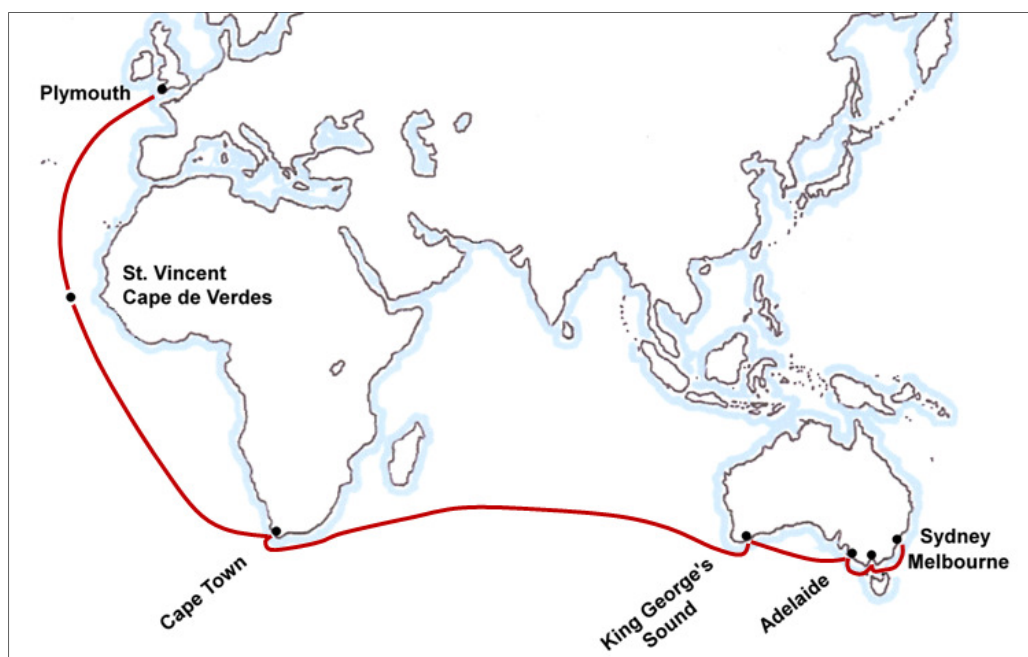
The Australian Royal Mail Steam Navigation Co.



Melbourne, 22 November 1852

Paid 5d: 2d inland, 3d ship-letter fee
ARM *Sydney*, Melbourne 11 December, Plymouth 16 March 1853
London rated 1/- due, the packet rate
Received 19 March 114 days

The second of only three ARM contract voyages from Australia



The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company

Experimental voyage to Singapore



Melbourne, 2 January 1853

Paid 3d ship-letter fee

P&O *Chusan*, Melbourne 3 January, Singapore 4 February

Ship *Bombay*, Singapore departure unknown, Manila 20 February

Manila rated 2 reales for inland

Received 20 February 49 days

Earliest recorded Victorian letter to the Philippines

The First P&O Contract: Via Singapore and Suez

The P&O contract signed on 1 January 1853 combined the existing route between England, India, Singapore and China with a branch route from Singapore to Sydney via Melbourne. Bimonthly sailings between Southampton and Sydney alternated with the ARM service.

In late 1852 P&O sent two ships—the *Chusan* and the *Formosa*—to Australia to have them in position at the start of the contract. Three non-contract experimental voyages to Singapore were then made, all of which carried ship letters. The Singapore branch was used only until July 1853, after which sailings went direct to Galle.

In all, the P&O carried three non-contract and 12 contract mails from Australia to England. Service was discontinued in January 1855 when P&O's ships were commandeered by the Admiralty for use in the Crimean War.

**The First Steam Packets
British Contract Steamships**

Overland via Marseilles

The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company

Last P&O sailing from Melbourne to Singapore



Melbourne, 30 July 1853

Paid 3d ship-letter fee, P&O *Chusan*, Melbourne 1 August, Singapore 4 September
Malta and *Madras* to Galle and Suez, *Euxine* and *Valetta* to Malta and Marseilles
Marseilles rated 16 decimes due, inland to Bordeaux Received 8 October 90 days

Paid 5d: 2d inland, 3d ship

P&O *Shanghai*

Melbourne 27 September

Galle 31 October

P&O *Bombay*, *Euxine*, *Vectis*
to Suez, Malta, Marseilles

London 17 December

60¢ debit to U.S.:

44¢ via Marseilles

16¢ Br. Pkt. to Boston

Cunard *Canada* to Boston,
where rated 65¢ due

Received 7 January

122 days



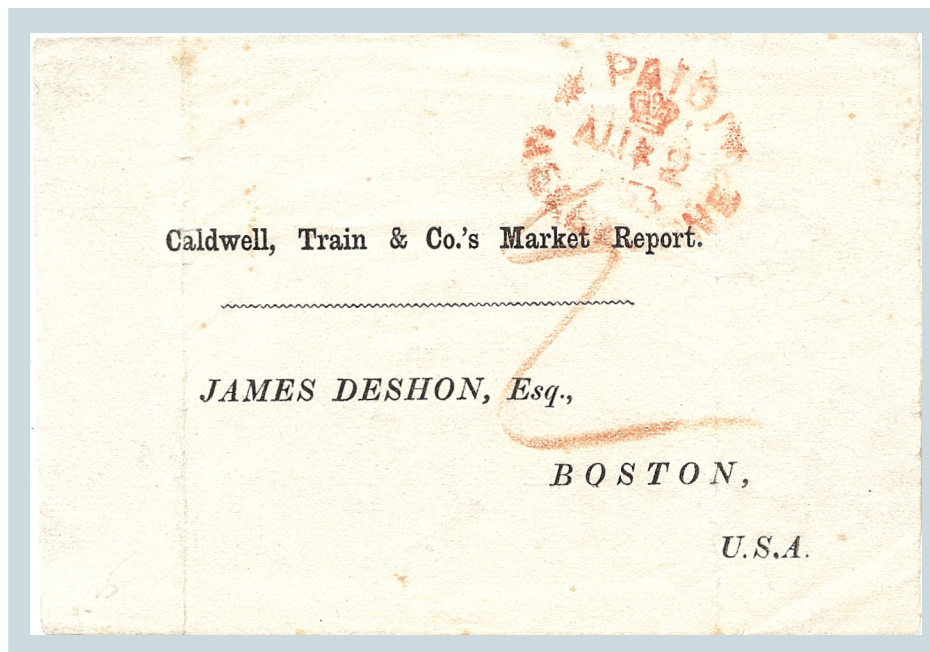
McIvor, 8 September 1853

The First Steam Packets
British Contract Steamships

Overland Via Southampton

The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company

Printed-Circular Wrapper



Melbourne, 2 August 1853

Paid 2d newspaper rate for two
circulars

P&O *Chusan*

Melbourne 3 August

Singapore 4 September

P&O steamers to Southampton

Malta to Galle

Madras to Suez

Euxine Alex.— S'otn., arr. 2 Nov.

Cunard *Arabia*

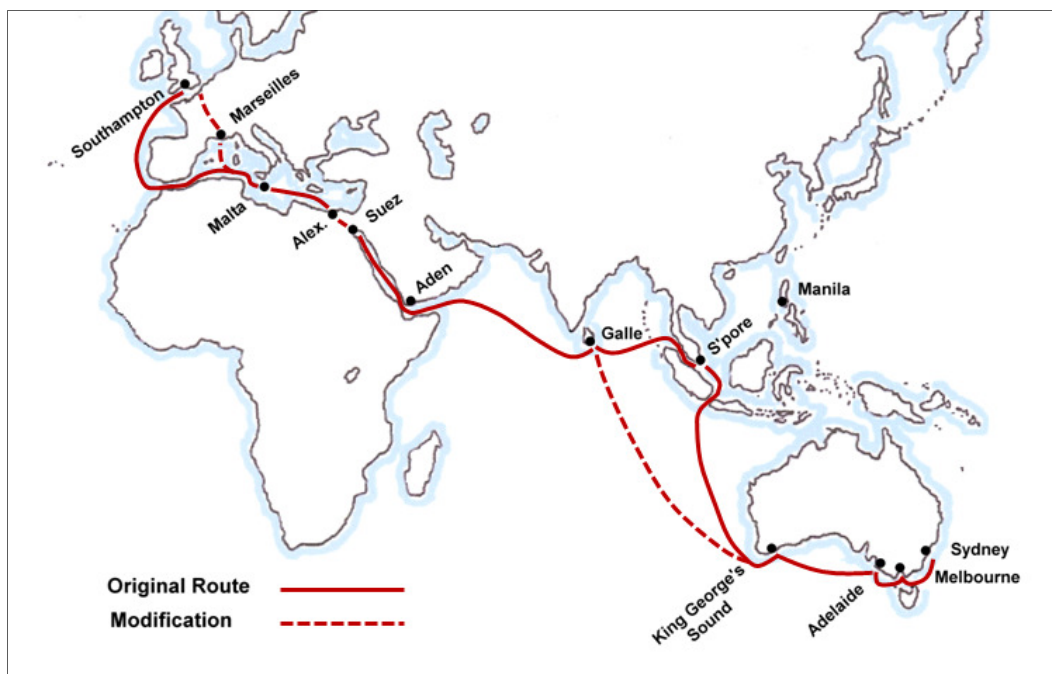
Liverpool 5 November

New York 17 November

Received 18 November

109 days

**Three wrappers recorded
from this period**



The First Steam Packets
British & Austrian Contract Steamships

Overland via Trieste

The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company



Paid 3d ship-letter fee

P&O Madras
Melbourne 30 January
Galle 23 February

P&O Bengal
Galle 28 February
Suez 15 March

Austrian Lloyd Bombay :
Alexandria 20 March
Trieste 25 March

Prussian closed mail to
London

Received 31 March

63 days

Melbourne, 28 January 1854

Earliest recorded Australian letter via Trieste
The only recorded Australian letter to Great Britain via Trieste

TRIESTE-OSTENDE BY RAIL



In 1848 the Austrian Lloyd started direct monthly service from Alexandria to Trieste, then twice monthly in from 1851.

The British postal agency in Alexandria delivered closed bags of Australian mail to the Austrian Lloyd post office, where they were sent by Prussian Closed mail to the exchange office in Aachen, then to Ostende for conveyance to London. British compensation to Belgium and Prussia for unpaid letters such as the one shown here was on a bulk-weight basis under terms of the 1852 U.K.-Prussian Convention.

This letter arrived four days ahead of the mail via Southampton. Although arriving two days later than the mail via Marseilles, it cost the addressee only 1/-, 1/3 less than via Marseilles for a letter weighing 1/4 to 1/2 ounce.

The First Steam Packets
British Contract Steamships

Overland via Marseilles

The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company

Single Rate

Paid 3d ship fee
up to ½ oz.

P&O Madras
Melbourne 30 Jan.

Bengal, Ripon, Valetta
to Suez, Malta and
Marseilles

London 2/3 due:
British rate 1/5
French transit 10d
¼ - ½ oz.

Received 2 Apr 1854

64 days



Melbourne, 30 January 1854

Double Rate



Paid 2 x 3d ship fee
½ - 1 oz.

P&O Chusan
Melbourne 25 Mar

Hindustan, Simla, Valetta
to Suez, Malta and
Marseilles

London 4/6 due:
2 x 1/5 British rate
4 x 5d French transit
¾ - 1 oz.

Received 31 May 1854

73 days

Melbourne, 20 March 1854

The First Steam Packets
British & American Contract Steamships

Overland via Marseilles

The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company

Victoria quadruples the ship-letter fee



Melbourne, 23 September 1854

Paid 1/- ship-letter fee effective 1 May 1854

P&O *Madras*, Melbourne 25 September, Galle 20 October

P&O *Bengal, Indus, Valetta* to Suez, Malta and Marseilles; mails at London 28 November

London debited U.S. 54¢: 51¢ (2s3d) British packet via Marseilles and French transit, 3¢ British inland

Collins Line *Pacific*, Liverpool 30 November, Boston 13 December

Boston rated 75¢ due: 54¢ to U.K., 16¢ American packet, 5¢ inland

Received 14 December

83 days

Rate Increase: Act 17 Vic c 30, Effective 1 May 1854

The 1851 discovery of gold in Victoria resulted in the colony's explosive economic and population growth

The number of post offices thus grew from 44 in mid 1851, to 265 by 1859. Postal authorities raised rates in 1854 to fund this expansion of the postal system.

Rates, up to ½ oz.

Town	2d
Inland	6d
Ship Fee	1s
Overland to SA	6d
Newspapers	1d

The First Steam Packets
British Contract Steamships

Overland via Southampton

The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company



Melbourne, 22 July 1854

Paid 1/- ship-letter fee

P&O *Norna*

Melbourne 26 July

Galle 21 August

P&O *Bentinck* to Malta,
Nubia to Southampton,
 Arrived 5 October

Southampton rated 1/- due,
 the packet rate

Received 6 October

77 days

Paid 1/6
 1/- ship-letter fee
 6d registered

P&O *Norna*
 Melbourne 25 Nov.
 Galle 24 Dec.

P&O *Bombay* to Suez,
Tagus to Sot'n.
 arrived 10 February

London rated 1/6 due
 1/- packet rate
 6d registered

Received 11 February

99 days



Avoca, 5 November 1854

The First Steam Packets
Private Coastal Steamer
British Contract Steamships

Overland via Southampton

The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company

Tasmanian feeder line for British packet service at Melbourne



Hamilton, Tasmania, 20 November 1854

Paid 4d, the Tasmanian rate for an outward ship letter
Private coastal steamer *Black Swan*, Launceston 23 November, Melbourne 24 November
P&O *Norna*, Melbourne 25 November, Galle 24 December
P&O *Bombay* to Suez, *Tagus* to Southampton, arrived 10 February
London rated 6d due, the uniform British rate effective 1 October 1854

Received 13 February

86 days



Hobart

Tasmania was never on the main line route for British steam packets, which called only at Melbourne and Sydney. Coastal steamers provided non-contract branch-line service from Melbourne to Hobart and Launceston. Later Melbourne's function as a transit point for mail to and from the U.K would include Adelaide and New Zealand. All mails brought by branch lines was sent in closed bags. Tasmania did not require prepayment of packet postage until November 1856.

**The First Steam Packets
Noncontract Steamship**

Via Cape of Good Hope

The General Screw Steam Ship Company

First homeward sailing by the Company



Melbourne, 1 May 1853

Forwarded to Liverpool by Adams Express in Melbourne
GSS *Harbinger*, Melbourne 22 May, Southampton 18 August, via Mauritius and Cape of Good Hope
Paid 1/- by forwarders Edwards, Sanford & Co.; Liverpool credited 5¢ to U.S.
Cunard Europa, Liverpool 20 August, Boston 31 August; New York marked *PAID*

Received 1 September 123 days

General Screw's only return voyage via the Cape of Good Hope, a non-contract sailing



finest of 3 recorded



General Screw Takes Over Australian Royal Mail Steam Navigation Co's. Route

In March 1854 the PMG contracted with General Screw to provide service lost when the Admiralty terminated ARM's contract. Steamers were to sail every two months from Southampton to Melbourne via the Cape of Good Hope, with return either via Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn. Only the first return went via The Cape of Good Hope. Only four of nine trips were under contract, which was annulled when steamships were commandeered for the Crimean War.

The First Steam Packets

Noncontract Steamship / British Contract Steamship

Via Cape Horn

The General Screw Steam Ship Company

Second of Nine Homeward Sailings by the Company

Paid 6d, 2 x 3d ship fee

GSS *Argo*

Melbourne 24 August

Plymouth 27 October

London to Basel via the
French mail

Basel 390 rappen due,
3 x 130, 15-22½ grams

Received 30 October

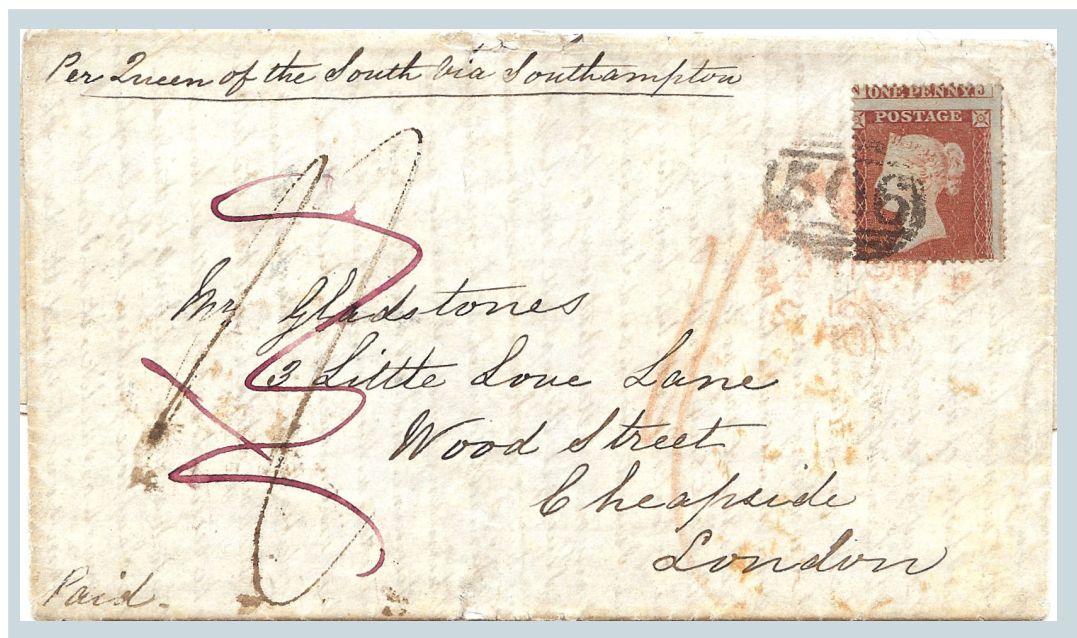
73 days

**Record-setting voyage
for a steamship from
Melbourne to England:
64 days**



Melbourne, 19 August 1853

First Homeward Contract Sailing



Melbourne, 15 July 1854

Paid 1/- ship letter fee

GSS *Queen of the South*

Melbourne 22 July

Southampton 13 Oct

London rated 1/- due for
incoming packet, and
mis-sent to Margate

1d paid for return

Received 25 October

100 days

**The First Steam Packets
British Contract Steamships**

Via Cape Horn

The General Screw Steam Ship Company

To Portugal via London



Paid 2/7
1/- ship-letter fee,
1/7 London to Portugal

GSS *Croesus*
Melbourne 10 September
S'hampton 14 December

British packet to Lisbon
3 January 1855

Porto rated 490 reis due

Received 14 January

128 days

Non-contract voyage of Croesus

Melbourne, 9 September 1854

Two pre-UPU covers to Portugal are recorded

To Maine via London & Liverpool

Paid 1/- ship-letter fee

GSS *Lady Jocelyn*
Melbourne 1 Oct.
S'hampton 1 Jan.

London debited 40¢ to
the U.S.:
24¢ incoming pkt.
16¢ transatlantic

Cunard Canada
Liverpool 6 Jan
Boston 19 Jan

Boston added 5¢ inland
and rated 45¢ due

Received 21 January

116 days



Sandridge, 28 September 1854

The First Steam Packets
British Contract Steamship

Via Cape Horn

The General Screw Steam Ship Company

Great Britain Institutes 6d Uniform Rate



Melbourne, 10 November 1854

Paid 1/- ship-letter fee

GSS *Calcutta*, Melbourne 12 November, Plymouth 28 January

London rated 6d due for the new uniform rate, effective 1 October 1854

Received 30 January 1855 82 days

The third of four homeward contract sailings

The British Uniform Rate

On 1 October 1854, Great Britain reduced both ship-letter and packet-letter rates to 6d per ½ oz. This was an all-inclusive rate, providing door-to-door service to anywhere in the British Empire.

Only five months earlier, on 1 May, Victoria had quadrupled their ship-letter fee to provide funds for construction of post offices needed to serve many new towns that had sprung up during the gold rush. Unwilling to forego this revenue, Victoria refused to participate in the uniform rate and continued to charge 1/- for ship and packet letters. That refusal ultimately resulted in a British retaliatory rate against Victoria, examples of which are shown later in this exhibit.

The First Steam Packets
Noncontract Steamship
British Contract Steamship

Via Ceylon

The General Screw Steam Ship Company

The only GSS sailing to Ceylon

Melbourne Prices and Shipping									
No. 2.] MONDAY, JUNE 18, 1855.									
Imports.									
Liquors.									
SPIRITS (in Bond.)									
BRANDY—Martell's in hhds per gall	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hennessy's do	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
United Vineyard do	12	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Martell's and Otard's per gall	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other brands do	9	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Martell's or Hennessy's cse pr doz	1	8	0	1	10	0	0	0	0
Champagne, Proprietors' per doz	1	8	0	1	10	0	0	0	0
Clouzeau, No. 6, D. P. do	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RUM—W. I., 25 to 30 o. p. per gall	5	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8 to 10 do do	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E. I., 25 to 30 do do	2	3	2	6	0	0	0	0	0
GENEVA—JDKZ or Key, 4-gal pr cs	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Half case do	12	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OLD TOM—Best brands per doz	14	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other brands do	14	0	15	6	0	0	0	0	0
Bulk, Booth's per gall	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nicholson's do	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WHISKY—Scotch per gall	5	6	6	6	0	0	0	0	0
Irish do	4	6	4	9	0	0	0	0	0
LIQUEURS—French, assorted pr cse	nominal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cherry cordial, pints do	nominal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Absynth. wanted do	nominal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PICKLES—Best brands, qts. per doz									
Ditto, pints do	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SALAD OIL—Pints do	18	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Half pints do	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
In bulk do	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SAUCES—Assorted, 1 pint. per doz	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SAUCES—Assorted, 1 pint. per doz	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SPICES—Cassia per lb	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cinnamon do	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cloves do	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nutmegs do	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ginger, W. I. bleached do	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brown do	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mace do	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pepper, white do	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black do	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Curry powder, quarts per doz	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SALT—Liverpool, coa. se per ton	8	0	0	8	10	0	0	0	0
Fine dairy do	2	0	0	2	10	0	0	0	0
St. Ube's do	3	10	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
Rock do	6	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	0
Table do	2	10	0	2	10	0	0	0	0
SOAP—English pale yel. hd. per cwt	1	18	0	1	18	0	0	0	0
Steele's yellow do	no sale	0	0	no sale	0	0	0	0	0
Ditto white do	48	0	0	48	0	0	0	0	0
Colonial pale yellow hard. per ton	3	10	0	3	10	0	0	0	0
Salt-water do	61	0	0	61	0	0	0	0	0
Colman's & Leach's do	61	0	0	61	0	0	0	0	0
Paints, Oils and Colors.									
White Lead best per cwt	1	18	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Red Lead do	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Assorted Dry Colors do	1	8	0	1	8	0	0	0	0
Mixed do	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Oil, Linseed, boiled, in drums per gall	4	6	0	4	6	0	0	0	0
Raw do	4	6	0	4	6	0	0	0	0
Varnish, Copal do	well supplied	0	0	well supplied	0	0	0	0	0
Chalk per cwt	17	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	0
Whiting do	7	6	0	7	6	0	0	0	0
Gold Leaf per m	0	0	1	13	0	0	0	0	0
Gold Bronze per pkge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Polar Oil per ton	75	0	0	79	10	0	0	0	0
Black do	66	0	0	66	0	0	0	0	0
Sperm do	100	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0
Rope do	50	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese do	50	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	0
Metals.									
COMPOSITION—Bolt per lb	1	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Muntz patent sheathing metal do	1	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yellow metal do	1	3	1	6	0	0	0	0	0
IRON—Bar & bolt, Staffordshire, p ton	18	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	0
Scotch Govan do	18	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	0
TIMBER—									
Red deals, uncut	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cut	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Uncut, 3 x 11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cut	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Uncut, 7 x 2 1/2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cross-cut, drawn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Do. 6 x 14 in. ru	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Laths	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plum, New Zealand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Palings, Circular	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shingles	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staves, 2 ft 3 in.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Baltic timber	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Posts and rails	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
V.D.L. cargo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
American lumber	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tongue and gro	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hard pine floor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spruce scantlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Doors and sash	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ash oars	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Masts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staves	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
American laths	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shingles	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drugs and									
Acids	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Melbourne, 18 June 1855

Paid 1d newspaper rate, underpaid for sender's endorsement *via Marseilles*
GSS *Bosphorus*, Melbourne 20 June, Adelaide 25 June, Galle ca. 17 August
P&O *Hindustan*, 29 July, Suez 18 August
P&O *Indus*, Alexandria 21 August, Southampton 5 September
London rated 1d due, sent onward to Scotland

Received 7 September

82 days

The First Steam Packets
Noncontract Steamship
British Contract Steamship

Via Singapore

The General Screw Steam Ship Company

The only GSS sailing to Singapore



Melbourne, 16 February 1856

Prepaid 1/4 for via Marseilles, but endorsed per *Hellasport* which was bound for Singapore
GSS *Hellasport*, Melbourne 18 February, Singapore 16 March
P&O *Norna*, Singapore 22 March, Galle 29 March
P&O *Bombay*, Galle 1 April, Suez 17 April
P&O *Pera*, Alexandria 20 April, Malta 23 April; *Valetta*, Malta 23 April, Marseilles 26 April
Mails in London on 28 April, where rated 4d due for far East mail

Received 29 April 73 days

One of only two steamships to leave Melbourne during the Crimean War



London

When in February 1855 the Admiralty began commandeering steamships for use in the Crimean War, *Hellasport* was not chosen. She remained in Melbourne, was sold for scrap, and in early 1856 sailed to Singapore to be broken up.

The First Steam Packets
Noncontract Steamship
British Contract Steamship

Via Panama

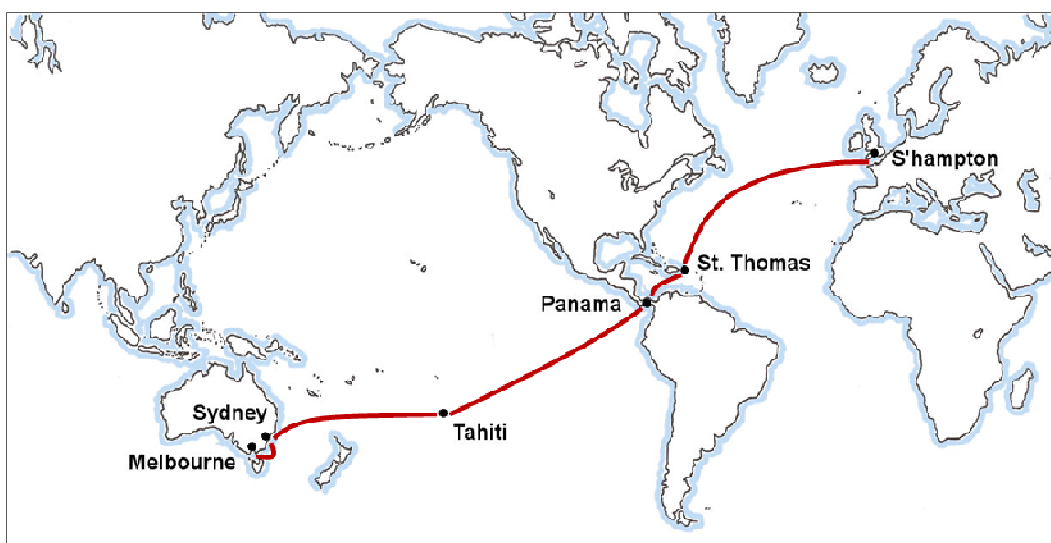
The New York & Australian Steam Navigation Company



Melbourne, 5 May 1854

Paid 1/- ship-letter fee. NY&A *Golden Age*, Melbourne 5 May, Panama 19 June via Tahiti
Roy. Mail Steam Pkt. Co. *Dee* and *Magdalena*, Chagres 23 June, St. Thomas 2 July; Southampton 17 July
London rated 2/- due, the packet rate from Panama
Received 18 July 75 days

First transpacific mail by steamship: 11 covers recorded



Golden Age, a wooden hulled, coal-fired paddle steamer, broke the transpacific speed record on this voyage. But the voyage was a financial disaster, so the company was wound up and the ship sold to The Pacific Mail Steamship Co. for use between Panama and San Francisco.

The First Steam Packets

Noncontract Steamship

Noncontract Sailing Ship

Via Panama

The New York & Australian Steam Navigation Company

Probably intended for the P&O Sailing, fortuitously sent on *Golden Age*



Portland, 14 April 1854

Paid 5d *

2d inland to Melbourne

3d ship-letter fee

NY&A *Golden Age*

Melbourne 5 May

Panama 19 June

RMSP *Dee & Magdalena*

Chagres 23 June

St. Thomas 2 July

Southampton 17 July

London rated 2/- due for
packet letter from Panama

Received 18 July 75 days

*1/- not effective until 1 May

Endorsed per *Golden Age*, but sent under sail

Paid 1/- ship-letter fee

TOO LATE for *Golden Age*,
sent via next departure

Ship *Essex*

Melbourne 7 May

London 2 September

London rated 8d due for
incoming ship letter

Received 2 September

119 days



Melbourne, 5 May 1854

Golden Age's sailing was unscheduled, so the letter from Portland was probably intended for the May sailing of the P&O, and was endorsed simply *Per next steamer*. The letter endorsed for *Golden Age* arrived at the Melbourne GPO earlier (time code A) than the letter shown on the previous page (time code B), so was probably mislaid by a postal clerk. The error caused a London-arrival delay of 44 days.

Conflict Between British & Victorian Rates

First contract clipper to sail from Australia



Castlemaine, 9 March 1855

Paid 2/-, quadruple rate ship-letter fee, 1-2 oz.

Black Ball Line *James Baines*, Melbourne 11 March, Liverpool 20 May

Liverpool rated 2/- due, quadruple 6d uniform rate

Received 22 May 73 days

69 days to Liverpool, fastest recorded homeward voyage by a sailing ship

The Retaliatory Rate Against Victoria

On 1 May 1854 Victoria raised the ship-letter fee to 1/-, a quadrupling of their earlier 3d fee. By GPO London notice of 1 October, the British rate for both packet and ship letters was reduced to 6d. Victoria rejected the 6d rate, so Victorian mail was treated in the U.K. as unpaid, and the 6d uniform rate charged on incoming letters whether conveyed by packet or private ship.

On 20 June 1855 London increased the pressure when a Treasury Warrant and GPO notice instituted a **retaliatory rate** against Victoria. Incoming letters were still considered unpaid, but were now charged **1/-** for packet letters and **8d** for ship letters.

Victoria had already capitulated before learning of the retaliation, having lowered their rate for both packet and ship letters from 1/- to 6d on 1 July 1855. GPO London got the news in late October and withdrew the retaliatory rate on 7 November 1855.

Return to Sail

Via Cape Horn

British Contract / Noncontract Clipper Ships

Retaliatory Rates

Paid 1/- ship-letter fee

Black Ball Line *Lightning*

Melbourne 11 April

Liverpool 29 June

Liverpool rated 1/- due,
retaliatory packet rate

Received 30 June

81 days



Melbourne, 11 April 1855



Melbourne, 16 May 1855

Paid 2/- double ship-letter fee, 1/2-1 oz.

Private clipper *George Marshall*, Melbourne 16 May, London 6 August

London rated 1/4 due, double 8d **retaliatory ship-letter rate**

Received 6 August 82 days

Retaliatory Rates

Last contract clipper mail subject to retaliatory rate



Melbourne, 21 July 1855

Paid 1/- double ship-letter fee, ½-1 oz., effective 1 July 1855

Black Ball Line *Marco Polo*, Melbourne 22 July, Liverpool 20 October

London rated 1/- due, single **retaliatory packet rate**; canceled and re-rated 24¢ debit to U.S.

Havre Line *Arago*, Southampton 24 October, New York 6 November

New York rated 66¢ due: 2 x 33¢ = 12¢ British uniform rate + 16¢ Am. Pkt., + 5¢ U.S. inland

Received 6 August 82 days

News that Victoria had lowered its rate to 6d first arrived in England on this voyage

Clipper Ship Mail Contracts

Initially GPO London let only one-way contracts to Australia. Some Captains secured return contracts in Melbourne; others returned as private ships. By 1856 Black Ball and White Star had each signed a year-long contract for monthly round trips, giving Melbourne bi-weekly service. The rate breakdown is shown at right; these amounts were indicated on each letter.

GPO Victoria Accounting for 6d Rate

	Credit to U.K.	Retained
Colonial contract	1d	5d
British contract	5d	1d
Noncontract	3d	3d

Victoria Adopts the British Uniform Rate

TOO LATE: Six pence fee for reopening the mail bag



Melbourne, 26 October 1855

Paid 6d uniform rate, plus 6d late fee

Melbourne credited 5d to Great Britain

Black Ball Line *Champion of the Seas*, Melbourne 27 October, Liverpool 25 January

Liverpool marked *AUSTRALIAN PACKET / PAID*

Received 26 January 93 days

The finest of 8 foreign-destination covers bearing this adhesive

Victoria was the world's first postal administration to issue an adhesive for payment of a Too-Late fee.

A letter was considered too late if it was handed in within 15 minutes of the advertised closing time for the mails. The fee was independent of weight, and was payable on both domestic and foreign mails.

Return to Sail
British Contract Clipper Ships

Via Cape Horn

Black Ball Line

Marco Polo: first homeward packet under the uniform rate



Melbourne, 21 July 1855

Paid 6d uniform rate

Melbourne rated 5d,
credit to U.K.

Black Ball *Marco Polo*
Melbourne 22 July
Liverpool 20 October

Liverpool marked paid

Received 22 October

90 days

e

Paid 6d uniform rate

Melbourne rated 5d,
credit to U.K.

Black Ball Line
Donald McKay
Melbourne 2 Oct.
Liverpool 28 Dec.

Liverpool marked paid

Received 29 December

89 days



Melbourne, 29 September 1855

Before January 1856, Melbourne had no credit or debit handstamps for postmarking letters under the uniform rate.

Return to Sail
British Contract Clipper Ship

Via Cape Horn

Black Ball Line

Unfavorable winds prevent reaching Liverpool, landed at Queenstown



Geelong, 20 August 1855

Paid 6d uniform rate, Melbourne 5d credit to U.K.
Black Ball *Oliver Lang*, Melbourne 23 August, Queenstown Ireland 26 November
Mails taken to Liverpool by steamer, arrived Liverpool 27 November
Marked paid at Liverpool on 28 November, and sent back to Ireland

Received 28 November 98 days

The only clipper-ship voyage to land mails in Ireland



Strong easterlies in the Irish sea prevented Oliver Lang from reaching Liverpool; square-rigged ships are unable to tack up wind. Queenstown was the harbor for Cork, nearly 300 miles by sea from Liverpool. It offered leeward entrance in both easterly and northwesterly winds.

Return to Sail
British Contract Clipper Ship

Via Cape Horn

Black Ball Line

Unfavorable winds prevent reaching Liverpool, landed at Queenstown



Geelong, 21 August 1855

Paid 1/- double uniform rate, Melbourne 10d credit to U.K.
Black Ball *Oliver Lang*, Melbourne 23 August, Queenstown Ireland 26 November
Liverpool marked paid on 28 November, London the same day

Received 28 November 97 days

Tabcart notes that multiple rate clipper-ship covers are very scarce

Why were clipper ships so fast?

In the early 1850s the U.S. Navy published maps of global wind patterns during different seasons. These maps showed that favorable winds were far stronger below 38°S, the usual route to and from Australia. In addition, sailors realized that great-circle routes were the shortest; the great circle route to Melbourne meant reaching 66 degrees south latitude. Finally, the clippers were stronger and better sparred to withstand high winds. The earliest and fastest of these ships were built in Boston by the pre-eminent designer and shipbuilder Donald McKay for James Baines, owner of the Black Ball line.

Return to Sail

Via Cape Horn

British / Colonial Contract Clipper Ships

Black Ball Line

Paid only to England, British Contract

Paid 6d uniform rate

Black Ball *Lightning*

Melbourne 27 December

Liverpool 24 March

Liverpool 12¢ debit to U.S

Ocean Line *Washington*
to New York

New York rated 33¢ due
12¢ debit, 16¢ Am. Pkt.,
5¢ inland

Received 14 April 111 days



Prahran, 25 December 1856

Unpaid, Colonial Contract



Geelong, 26 August 1856

Sent unpaid

Melbourne debited 5d
to U.K.

Black Ball *Lightning*
Melbourne 28 Aug.
Liverpool 20 Nov.

Liverpool rated 6d due

Received 21 November

87 days

The GPO London's long-term contract with the Black Ball Line applied only to outbound voyages. It was up to Victoria to make separate contract arrangements with Black Ball for return journeys.

Return to Sail
British Contract Clipper Ship

Via Cape Horn

Black Ball Line

To Ireland



Geelong, 20 November 1855

Paid 1d newspaper rate

Black Ball *James Baines*, Melbourne 28 November, Liverpool 2 March

Ireland arrival unknown

Made Liverpool in 95 days; delayed by calms off Cape Horn

Three Victorian wrappers from this decade are recorded

Conveyance of Newspapers

Until 1 May 1854, newspapers were free of postage if mailed within seven days of publication. Newspapers and other printed matter often comprised the greatest portion of the foreign mails; from 1852-57, 5.5 million newspapers were shipped from Melbourne. Census data record 15 “survivors”, ***a preservation rate of about 3 per million, or 0.0003%.***

Return to Sail
Colonial Contract Clipper Ships

Via Cape Horn

Black Ball Line

Paid 6d uniform rate

Melbourne 1d credit to U.K.

Champion of the Seas

Melbourne 16 July

Liverpool 13 October

Received 16 October

105 days



Port Albert, 4 July 1856



Geelong, 23 August 1856

Paid 6d uniform rate, Melbourne 1d credit to U.K.

Lightning, Melbourne 28 August, Liverpool 20 November

Received 21 November

87 days

Return to Sail
British Contract Clipper Ships

Via Cape Horn

White Star Line



Amherst, 1 April 1856

Paid 6d uniform rate

Melbourne 5d credit to U.K.

White Star *Earl of Sefton*
Melbourne 26 April
Liverpool 16 July

Received 16 October

105 days



Melbourne, 7 March 1856

Paid 6d uniform rate, 1/- registered, Melbourne 5d credit to U.K.

White Star *Mermaid*, Melbourne 13 March, Liverpool 9 June

Liverpool rated 6d due for registration

Received 12 June 98 days

Return to Sail
Colonial Contract Clipper Ship

Via Cape Horn

White Star Line

To Prussia via Liverpool & Aachen



Melbourne, 27 September 1856

Paid only to the U.K., 6d uniform rate, Melbourne 1d credit to U.K.
White Star *Red Jacket*, Melbourne 2 October, Liverpool 29 December
Sent unpaid to Prussia via Ostende and Aachen at the 8d (7 Sgr) rate effective July 1852
Aachen exchange office mistakenly added the 1d credit, and rated the letter 8 Sgr due

Received 1 January 97 days

The White Star Line

The PMG awarded White Star a contract for monthly departures from Liverpool from June to December 1855. All mails for the Australian colonies and New Zealand were to be conveyed. Newspapers were free of postage, and both White Star and Black ball were paid ½d per newspaper.

Under the 1856 contracts for both the White Star and Black Ball Lines, contractors were paid half of all packet postage plus ½d per newspaper, but had to ensure delivery of mails—at their own expense—to the Postmasters at Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide within 78 days of leaving Liverpool. The fine for non-compliance was £20 per late day.

Return to Sail
Colonial Contract Clipper Ships

Via Cape Horn

White Star Line

Single rate, landed at Kinsale Ireland



Paid 6d uniform rate
Melbourne 1d credit to U.K.
Too late for *Kent* sailing;
White Star *Sardinian*
Melbourne 27 June
Kinsale 11 September
Received 13 September
109 days

Melbourne, 27 June 1856

Double rate, landed at Gravesend

Paid 1/-, double uniform rate
Melbourne 2d credit to U.K.
White Star *True Briton*
Melbourne 13 September
Gravesend 8 December
Received 10 December
102 days



Echuca, 29 August 1856

Return to Sail
Noncontract Clipper Ships

Via Cape Horn



Melbourne, 29 August 1855

Paid 6d uniform rate, Melbourne 3d credit to U.K.
White Star Line *White Star*, Melbourne 29 August, Liverpool 27 November
Received 28 November 92 days



Geelong, 26 November 1856

Paid 6d uniform rate, Melbourne 3d credit to U.K.
Black Ball Line *Ocean Chief*, 26 November, Liverpool 23 February 1857
Received 23 February 90 days

Return to Sail
Noncontract Clipper Ship

Via Cape Horn

Adverse winds force landing at Crookhaven, County Cork



Melbourne, 16 January 1856

Paid 6d uniform rate, Melbourne 3d credit to U.K.
Eagle Line *Albatross*, Melbourne 18 January, Crookhaven Ireland 2 May
Mails dropped at Crookhaven, sent overland to Dublin
Kingston-Holyhead packet to Glasgow

Received 5 May 110 days



Dublin

2 recorded by Tabcart



reverse

Unable to reach Liverpool

Since 1711, all ships entering the United Kingdom had been required by law to land their mails at the first port of call.

5 May 1856, London Standard: "*Albatross arrived Crookhaven 2 May 1856 en route Melbourne-Liverpool.*"

12 May 1856, London Daily News: "*The Eagle Line ship Albatross, Captain Allen, which for the last fortnight has been beating about the channel owing to adverse winds, was towed into the Mersey on Saturday evening [10 May]. She left Melbourne on the 18th of January and has 18,000 ounces of gold.*"

Return to Sail
Noncontract Clipper Ships

Via Cape Horn



Maryborough, 31 May 1856

Paid 6d uniform rate, 6d registered, Melbourne 3d credit to U.K.
Wigram Line *Kent*, Melbourne 11 June, London 2 September; London rated 6d due for registration

Rec'd 5 September 98 days



Geelong, 26 February 1856

Paid 6^d uniform rate, Melbourne 3^d credit to U.K.
Eagle Line *Eagle*, Melbourne 28 February, Gravesend 22 May

Rec'd 22 May 86 days

Return to Sail
Noncontract Clipper Ships

Via Cape Horn

Landed at Bristol

Paid 6d uniform rate

Melbourne 3d credit
to U.K.

Morning Star

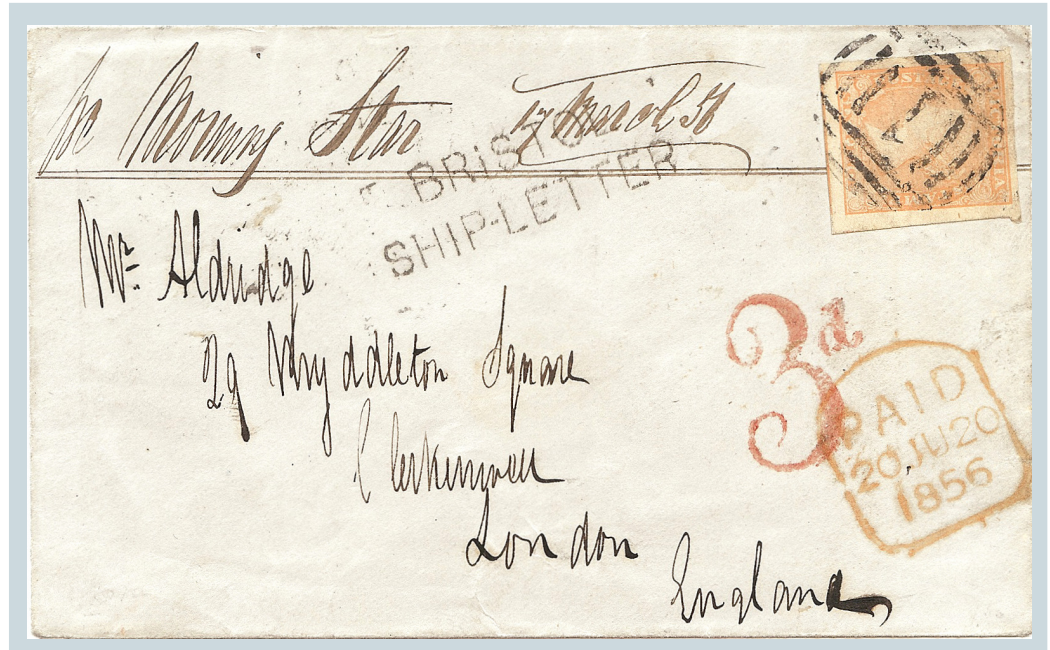
Melbourne 20 March
Bristol 19 June

Received 20 June

95 days

BRISTOL
SHIP-LETTER

Earliest recorded use



Melbourne, 18 March 1856

To New Hampshire via London, American Packet to New York



Melbourne, 31 January 1857

Paid 6d uniform rate

Melbourne 3d credit
to U.K.

Sydenham

Melbourne 6 February
Gravesend 3 June

London 3¢ credit to U.S.

Havre Line *Fulton*

Southampton 3 June
New York 16 June

24¢ due in New York

Received 18 June

139 days

Return to Sail

Colonial Contract Clipper Ship
British Contract Steamship

Overland via Trieste

Via Ceylon, endorsed for Marseilles but re-routed at Alexandria



Melbourne, 28 July 1856

Paid 11d: 6d uniform rate, 5d French transit, <1/4 oz.

Melbourne retained 5d, 6d credit to U.K. for French transit and British inland

Formosa, Melbourne 31 July, Galle 1 September

P&O *Oriental*, Galle 1 September, Suez 23 September

P&O *Australia*, Alexandria 5 October, Trieste 11 October

Rail from Trieste to Ostende, Belgium

Received 14 October

99 days

The only clipper sailing to Ceylon

The only Victorian cover paying the 11d rate

The P&O evidently had no ship available for Malta to Marseilles run, so the India & Australia mails were taken directly from Alexandria to Trieste. As reported in *The Times* of 11 October 1856:

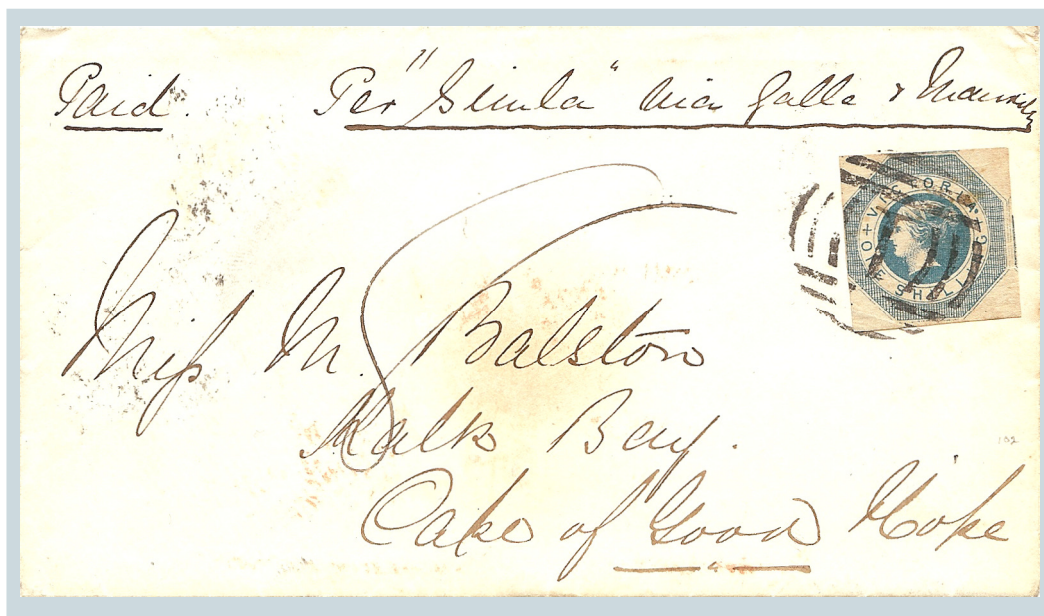
The Overland Mail - India and Australia. We have received the following telegraphic dispatch from Trieste, Trieste 10 Oct. The ss Australia arrived here at 11:30 this morning from Alexandria 5 Oct. The India mail was to leave Alex on that date with the following dates: Calcutta 8 Sep, Bombay 12 Sep, Melbourne 12 Jul.

Return to Steam
British Contract Steamship

Overland via Southampton

European & Australian Royal Mail Co.

To the Cape of Good Hope



Melbourne, 28 May 1857

Paid 1/-, underpayment of 6d uniform rate + 1/- packet from England

[NB: on 1 June 1857, the U.K reduced the packet rate to CGH to 6d, making this letter fully prepaid by packet, before it arrived at Southampton]

E&ARM *Simla*, Melbourne 30 May, Mauritius 15 June, Suez 12 July

E&ARM *Scamander*, Alexandria 14 July, Liverpool 1 August

Private steamship *Scotland*, Deal 3 August, Cape Town 18 September

Cape Town rated 8d due, 4d ship, 4d inland to Kalk Bay

Received 18 September

114 days

The Folly of the European and Australian Royal Mail Co's. Contract

In February 1856 the Admiralty sought tenders for a return to steamship service for Australia. The schedules proposed and the late penalties intended were so onerous that the P&O withdrew their bid. The only other offer, from the E&ARM, was accepted. Monthly service was to begin in January 1857 from Southampton to Alexandria, thence from Suez to Sydney via Melbourne.

The company had no experience with long-distance steam transport and owned very few ships; their chartered ships were unreliable. Stiff late penalties levied against a nearly impossible schedule made the company unprofitable, but the Admiralty refused to alter the contract terms. When the company failed, their contract was turned over to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. on 1 July 1858.

Ironically, RMSP Co. was given an increased subsidy and lower late-penalty costs, yet was also unsuccessful.

Return to Steam
Colonial Contract Steamship

Via Cape of Good Hope

Substitute Sailing for European & Australian Royal Mail Co.



Melbourne, 20 May 1857

Paid 1/-, 2 x 6d uniform rate

Great Western *Great Britain*
Melbourne 21 May
Liverpool 22 August

Liverpool marked paid:
tombstone handstamp

Sent onward to Ireland

Received 24 August

96 days

Paid 1/-, 2 x uniform rate

Great Western *Great Britain*
Melbourne 21 May
Liverpool 22 August

Liverpool marked paid:
provisional handstamp

Received 23 August

91 days



Melbourne, 25 May 1857

cover fragment only

Provisional use of a Liverpool ship-letter handstamp

E&ARM's first scheduled departure, *Oneida*, did not sail; their second ship, *Simla*, was having difficulties. This led Victoria to hire *Great Britain* to carry mails from Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania—the largest volume of mail ever sent from Melbourne. A second mail was made up for *Simla*, which sailed to Suez. The Liverpool P.O. was overwhelmed with the *Great Britain*'s mails, so added **PAID** to an old ship-letter handstamp and pressed it into service.

Used only 22 August 1857, one of the rarest of all Liverpool maritime markings

Return to Steam
Noncontract Steamship

Overland via Southampton

European & Australian Royal Mail Co.



Melbourne, 22 July 1857

Paid 10d rate to France effective January 1855 up to ½ oz.
E&ARM *King Phillip*, Melbourne 27 July, London 18 October
London 4d credit to France, >¼ oz., so Paris rated 40 centimes due
Received 17 October 88 days



Melbourne, 15 June 1858

Paid 9d via Marseilles, but
>¼ oz.

Melbourne marked
**INSUFFICIENTLY PAID
VIA MARSEILLES**

E&ARM *Australasian*
Melbourne 16 June
Suez 30 July
E&ARM *Cambria*
Alexandria 1 August
Southampton 14 August

Received 14 August
61 days

Return to Steam

Overland via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

European & Australian Royal Mail Co.

Grounding of the *Emeu* in the Red Sea



Geelong, 12 September 1857

Paid 9d via Marseilles but rerouted via Southampton after mishap at sea
E&ARM *Emeu*, Melbourne 14 September, ran aground on 22 October
P&O *Madras*, took mail from *Emeu* on 18 November, Suez 19 November
P&O *Ripon*, Alexandria 21 November, Southampton 6 December

Received 7 December

87 days

Emeu grounded on a reef off Jeddah

Emeu was fully loaded with a double mail, as E&ARM had provided no ship to carry the August mails. On 22 October she ran aground on the coral reef *Gutta el Bunna* off the coast of Sudan near Jeddah. The Captain and the Admiralty Agent took some of the mail in a small boat to seek help in Jeddah, but turned back and were picked up by P&O *Madras* in the northern Red Sea on 18 November. The mail they had removed from the ship went across to Alexandria and was carried by two P&O steamers, *Vectis* for Malta and Marseilles, and *Ripon* for Malta and Southampton.

Meanwhile, the *Emeu*'s Chief Officer had refloated the ship, had made temporary repairs ashore, and had reached Suez on 3 November. The mail remaining on board was taken from Alexandria to Southampton by *Australasian*, and arrived 18 days ahead of the mail "rescued" by the Captain. E&ARM was fined £3,300 for the late mails.

Return to Steam

Overland via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

European & Australian Royal Mail Co.

Paid via Marseilles but sent via Southampton



Sandhurst, 2 May 1858

Paid 5/8, overpaying the 5/6 rate to destination via Marseilles for a registered letter weighing 1 oz.:
2 x 6d uniform rate, 4 x 3d French transit, 4 x 6d U.K. to Switzerland via France, 1/- + 6d registration

E&ARM *European*, Melbourne 17 May, Suez 30 June

E&ARM *Teviot*, Alexandria 2 July, Southampton 18 July

London marked paid to destination and forwarded via France

Received 24 July

84 days

The sender no doubt intended to use the faster route via Marseilles, and paid for it, but neglected to so endorse the letter. Via Southampton was the default route for mail with no preference noted, which would have cost only 4/6, 1/2 less than was spent.

Return to Steam
British Contract Steamship

Overland via Marseilles

European & Australian Royal Mail Co.

To France direct



Melbourne, 14 February 1857

Paid 9d, 6d uniform rate, 3d French transit (to ¼ oz.)
E&ARM *Simla*, Melbourne 15 February, Suez 26 March
E&ARM *Jura*, Alexandria 28 March, Malta 31 March
E&ARM *Cambria*, Malta 31 March, Marseilles 3 April

Marseilles rated 5 decimes due for inland

Received 5 April 51 days

The earliest of 3 Victorian letters to pay this rate, effective 1 January 1857

The Palmer census records 81 Victorian covers to France between 1850 and 1860, only three of which were prepaid at the direct rate via Marseilles rather than sent via England. The reason is that Australian mail could be prepaid to England and forwarded unpaid to France, whereas letters via Marseilles direct to French destinations had to prepay the French transit fee—a faster but more expensive option.

Return to Steam
British Contract Steamship

Overland via Marseilles

European & Australian Royal Mail Co.

To Alzey, Grand Duchy of Hessen, paid only to England

Paid 1/- for $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. :

6d uniform, 2 x 3d Fr. transit

Simla, Melbourne 16 Feb. to Suez

Tamar, Alex. 25 Mar. to Malta

Wye, Malta 28 Nov. to Marseilles

Forwarded unpaid from Paris

Frankfurt rated 75/18:

75 kr Fr. transit

18 kr German inland = 93 kr

93 kr restated as 1 gulden/33 kr
due in Alzey

Received 3 April

48 days



Paris



Melbourne, 15 February 1858

To Hanover, prepaid to destination via Belgium



Melbourne, 7 March 1858

3d overpayment of $\frac{1}{5}$ rate:
6d uniform, 3d Fr. transit,
8d to Germany

Emeu :

Melbourne 17 March,
Suez 23 April

Valetta :

Alex. 26 April,
Marseilles 2 May

London marked *P* and 8d for
paid to destination

Aachen exchange office
noted prepayment with
**ENGLAND PER AACHEN /
FRANCO**

Received 7 May

62 days

Return to Steam

Overland via Marseilles

British Contract Steamship

European & Australian Royal Mail Co.

Too Late for Packet from Sydney: Supplementary Mail via Melbourne



Sydney, 15 October 1858

Paid 1/11 to destination: 6d supplementary mail fee, 6d uniform rate, 3d French transit, 8d transatlantic
Sydney credited 8d to U.K. for transatlantic packet

Steam commuter *Telegraph* : Sydney 15 October, Melbourne 18 October

E&ARM *Victoria* : Melbourne 18 October for Suez; ***sprung a leak so mails transferred to Oneida at Galle***

E&ARM *Oneida* : Galle 13 November, ***broke screw so sailed to Aden and transferred mails to "Bengal"***

P&O *Bengal* : Aden departure unknown, Suez 5 December

P&O *Niagara* : Alexandria 7 December, Malta 9 December

P&O *Wye* : Malta 9 December, Marseilles 13 December, mail at London 15 December

London credited 1d to Canada

Havre Line *Fulton* : Southampton 16 December, Halifax 31 December

Montreal 2 January 80 days

GPO Sydney usually advertised a supplementary mail service 1-4 after a packet's departure, to catch the packet at Melbourne. A few supplementary letters to the U.K. are known; this letter is the **only recorded example to Canada**.

Return to Steam
British Contract Steamship

Overland via Southampton

Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.

Third homeward sailing by the company



Geelong, 15 September 1858

Paid 6d uniform rate

RMSP European, Melbourne 17 September, Suez 27 October

RMSP Teviot, Alexandria 28 October, Southampton 12 November

Received 13 November

59 days

First on-board sorting of Australian mail to the United Kingdom

Royal Mail Steam Packet Company takes over the E&ARM contract

On 1 July 1858, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company assumed the mail services previously provided by the failed E&ARM. The routes, schedules and ships remained in place under the new contract.

The company refused the penalty clauses and remuneration terms under which their predecessors had struggled, and were paid £10,703 per entire voyage, compared to E&ARM's average per-voyage net of £4,300. Despite these improvements, RMSP was unable to make sufficient profit, so was ***shut down after only nine months of service.***

The company introduced the first on-board mail sorting during the sailing illustrated above. This enabled the mails for the west of England to be forwarded direct from Southampton rather than through London.

Return to Steam
British Contract Steamship

Overland via Southampton

Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.

Prepaid to U.S. port, British Packet from Liverpool



Melbourne, 15 July 1858

Paid 1/2 to U.S. port

Emeu

Melbourne 16 Jul

Suez 24 Aug

Teviot

Alexandria 12 Aug

Southampton 9 Sep

Cunard Niagara

Liverpool 11 Sep

Boston 24 Sep

Boston rated 5¢ due

Received 24 Sep 72 days

**First homeward sailing
under the contract**

Prepaid to U.S. port, American Packet from Liverpool

Paid 1/2 to U.S. port

Victoria

Melbourne 18 Oct

Galle 13 November

Oneida, Bengal, Niagara

Galle 13 Nov

Suez 5 Dec

Alexandria 7 Dec

Southampton, 18 Dec

London 16¢ credit to U.S.

Inman City of Manchester

Liverpool 22 Dec

New York 11 Jan

New York sent to Boston,
where rated 5¢ due

Received 12 Jan 89 days



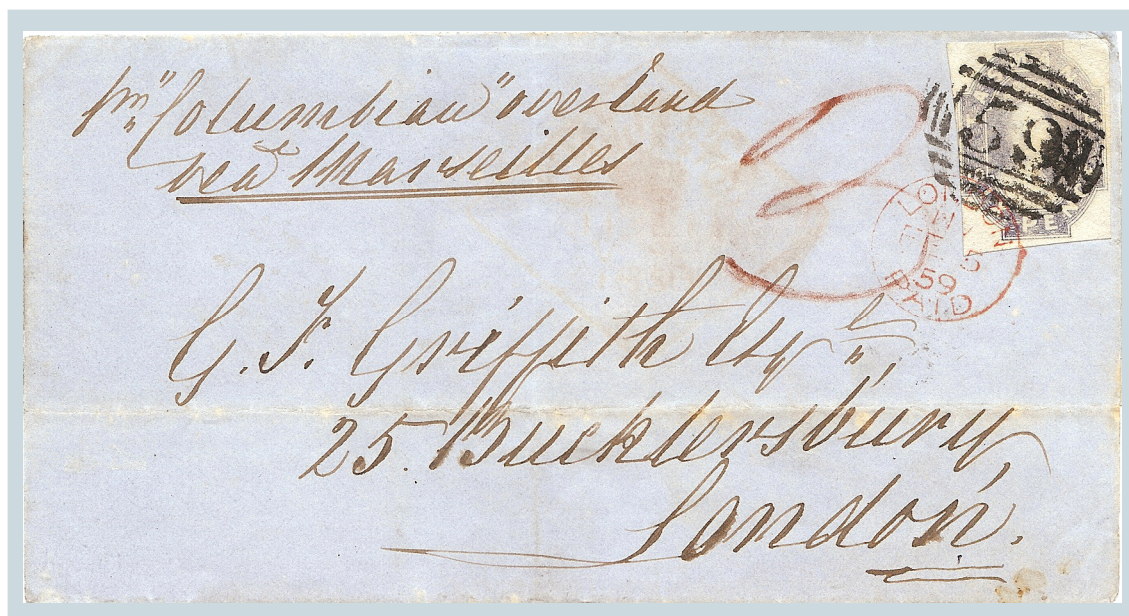
Sandhurst, 16 October 1858

Return to Steam
British Contract Steamship

Overland via Marseilles

Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.

From Tasmania via Melbourne, single French transit



Launceston, 13 December 1858

Paid 9d, 6d uniform rate, 3d French transit (in cash) up to ¼ oz.
Brig *Mercury*, Launceston 12 December, Melbourne 13 December
Columbian, Melbourne 18 December, Suez 23 January
Thames, Alexandria 27 January, Malta 31 January
Wye, Malta 31 January, Marseilles 3 February

Received 5 February

55 days

Melbourne as trans-shipment port

Royal Mail Steam Packet Company ships homeward-bound from Melbourne originated in Sydney and carried the NSW mails. Victoria's mails were loaded at Melbourne, as were mails brought to Melbourne by branch lines from South Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania. The packet schedules were well advertised, so post offices in the other colonies were able to schedule their own trans-shipments.

It is unclear whether branch-line service from Tasmania was run under a standing contract with the Tasmanian P.O. or under a single-trip, available-vessel basis. Mail sometimes arrived from Launceston on coastal steamers, at other times under sail. The trip to Melbourne usually took 1-2 days.

Return to Steam

British Contract Steamships

Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.

Overland via Marseilles

Single British rate, double French transit

Paid 1/-

6d uniform rate

2 x 3d Fr. transit, $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Victoria

Melbourne 18 Oct

Galle 13 Nov

Oneida/Bengal

Galle 13 Nov

Suez 5 Dec

Niagara/Wye

Alexandria 7 Dec

Marseilles 13 Dec

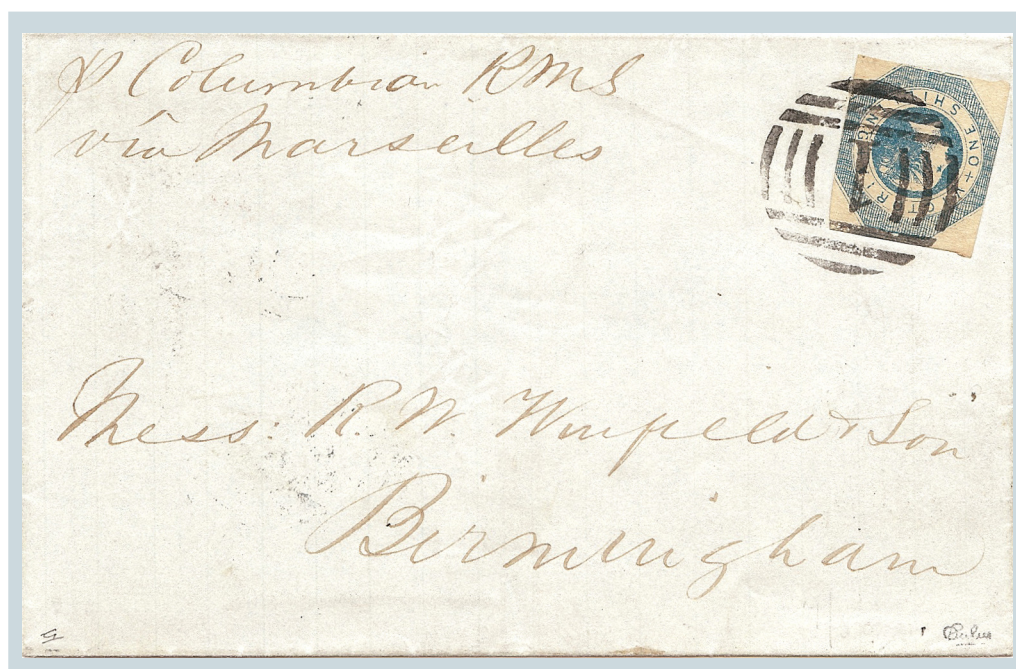
Dublin arrival 16 Dec

61 days



Melbourne, 16 October 1858

Single British rate, double French transit



Melbourne, 16 August 1858

Paid 1/-

6d uniform,

2 x 3d Fr. transit, $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Columbian

Melbourne 16 Aug

Suez 3 Oct

Cambria/Wye

Alexandria 5 Oct

Malta 9 Oct

Marseilles 12 Oct

Received 14 October

60 days

Return to Steam
British Contract Steamships

Overland via Marseilles

Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.

Double British rate, triple French transit



Paid 1/9
2x 6d uniform rate
3 x 3d Fr. Transit
 $\frac{1}{2} - \frac{3}{4}$ oz.

Columbian
Melbourne 18 Dec
Suez 23 Jan
Thames/Wye
Alexandria 27 Jan
Malta 31 Jan
Marseilles 3 Feb
Received 5 Feb 1859
51 days

Melbourne, 17 December 1858

Double British rate, triple French transit

Paid 1/-9
2 x 6d uniform rate
3 x 3d Fr. Transit
 $\frac{1}{2} - \frac{3}{4}$ oz.

European
Melbourne 17 Sep
Suez 27 Oct
Teviot/Wye
Alexandria 28 Oct
Malta 2 Nov
Marseilles 5 Nov
Received 8 November
55 days



Melbourne, 15 September 1858

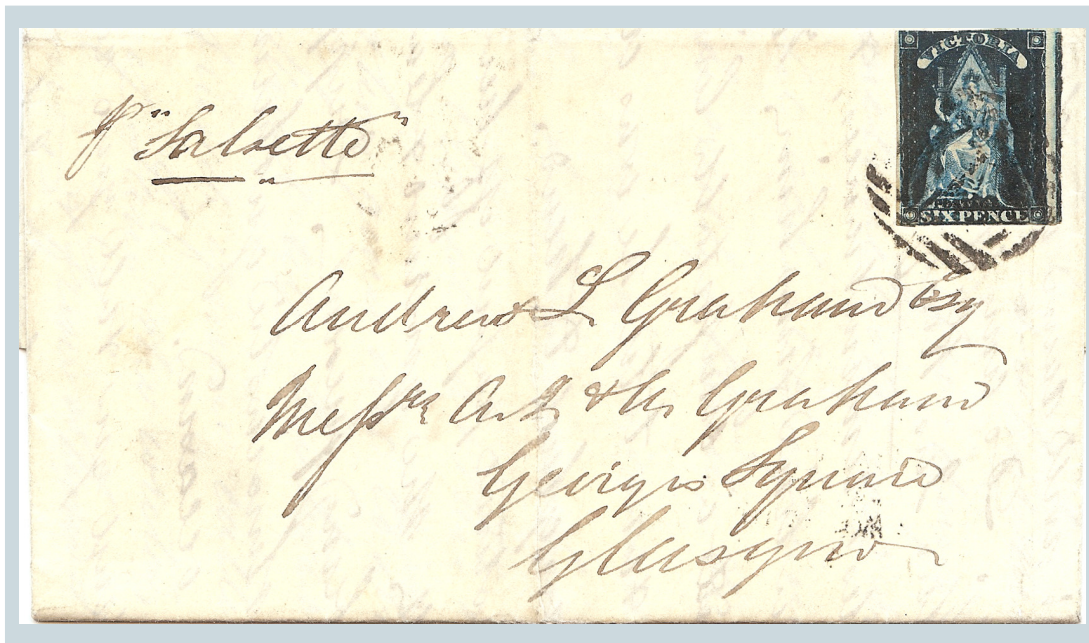
Return to Steam

British & American Contract Steamships

Overland via Southampton

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

P&O re-enters Australian service



Melbourne, 15 February 1859

Paid 6d uniform rate

Salsette, Melbourne 15 February, Suez 27 March

Pera, Alexandria 29 March, Southampton 9 April

Received 11 April 56 days

P&O's first homeward sailing under the contract

The P&O 1859 contract

Failure to make a profit forced the RMSP to withdraw from Australian service after their February 1859 homeward sailing from Melbourne. The P&O was the sole responder to London's request for tenders to replace the RMSP, so were awarded the contract with effect from February 1859.

Through February 1860 all 13 monthly homeward voyages called at Adelaide (South Australia), King George's Sound (Western Australia) and Port St. Louis (Mauritius) enroute to Suez. Beginning with the March 1860 sailing, Galle (Ceylon) was substituted for Port St. Louis as a more direct route. P&O's monthly mail service continued until 1880, when it was increased to twice monthly.

Return to Steam

Overland via Southampton

British & American Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Overland by Butterfield Stage to San Francisco



Melbourne, 15 February 1859

Front only

Paid 1/9, 1/2d overpayment of the 1/8 1/2d (41¢) paid-to-destination rate, effective 1851:

6d uniform rate, 1 1/2d British inland, 8d transatlantic, 10d U.S. inland

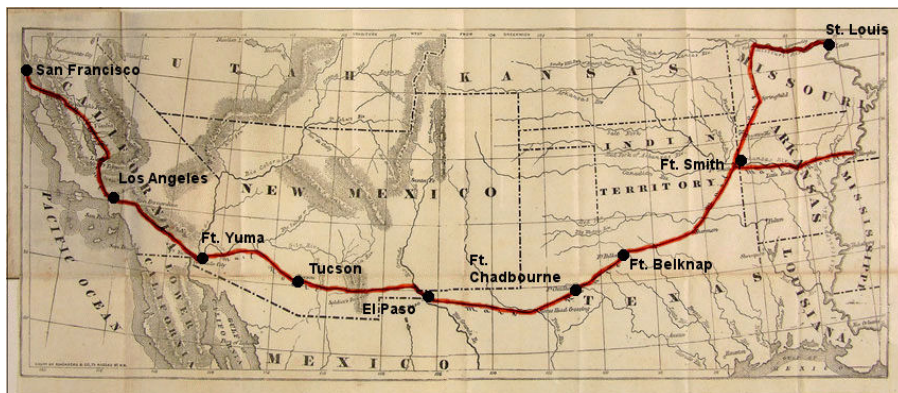
Salsette, Melbourne 15 February, Suez 27 March

Pera, Alexandria 29 March, Southampton 9 April, mails at London 11 April

London credited U.S. with 1/2 1/2 (29¢), the treaty rate to California
Inman Line *City of Washington*, Liverpool 13 April, New York 25 April
Rail to St Louis, then overland mail to San Francisco, arrived 24 May

Received 24 May 99 days

P&O's first homeward sailing under the contract
The only recorded Victorian cover carried by Butterfield Stage



Return to Steam

Overland via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

From the Riverina District of New South Wales



Deniliquin, 22 October 1860

Paid 1/-, 6d intercolonial rate to Melbourne, 6d uniform rate
Overland via Moama NSW and Albury VIC, arrived at Melbourne 23 October
Behar, Melbourne 26 October, Galle 15 November
Nubia, Galle 17 November, Suez 1 December
Pera, Alexandria 4 December, Southampton 19 December

Received 19 December 59 days

Mixed franking of two British Colonies

The Riverina Mails

Townpeople along the Murray River in New South Wales – the Riverina area – were willing to pay an extra 6d to send foreign mails to Melbourne, rather than to Sydney, to catch England-bound vessels. The overland journey south was faster, and because ships called at Melbourne a few days after leaving Sydney it was possible to reply to a letter that had arrived on the same ship. The use of this route and payment method began at least as early as August 1854.

Return to Steam
British Contract Steamship

Overland via Southampton

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

To the mails by Victoria Express



Lamplough, 12 February 1860

Paid 6d uniform rate

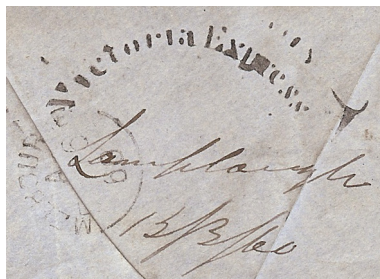
Victoria Express from unknown Goldfield camp to Lamplough, arrived 12 February

Salsette, Melbourne 16 February, Suez 25 March

Indus, Alexandria 28 March, Southampton 12 April

Received 13 April 61 days

The only recorded Victoria Express cover to a foreign destination



Reverse

The only recorded example

Victoria Express Co.

Victoria Express, owned and operated by S. Collou & Co., carried letters to and from the gold diggings to the nearest post office. The Lamplough post office, about 80 miles northwest of Melbourne, had opened on 2 January 1860 with daily service to Melbourne, but had no hand-stamp devices until later that year.

Return to Steam

British Contract Steamships

Overland via Southampton

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Prepaid only to U.S. port



Ceres, 19 October 1860

Paid 1/2, 6d uniform, 8d transatlantic **Misplaced at GPO, missed October sailing**

Salsette, Malta, Melbourne 26 November, Galle 16 December, Suez 1 January

Indus, Alexandria 4 January, Southampton 18 January

Cunard *America*, Queenstown 16 January, Boston 4 February

Boston rated 5¢ due for inland Received 17 January 91 days

To New Brunswick via Halifax

Paid 1/-

6d uniform rate to London

6d to NB by British packet

Jeddo

Melbourne 26 June, Galle 16 July

Candia, Delta

Galle 18 July, Suez 5 August

Alex 9 August, S'otn 21 August

London 1d credit to NB

Cunard *Arabia*

Liverpool 24 August

Halifax 3 September

Received 5 September 73 days



Melbourne, 25 June 1861

Return to Steam

Overland via Southampton

British & American Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Double rate to U.S. port, British open mail



Melbourne, 25 May 1861

Paid 2/4: 2 x 6d uniform rate, 2 x 8d transatlantic

Benares, Melbourne 28 May, Galle 17 June

Colombo, Galle 20 June, Suez 7 July

Pera, Alexandria 9 July Southampton 21 July

London denoted prepayment of transatlantic postage by 1/4 in red

London 32¢ credit to U.S. for American Packet

Havre Line *Arago*, Southampton 24 July, New York 5 August

New York rated 10¢ due, 2 x 5¢ inland

Received 5 August 73 days

The use of British open mail

The Anglo-American convention of 1848 provided for use of the British mail system for correspondence between the United States and any country in the world with which Great Britain had a postal agreement. Such letters did not pass through England in closed bags, but were evaluated and rated in London (thus “open” mail), and were not charged for British inland. The 8d transatlantic conveyance accrued to the U.S. or the U.K. depending on which country held the shipping line’s mail contract. Letters were paid only to the destination’s frontier; recipients paid inland postage from the port.

Return to Steam
British Contract Steamship

Overland via Southampton

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.



Buninyong, 24 October 1862

Paid 6d uniform rate

Bombay, Melbourne 26 Oct

Colombo, Galle 17 Nov

wrecked 19 Nov

Nemesis

Galle 1 Dec, Suez 15 Dec

Massilia, S'otn 30 December
from Alexandria

Received 31 December

69 days

To Canada West

Paid 6d uniform rate

London 1d credit to

Canada for inland

Bombay, Melbourne 26 Oct

Colombo, Galle 17 Nov

wrecked 19 Nov

Nemesis

Galle 1 Dec, Suez 15 Dec

Massilia, arr. S'otn 30 Dec

Allan Line *Hibernian*

Liverpool 8 Jan 1863

Portland 19 Jan

Received 19 January

89 days



Deep Lead, Pleasant Creek, 23 October 1862

Loss of the Colombo

Colombo ran ground on Minicoy Island, a coral reef 500 miles north northwest of Galle. There were no casualties, but the ship was a total loss. The mail boxes were flooded and had to be drilled for draining. The mails were taken off in stages and carried to Suez by several ships over the ensuing weeks. Because each partial shipment was forwarded on to London as it arrived at Alexandria, London arrival dates range from 31 December to 25 January.

Return to Steam

British & American Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Overland via Southampton

American Packet to Portland

Paid 1/2, 6d uniform rate,
8d transatlantic

Bombay, Melbourne 26 Jan

Nubia, Galle 18 Feb

Pera, Alexandria 5 Mar

London 16¢ credit to U.S.
for American packet

Allan Line *North American*

Londonderry 18 Mar

Portland 31 Mar

Portland rated 5¢ due, inland

Received 3 April

70 days



Melbourne, 26 January 1864

British packet to New York



Melbourne, 24 March 1866

Paid 1/2, 6d uniform rate,
8d transatlantic

Ellora, Melbourne 26 March

Bengal, Galle 18 April

Ripon, Alexandria, 5 May

London 8: transatlantic prepaid

Cunard *Persia*

Queenstown 20 May

New York 29 May

New York rated 5¢ due, inland

Received 31 May 69 days

Return to Steam

British & American Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Overland via Southampton



Carlton, 5 January 1869

Paid 11d to destination: 6d uniform rate, 4d transatlantic, 1d U.S. inland

Avoca, Melbourne 5 January; *Candia*, Galle 27 January; *Bangalore*, Alexandria 13 February, S'otn 25 February

London 2¢ credit to U.S. for inland; Cunard *Russia*, Liverpool 27 February, New York 11 March

Received 11 March 66 days

Paid 1/-, overpayment of 11d
rate to destination

Malta, Melbourne 11 October

Candia, Galle 10 August

Pera, Alexandria 21 November

Southampton 5 December

London 2¢ credit to U.S.

NGL *Rhein*

Southampton 7 December

New York 18 December

Chicago exchange office
marked PAID

Received 22 December

73 days



Golden Square, 11 October 1869

1868 U.S.-U.K Postal Convention

U.K.-U.S rate was lowered to 12¢ on 1 Jan 1869: 2¢ U.K., 8¢ sea, 2¢ U.S. U.K. fee not charged for transit letters.

Return to Steam
British Contract Steamships

Overland via Southampton

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Paid 1/-, 6d uniform rate,
 6d U.K. to Hessen

Bombay, Melbourne 2 Feb
Mooltan, Galle 24 Feb
Poonah, Alex. 14 March
 S'otn. 29 March

London noted paid to
 destination

Aachen exchange office
 noted paid

Received 30 March
 58 days



Mount Buneed, 1 February 1869



German Confederation Consulate in Melbourne, 18 June 1870

Paid 1/-, 6d uniform rate, 6d U.K. to Hanover

Malta, Melbourne 19 June; *Avoca*, *Candia*, *Golconda* to Suez; *Ripon* Alexandria to S'otn, arrived 26 August
 London noted paid to destination; Aachen exchange office noted paid

Received 28 August 72 days

Return to Steam

British Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Overland via Southampton



Richmond, 27 March 1871

Paid 9d to destination
6d uniform rate
3d to France, eff. 1 July 1870

Geelong

Melbourne 28 March
Galle 17 April

Poonah

Galle 20 April
Southampton 22 May

London noted prepayment
of 3d rate to France

Received 24 May 59 days

The first P&O voyage, and the first Australian mail, to transit the Suez canal

Paid 8d to destination
6d uniform rate to U.K.
1d sea to U.S., 1d U.S. inland

Nubia

Melbourne 30 March
Galle 16 April

Khedive, Galle 21 April,
Suez 5 May

Ceylon

Alexandria 7 May
Southampton 19 May

London 2¢ credit to U.S., inland
NGL Hermann

S'otn 21 May, N.Y. 1 June

Received 1 June 66 days



Melbourne, 28 March 1872

Reduction in postage rates

In 1854 Victorians could not prepay a letter to a U.S. destination via England: 1s took a letter to the U.K. from where it would be forwarded unpaid, with 24¢ due from the addressee. By 1870 the British uniform rate and U.S.-G.B. postal conventions had lowered the paid-to destination cost to only 8d, a 66% reduction.

Return to Steam

Overland via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Galle to Southampton via the Suez canal



Stratford, 14 July 1873

Paid 8d, 6d uniform rate, 2d to Germany

China, Melbourne 17 July, Galle 6 August

Pekin, Galle 7 August, transited Suez Canal 23-26 August, arrived Southampton 8 September

London 2d credit to Germany, forwarded in closed mail via Belgium

Received 11 September

60 days

The third Australian mail to transit the Suez canal

Using the Suez Canal for Australian mail

Although the Suez Canal opened in November 1869, homeward P&O sailings did not routinely transit the canal until February 1874. During P&O's first four canal transits, the time it took mail from its arrival at Suez until its departure from Alexandria took four days (1871), three days (1872), two days (1873, and three days (1873). The average overland time was only two days. The problem was that contracts and treaties then in force required that all mails be offloaded at Suez and transported overland, where the mail for Southampton would be reloaded on the same ship that had just transited the canal. By 1874 agreements had been modified and canal use became routine.

Return to Steam

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Overland Via Trieste

To Count Andrassy, Prime Minister of Hungary



Melbourne, 13 July 1871

Paid 2/-, 6d overpayment of the mistakenly employed 1/6 paid-to-destination rate to England

Rangoon, Melbourne 17 July, Galle 6 August; *China*, Galle 9 August, Suez 26 August

British exchange office at Alexandria marked 1/- credit to Austria for packet & inland

Austrian exchange office in Alexandria marked 15 Neukreuzer due: 10 NKr packet to Trieste, 5 NKr inland

Austrian Lloyd steamer from Alexandria to Trieste

Forwarded to Kaschau, then to Hommona

Received 6 September

56 days

Six pre-GPU Victoria covers via Trieste are recorded

The only recorded Victoria pre-UPU cover to Hungary by any route

Via Trieste

Austrian Lloyd established a monthly express connection between Trieste and Alexandria in 1848, expanded to twice monthly in 1851. Although the route was not advertised in Australia, it was available in New South Wales and Victoria from September 1853 via P&O steamers for Suez calling at Sydney and Melbourne. The July 1852 Anglo-Prussian postal convention provided for mail service between Egypt and the United Kingdom via Trieste and the Prussian mail route for 1/- per ½ oz. In 1866 the rate was increased to 1/- up to ¼ oz, and 1/6 up to ½ oz.

Return to Steam

Overland via Marseilles

British & American Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Paid to U.S. port, double British rate, triple French transit



Melbourne, 17 May 1859

Paid 3/1: 2 x 6d uniform rate, 3 x 3d French transit, 2 x 8d transatlantic

Columbia, Melbourne 19 May, Suez 20 July

Panther, Alexandria 22 July, Marseilles 29 July, mails at London on 31 July

London's red 1/4 noted prepayment of double 8d transatlantic rate; red 32¢ credit to U.S. for American packet

Vanderbilt Line *Ocean Queen*, Southampton 3 August, New York 13 August

New York rated 10¢ due, double 5¢ inland

Received 15 August

91 days

Via Marseilles

From January 1857 prepayment of all French charges was compulsory, an efficiency gain since the need for accountancy was eliminated. It was still expensive though; a letter weighing $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ oz., at 3d per $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. cost as much in French transit as the entire 6d uniform rate. Nevertheless, the rapidly increasing proportion of mail endorsed *via Marseilles* suggests that cost was far less important than the 4 to 7 extra days it took for the mail to go via Southampton.

Return to Steam

Overland via Marseilles

British Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Paid 1/9

6d uniform rate, 1/- registered

3d French transit, 1/4 oz.

Benares

Melbourne 18 November

Suez 24 December

Panther

Alexandria 28 December

Marseilles 5 January

London 12 January, rated 6d

due for registration

Received 14 January 59 days



Melbourne, 17 November 1859



Melbourne, 17 January 1860

Paid 9d, 6d uniform rate, 3d French transit, 1/4 oz.

Columbian, Melbourne 18 January, Suez 25 February via Mauritius

Valetta, Alexandria 27 February, Marseilles 4 March; mails at London 6 March

Received 6 March 50 days

Return to Steam

Overland via Marseilles

British Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Double French transit



Melbourne, 1 July 1859

Paid 1/-
6d uniform rate
2 x 3d French transit, 1/2 oz.

Northam

Melbourne 18 July
Suez 28 July

Panther

Alexandria 5 September
Marseilles 12 September

London 14 September

Received 14 September

59 days

Quadruple uniform rate, quintuple French transit



Melbourne, 1859

front only

Paid 3/3: 4 x 6d uniform rate, 5 x 3d French transit, 1 1/4-1 1/2 oz.
Ship & sailing unknown; year determined by stamp and cancel

Return to Steam

Overland via Marseilles

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

To Denmark via Marseilles, London, Belgium and Hamburg



Melbourne, 15 February 1860

Paid 3/2: overpayment of the 1/10½ rate for ¼ to ½ oz. via Marseilles and Belgium

Melbourne credited 10/½d to the U.K., the rate from London to Denmark

P&O *Salsette*, Melbourne 18 February, Suez 25 March

P&O *Panther*, Alexandria 28 March, Marseilles 3 April, mails in London on 5 April

Backstamped in Hamburg on 7 April, Wick on 8 April

Received 8 April 53 days

The only recorded pre-UPU letter from Victoria to the Danish Frisian Islands

Routes to Denmark

Prior to 1854 letters to Denmark could be sent from London by Thames packet directly to Hamburg or Rotterdam, or overland via the Prussian post office in Hamburg. No direct service to Denmark was available. As from January 1854 only two routes were offered: the “normal” route was through Ostende, Belgium to Hamburg. The route through France was available for letters so endorsed, but cost nearly twice as much as the route via Belgium.

Return to Steam

Overland via Marseilles

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Double French transit



Melbourne, 17 October 1859

Paid 1/-, 6d uniform rate, 2 x 3d French transit, $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Emeu, Melbourne 18 October, Suez 28 November

Valetta, Alexandria 30 November, Marseilles 6 December; mails at London 8 December

Received 8 December

53 days

Return to Steam

British Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Overland via Marseilles



Paid 1/-, 6d uniform rate,
2 x 3d French transit, $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Geelong **M** : via Marseilles

Bombay, Melbourne 26 January

Suez 4 March

Euxine, Alexandria 6 March

Marseilles 13 March

Mails at London 15 March

Received 15 March

51 days

Geelong, 24 January 1863



Marseilles Exchange Office
bulk-rate credit to Great
Britain for letters from
Australia and New Zealand



Marseilles to Lyon
railway post office



Melbourne, 24 May 1862

Sent unpaid, $\frac{1}{4}$ oz.

Madras, Melbourne 26 May, Galle 14 June; *Candia*, Galle 18 June, Suez 5 July

Valetta, Alexandria 6 July, Marseilles 12 July

Marseilles rated 9 decimes due

Received 13 July

50 days

Return to Steam

Overland via Marseilles

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Rate reduction for letters via Marseilles



Melbourne, 25 April 1864

Paid 1/6 to the U.S. port: 6d uniform rate, 4d via Marseilles, 8d transatlantic
Bombay, Melbourne 26 April, Galle 15 May

Simla, Galle 18 May, Suez 3 June; *Syria*, Alexandria 4 June, Marseilles 11 June

Mails at London on 12 June; London 16¢ credit to U.S. for American packet
Allan Line *Hibernian*, Liverpool 16 June, Quebec 30 June

Closed bag via Grand Trunk Railway from Rivière-du-Loupe to Portland
Mails at Portland 1 July, rated 5¢ due for inland

The Palmer census records three Victoria covers to the U.S. via the Portland exchange office

Reduction in French transit rates

With effect from 14 July 1863 France reduced the transit fee for mail via Marseilles to the United Kingdom. The new rate was based on ½ oz. increments instead of the old ¼ oz. system, and was lowered to 4d per ½ oz. Letters via Marseilles in British open mail to the United States therefore saved the sender 2d per ½ oz.

Return to Steam
British Contract Steamship

Overland via Marseilles

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

From the Riverina District of New South Wales



Deniliquin NSW, 26 July 1867

Paid 1/-, 6d intercolonial to Melbourne, 6d uniform rate

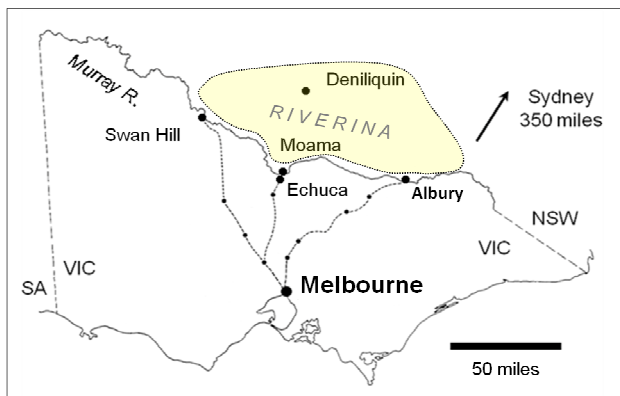
Avoca, Melbourne 28 July, Galle 17 August

Nubia, 17 August, Suez 2 September; *Ceylon* 4 September, Marseilles 10 September

Mails at London 11 September 48 days



reverse



The Riverina Area

The Riverina is not an official political district of NSW, but the northern part of an agricultural region that comprises both sides of the Murray River.

Senders of foreign-mail letters from NSW towns in the Riverina were required to prepay with adhesives of both New South Wales and Victoria. Each colony canceled its own stamps.

Most letters crossed the border and entered Victoria's mail system at Swan Hill, Moama or Albury.

Return to Steam

Overland via Marseilles

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

To Switzerland via French mail, *TOO LATE* fee paid in cash



Clunes, 23 September 1865

Paid 10d, 6d uniform rate, 4d French transit & Swiss inland

TOO LATE: Clunes post office charged 6d in cash to reopen the bag for Melbourne

Northam, Melbourne 26 September, Galle 17 October

Delhi, Galle 18 October, Suez 1 November; *Syria* 3 November, Marseilles 9 November

From Marseilles via Chur-Olten/St. Gallen-Baden-Poschiavo

Received 13 November

52 days

1866 Rate Reductions

GPO London issued a new Postal Guide in January 1866 that reduced rates for letters to 10d per ½ per oz., paid to destination, if conveyed via Southampton or Marseilles.

Return to Steam
British Contract Steamship

Overland via Marseilles

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

To Prussia via Belgium, double rate

Paid 1/8:

- 2 x 6d uniform rate
- 2 x 4d Fr. & Belg. Transit

Bombay :

- Melbourne 28 August
- Galle 4 September

Bengal : Galle to Suez

Delta : Alex. To Marseilles

Marseilles marked **P.D.**,
 forwarded to Aachen
 exchange office

Received 15 October

45 days



To New Brunswick, Canadian Packet from Liverpool



Richmond, 20 June 1868

Paid 1/3

- 6d uniform rate
- 3d French transit
- 6d transatlantic

Geelong :

- Melbourne 21 June to Galle
- Surat : 14 July to Suez
- Massilia : 2 August to Marseilles

Allan Line *Austrian* :

- Liverpool 13 August
- Quebec 23 August

Received 31 August

73 days

Return to Steam

Overland via Marseilles

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

From Tasmania via Melbourne



Hobart, 1 February 1868

Paid 1/-, 2d overpayment of 10d rate: 6d uniform rate, 4d French transit, ½ oz.

Steamer *Tasmania*, Launceston 3 February, Melbourne 4 February

Avoca, Melbourne 5 February, Galle 24 February

Mongolia, Galle 27 February, Suez 13 March; *Nanza*, Alexandria 15 March, Marseilles 21 March

Mails in London 23 March 52 days

Feeder Lines for Melbourne Mail Departures

The GPO Hobart contracted for conveying mails to and from Melbourne, using coastal steamers that reached Melbourne in a day. Bags for this sailing closed at Hobart at 4:00 pm on 1 February. The Brisbane mails were brought for this sailing of *Avoca* by the steamer *Florence Irving*. The NSW mails were put aboard *Avoca* at Sydney.

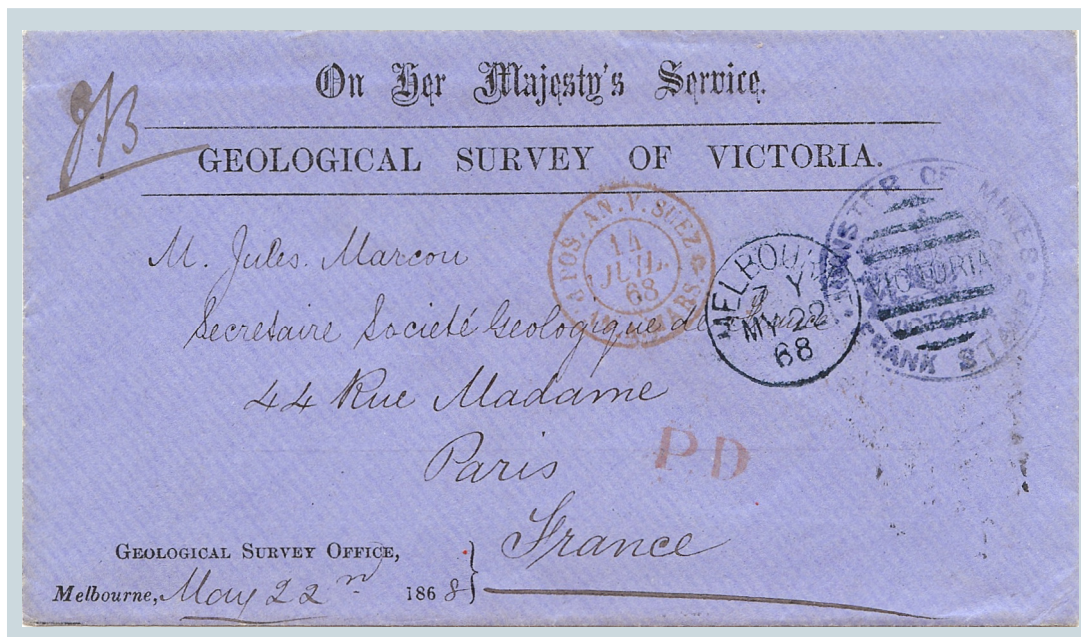
Return to Steam

Overland via Marseilles

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

On Her Majesty's Service



Melbourne, 22 May 1868

Free-franked letter **MINISTER OF MINES / FRANK STAMP**

Bombay, Melbourne 24 May, Galle 12 June

Mooltan, Galle 18 June, Suez 6 July; *Travancore*, Alexandria 8 July, Marseilles 13 July

Received 14 July

54 days



1865-1877



1880-1895

Minister of Mines' Franking Privilege

On 6 May 1868, George Briscoe Kerford was appointed Minister of Mines. It is likely that the next day he sent notices to his geological and engineering peers in academia and the mining industry announcing the change in leadership of his ministry. Kerford initialed this cover **GB** to show the letter was official business.

Return to Steam

Overland via Marseilles

British Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.



Geelong, 10 November 1868

Paid 10d to destination, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.: 6d uniform, 4d French transit

Bombay, Melbourne 10 November, Galle 29 November

Mooltan, Galle 1 December, Suez 17 December; Massilia, Alexandria 19 December, Marseilles 26 December

Received 28 December

49 days

Quadruple rate



Beechwood, 4 December 1869

Paid 2/8, 4 x 8d rate per $\frac{1}{4}$ oz., paid-to-destination

Avoca

Melbourne 7 December

Galle 27 December

Simla

Galle 29 December

Suez 13 January

Pera

Alexandria 16 January

Marseilles 22 January

Received 24 January

52 days

Return to Steam

Overland via Marseilles

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

To New Brunswick via Canadian packet to Quebec



Richmond, 4 August 1869

Paid 1/3: 6d uniform rate, 4d French transit, 5d to Canada; ½ oz.

Geelong, Melbourne 15 August, Galle 5 September

Mooltan, Galle 6 September, Suez 23 September; Poonah, Alexandria 25 September, Marseilles 1 October

Mails in London 8 October, where 5d prepayment for transatlantic noted in red

Liverpool 3d credit to Canada

Liverpool 3d credit to Canada

Allan Line *North American*, Londonderry 8 October, Quebec 19 October

Received 22 October

80 days

Canadian packet service to Canada

Prior to the annual freeze-up of the St Lawrence River, the western terminus for Allan Line service was Quebec. In 1869 the last arrival at Quebec was three weeks after this voyage of *North American*. Until the Spring thaw of 1870 Allan Line's weekly packets instead sailed to Portland, Maine.

Return to Steam

Overland via Marseilles

British Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.



Geelong, 28 December 1866

Paid 8d, 2d underpayment for the 10d rate, so treated as unpaid

Geelong, Melbourne 28 December, Galle 17 January

Candia, 18 January, Suez 31 January; Ceylon, Alexandria 3 February, Marseilles 9 February
Marseilles 10 dec. due Received 12 February 47 days

Sent unpaid

Ellora

Melbourne 26 March

Galle 16 April

Bengal

Galle 18 April

Suez 3 May

Poonah

Alexandria 5 May

Marseilles 11 May

Marseilles 10 dec. due

Received 13 May

51 days



Melbourne, 24 March 1866

Return to Steam
British Contract Steamship

Overland via Marseilles

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

To Denmark via Marseilles & Belgium



Stuart Mill, 24 February 1870

Paid 1/4, 2d overpaying the 1/2 rate per 1/4 oz.: 6d uniform rate, 4d French transit, 4d to Denmark via Belgium
Avoca, Melbourne 1 March, Galle 20 March
Simla, Galle 23 March, Suez 7 April; *Delta* Alexandria 10 April, Marseilles 15 April

Marseilles marked paid to destination

Received 19 April 55 days

Marseilles vs. Southampton

This letter could have been sent to Denmark via Southampton and Belgium for only 10d per 1/2 oz., but would not have arrived in London until 22 April, three days after it was delivered in Lillerød, Denmark by using the Marseilles route.

Return to Steam
Non-Contract Sailing Ship

Via Callao & Panama

Gold Miner's Letter



Goldborough, 7 January 1857

Paid 6d ship-letter fee

Barque *Yarra*, Melbourne 23 January for Callao, arrival unknown

Pacific Steam Navigation Company to Panama, departure unknown

Pacific Mail Steamship Co., *Golden Gate*, Panama 17 April, San Francisco 30 April

San Francisco rated 20¢ due, incoming steamship >2,500 miles

Received 1 May

84 days

Diggers' Mail

By the mid 1850s, after many of the California gold fields had played out, hundreds of disappointed miners emigrated to Australia to take part in Victoria's gold rush. Goldborough was temporary post office established in October 1856 in the midst of gold diggings near Dunolly. The letter above is from a California miner to his attorney, asking why he has had no information about his affairs in more than three years.

Most mail from the diggings is in poor condition, as the diggers carried letters around for days or weeks before having an opportunity to either visit a temporary post office (often just a tent) or send it to Melbourne via an express rider.

Return to Steam

Via San Francisco

Noncontract Steamship /Sailing Ship

To San Francisco via Tahiti & Honolulu

Sent unpaid as loose ship letter

Steamship *City of Norfolk*
Melbourne, 6 December
Launceston, 9 December
Tahiti, 28 January
Honolulu, 16 February

San Francisco rated 6¢ due for
delivery at the port

Received 20 March 1856

106 days



Melbourne, 5 December 1855

To San Francisco direct



Beechworth, 6 November 1855

Paid 6d ship-letter fee

Barque *Fame*, Melbourne 9 November, Newcastle 13 November
Ship *Lucas*, Newcastle 25 November, San Francisco 10 March 1856
San Francisco rated 5¢ due: 2¢ ship. 3¢ inland to Columbia

Received 12 March 127 days

Return to Steam

Via San Francisco

Non-Contract Sailing Ships, American Contract Steamship

Via Melbourne, Sydney & Guam



Hobart, 11 October 1859

Paid 6d ship-letter fee

Schooner *Highlander*, Launceston 15 October, Melbourne 18 October, overland mail to Sydney;

Mails aboard *Achilles*, departure delayed three months raising a cargo

Ship *Achilles*, Sydney 3 March 1860, San Francisco 16 May 1860, via Guam

San Francisco rated 5¢ due: 2¢ ship, 3¢ inland

MISSENT in California, probably to the City Recorder in San Francisco

Received date unknown 219+ days

Via Callao & Panama

Paid 6d, underpaying the 1/2
rate via Southampton

Ship *Southern Empire*

Melbourne 26 August

Callao arrival unknown

PSNC steamer Callao-Panama

PMSS *Constitution*

Panama 13 December

San Francisco 26 December

San Francisco rated 6¢ due for
delivery at the port

Received date unknown

123+ days



Maryborough, 24 August 1864

Return to Steam

Via San Francisco

Non-Contract Sailing Ship, American Contract Steamships

To San Francisco direct



Melbourne 24 June 1857

Paid 8d: Endorsed for E&ARM *European* but sent by private ship via California
Barque *What Cheer*, Melbourne 29 June, San Francisco 26 August
PMSS *California*, San Francisco 6 September, Panama 21 September
PMSS *Star of the West*, Aspinwall 24 September, New York 4 October, via Havana

Received 4 October 103 days

Lower rate via San Francisco than via London

This letter was insufficiently paid to London via Southampton, so was sent via California as a ship letter. The sender may have applied the adhesives at home, carried the letter to the GPO Melbourne, where he learned he would have to pay an additional 6d to prevent the addressee from paying 24¢ postage due. He saved himself the extra 6d, and the addressee 12¢, by using the route to San Francisco.

Return to Steam
Non-Contract Sailing Ship

Via San Francisco

To San Francisco direct



Melbourne, 9 December 1858

Paid 6d ship-letter fee

Ship *Milwaukie*

Melbourne 15 December

San Francisco 19 March 1859

San Francisco 5¢ due: 2¢ ship, 5¢ inland

Received 20 March

102 days

Return to Steam

Via Callao & Panama

Noncontract Sailing Ships / American Contract Steamships



1858-



New York
1851-1869

Melbourne, 17 February 1860

Paid 6d uniform rate via Southampton, but $> \frac{1}{2}$ oz., so sent via Panama

Ship *United States*, Melbourne 17 February, Callao arrival unknown

PSNC steamer to Panama, PNSS steamer to New York, dates unknown

New York rate 10¢ for steamship, $> 2,500$ miles

Paid 6d ship-letter fee

Ship *Admiral Lyons*

Melbourne 19 June

Callao arr. unknown

Unknown PSNC ship
to Panama

PMSC *Northern Light*

Aspinwall 25 Dec

New York 4 Jan

N.Y. rated 10¢ due for
Steam, $> 2,500$ miles

Received 5 January

196 days



Melbourne, 18 June 1860

Return to Steam

NZ/NSW & American Contract Steamships

Via Panama & San Francisco

Panama New Zealand & Australian Royal Mail Co.

To San Francisco via Sydney, Wellington & Panama



Paid 1/-, packet rate to Panama

P&NZ *Tararua*

Melbourne 28 August

Wellington 4 September

P&NZ Steamship *Mataura*

Wellington 8 September

Panama 4 October

PMSC *Constitution*

Panama 11 October

San Francisco 25 October

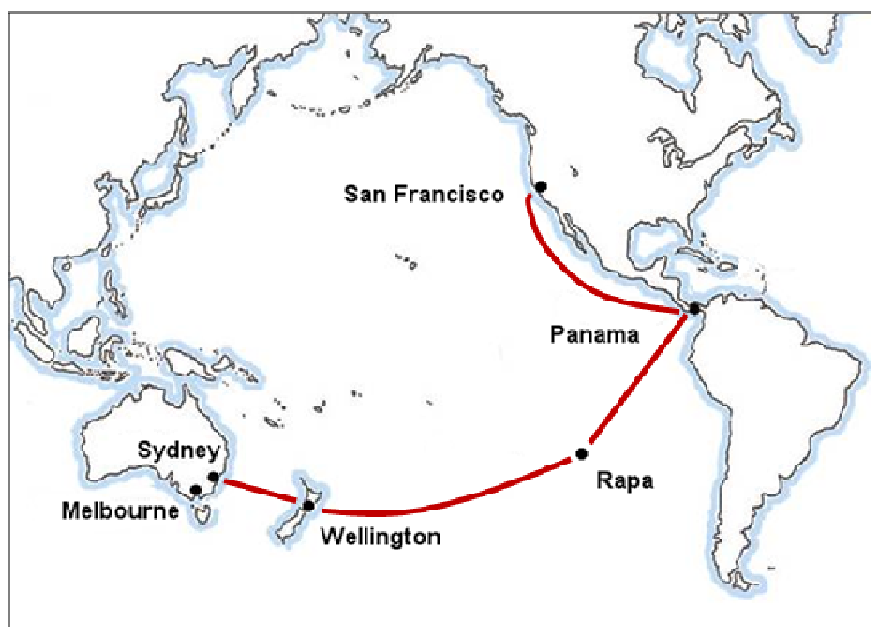
S.F. 10¢ due, incoming steam
ship rate, eff. 1 July 1864

Received 25 October

60 days

Richmond, 27 August 1867

Earliest of 3 covers via this contractor and route ; unlisted in the Palmer census



The first transpacific packet contract, 1866-68

In 1866 New Zealand and New South Wales contracted with P&NZ for monthly steamer service between Wellington and Panama, with branch lines to Sydney and Melbourne, and a coaling stop at Rapa, Easter Island. Neither Victoria nor the other colonies agreed to help underwrite the cost. Service ended when the company went bankrupt in December 1868.

Return to Steam

NZ/NSW Contract Steamships

Via San Francisco

Australian Steam Navigation Co. & North Pacific Transportation Co.

To Vermont via Sydney, Fiji & San Francisco



Melbourne, 29 May 1871

Paid 6d treaty rate, U.S.-New Zealand Postal Convention

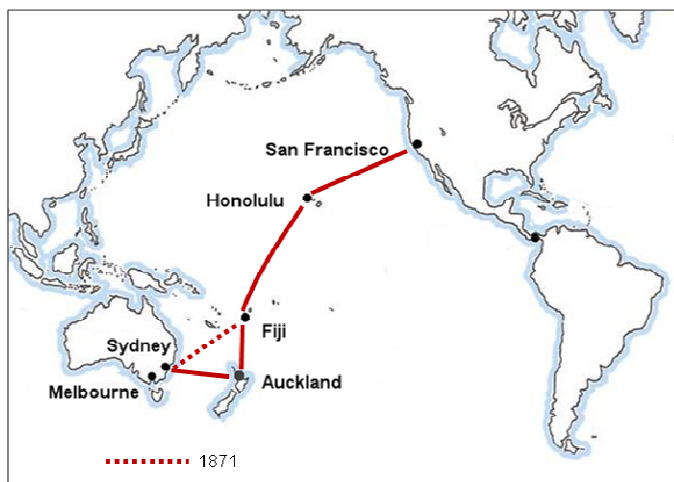
Wonga Wonga, Sydney 1 June, Fiji 13 June, Honolulu 26 June, San Francisco 7 July

San Francisco rated 10¢ due, >3,000 miles

Received 13 July 46 days

Only 2 covers recorded to the United States by "Hall's Line"

"Hall's Line" March 1870-September 1871



First Packet Service to San Francisco

Completion of the U.S transcontinental railway in 1869 made the route via San Francisco competitive with overland routes via Suez for British mails. The U.S-New Zealand Postal Convention resulted, with effect from 1 December 1870. The postage rate was set at 12¢ or 6¢ to or from San Francisco/Sydney.

In 1870 the Australian Steam Navigation Co. took mail to Honolulu, where it was transferred to the North Pacific Transportation Co. The five 1871 voyages were non-contract, and sailed via Fiji without calling at Auckland.

The partnership was unprofitable, so was dissolved in April 1871.

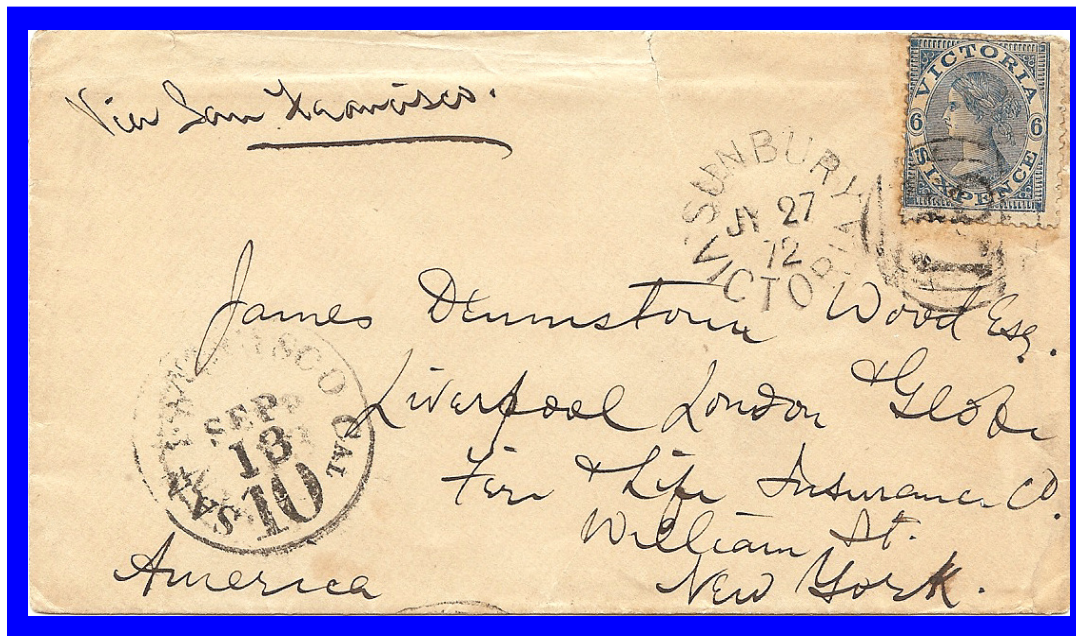
Return to Steam

Via San Francisco

New Zealand Contract Steamships

United States, New Zealand & Australian Mail Steamship Co.

Via Auckland & Honolulu



Sunbury, 27 July 1872

Paid 6d, the U.S.-N.Z. treaty rate, to the port

City of Adelaide, Melbourne 31 July

Nebraska, Auckland 10 August, Honolulu 27 August

Olympia, Honolulu 31 August, San Francisco 12 September

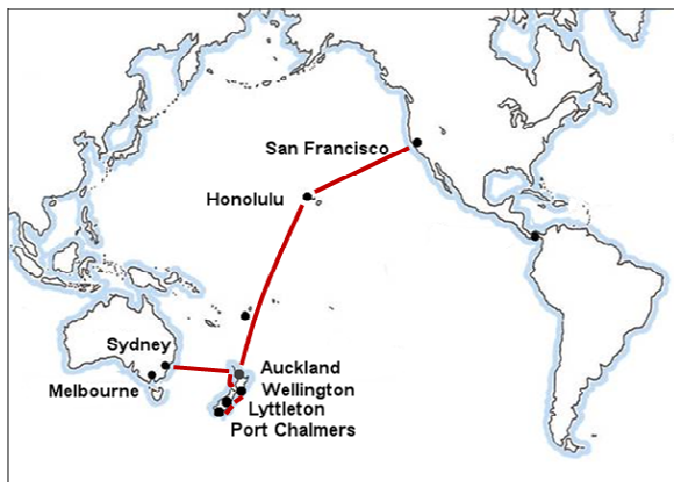
San Francisco rated 10¢ due, the incoming steamship rate eff. 1 July 1864

Received 20 September

56 days

The only recorded cover to the United States carried by Webb & Holladay

“Webb’s Line” May 1871-March 1873



Webb & Holladay contract

The three-year contract required monthly sailings from Port Chalmers to Christchurch, Lyttleton, Wellington and Auckland, then to Honolulu and San Francisco. Five steamships were required, with the time from San Francisco to Auckland not to exceed 25 days. Financial subsidies were provided by Honolulu, New Zealand and New South Wales.

A feeder line connected with Sydney was operated by local steamers. Victoria did not participate in the contract so was responsible for conveying its mails from Melbourne to Auckland. British mails were despatched from to and from San Francisco by rail from New York.

The line proved unprofitable, so Webb & Holladay abruptly refused to continue service after March 1873.

Return to Steam

Via San Francisco

New Zealand Contract Steamship

Australasian & American Mail Steamship Co.

Via Auckland, Fiji & Honolulu



Melbourne 27 July 1875

Paid 6d, the U.S.-N.Z. treaty rate, to the port

Macedon, Melbourne 27 July, Sydney 29 July

Cyphrenes, Sydney 31 July, Honolulu 23 August, San Francisco 3 September

San Francisco rated 5¢ due, the incoming steamship rate, eff. 1 July 1875

Received date unknown ~47 days



Sydney, Aug 1874-1876

Victoria was not a party to the U.S.-N.Z Postal Convention of 1870, so was not entitled to the 6d paid-to-destination rate to the United States.

GPO Sydney marked *PAID ALL* on letters from non-convention colonies only to show that Australian postage had been paid. San Francisco correctly charged incoming steamship fees on such letters.

Australasian & American Mail Steamship Co. January 1874-October 1875

Hall & Forbes of New York were operators of this contract for monthly service between San Francisco and Sydney via Honolulu, Fiji, and Auckland. When the United States refused to provide a subsidy, Hall & Forbes abandoned the contract in July 1874, after which the ships were transferred to the *Australasian & American*. As with previous financial problems of Pacific-route contract services, low profitability led to termination of this service in October 1875.

Return to Steam

New Zealand Contract Steamship

Via San Francisco

Pacific Mail Steamship Co.

Via Sydney, Auckland, Fiji & Honolulu

Paid 6d treaty rate,
up to ½ oz.

City of New York
Sydney 9 March
San Fran. 6 April

San Fran. rated 5¢ due,
Single incoming s'ship
Rate, eff. 1 July 1875

No received date

~ 38 days



Melbourne, 5 March 1877



Melbourne, 28 January 1878

Paid 1/-, 2 x 6d
treaty rate, ½-1oz.

City of New York
Sydney 31 Jan.
Auckland 6 Feb.
San Fran. 27 Feb.

San Fran. rated 10¢
due, double 5¢
incoming s'ship
rate, eff. 1 Jul. '75

No received date

~35 days

Pacific Mail Steamship Co. January 1876-December 1885

PMSC contracted with New Zealand and New South Wales in September 1875 to provide monthly steamer service between San Francisco, Sydney, and New Zealand ports. In 1877 the route was simplified to San Francisco-Honolulu-Fiji-Auckland-Sydney. The contract expired in 1885, but PMSC declined to renew, as they were operating the route at a loss.

Return to Steam

Via San Francisco

New Zealand Contract Steamship

The Union Steamship & Oceanic Steamship Companies



Paid 10d
6d treaty rate
4d registered

Konoowarra
Melbourne, 21 February
Sydney, 22 February

Mariposa
Sydney 22 February
San Francisco 17 March

Received 17 March

46 days

Melbourne, 21 February 1888

Melbourne, 19 June 1889

Paid 6d treaty rate

R.M.S. *Iberia*
Melbourne, 9 July
Sydney, 10 July

Mariposa
Sydney 10 July
San Francisco 3 August

Missent to Seneca Falls,
Redirected to Glens Falls

Received 10 August

53 days



Union & Oceanic Steamship Companies December 1885-December 1900

An 1885 contract was agreed between Union (N.Z.) and Oceanic (U.S.), funded in part by subsidies from NZ, NSW and the U.S. sailings were monthly between Sydney and San Francisco, via Auckland and Honolulu.

French route via Turin, Lyon & Paris



e

Melbourne, 21 May 1870

Paid 1/1, paid-to-destination via Brindisi, eff. September 1869

P&O *Avoca*, Melbourne 22 May, Galle 11 JuneP&O *Simla*, Galle 14 June, Suez 30 JuneAdriatic & Oriental Line *Brindisi*, Alexandria 2 July, Brindisi 5 July: mails at London 8 July

Received 9 July 50 days

The Brindisi Route

Introduced in September 1869, Brindisi saved two days compared to Marseilles, which was twice as far from Alexandria. Until 1871, when P&O took over, the Alexandria-Brindisi trip was made by contract steamers of the Adriatic & Oriental Company.

Postal rates had to accommodate the added cost of using Italian steamships, but were when the P&O began service all the way to Brindisi in 1871, with an additional three reductions before Victoria joined the UPU in 1891.

Via Brindisi, ½ oz.

September 1869	13d
February 1871	9d
July 1876	8d
January 1880	6d
January 1889	4d

Return to Steam

Via Brindisi

British & Italian Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

French route via Turin, Lyon & Paris



Melbourne, 23 April 1870

Paid 2/2, double rate paid-to-destination, 1/2- 1 oz.

P&O *Geelong*, Melbourne 24 April, Galle 17 May, Suez 1 June

P&O *Simla*, Galle 14 June, Suez 30 June

A&O *Cairo*, Alexandria 5 June, Brindisi 8 June; mails at London 10 June

Received 12 June

51 days



Route Changed by the Franco-Prussian War

The route via France crossed the Alps through the Mont Cenis Pass, between Turin and Lyon. Conveyance was by carriage until May 1868, when the Fell Railway opened. A railway tunnel through the mountain opened in September 1871, too late to impact the Australian mails.

In September 1870 the rail line from Marseilles to Calais was cut, closing the postal route through France. GPO London announced the closure, and the new route through Germany, on 20 October. Australians learned of the route change in December, too late to avoid sending their September, October and November mails via Marseilles.

Mail by both routes was in closed bags subject to a bulk rate, so letters bear neither French nor German postmarks. Australian mail never returned to the route via Marseilles.

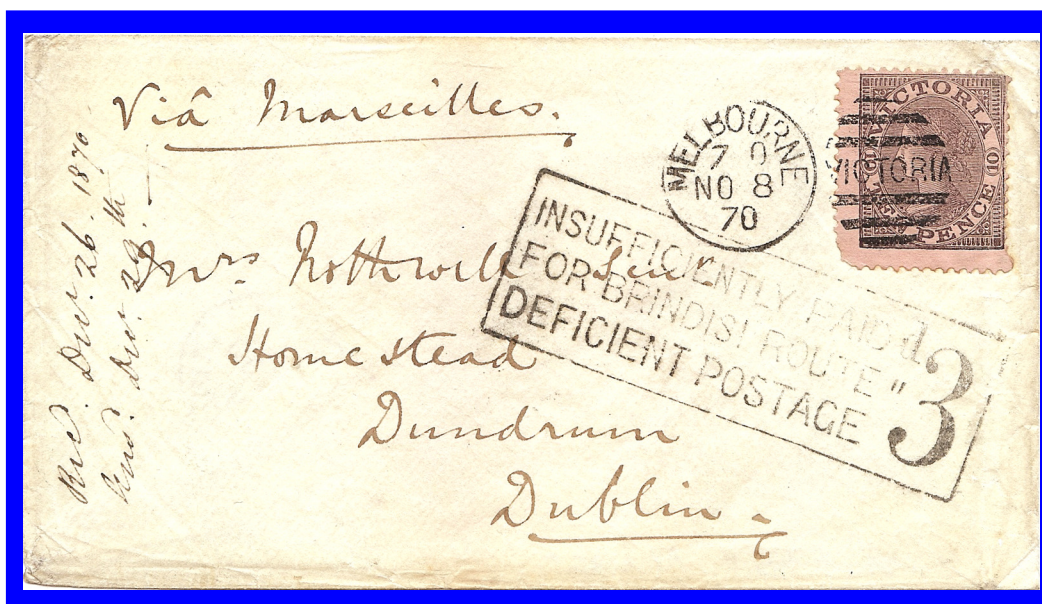
Return to Steam

Via Brindisi

British & Italian Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

German route via Bologna, Munich & Köln



Melbourne, 8 November 1870

Paid 10d, single rate via Marseilles, underpaid 3d via Brindisi

P&O *Malta*, Melbourne 8 November, Galle 28 November

P&O *Delhi*, Galle 30 November, Suez 15 December

A&O *Brindisi*, Alexandria 17 December, Brindisi 21 December; mails at London 24 December

Received 26 December

49 days



London Foreign Branch

Five known on covers from Victoria

Insufficiently Paid

Under normal circumstances partially paid letters were not accepted by the GPO in Melbourne. However for the September through November mails to England, no one in Australia knew the Marseilles route was closed, and that an additional route had been established which required additional postage. Given the circumstances GPO London waived penalties for underpayment and charged the recipient with only the deficiency.

Return to Steam

Via Brindisi

British & Italian Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

German route via Bologna, Munich & Köln



Melbourne, 10 September 1870

Paid 2/2, double rate via Marseilles, underpaid 6d via Brindisi

P&O *Avoca*, Melbourne 11 September, Suez 20 October

A&O *Cairo*, Alexandria 23 October, Brindisi 26 October; mails at London 31 October

Received 31 October

50 days

INSUFFICIENTLY PAID
FOR BRINDISI ROUTE
DEFICIENT POSTAGE

London Foreign Branch

Two known on covers from Victoria

Insufficiently Paid

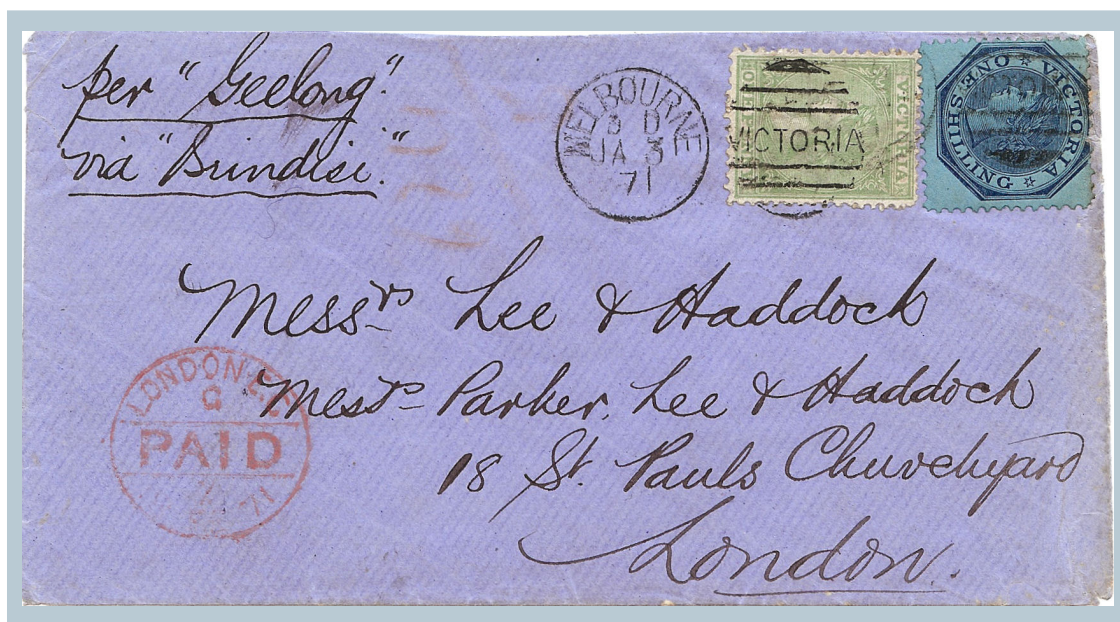
GPO London prepared only two types boxed **INSUFFICIENTLY PAID** postmark devices with integral postage-due values: 1d and 3d for newspapers and single rate letters, respectively. The value-mute type shown above was used for letters weighing more than ½ oz., with amounts due added in manuscript. These are very scarce on letters from any Australian colony.

Return to Steam

Via Brindisi

British Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.



Melbourne, 3 January 1871

Paid 1/1, single rate up to ½ oz.

Geelong, Melbourne 3 January, Galle 23 January; *Candia*, Galle 26 January, Alexandria 10 February
Bangalore, Alexandria 12 February, Brindisi 15 February; Mails at London 17 February



Melbourne, 31 January 1871

Paid 2/3, 1d overpayment of double rate, ½-1 oz.

Rangoon, Melbourne 31 January, Suez 19 February; *Deccan*, Galle 22 February, Suez 9 March
Pera, Alexandria 11 March, Brindisi 14 March; Mails at London 18 March

Return to Steam

Via Brindisi

British Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Rate via Brindisi reduced to 9d

Paid 9d, single rate to $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Nubia

Melbourne 30 March

Galle 16 April

Khedive

Galle 21 April

Suez 5 May

Mooltan

Alexandria 6 May

Brindisi 9 May

London 12 May

Received 13 May 47 days



Echuca, 28 March 1872



Melbourne, 22 May 1872

Paid 1/6, double rate $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 oz.

Baroda, Melbourne 23 May, Galle 12 June; Surat, Galle 13 June, Suez 2 July

Nyanza, Alexandria 3 July, Brindisi 7 July Mails at London 10 July

Received 10 July

50 days

Return to Steam

British Contract Steamships

Via Brindisi

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

To Pennsylvania via London



Melbourne, 20 May 1873

Paid 11d

9d to London, 2d transatlantic

Baroda

Melbourne 23 May

Galle 12 June

Ellora, Galle 13 June, Suez 1 July

Pera, Alex. 2 July, Brindisi 5 July

Mails at London 8 July, London
credited 2¢ to U.S. for inland

Cunard *Batavia*

Queenstown 9 July

New York 20 July

Received 21 July

51 days

To California via London



Melbourne, 22 March 1873

Paid 1/-, 1d overpayment of 11d the single rate to the United States

Bangalore, Melbourne 27 March, Galle 17 April; *Mahva*, Galle 19 April, Suez 5 May

Simla, Alexandria 6 May, Brindisi 9 May Mails at London 12 May, 2¢ credit to U.S. for inland

Cunard *Parthia*, Liverpool 13 May, New York 23 May

Date received unknown

Return to Steam

British Contract Steamships

Via Brindisi

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.



Emerald Hill, 19 May 1874

Paid 9d, single rate up to $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Ellora, Melbourne 19 May, Galle 9 June; Tanjore, Galle 10 June, Suez 3 July

Ceylon, Alexandria 4 July, Brindisi 8 July Mails at London 10 July

Received 11 July 54 days



Melbourne, 5 November 1873

Paid 1/6, double rate, $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 oz.

Baroda, Melbourne 7 November, Galle 26 November; Peshawar Galle 28 November, Suez 12 December

Ceylon, Alexandria 15 December, Brindisi 19 December Mails at London 21 December

Received 22 December 48 days

Return to Steam

Via Brindisi

British Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.



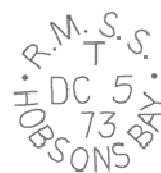
Hobson's Bay, 5 December 1873

Paid 1/9: 9d rate to ½ oz., 1/- late fee

Bangalore, Melbourne 5 December, Galle 25 December; *Mirzapore*, Galle 27 December, Suez 11 January
Simla, Alexandria 12 January, Brindisi 15 January; mails at London 18 January

Received 19 January 46 days

Seven R.M.S.S. Hobson's Bay covers are recorded



The R.M.S.S. Hobson's Bay Service

From August 1861 until December 1877 additional time was allowed for posting mail up to the departure of vessels anchored in Hobson's Bay, Port Melbourne. Mail from a dockside post box was carried to the ship just before sailing, and was postmarked on board.

Senders paid a one shilling late fee for this service. A special duplex cancellation was used on all letters.

Return to Steam

Via Brindisi

British Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.



Melbourne, 4 November 1875

Paid 1/- : 9d single rate, 3d late fee

Ellora, Melbourne 4 November, Galle 27 November; Poonah, Galle 27 November, Suez 9 December
Baroda, Alexandria 12 December, Brindisi 15 December Received 19 December 46 days

1876 rate reduction



Stawell, 27 November 1876

Paid 8d, single rate to 1/2 oz., eff. 1 July 1876

China, Melbourne 30 November, Galle 20 December; Peshawar, Galle 22 December, Suez 5 January
Ceylon, Alexandria 7 January, Brindisi 7 July Received 14 January 49 days

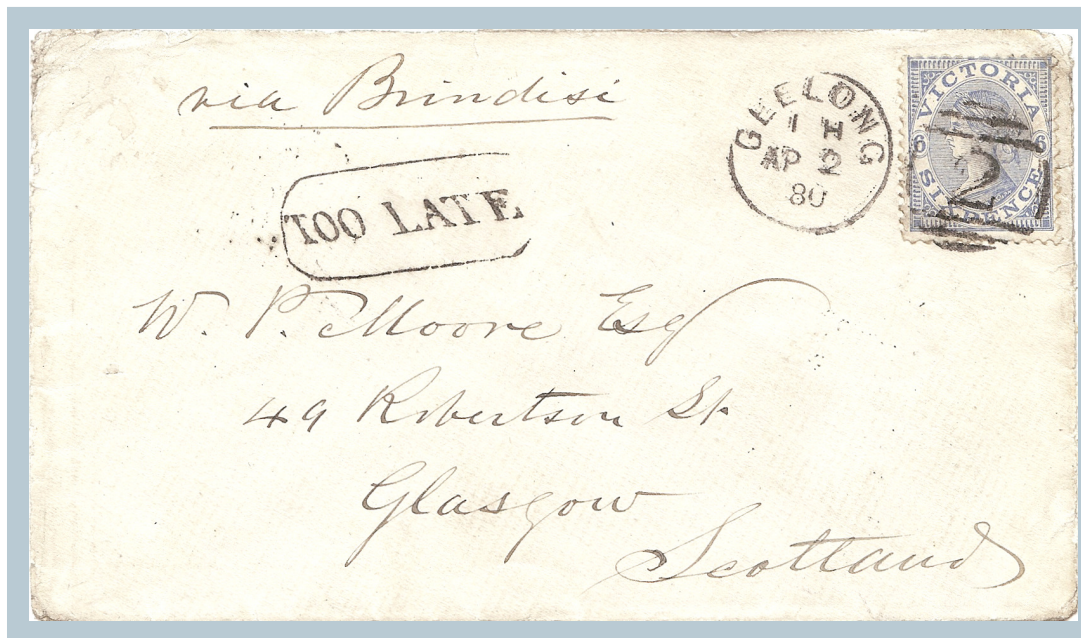
Return to Steam

Via Brindisi

British Contract Steamships

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

1880 rate reduction



Geelong, 2 April 1880

Paid 6d, single rate to $\frac{1}{2}$ oz., eff. 1 January 1880 *TOO LATE* for the P&O 2 April sailing
Siam, Melbourne 14 April, Galle 3 May; *Australia*, Galle 3 May, Suez 17 May
Ceylon, Alexandria 20 May, Brindisi 23 May

Received 26 May 54 days

Paid 1/-, double rate

Assam

Melbourne 16 March

Galle 3 April

Nizam

Galle 5 April

Suez 18 April

Tanjore

Alexandria 19 April

Brindisi 22 April

Received 25 April

41 Days



Drysdale, 16 March 1882

Return to Steam
Colonial Contract Steamship

Via Naples

The Orient Steam Navigation Co.

Via Adelaide, Suez Canal & Naples



Melbourne, 6 August 1890

Paid 3/10: 6d overpayment of sextuple rate for 3 oz., 4d registered

Sent overland by rail to Adelaide on 12 August

Orotava, Adelaide 13 August, Naples 11 September

Backstamped "K.B. Bahnpost / Kufst. Mchen" (Royal Bavarian TPO Kufstein—Munich)

Received 15 September

41 days

The "Orient Line"

The "Orient Line" operated in Australia from 1879 without a mail contract or subsidy. In 1883 the line contracted with NSW to carry mail via Suez, alternating biweekly with the P&O. In 1888 the Orient and P&O signed a joint contract with NSW for weekly service between Sydney and Plymouth via Adelaide, Melbourne, Albany, the Suez Canal and Naples.

The Orient Line continued in Australian service well into the 20th Century, with interruptions during both world wars when their ships were requisitioned. The line merged with P&O in 1960.

Return to Steam

British Contract Steamships

Via Brindisi

Via Naples

The Orient Steam Navigation Co.

Via Suez & Brindisi

Paid 1/9

1/5 for ½ - 1 oz.

4d registered

Orient Line *Cuzco*

Melbourne 27 June

Suez 28 July

P&O *Nizam*

Alexandria 29 July

Brindisi 1 August

Received 3 August

39 days



Melbourne, 26 June 1885

Via Suez & Naples



Melbourne, 5 March 1886

Paid 10d, up to ½ oz.

Orient Line *John Elder*

Melbourne 6 March

Naples 10 April

Received 12 April

39 days

Return to Steam
German Contract Steamship

Via Brindisi

Norddeutscher Lloyd

Via Adelaide, Suez Canal and Brindisi



Melbourne, 6 January 1890

Paid 6d: single rate up to ½ oz, effective 1 April 1884

NDL *Elbe* had departed Melbourne on 4 January; letter sent overland to Adelaide on 7 January

Elbe, Adelaide 8 January, Brindisi arrival unknown

Backstamped Frankfurt am Main 11 February

Leipzig arrival unknown 36+ days

German Packet Service for Australian Mail

A GPO notice in June 1886 announced the availability of monthly service by North German Lloyd, which was advertised as *Adelaide in 35 days via Brindisi*. The contract was with the German government, so initially British mails were only picked up at Brindisi. From January 1888 ships called at Southampton on both outward and homeward voyages. For letters to Germany the Brindisi route saved 10 days compared to the Southampton route.

Return to Steam

New Zealand and American Contract Steamships

Spreckel's Line

Via San Francisco



Prahlan, 8 May 1893

Paid 8d, double UPU rate
2 x 2½d, ½ to 1 oz.
3d registered

Cintra

Melbourne 13 May
Sydney 15 May

Alameda

Sydney 15 May
San Francisco 8 June

Rail via Chicago & Detroit

Mail at Windsor 13 June

Received 14 June

38 days

Paid 2½d, single
UPU rate to ½ oz.

Marloo

Melbourne 23 Oct.
Sydney 25 Oct.

Mariposa

Sydney 25 Oct.
San Fran. 18 Nov.

Received 23 Nov.

32 days



Melbourne, 23 October 1897

"Spreckel's Line" was a joint venture between the Union Steamship Co. of N.Z. and the Oceanic Steamship Co. of the U.S. Their contract was awarded in 1885 when the Pacific Mail Steamship Co. opted not to renew their contract.

Return to Steam

Via Vancouver

Canadian and Australian Contract Steamships

The Canadian-Australian Line: The "All Red Route"

Via Sydney, Wellington, Fiji, Honolulu, Victoria-Vancouver, New York and Panama



Melbourne, 29 November 1898

Paid 5½d: 2½d UPU, 3d registered

Sent overland by rail to Sydney

Canadian-Australian Line *Warimoo* : Sydney 3 December, Victoria 29 December

Puget Sound & Alaska Steamship Co. *City of Kingston* : Victoria 30 December, Tacoma the same day

Rail from Tacoma to New York via Minneapolis and Chicago, arr. 5 January

Panama Railroad Steamship Co. *Finance* : New York 10 January, Colon 24 January

Pacific Steam Navigation Co. from Panama, via Guayaquil and Callao, to Valparaiso, arr. 7 February

97 days

The All Red Route

Called the "All Red Route" because mail between Australia and the U.K. touched only British territory, this service was jointly contracted in 1893 by the Canadian and New South Wales governments. From Vancouver to the U.K. the route was via Canadian Pacific Railroad to Portland Maine, than by British packet to Liverpool.

Summary

In 60 years, Victoria's foreign mail changed from unscheduled sailing ships to reliable steam packets on multiple routes. Overland routes became the default for mail to Britain and Europe, Pacific routes for North American mail. Travel times to England shrunk from 6-9 months to less than 40 days, and postage was reduced by 60-80 Percent.