

Transportation of Australian Colonial Mail to 1860

Objective

This exhibit explains the development of early foreign maritime mail from the Australian Colonies with a purpose to illustrate how:

- The improvements in maritime transportation changed the Colonies outgoing mail routes;
- The speeds, routes and schedules of mails were altered by economic events and wars;
- The changes in rates and postal treaties influenced a correspondent's mailing options;
- The inter-connection of the smaller populated colonies with mailing contracts of the larger populated colonies

Historical overview

From the first colonial settlement at Sydney in New South Wales in 1788, letters back home to England on a good voyage would take seven months to arrive. With the introduction of steam packet contracts, this journey was taking just over six weeks.

Vast improvements in ship building, including the introduction of steam technology, drastically cut the transportation times of the routes. The early sailing ships were impacted by geography, having to plot their courses around the long routes via the two Capes. The opening of the Suez route drastically cut the mail time from the colonies.

Economic influences played an early role in the absence of a steamship service to Australia. It was not until the discovery of gold in Victoria and New South Wales in 1851 that prompted the British government to establish a faster mail steamer service to the antipodes. However, the declaration of the Crimean War in 1853 forced the British to recall the steamers. In the mean time, mail was transported by the fast clipper sailing ships via Cape Horn until hostilities ended in 1856.

The return of the steamer service in 1857 provided regularly scheduled mail transportation. Improvements in ship technology and the building of new railroads to transverse continents opened up new mailing routes across Europe.

Finally, throughout this period, the smaller colonies relied almost exclusively on the mailing contracts of Victoria and NSW, with extension services from the smaller colonies to Melbourne and Sydney.

Scope and Organisation

The covers are arranged by transportation era as defined by the prominent 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 each Colony's control.

Within each era covers are organised by route. It is important to recognise that rates and routes can span the boundaries between eras. The date brackets for the four transportation eras shown are approximate, and overlap:

1. Early Ships Under Sail	to 1860
2. The First Steam Packet Contracts	1851-1856
3. The Clipper Sailings	1852-1860
4. The Return to Steam	1857-1860

Within each major category, there are a number of sub-categories illustrating the different routes and rates available to the colonists for sending their mail.

Relative rarity of the material

Although there are common routes and destinations throughout the periods, there are a number of scarce and rare items of which only a few examples have been recorded. These items are highlighted in the bold red frames.

Principal references

- "Australia New Zealand UK Mails Volume 1 - to 1880" by Colin Tabeart (2011). *Volume 2 - 1881-1900* (2011)
- "Understanding Transatlantic Mail - Volume 1" by Richard Winter (2006); *Volume 2* (2009).
- "North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75" by Walter Hubbard and Richard Winter (1988).
- "British Maritime Postal History - The P&O Lines to the Far East" by R. Kirk (1982).
- "The Pre-UPU Destination Mail of Victoria" by Ben Palmer (2009).
- "The Postal History of New South Wales 1788-1901" edited by John White (1988).
- "www.trove.nla.gov.au" - Newspapers of the National Library of Australia

1.0 Early Ships Under Sail to 1856

Historical overview

In this early period to 1854, the majority of mail originated from New South Wales with the first settlement in 1788. There is also a considerable amount of mail from Van Diemen's Land which was settled in 1803. After this time, the other colonies are a lot scarcer with the Moreton Bay District being the hardest to locate. Intercolonial mail was sent by the first available sailing ships. Road postal routes had not been established, except the road between Melbourne and Sydney.

Nearly all mail to England was sent via the "roaring forties" winds via Cape Horn. Sailing against the winds via the Cape of Good Hope was almost non-existent, except for Western Australia. The P&O Line Far East service established in 1843 gave the Australian colonists further options to send their mail, but this route was used very infrequently, except by the settlers in Western Australia. The Early Ships Under Sail to 1856 section is represented by the following categories:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1.1 Intercolonial mail | 1.4 Overland via Southampton |
| 1.2 Via Cape Horn | 1.5 Overland via Marseilles |
| 1.3 Via Cape of Good Hope | 1.6 Via other routes |

1.1 Early Ships Under Sail - Inter-colonial Mail

Historical overview

Mail between the colonies in this early period was all sent by sail. Although steamer technology was available in Europe and the United States in the 1840's, it was not economically viable within the Australian Colonies. There was a general agreement between each of the postal services that letters would be sent on the next available vessel. Ship captains were heavily fined if they did not deliver their mail immediately upon docking at each port.

The map at the right shows all the capital cities of Australia where the inter-colonial mail was sent. Launceston in Tasmania is included since most of the mail from Hobart was sent overland to Launceston for easier shipping to Melbourne and forwarding on to other ports.



Single Rate:

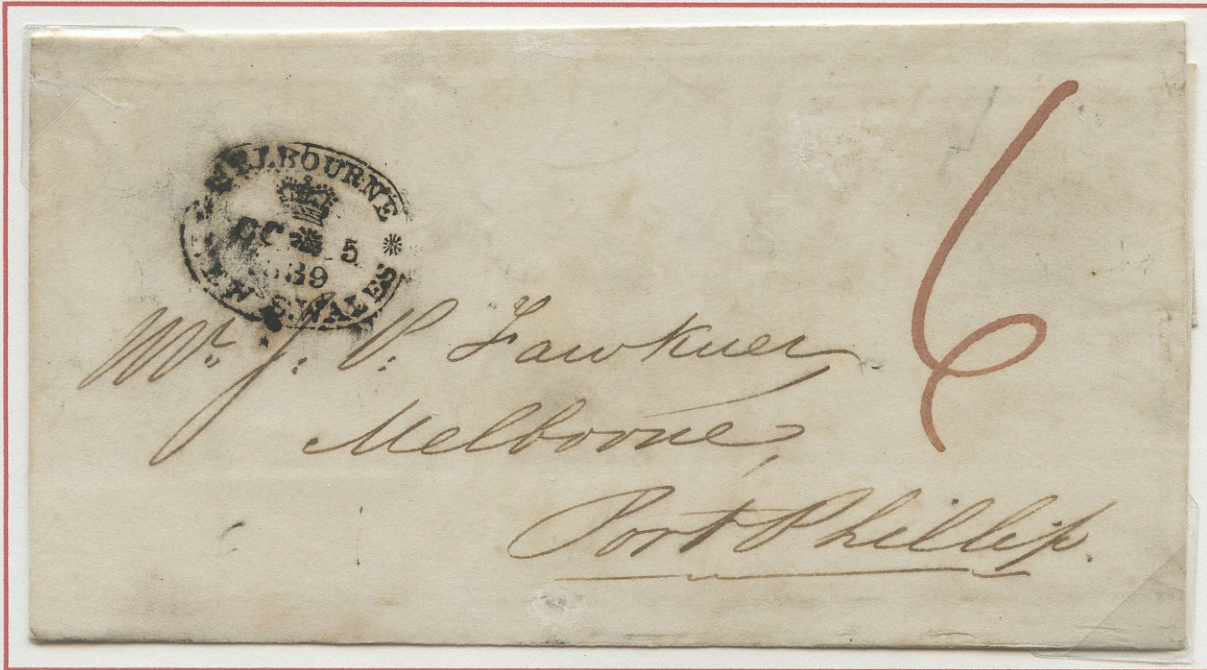
"3"(d) manuscript in red brown for prepayment of a ½ oz. ship letter to Van Diemen's Land.

"3"(d) manuscript in black for the inwards ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.

Sydney, New South Wales 20.2.1833 to Hobart, Van Diemen's Land

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 28.2.1833 per "Hetty" to Hobart, arriving 5.3.1833. (5 days).

One of the earliest inter-colonial covers recorded

**Single Rate:**

"6"(d) manuscript in red for prepayment of a ½ oz. ship letter to Victoria.

Launceston, Van Diemen's Land 3.10.1839 to Melbourne, Victoria.

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Launceston 2.10.1839 per "Milligan" to Melbourne, Victoria, arriving 5.10.1839. (3 days).

This entire is addressed to John Pascoe Fawcner one of the founders of the city of Melbourne

**Single Rate:**

"1/1"(d) manuscript in black comprising 4d for a ½ oz. ship letter to New South Wales plus 9d for forwarding from Sydney to Bathurst to be paid by the recipient.

Postal markings:

"POST OFFICE/ LION and CROWN / ADELAIDE" in black.

Mount Barker, South Australia 16.10.1840 to Bathurst, New South Wales

Route: Departed Adelaide, South Australia 7.12.1840 per H.M.S. "Beagle" to Sydney 23.12; overland to Bathurst. (over 68 days).

Note: This is a rare carriage of Australian Colonial mail by a British naval ship. Although not endorsed, the "Beagle" was the only vessel that arrived in Sydney from Adelaide on the 23.12.1840. HMS Beagle set sail on it's third and final voyage in 1837, surveying large parts of the uncharted Australian coast under the command of Commander John Clements Wickham. The expedition identified the Adelaide and Victoria rivers and surveyed the Torres Strait and the Gulf of Carpentaria, before exploring northern and north-west Australia, the Bass Strait and Van Diemen's Land.

The second earliest cover from South Australia to New South Wales recorded

Double Rate - Unpaid:

"6"(d) manuscript in black for a ½ oz letter to Sydney, and;
 "1/9"(d) manuscript in black comprising 1/3d for the overland route from Sydney to Melbourne plus 6d to Portland, all to be paid by the recipient.



Adelaide, South Australia 24.5.1848 to Portland, Victoria

Route: Departed Adelaide, South Australia 24.5.1848 per "Hero" to Sydney 12.6; overland via Melbourne 19.6; to Portland, arriving 22.6.1848. (29 days).

Note: This is a very unusual routing for an intercolonial from Adelaide to Portland. The "Hero" sailed past both Portland and Melbourne, arriving in Sydney on the 12.6. The entire was then sent by the expensive overland route via Melbourne to Portland. Instead of 29 days, this letter should only have taken a couple of days.



Campbelltown, New South Wales 6.9.1848 to Adelaide, South Australia

Route: Departed Campbelltown 6.9.1848 overland to Sydney. **Private sailing ship:** Departed Sydney 19.9 per "Winscales" via Melbourne to Adelaide, arriving 4.10.1848. (30 days).

Single Rate:

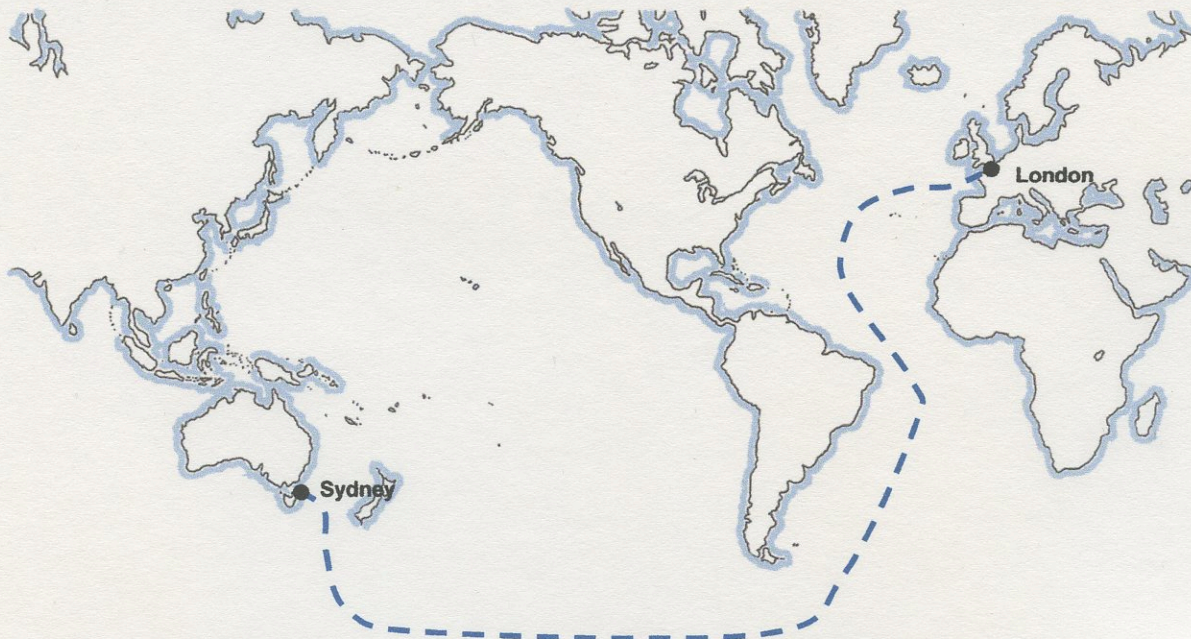
"10"(d) manuscript in red for prepayment of a ½ oz letter comprising 7d inland and 3d ship letter postage to South Australia.

"6"(d) manuscript in black for the South Australian incoming ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.

1.2 Early Ships Under Sail - Via Cape Horn

Historical overview

By far the majority of the mail from the Australian Colonies during this period was addressed to England. The fastest route passed south of New Zealand to catch the "Roaring Forties", the thunderous trade winds which carried the sailing ships beyond Cape Horn. Heading north, and veering westwards off the coast of Africa to avoid the adverse winds and currents, most ships sailed in to London, Southampton or Liverpool. Letters addressed to other destinations were forwarded through England.



Map showing the indicative sailing route to England via Cape Horn

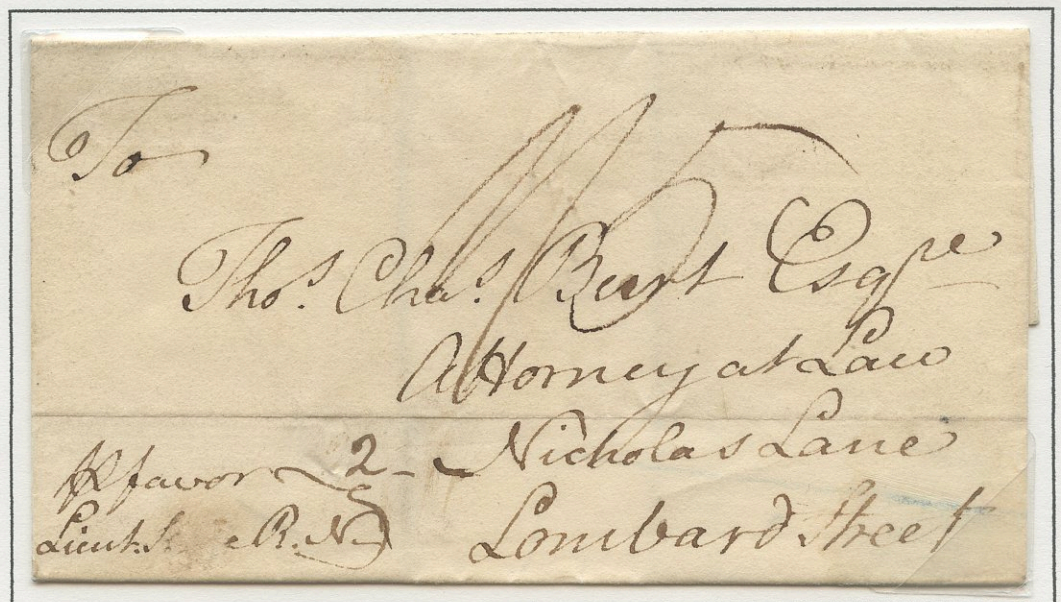
An early entire from Van Diemen's Land when administered by New South Wales

Single Rate:

"1/5"(d) manuscript in black comprising 8d for the incoming ship letter fee plus 9d internal postage to be paid by the recipient.

Postal markings:

"SHIP LETTER / SOUTHAMPTON" in black on the reverse.



Hobart, Van Diemen's Land 28.12.1824 to London, England

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Hobart 29.12.1823 per barque "Denmark Hill" to Rio de Janeiro; by private sailing ship to Southampton; overland to London, arriving 25.5.1825. (147 days).

Note: This letter was carried privately and endorsed "p favour/ Lieut. Slade R.N." at the lower left, a passenger on the "Denmark Hill". Van Diemen's Land was part of New South Wales until 14.7.1825, when it was proclaimed a separate colony.

The earliest recorded convict letter from Australia in private hands

Rate: There is no prepayment manuscript on this entire; “8” (d) in manuscript representing the incoming ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.

Postal markings: “SHIP LETTER/LONDON” arrival datestamp of the 15.10.1823. “Crown/ Too Late for/ Mornng Post” in red denoting the letter was too late to be delivered in the morning post.

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 14.4.1823 per “Venerable” to London, arriving 15.10. (184 days).



Wellington, New South Wales 31.3.1823 to England

Letter from the convict Mathias Maher

The entire is headed “H. Majesty’s New Settlement at Wellington Plains” and signed “Mathias Maher, formerly a Midshipman in the Royal Navy, now (from 1817) a Convict for Life”.

Convict letters had to be censored by the Superintendent of Convicts and counter-signed, however, given there is no censorship on this letter, it was presumably smuggled directly aboard the “Venerable”. The entire is addressed to his old Captain in London, desperately seeking the addressee’s intervention with the New South Wales Governor to improve his position. Convict Maher writes:

“.....imploring your kind intersection with Captain Sir James Brisbane to write to his cousin, the present Governor of this Colony - His Excellency Sir Thomas Brisbane K.C.B. - to recommend me in his consideration of my former service in the Navy.....in consequence of seeing you weeping for me in a dream last night.....Oh relieve me! Oh may heaven reward you and relieve me from the Bondage of Slavery.....”

Note: The new convict settlement at Wellington was established by Lieutenant Percy Simpson in early 1823. This letter dated in March must be the earliest recorded from this settlement.

Ex Molnar

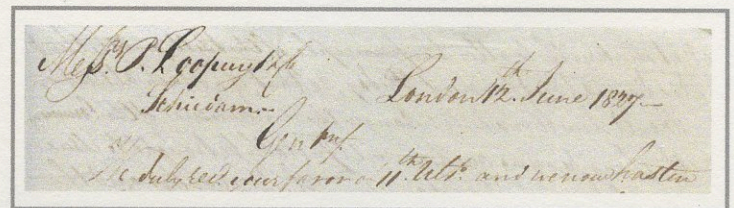
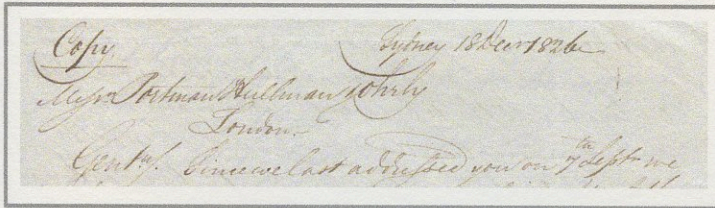
1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn

A rare consignee letter to the Netherlands

The use of consignment letters, particularly between merchants and agents, was a common practice before 1850. Merchants would send letters to their agents, most commonly in London, who would forward the letter to the intended destination, usually in Europe, on the merchant's behalf.

With the consignee's letter below, the rum merchants Jones & Walker have written to their London agents Messrs. Portman, Hullman & Ohrly regarding a Bill of Lading for £517.2.11. The Sydney letter has been rewritten in London, (as evidenced by the word "Copy" inside at the top left), together with a letter from Messrs. Portman, Hullman & Ohrly to the distillers Messrs. P. Loopuyt & Co. in Schiedam, near Rotterdam regarding the Bill and other items of trade.



The two scans above are of the inside of this consignee's letter. The first scan is the copy of the letter written at London datelined Sydney on the 18.12.1826. The second scan is the second letter written by the agent in London to the distillers in Schiedam. Note that both letters are written in the same hand.

These consignee's letters give a valuable insight to the level of trade between the Australian Colonies and the rest of the world.



Sydney, New South Wales 18.12.1826 to England
London, England 12.6.1827 to Schiedam, Netherlands

Single Rate: "8"(d) manuscript in black representing the prepayment for a single lettersheet from England to the Netherlands; "50"(cents) manuscript in black representing the Dutch inwards ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.

Postal markings: "POST PAID SHIP Lt./LONDON" in red datestamp of the 12.6.1827.

Route: By steamer from London to Rotterdam.

Ex Druce, Davis, Forster

1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn

The earliest newspaper wrapper from the Australian Colonies recorded



Single Rate: "1"(d) manuscript in red representing prepayment for a newspaper to England; "3"(d) manuscript in black for the inwards newspaper fee to be paid by the recipient.

Postal markings:
"INDIA LETTER/ DEAL"
in black applied in England.

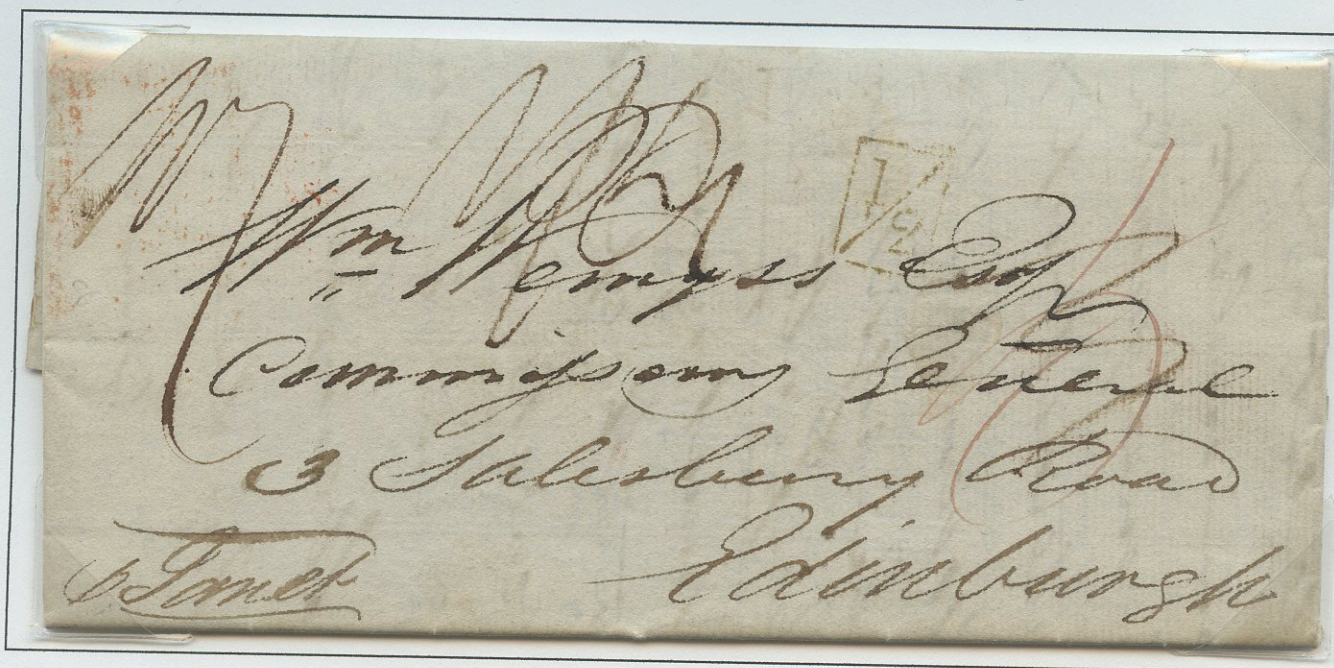
There is an official New South Wales government seal in red wax at the left, however, it is indecipherable.

Sydney, New South Wales 10.5.1833 to Milton Park, England

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 31.5.1833 per "William" to Deal; overland to London, arriving 4.11.1833. (157 days).

Note: The "Australian" newspaper was published between 1822 and 1844 in Sydney. This example is dated the 10th May 1833 and is the earliest recorded newspaper wrapper from Australia.

An entire from Tasmania during the no postal markings period



Hobart, Van Diemen's Land 13.12.1836 to Edinburgh, Scotland

Single Rate: "3"(d) manuscript in red representing the prepayment for a 1/2 oz ship letter to Great Britain; "1/4" manuscript in black crossed out and rerated "1/7" comprising 8d incoming ship letter fee via India plus 11d inland postage to be paid by the recipient.

Postal markings: "1/2"(d) boxed in black representing the Scottish border tax to be paid by the recipient.

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Hobart 19.12.1836 per brig "Janet" to Falmouth 11.6.1837; overland to Edinburgh, arriving 20.6.1837. (189 days).

1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn



Single Rate:

“4”(d) manuscript in red representing prepayment for a ½ oz ship letter to United States of America.

Sydney, New South Wales 14.2.1837 to Connecticut, United States of America

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 15.2.1837 per “Columbus” via Hobart and Bombay to Liverpool, England; forwarded in Liverpool by R.F. Breed & Eceleston 17.7 to New York 29.8; overland to Glastonbury. (*over 196 days*).

Ex Forster

Note: The earliest recorded letter from the Australian Colonies to the United States was also written by Captain Horace Hale of the American barque “Brothers” and both were sent on the “Columbus”, arriving at Glastonbury together on the same date.

The second earliest cover from the Australian Colonies to the United States of America recorded

Single Rate:

“1/-” manuscript in black comprising 8d for the incoming ship letter fee plus 4d via India to be paid by the recipient.

Note: There is no prepayment fee for this entire.



Adelaide, South Australia 19.12.1838 to London, England

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Adelaide 28.12.1838 per “David” to Sydney 9.1.1839. Departed Sydney 12.2 per “Hope” to Brighton 11.7; overland to London, arriving 12.7.1839. (*204 days*).

Ex Chartwell

The third earliest cover from South Australia recorded, two years after settlement

1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn



Adelaide, South Australia 1.12.1840 to Bath, England

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Adelaide 13.1.1841 per "Lalla Rookh" to London 30.4; by rail to Bath, arriving 30.4.1841. (107 days).

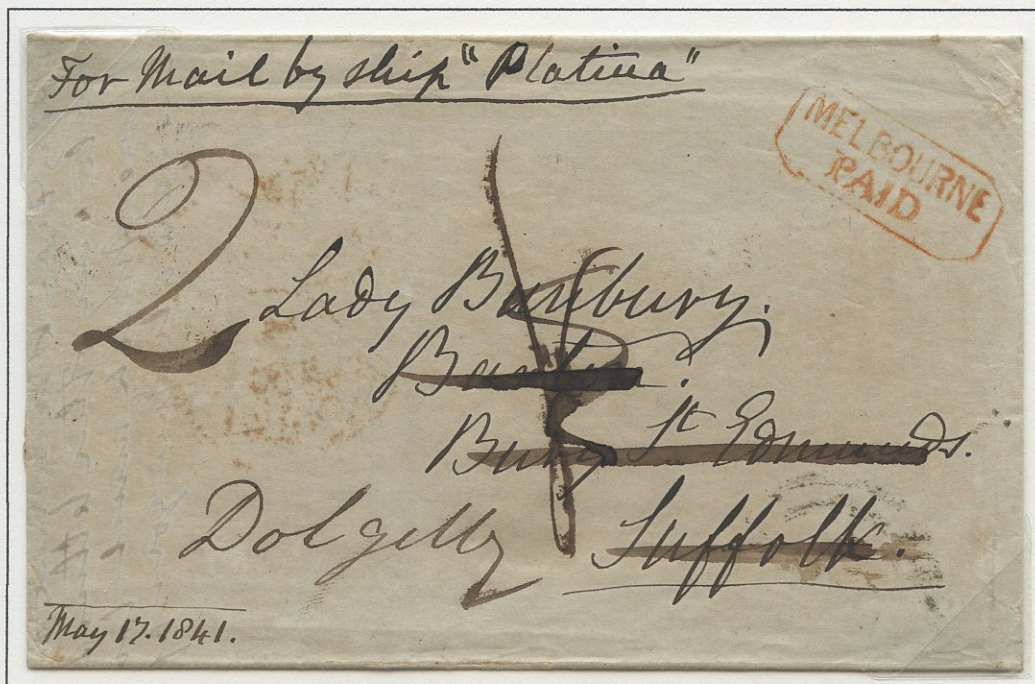
Single Rate:

"8"(d) manuscript in black for the incoming ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.

Postal markings:

"POST OFFICE/ LION and CROWN/ADELAIDE" in black.

Note: This is the first postal marking of Adelaide.



Melbourne, Port Phillip District 18.5.1841 to Bury, England, redirected to Dolgetty.

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Melbourne 18.5.1841 per barque "Platina" to London 25.10; redirected to Dolgetty, arriving 27.10.1841. (162 days).

Single Rate:

"8"(d) manuscript in black for the incoming ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.

"2"(d) manuscript in black for the inland postage for the redirection to Dolgetty, Wales.

Postal markings:

"**MELBOURNE/PAID**" in red denoting the 3d ship letter prepayment.

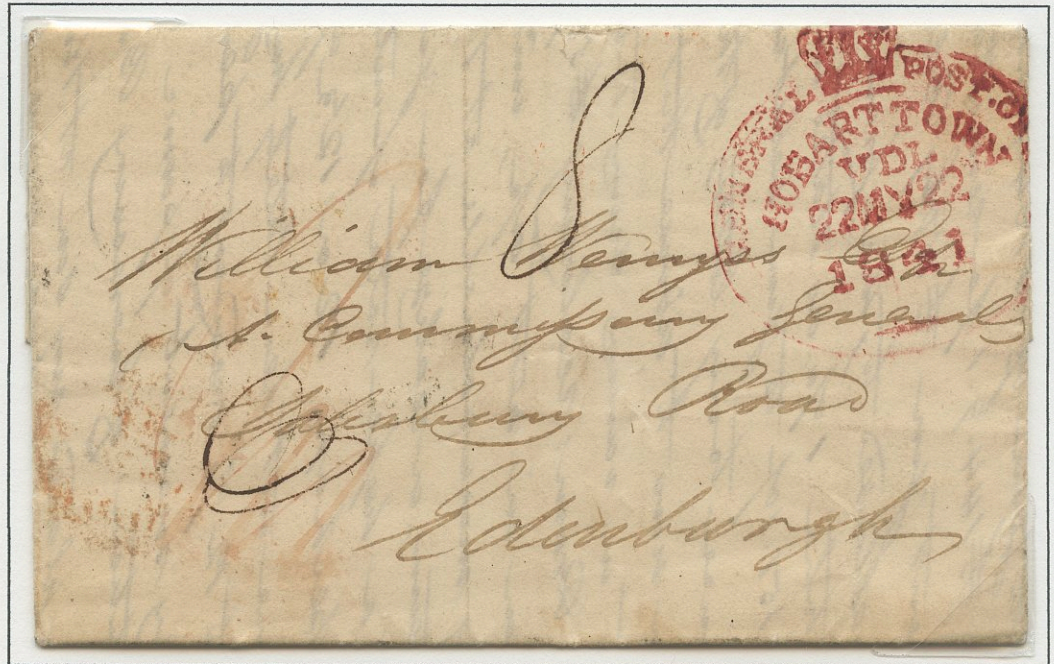
1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn

Single Rate:

“4”(d) manuscript in red representing the prepayment of a ½ oz letter to England;

“8”(d) manuscript in black representing the incoming ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.



Hobart, Van Diemen's Land 22.5.1841 to Edinburgh, Scotland

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Hobart 24.5.1841 per “Hindoo” to London 6.11; overland to Edinburgh, arriving 7.11.1841. (167 days).

Rare early redirection of Australian Colonial mail using an English imperforate issue

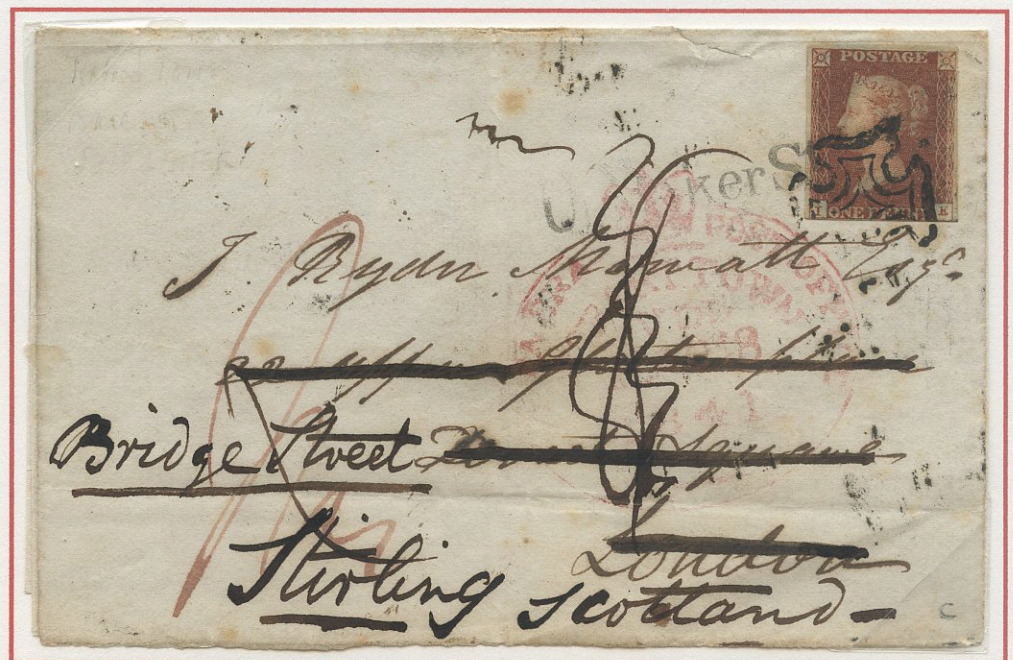
Single Rate:

“4”(d) manuscript in red representing the prepayment of a ½ oz letter to England;

“8”(d) manuscript in black representing the incoming ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.

Postal markings:

“BAKER STREET” receiving house handstamp in black;
England imperforate 1d for redirection to Scotland.



Hobart, Van Diemen's Land 18.9.1841 to London, England, redirected to Scotland

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Hobart 25.9.1841 per “Mayflower” to London 10.2.1842; redirected to Stirling, arriving 12.2.1842. (147 days).

Ex Sato

1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn

Single Rate:

“3”(d) manuscript in red for prepayment of a ½ oz letter to England;

“8”(d) manuscript in black denoting the incoming ship letter fee - crossed out;

“1/8” manuscript in black applied in London comprising the 8d inwards ship letter fee and 1/- transatlantic postage by a British contract steamer;

“1/10½” manuscript in black representing the conversion of the British fees to Canadian currency to be paid by the recipient.



Sydney, New South Wales 29.1.1842 to Toronto, **Province of Canada**

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 4.2.1842 per brig “Childers” to Liverpool 23.5; **Cunard Line:** Departed Liverpool per “Britannia” 4.6. to Boston 18.6; overland to Toronto, arriving 25.6.1842. (142 days).

The earliest recorded cover from the Australian Colonies to the Province of Canada



Adelaide, South Australia 8.12.1842 to Little Gaddesden, England

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Adelaide 19.12 per “Emma” to London 15.5; overland to Hemel-Hempstead, arriving 16.5.1843. (148 days).

Note: The entire is addressed to the Countess of Bridgewater

Double Rate:

“6”(d) manuscript in red brown representing prepayment for a ship letter under ¾ oz to England.

“8”(d) manuscript in black denoting the incoming ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.

Postal Markings:

“GENERAL POST OFFICE/ ADELAIDE” datestamp of the 8.12.1842 on the reverse.

The earliest cover from the Australian Colonies to the Nordic countries recorded

Single Rate: Prepayment of 3d for a of a ½ oz letter from Sydney to England. Unpaid to Sweden

Postal markings:

“8”(d) manuscript in black for the incoming ship letter fee crossed out.

“2/4” manuscript in black for forwarding from England to Hamburg comprising 1/8d for the British packet and 6d handling fee for the Hamburg Stadt PostAmt.

“37”(Schilling) manuscript in red applied at Hamburg for conversion of the British forwarding fee comprising 33 Schilling for the British packet and 4 schilling handling fee for the Hamburg Stadt PostAmt.

“35”(Silbergroschen) manuscript in red applied at Stralsund for conversion of the 37 schilling applied at Hamburg

“3 Rdr 1s” manuscript in black applied at Ystad comprising the conversion of 35sgr to 105 skilling banco plus 32sk for transit from Stralsund to Ystad and 8sk from Ystad to Stockholm, totalling 145sk which converts to 3Rdr 1sk, to be paid by the recipient..



Sydney, New South Wales 26.3.1843 to Stockholm, Sweden

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney Hobart 27.3.1843 per “Hamlet” to London 23.7; by British packet to Hamburg 28.7; overland to Stralsund; by private sailing ship via Ystad to Stockholm, arriving c6.8.1843. (132 days).

Ex Larsson

The Soldiers 1d Concessionary Rate

A soldier's entire from Private Robert Clutterhorn of the 96th Regiment, correctly countersigned by his commanding officer at the lower left authorising the 1d concessional postal rate.

British Regulations passed the Act 1 Vic Cap 34 on the 12.7.1837 providing that the concessional 1d rate was to apply to a single sheet letter.



Eaglehawk Neck, Van Diemen's Land 28.5.1843 to **Prince Edward Island**

Single Rate: Prepayment of 1d for a soldier's concession rate for a single sheet letter to Prince Edward Island.

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Hobart 7.6.1843 per "Elizabeth and Jane" to London 14.10; by private sailing ship to Prince Edward Island, arriving 24.10.1843. (139 days).

Note: Eaglehawk Neck was the narrow isthmus which connects the Tasman Peninsula including the convict settlement of Port Arthur to the mainland.

Private Clutterhorn writes "The name of animals in this country consist chiefly of Ring Tail Possum and kangaroo and Tiger Cat and Bandicoot. Rats, and black snake and Porcupine. This is a Plentiful Place....."

The earliest cover from the Australian Colonies to Prince Edward Island recorded

1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn



Williamstown, Port Phillip District 7.7.1844 to England, redirected to **Malta**

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Melbourne 13.7.1844 per "Sea Queen" to Liverpool 26.11; by rail to London 27.11; by private ship to Calais; by rail to Marseilles; by French Packet to Malta.

Handstamped TOO LATE after the closure of the mails



Yass, New South Wales 6.1.1845 to Edinburgh, Scotland

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Yass 6.1.1845 overland to Sydney. Departed Sydney 16.1 per barque "Parrock Hall" to London 7.5; by rail to Edinburgh, arriving 8.5.1845. (122 days)

Double Rate:

"6"(d) manuscript in red denoting prepayment for a $\frac{3}{4}$ oz ship letter to England;

"8"(d) manuscript in black crossed out and rerated " $\frac{1}{4}$ " for the incoming ship letter fee for the initial consignee;

"2/10" manuscript in black comprising for a $\frac{3}{4}$ oz ship letter to from England to Malta via France to be paid by the recipient.

Single Rate:

"1/2" manuscript in red for prepayment for a $\frac{1}{2}$ oz letter comprising 11d for the inland postage from Yass to Sydney plus 3d for a ship letter to England;

"8"(d) manuscript in black for the incoming ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.

Postal markings:

"YASS/ POST PAID" in red representing the prepayment;

"TOO LATE" in black after the closure of the mails for the endorsed vessel "Saint George" and transferred to the "Parrock Hall" for departure.

Ex Forster

1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn

Single Rate:

“3”(d) manuscript in red for prepayment for a ¼ oz ship letter to England;
 “8”(d) manuscript in black crossed out for the incoming ship letter fee;
 “8”(d) manuscript in black for prepayment from London to Aachen for a ¼ oz letter;
 “20”(decimes) manuscript in black credit to Belgium for forwarding postage;
 “5½”(silbergroschen) manuscript in red for the Belgian forwarding and internal postage to Bonn to be paid by the recipient.



Sydney, New South Wales 16.8.1845 to England, redirected to **Kingdom of Prussia**

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 17.8.1845 per “Ganges” to London 18.12; by steamer to Ostend, Belgium 19.12; by rail, via Aachen to Bonn, Kingdom of Prussia, arriving 21.12.1845. (126 days).

Ex Peace

The earliest cover from the Australian Colonies to the German States recorded



Sydney, New South Wales 20.4.1847 to New York, **United States of America**

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 22.4.1847 per “Mayflower” to New York, arriving 27.10.1847. (186 days).

Ex Forster

Note: The correspondent writes regarding the difficulty in sending mail to the United States: “A vessel advertised for the United States is too rare an occurrence to be neglected - although to which of the States I know not. Since writing back to my dear sister Sarah, I have had the pleasure of receiving a letter from her, and also yours dearest from Boston, which appears to be a safe route altho the letters are liable to be longer reaching me, being chiefly sent by whalers. They are frequently out fishing until they find it necessary to put in to port to furnish supplies....”

1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn

The Toulmin Packet mail service to New South Wales - 1846

The extension of the P&O Line service to India in 1843 led the Australian Colonists to hope for a line of steam packets themselves. Instead, the British Admiralty signed a monthly sailing packet contract from London to Sydney, operated by the brothers Henry and Calvert Toulmin. The first sailing from Sydney was on the 2.1.1846 via Cape Horn until the end of the contract in mid 1849.

Mail forwarded from Tasmania to capture the Toulmin Packet mail service from Sydney

Single Rate:

"4"(d) manuscript in red denoting prepayment for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

"1/-" manuscript in black for the incoming packet letter fee to be paid by the recipient.



Hobart, Van Diemen's Land 17.8.1847 to London, England

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Hobart 18.9.1847 per "Louisa" to Sydney; **Toulmin Packet Service:** Departed Sydney 3.10. per "Tory" to Falmouth 28.2; by rail to London, arriving 1.3.1847. (197 days).

Note: The entire is endorsed "Via Sydney" at the lower left.

The Toulmin Packet service - Mail from other colonies

The Toulmin Service was advertised by the colonial post offices outside New South Wales, with mail known from the Port Phillip District, Van Diemen's Land and South Australia. Since the service departed from Sydney via Cape Horn, the mails from Western Australia were quicker if sent via India, so the service was not used by that Colony. Letters posted in the other Colonies for the Packet Service had to be endorsed "via Sydney".

1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn



Sydney, New South Wales 13.7.1848 to Paris, France

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 14.7.1848 per "City of Poonah" to England 8.12; by steamer to Calais; by rail to Paris, arriving 9.12.1848. (149 days).

Ex Druce, Forster, Peace

Mail forwarded from New Zealand to capture the mail service from Sydney to London

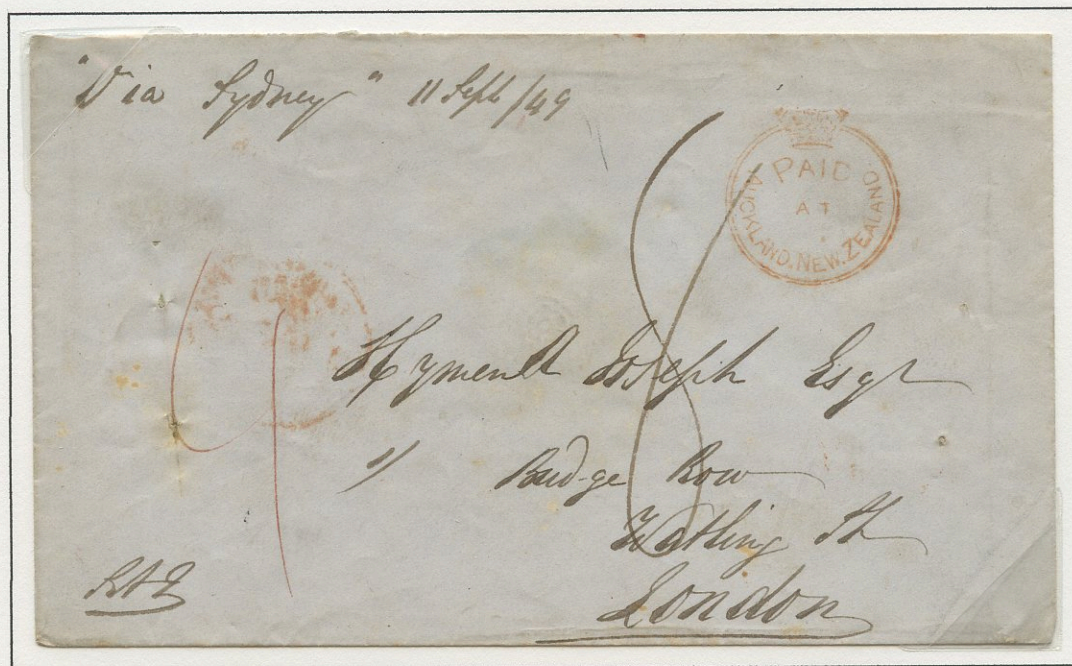
Single Rate:

"4"(d) manuscript in red denoting prepayment for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

"8"(d) manuscript in black for the incoming ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.

Postal markings:

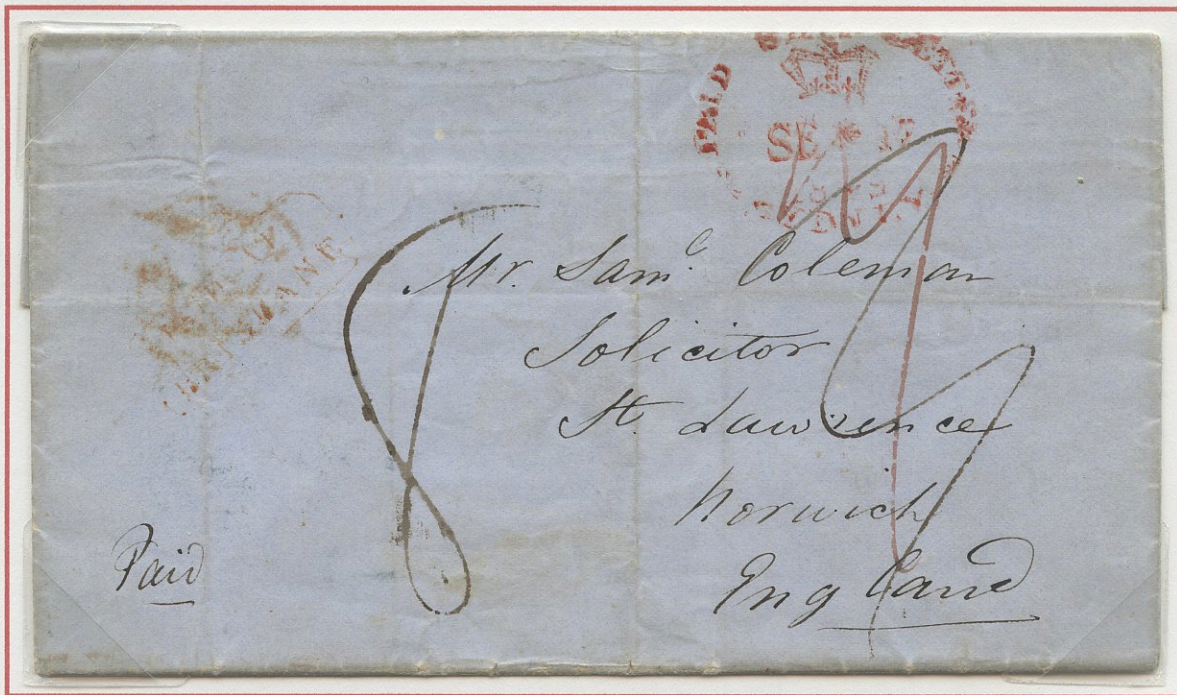
"PAID/AT/AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND" crowned circle in red representing the pre-payment.



Auckland, New Zealand 12.9.1849 to London, England

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Auckland, New Zealand 12.9.1849 per "Susan" to Sydney, New South Wales 10.10. Departed Sydney 15.10 per "Victory" to London, arriving 9.2.1850. (150 days).

Ex Pegasus



Brisbane, Moreton Bay District 13.9.1849 to St. Lawrence, England

Single Rate: "7"(d) manuscript in red comprising 4d for a ½ oz ship letter from Brisbane to Sydney plus 3d ship letter postage to England; "8"(d) manuscript in black for the incoming ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.

Postal markings: "PAID AT/ BRISBANE" handstamp in red representing the prepayment of 7d;

Route - Private steamship: Departed Brisbane 13.9.1849 per "Eagle" to Sydney. **Private sailing ship:** Departed Sydney 18.9 per "Lady Amherst" to London 28.1; by rail to Norwich, arriving 29.1.1850. (138 days).

Double Rate:

"6"(d) manuscript in red denoting prepayment for a ¾ oz ship letter to England.

"8"(d) manuscript in black crossed out for the incoming ship letter fee;

"1/2" manuscript in black credit to England for transmission to Hamburg;

"19" (silbergroschen) manuscript in blue comprising the English ship letter fee and overland postage to be paid by the recipient.



Adelaide, South Australia 18.4.1850 to the Duchy of Schleswig-Holstein (Denmark) (E)

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Adelaide 19.4.1850 per "John Bartlett" to England 3.7; by steamship to Ostende in the closed bag mail; by rail to Altona, Duchy of Schleswig-Holstein, arriving 8.7.1850. (80 days).

Ex Blake, Lewin

The earliest cover from the Australian Colonies to the Duchy of Schleswig-Holstein recorded

Note: The Duchy of Schleswig-Holstein was ruled by Denmark until 1864 when it was annexed to become part of the German States.

1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn

Single Rate:

Prepayment of 5d comprising 2d inland and 3d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

“8”(d) manuscript in black for the incoming ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.



Merriwa, New South Wales 25.5.1850 to Loughton, England (E)

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 4.6.1850 per “Oriental”, arriving Loughton 10.10.1850. (138 days).

Ex Chartwell

Three Sydney View covers with manuscript numeral cancels are recorded

Single Rate:

Prepayment of 3d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

“8”(d) manuscript in black for the incoming ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.



Melbourne, Port Phillip District 8.3.1851 to London, England (E)

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Melbourne 9.3.1851 per “Rodney”, arriving London 21.7.1851. (135 days).



Brisbane, Moreton Bay District 29.4.1851 to Bradford, England, redirected to Beckington

Single Rate: "5"(d) manuscript in red comprising 2d for a ½ oz inland letter from Brisbane to Sydney plus 3d ship letter postage to England; "8"(d) manuscript in black for the incoming ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient; (1d) inland postage redirection to Beckington, both to be paid by the recipient.

Postal markings: "PAID AT/ BRISBANE" handstamp in black representing the prepayment of 5d.

Route: Departed Brisbane 30.4.1851 overland to Sydney. Departed Sydney 6.5 per "Duke of Wellington" to London 25.9; by rail to Bradford 25.9; redirected to Beckington, arriving 26.9.1851. (151 days).

Ex Forster

The first Australian gold shipment to England



Sydney, New South Wales 31.5.1851 to England, redirected to France.

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 31.5.1851 per "Thomas Arbuthnot", to London 6.10; redirected to France; by steamer to Calais 7.10, by rail to Bordeaux, arriving 9.10.1851. (131 days).

Note: The "Thomas Arbuthnot" carried the first Australian gold shipment to England on this voyage, a mere 253 ounces.

Single Rate:

"3"(d) manuscript in red representing prepayment for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

"8"(d) manuscript in black for the incoming ship letter fee crossed out.

Unpaid from England to France.

"16"(decimes) manuscript in black representing the British ship letter fee and the French internal postage to Bordeaux to be paid by the recipient..

1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn



Single Rate:

Prepayment of 5d comprising 2d inland and 3d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

“8”(d) manuscript in black for the incoming ship letter fee (crossed out) and re-rated;

“9”(d) manuscript in black for the 8d incoming ship letter fee plus 1d for re-direction to Hampshire to be paid by the recipient.

Gayndah, **Moreton Bay District** 16.1.1853 to Swansea, redirected to Hampshire

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Brisbane by private sailing ship to Sydney. Departed Sydney 1.2.1853 per “Vimeira” to Southampton 30.4, redirected to Hampshire, arriving 30.4.1853. (104 days).

Single Rate:

Prepayment of 3d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

Unpaid from England to France.

“30”(decimes) manuscript in black comprising 8dec for a ½ oz ship letter plus 22dec postage from Calais to Rouen to be paid by the recipient.

Postal markings:

“**COLONIES / &cART.13**” applied at London for unpaid mail to France.



Sydney, New South Wales 13.6.1853 to Rouen, France

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 13.6.1853 per “Oriental Queen” to London 10.10; by steamship to Calais 11.10; by rail, via Paris, arriving Rouen 11.10.1853. (120 days).

1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn

The 11d all-in letter rate 2.1853 - 1.10.1854: The 11d all-in rate was mutually agreed between the British and New South Wales post offices to allow the entire postage to be paid to destination if the sender so wished. It combined the existing UK 8d incoming ship letter fee and the NSW 3d ship letter rates to make a postage to destination rate of 11d, plus an additional 2d colonial rate if sent to or from outside Sydney. Very few covers are recorded.

The only Sydney View cover pre-paid at the 11d all-in letter rate



Sydney, New South Wales 4.6.1853 to Christchurch, England

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 8.6.1853 per "Oriental Queen" to Southampton; by rail to Christchurch, arriving 10.10.1853. (128 days).

Ex Forster



Sydney, New South Wales 20.4.1853 to Erith, England

Single Rate:

Prepayment of 11d for a ½ oz ship letter to England. (There was no 8d inwards ship letter fee payable on this cover).

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 22.4.1853 per "Woolloomooloo" to London 19.7; by rail to Erith, arriving 19.7.1853. (90 days).

Ex Tabart

1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn

The England - New South Wales Paid to Destination Rate

In February 1853 the United Kingdom had agreed with New South Wales the first ever paid-to-destination rate of 11d to or from Sydney, or 1/1d to places in New South Wales other than Sydney. This rate was made up of the UK ship letter rate of 8d, the New South Wales ship letter rate of 3d, plus where necessary, the colonial 2d inland rate.

It applied "for the present, only to such of those letters as may be addressed to be forwarded by Private ship." In addition, a 1/3d rate was introduced comprising the 3d New South Wales ship letter fee plus 1/- for the UK inwards packet letter fee via Southampton. This was a pre-cursor to the 6d paid to destination rate introduced in October 1854.



Drayton, Moreton Bay District 7.1854 to Fochabers, Scotland, England

Single rate: Prepayment of 1/5d comprising 2d inland, 3d New South Wales ship and 1/- for a ½ oz packet ship letter to England; "8"(d) manuscript in red credit to England for the incoming ship letter fee.

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Brisbane by private sailing ship to Sydney. Departed Sydney 10.8.1854 per "Walter Maurice" to Falmouth 21.12; by rail via London 22.12 to Fochabers, arriving 23.12.1854. (136 days - from Sydney date).

Note: This cover is interesting from a number of different aspects. Firstly, it pre-paid the New South Wales paid to destination by packet rate of 1/3d, however, it was sent by the "Walter Maurice", a private sailing vessel, thereby over-paying 4d. The probable reason for this is the "per first ship" endorsement at the upper left. This inscription indicated to the postal officials that it was to be sent by the first vessel, rather than waiting for a quicker steamship. The first available steamship was the General Screw Steam Ship Co. "Croesus" which left Sydney on the 2.9.1854, arriving at Southampton on the 14.12., a week before this envelope's arrival at Falmouth.

Ex Druce, Forster

The only cover from the Moreton Bay District using the NSW-UK paid to destination rate recorded

The earliest cover from Victoria with the registration fee prepaid by an adhesive postage stamp recorded



Sandhurst, Victoria 3.8.1854 to St. Georges, **Bermuda**

Single rate: Prepayment of 2/- comprising 1/- for a 1 oz ship letter plus 1/- registration to England; Unpaid from England to Bermuda. "1/-" manuscript in black for forwarding from England to Bermuda to be paid by the recipient.

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Melbourne 14.8.1854 per "John Banks" to Southampton; by rail to London 6.12; by rail to Liverpool. **Cunard Line:** Departed Liverpool 9.12 per "America" to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Departed Halifax 23.12 per "Curlew" to St Georges, Bermuda, arriving 28.12.1854. (147 days).

Note: The Victoria 1/- Registration stamp was issued on the 1.12.1854, three months after this envelope was posted.

Ex Perry, Kellow, Winchester

The earliest stamped cover from the Australian Colonies to the West Indies recorded

1.2 Early Ships Under Sail

Via Cape Horn

Two scarce late sailing ship covers



Sydney, New South Wales 14.7.1855 to London, England

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 16.7.1855 per "Walter Hood" to Southampton; by rail to London, arriving 22.10.1855. (100 days).

Note: The closure for the contract mail clipper "Marco Polo" was on the 18.7. The sender had the option of two different sendings for this entire. If they had taken the contract mail option, the letter would have arrived only two days earlier.

Single Rate:

Prepayment of 1/6d comprising 6d for a ½ oz ship letter and 1/- registration to England.

Unpaid from England to the United States of America.

"6d"(d) handstamp in black credit to Great Britain for a non-contract ship letter crossed out and rerated; "12"(cents) and "16"(cents) crossed out and rerated "21"(cents) comprising 16cents trans-Atlantic fee for a British Packet and 5cents United States internal to be paid by the recipient.



Castlemaine, Victoria 25.2.1856 to New York, United States of America

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Melbourne 2.3.1856 per "Medway" to Plymouth 18.6; by rail via London 20.6 to Liverpool. **Cunard Line:** Departed Liverpool 21.6 per "Canada" to New York, arriving 4.7.1856. (129 days).

Note: The closure for the contract steamer "European" was on the 15.3. The sender had the option of two different sendings for this entire. If they had taken the contract mail option, the letter would have arrived six weeks earlier.

The second earliest registered cover from Victoria to the United States of America recorded