

3.0 The Clipper Sailings 1852-60

Historical overview

The British Admiralty's removal of contract mail steamers to convey troops and materials for the Crimean War from 1853-56 meant that all the mail contracts were void. So reversion to sail was the only option. It was unclear how long this situation would last and there were initially single voyage contracts. As the situation became more permanent, longer contracts were entered into.

In the few years since the end of the Toulmin contract in 1849, long distance sail had improved dramatically by two factors. Perhaps the most important being the work of Lt. M.F. Maury of the United States Navy who had recently published his detailed studies on wind patterns around the globe at various times of year. This allowed the clipper captains to determine the optimum route for winds at whatever time of year the ship was sailing. He deduced that there were stronger winds further south than the usual route along the 40th parallel. He was proved correct for world records that these clippers produced for sailing around the world. Secondly, strongly built and heavily sparred ships were needed to take advantage of these winds. New clipper ships were designed and built, initially by American ship builders such as the great Boston builder Donald McKay.

This era of sailing ship and clipper voyages lasted beyond the return to steamer contracts in 1857 after the Crimean War ended. Sailing ships still plied their trade for intercolonial mail. Small steamers were introduced in the early 1850's, and finally took over most of the trade by the early 1860's. Conversely, new routes were being opened up across the Pacific Ocean which were initially operated by the clipper ships.

The Clipper Sailings section is represented by the following categories:

3.1 Pre-contract Clipper Sailings

3.2 Via Cape Horn

3.1 Pre-contract Clipper Sailings 1852-55

Via Cape Horn

Prior to the Crimean War, the new clipper sailing ships were plying their trade between England and the Australian Colonies in the early 1850's. Mail was also carried on these vessels, with covers being particularly scarce from this period.

The earliest all-over advertising envelope from the Australian Colonies

Double Rate:

Prepayment of 6d for a 1oz ship letter to England.

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



Melbourne, Victoria 9.10.1852 to London, England

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Melbourne per "Marco Polo" 9.10.1852 to Liverpool; by rail to London, arriving 27.12.1852. (79 days).

Ex Rizvold; Forster

Note: The "Marco Polo" was one of the new clipper ships which accounts for the extremely quick sailing time of 79 days.

3.2 The Clipper Sailings - Via Cape Horn

Historical overview

Long distance sailing had improved rapidly from when the Toulmin packet ships carried the colonist's mail via Cape Horn. In the late 1840's, it was common for Australian ship letters to arrive in England after more than 130 days. A better understanding of global winds and currents, coupled with progressive designs in ship building for clippers cut the sailing times via this route to around 90 days.

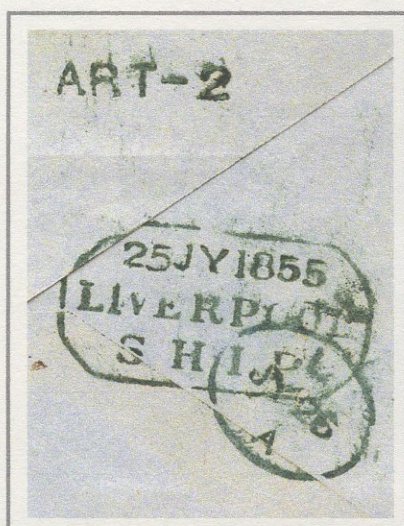
During this period, there were a number of changes in rates and prepayment of mail to England and foreign destinations. For a short couple of years of the "Accountancy Period", Great Britain and the Australian Colonies handstamped their mail indicating credits to each postal administration based on whether a ship was a contracted or non-contracted mail packet vessel.



Sydney, New South Wales 23.4.1855 to New York, United States of America

Single Rate - Underpaid: Prepayment of 6d and underpaid 6d for a 1 oz ship letter to England. Unpaid from England to the United States.

"6"(d) manuscript in black crossed out and rerated "1/-" for the incoming ship letter fee; "32"(cents) in manuscript in black from Liverpool in error crossed out and rerated "74"(cents) by New York comprising 32 cents incoming ship letter; 32 cents transatlantic postage by an American packet; and 10 cents inland postage to be paid by the recipient.



Postal Markings:

"ART-2" in green on the reverse applied at Liverpool and used for underpaid mail to the United States of America.

At the left is a scanned image of the reverse of this envelope showing the green arrival markings at Liverpool.

Route - Private steamship: Departed Sydney 24.4.1855 per "City of Sydney" to Melbourne. **Non contract clipper:** Departed Melbourne 2.5.1855 per "Red Jacket" via Rio de Janeiro 20.6, to Liverpool 25.7. **Collins Line:** Departed Liverpool 28.7 per "Baltic", arriving New York 8.8.1855. (107 days).

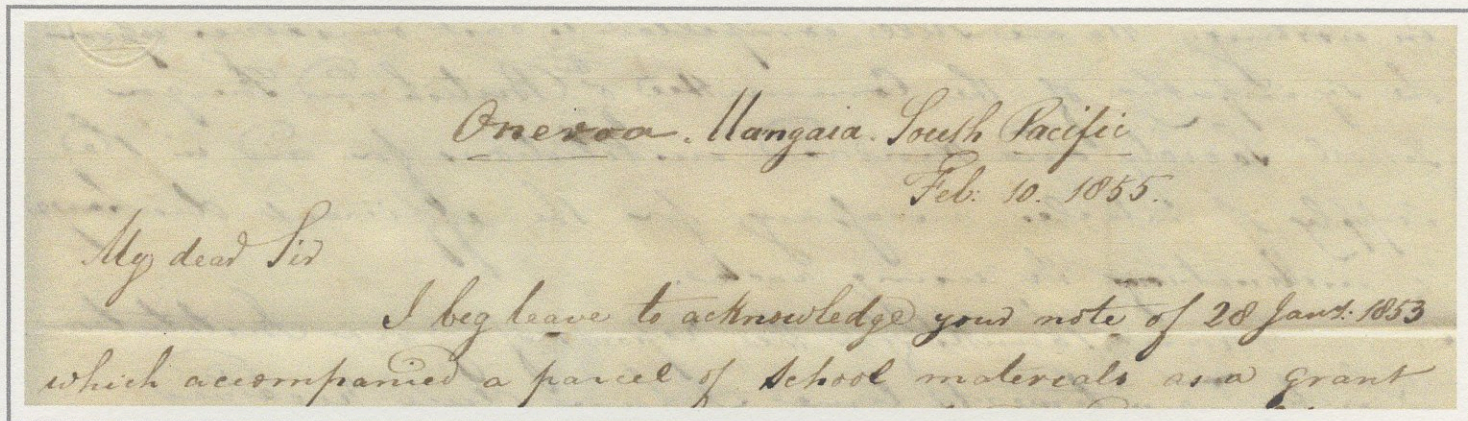
Ex Dewavrin

Three examples of the "ART-2" cachet in blue green are recorded

3.2 The Clipper Sailings

Via Cape Horn

Usage of the Australian ship mails service from the Cook Islands



A scan of the inside of the entire headed "Oneroa, Mangaia, South Pacific, Feb 10 1855"



Oneroa, Mangaia, Cook Islands 10.2.1855 to London, England

Single Rate: Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

Postal markings: "3" manuscript in red credit to Great Britain for a non-contract incoming ship letter.

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Cook Islands 2.1855 to Melbourne; **Non-contract clipper - White Star Line:** Departed Melbourne 30.8.1855 per "White Star" to Liverpool 27.11; by rail to London, arriving 28.11.1855. (200 days to Melbourne; 89 days to London).

Note: Oneroa is a small village on the island of Mangaia, the most southerly of the Cook Islands and the second largest after Rarotonga. The entire was written by Reverend George Gill of the London Missionary Society who was a missionary in the Cook Islands from 1845-60. It is a letter of thank you to the British and Foreign School Society for providing slates and pencils for the school children.

Ex Ward

The only stamped entire from the Cook Islands using the Australian mails service recorded

3.2 The Clipper Sailings

Via Cape Horn



Single Rate:

Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

Unpaid to the Grand Duchy of Hesse.

“23”(kreuzer) manuscript in blue credit to Thurn & Taxis Post for forwarding from England to Rudesheim through the closed mail service to be paid by the recipient.

Melbourne, Victoria 30.5.1855 to Rudesheim, **Grand Duchy of Hesse**

Route - Black Ball Line - British contract clipper: Departed Melbourne 22.7.1855 per “Marco Polo”, to Liverpool 20.10; by rail to London 21.10; by steamer to Ostende; by rail via Aachen 23.10 to Ringen 24.10; overland to Rudesheim, arriving 24.10.1855. (147 days).

Note: The postal system of the Grand Duchy of Hesse was privately operated by the Thurn & Taxis Post.

The earliest cover from the Australian Colonies to the Grand Duchy of Hesse recorded

Single Rate:

Prepayment of 1/- for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

Unpaid to the United States of America.

“8”(d) manuscript in black for the British incoming ship letter rate crossed out;

“16”(cents) manuscript in black for transatlantic postage by an American packet;

“37”(cents) handstamp and manuscript in black comprising the 16 cents incoming ship letter fee; 16 cents transatlantic postage by an American packet ship; and 5 cents inland postage to be paid by the recipient.



Ballarat, Victoria 25.6.1855 to Concord, United States of America

Route - Non contract clipper: Departed Melbourne 29.6.1855 per “Frances Henty” via Pernambuco 23.8 to Plymouth 21.9; by rail via London 24.9 to Southampton 25.9. **Havre Line:** Departed Southampton 26.9 per “Union” to New York 11.10; by rail to Concord, arriving 13.10.1855. (110 days).

Seven covers from Victoria at the 1/- retaliatory rate addressed to the United States of America are recorded

3.2 The Clipper Sailings

Via Cape Horn



Single Rate:

Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

Unpaid to the Kingdom of Sardinia.

Postal markings:

“P.D.” circular handstamp in red applied at London signifying paid to destination.

Note: The paid to destination handstamp indicates that the postage from London to Intra was pre-paid in cash in London, probably through a shipping agent.

Hepburn, Victoria 3.7.1855 to Intra, **Kingdom of Sardinia (E)**

Route - Black Ball Line - British contract clipper: Departed Melbourne 22.7.1855 per “Marco Polo”, to Liverpool 20.10; by rail to London 21.10; by steamer to Calais; by rail to Intra, arriving 25.10.1855. (114 days).

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



Adelaide, South Australia 5.12.1855 to Ohrdruf, **Duchy of Saxe-Gotha**

Single Rate: Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England. Unpaid to the Duchy of Saxe - Gotha.

“23”(Kreutzer) manuscript in blue, credit to Thurn & Taxis Post for forwarding from England to Ohrdruf through the closed mail service. Rerated “7”(silbergroschen) for delivery to the Duchy of Saxe-Gotha to be paid by the recipient.

Route - private steamship: Departed Adelaide 5.12.1855 per “Burra Burra” to Melbourne. **Contract clipper - White Star Line:** Departed Melbourne 11.12 per “Emma” to Liverpool 26.3.1856; by rail to London 27.3; by steamer to Ostende; by rail via Aachen 28.3 to Gotha 29.3; overland to Ohrdruf, arriving 29.3.1856. (114 days).

Note: The postal system of the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg Gotha was privately operated by the Thurn & Taxis Post.

The only cover from the Australian Colonies to the Duchy of Saxe-Gotha recorded

3.2 The Clipper Sailings

Via Cape Horn

An extraordinary registered usage from Victoria to Bermuda

Single Rate - Unpaid:

Unpaid from Victoria to England plus prepayment of 1/- Registration for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

Unpaid from England to Bermuda.

“6” handstamp in black for the English contract clipper fee incorrectly charged and crossed out;

“11”(d) manuscript in black comprising the unpaid 6d from Victoria to England plus 6d postage for forwarding to Bermuda, less 1d internal delivery to be paid by the recipient.



Raglan, Victoria 18.12.1855 to St. Georges, **Bermuda**

Route - contract clipper - Black Ball Line: Departed Melbourne 27.12.1855 per “Lightning” to Liverpool 24.3.1856. **Cunard Line:** Departed Liverpool 29.3 per S.S. “Cambria” to Halifax 14.4; S.S. “Merlin” 14.4 to St Georges, Bermuda, arriving 18.4.1856. (121 days).

The second earliest cover from the Australian Colonies to Bermuda recorded

Single Rate:

Prepayment of 1/6 for a ½ oz ship letter to the Kingdom of Hanover.

“11”(d) manuscript in red credit to England comprising 3d incoming ship letter fee for carriage by a non-contract clipper plus 8d for onwards transmission from England to the Kingdom of Hanover to be paid by the recipient.

Postal Markings:

“P” handstamp in red denoting the envelope was paid to destination.

“**ENGLAND PER AACHEN/FRANCO**” transit datestamp in red of the 6.4.1856.



Sydney, New South Wales 28.12.1855 to the **Kingdom of Hanover**

Route - non contract clipper: Departed Sydney 28.12.1855 per “Vimeira” to London 5.4; by steamer to Ostende; by rail via Aachen 7.4 to Hannover, arriving 8.4.1856. (88 days).

Ex Alvarado

The second earliest cover from New South Wales to the Kingdom of Hanover recorded

3.2 The Clipper Sailings

Via Cape Horn



Single Rate:

Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

Unpaid to the City State of Hamburg.

“10”(d) manuscript in black debit to Great Britain comprising 6d incoming letter fee plus 4d for forwarding through the closed Prussian mail service; “16”(schillings) manuscript in red for the unpaid transit from England to the City State of Hamburg to be paid by the recipient.

Melbourne, Victoria 30.1.1856 to the City State of Hamburg

Route - Victorian contract clipper - Black Ball Line : Departed Melbourne 1.2.1856 per “Beemah”, to Liverpool 26.4; by rail to London 28.4; by steamer to Ostende; by rail via Aachen to Hamburg, arriving 30.4.1856. (91 days).

Ex Davis

Note: The postal system of the City State of Hamburg was privately operated by the Thurn & Taxis Post until 1858.

One of the earliest covers from Victoria to the City State of Hamburg recorded



Single Rate:

Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

“1/-” manuscript in black for the incoming ship letter fee to be paid by the recipient.

Geelong, Victoria 8.3.1856 to the London, England

Route - Victorian contract clipper - White Star Line : Departed Melbourne 13.3.1856 per “Mermaid”, to Liverpool 9.6; by rail to London, arriving 10.6.1856. (94 days).

Ex Perry, Besancon

The third earliest cover from Victoria to Denmark recorded



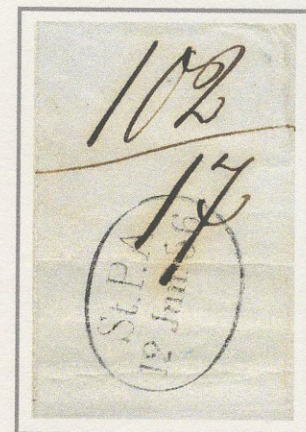
Melbourne, Victoria 18.3.1856 to Copenhagen, Denmark

Double Rate: Prepayment of 1/- for a 1 oz ship letter to England. Unpaid from England to Denmark.

"1/8" manuscript in black debited to England for double the 10d rate to Denmark; "24" (silbergroschen) manuscript in blue credit to the City State of Hamburg for forwarding to Denmark; "32" manuscript in red applied at Hamburg for credit to the Royal Danish post office;

"102/17" (119 skilling) manuscript in black on the reverse comprising 102 Danish skilling (representing 24 silbergroschen) and 17 skilling for the transit fee to Denmark to be paid by the recipient.

A scanned image of the reverse of this cover showing the accountancy postage to collect by the Royal Danish post office in Hamburg, together with the oval datestamp of the Hamburg stadtpost for the 12.6.1856.



Route - Victorian contract clipper - White Star Line:

Departed Melbourne 13.3.1856 per "Mermaid" to Liverpool 9.6; by rail to London 10.6; by steamer to Ostende; by rail in the closed mail bag to Hamburg 12.6.1856; overland to Copenhagen. (over 86 days).

3.2 The Clipper Sailings

Via Cape Horn



Sydney, New South Wales 12.3.1856 to Salem, United States of America

Route - Private steamship: Departed Sydney 22.3.1856 per "City of Sydney" to Melbourne. **Victorian contract clipper - Black Ball Line:** Departed Melbourne 27.3 per "Marco Polo" to Liverpool 21.6. **Collins Line:** Departed Liverpool 25.6 per "Baltic" to New York 6.7; by rail to Salem 8.7.1856. (86 days).

Note: This envelope was incorrectly processed at Liverpool. It should have been credited with "16 cents" in red for the American Packet Trans Atlantic ship rate, leaving 5 cents for the recipient to pay for inland postage. This oversight was corrected at New York with the "24"(cents) handstamp comprising 16 cents transatlantic postage by an American packet plus 5 cents internal delivery and 3 cents payment to the United Kingdom for inland postage.

Ex Wiggins



Creswick Creek, Victoria 19.5.1856 to Locarno, Switzerland

Route - Victorian contract clipper - Liverpool & Australian Steam Navigation Co: Departed Melbourne 25.5.1856 per "Royal Charter" to Liverpool 12.8; by rail to London 14.8; by steamer to Calais; by rail in the closed bag via France to Locarno, arriving 18.8.1856. (91 days).

Single Rate - overpaid:

Prepayment of 1/3d and overpaid 1d for a 1/2 oz ship letter to United States of America.

"1/1" manuscript in red credit to Great Britain comprising 1d for forwarding by Victorian contract clipper plus 1/- transatlantic postage; "3 cents" handstamp in black applied at Liverpool for British inland postage due debited to the United States;

"N. YORK Am. PKT/ 24" dated 6th July for 24cents due to the United States, comprising 16c transatlantic shipment by an American packet; 5c inland postage and 3 cents British inland postage to be paid by the recipient.

Single Rate: Prepayment of 1/6d comprising 6d for a 1/2 oz ship letter plus 1/- registration to England.

Unpaid from England to Switzerland.

"6d" in black credit to the United Kingdom incorrectly charged for an unpaid shipmletter;

"9"(decimes) manuscript in black credit to France for forwarding;

"130"(rappen) manuscript in red for foreign charges plus Swiss inland postage to be paid by the recipient.

Postal Markings:

"Crown/ REGISTERED" in red applied at London;

"COLONIES/&cART.13" applied at London for unpaid mail to France.

3.2 The Clipper Sailings

Via Cape Horn

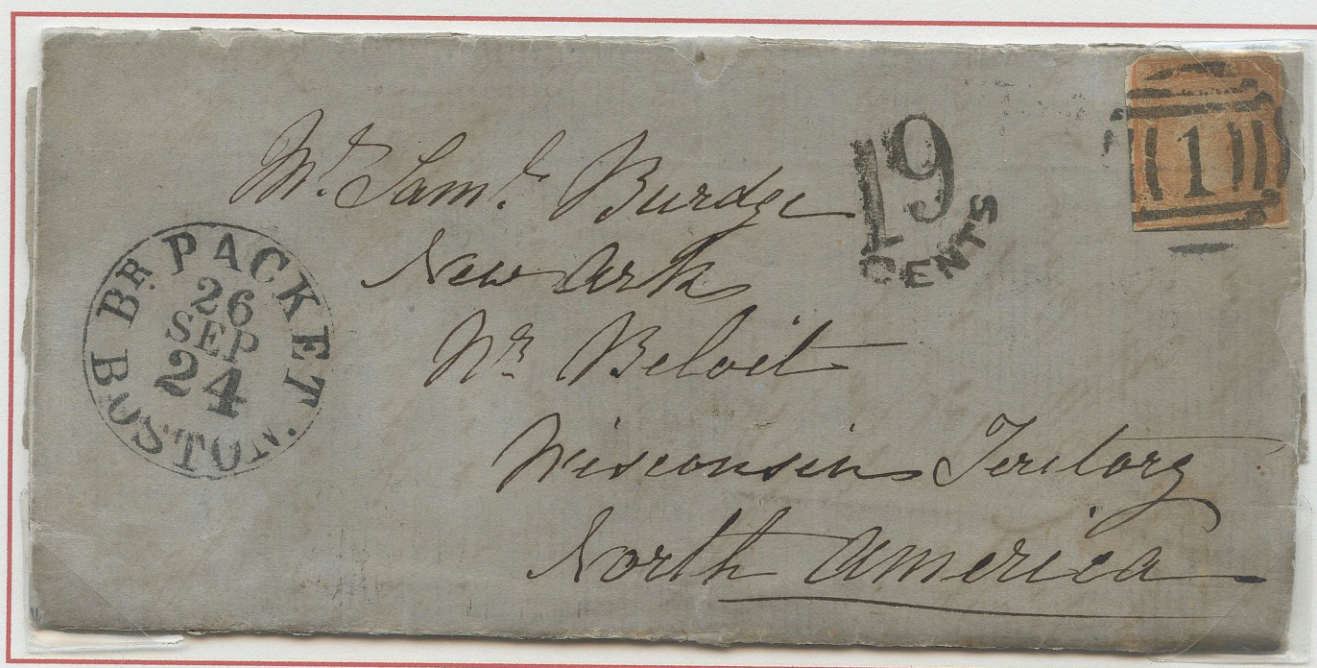
A Rare Non Concessional Soldier's Letter

A rare letter from a soldier in the 1st Somerset Regiment in charge of the six gun battery overlooking the Yarra River and sent to the United States at the non concessional postage rate.

The letter is written by Sergeant Major John Gould of the 1st Somerset Regiment who writes:

"Since I wrote last I have been a great sufferer. I broke my thigh and dislocated my hip but I am almost recovered. I expect in six or eight weeks to be once more as proud man and upright soldier. You must know, my dear sister, I am a favoured one in this Regiment. I belong to the 1st Somerset. Of course, a Staff Sergeant.

I am in command of a Six Gun Battery at the mouth of the Yarra River leading to Melbourne. I am my own commanding officer. I go when I like and return when I please. My pay is seven shillings and four pence per diem."



Melbourne, Victoria 23.6.1856 to Wisconsin, United States of America

Single Rate: Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England. Unpaid from England to the United States of America.

Reason for Non Concessional Postage:

The 1d concessionary rate was only applicable to soldiers letters addressed within the British Empire. Since this cover was addressed to the United States, the concessionary rate did not apply.

Postal markings: '19 cents' handstamp in black at Liverpool for credit to Great Britain (comprising 3c British inland letter plus 16c Trans Atlantic postage by British Packet); 'BR. PACKET/26/Sep/24/ BOSTON' handstamp in black comprising British 19c plus 5c United States inland postage to be paid by the recipient.

Route - non contract clipper - White Star Line: Departed Melbourne 27.6.1856 per "Sardinian". Adverse winds prevented the "Sardinian" from docking at Liverpool, and the mails were offloaded at Kinsdale in Ireland on the 11.9 and forwarded by steamer to Liverpool 11.9. **Cunard Line:** Departed Liverpool 13.9 per "Canada" to Boston 26.9; by rail via New York to Beloit, Wisconsin.

3.2 The Clipper Sailings

Via Cape Horn

Single Rate:

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

Postal markings:

“1”(d) manuscript in red credit to Great Britain for the incoming ship letter fee for a Victorian contract ship letter.

“6”(d) manuscript in black for the inwards registration fee to be paid by the recipient.

Note: The 1/- Registered stamp is Die II and very scarce used on cover.



Castlemaine, Victoria 5.7.1856 to London, England

Route - Victorian contract clipper - Black Ball Line: Departed Melbourne 16.7.1856 per “Champion of the Seas” to Liverpool 13.12; by rail to London, arriving 14.10.1856. (90 days).

Ex Molnar, Winchester

Mail from South Australia using the Victorian Contract Clipper Service



Adelaide, South Australia 9.8.1856 to England

Single Rate:

Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

Postal markings:

“PAID/ LIVERPOOL/ SHIP/No 20/1856” arrival date stamp in red.

“1”(d) handstamp in red credit to Great Britain for the incoming ship letter fee for a Victorian contract clipper.

Note: Given that South Australia did not subsidise or contribute to the Victorian contract, this cover should have been credited with 5d to Great Britain.

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Adelaide 9.8.1856 per “John Scott” to Melbourne 23.8. **Victorian contract clipper:** Departed Melbourne 28.8 per “Lightning” to Liverpool 20.11; by rail to Wareham, arriving 21.11.1856. (104 days).

3.2 The Clipper Sailings

Via Cape Horn

Mail from Tasmania using the Victorian Contract Clipper Service



Single Rate:

Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

Postal markings:

“PAID/ LIVERPOOL/ SHIP/ No 20/1856” arrival datestamp in red.

Hobart, Van Diemen's Land 18.8.1856 to London, England

Route - Private steamship: Departed Hobart 21.8.1856 per “City of Hobart” to Melbourne 23.8. **Victorian contract clipper:** Departed Melbourne 28.8 per “Lightening” to Liverpool 20.11; by rail to London, arriving 21.11.1856. (95 days).

Ex Bombieri, Groom

Single Rate:

Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

Unpaid to the United States of America.

“3”(d) in black applied at Sydney for debit to New South Wales for a non-contract ship letter;
“6d” handstamp in black equivalent to “12”(cents) manuscript credit to Great Britain for an unpaid ship letter;
“33”(cents) manuscript in black representing 12 cents for the British uniform rate plus 16 cents for the American Packet and 5 cents internal postage to be paid by the recipient.



Sydney, New South Wales 11.10.1856 to New York, United States of America

Route - Private sailing ship: Departed Sydney 11.10.1856 per “Waratah” to Melbourne. **Victorian contract clipper - Black Ball Line:** Departed Melbourne 17.10. per “Montmorency”, to Dunmore East, Ireland 5.1.1857; by steamer from Dublin to Liverpool 7.1. **Collins Line:** Departed Liverpool 12.1 per “Baltic” to New York, arriving 24.1.1857. (105 days).

3.2 The Clipper Sailings

Via Cape Horn

Single Rate - Underpaid:

Prepayment of 8d and underpaid 4d for a ½ oz ship letter of 1/- to New Brunswick.

Postal markings:

“INSUFFICIENTLY/STAMPED” in black applied at Sydney recognising the under payment;

“3”(d) in black applied at Sydney for debit to New South Wales for a non-contract ship letter;

“1/-” manuscript in black applied at Liverpool comprising 6d for an incoming ship letter and 6d for forwarding to New Brunswick.



Stoney Creek, New South Wales 21.10.1856 to Fredericton, **New Brunswick**

Route - Private steamship: Departed Sydney 29.10.1856 per “City of Sydney” to Melbourne. **Victorian contract clipper:** Departed Melbourne 31.10. per “Heather Bell”, to Gravesend 8.2.1857; by rail to Liverpool 10.2. **Allan Line:** Departed Liverpool 11.2 per “Indian” to Portland 4.3; by rail to Fredericton, arriving 8.3.1857. (138 days).

Ex Druce, Forster, Davis, Alvarado, Palmer

Note: The accountancy marks on this cover are confusing. The “3” handstamp in black should have been a credit in red ink to Great Britain. It was assumed by Great Britain that since the cover was under paid, that it was completely unpaid. Therefore the “1/-” manuscript comprising 6d for an incoming ship letter and 6d for forwarding to New Brunswick was appropriate.

The earliest cover from the Australian Colonies to New Brunswick recorded



Double Rate:

Prepayment of 1/- for a 1oz ship letter to England.

“2d” handstamp in red applied at London for credit to England for a Victorian contract ship letter.

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

Melbourne, Victoria 5.11.1856 to Table Bay, **Cape of Good Hope**

Route - Victorian contract clipper - Black Ball Line: Departed Melbourne 14.11.1856 per “Morning Light” to Liverpool 8.2.1857; by rail via London 9.2 to Dartmouth. **Lindsay Line:** Departed Dartmouth 6.3 per S.S. “Clarendon” to Cape Town, arriving 25.4.1857. (162 days).

Ex Tabcart

A rare clipper cover to the Cape of Good Hope

3.2 The Clipper Sailings

Via Cape Horn



Single Rate:

Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

Unpaid to the City State of Hamburg.

“1d”(d) handstamp in red credit to Great Britain for a Victorian contract ship letter;

“9”(schillings)manuscript in red for the unpaid transit from England to the City State of Hamburg to be paid by the recipient.

Melbourne, Victoria 12.11.1856 to the **City State of Hamburg**

Route - Victorian contract clipper - Black Ball Line : Departed Melbourne 14.11.1856 per “Morning Light”, to Liverpool 8.2.1857; by rail to London 9.2; by steamer to Ostende; by rail via Aachen to Hamburg, arriving 11.2.1857. (91 days).



Single Rate:

Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

“3”(d) in red applied at Sydney for credit to England for a non-contract ship letter.

Brisbane, **Moreton Bay District** 2.12.1856 to London, England

Route: Departed Brisbane 3.12.1856 per “Shamrock” to Sydney. **Non contract clipper - Aberdeen White Star Line:** Departed Sydney 17.12.1856 per “Woolloomooloo” to London, arriving 13.3.1857. (83 days).

A scarce clipper cover from the Moreton Bay District

3.2 The Clipper Sailings

Via Cape Horn



Hepburn, Victoria 29.12.1856 to Locarno, Switzerland

Route - Non contract clipper - Black Ball Line: Departed Melbourne 17.1.1857 per "Marco Polo" to Liverpool 4.4; by rail to London 6.4; by steamer to Calais 6.4; by rail via Geneva 7.4 and Basle 8.4 to Locarno, arriving 10.4.1857. (83 days).

Ex Chester Beatty, Forster, Perry, Kellow, Geitenbeek, Winchester

Single Rate:

Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.



Melbourne, Victoria 30.1.1857 to Manchester, England

Route - Non contract clipper: Departed Melbourne 31.1.1857 per "South Carolina" to Liverpool 6.6; by rail to Manchester, arriving 6.6.1857. (127 days).

Note: The last contract clipper to leave Melbourne was the Gibbs Bright vessel "Royal Charter" on the 17.1.1857. The next steamer voyage was the European and Australian Royal Mail Co. steamer S.S. Simla, departing on the 15.2. If the sender had waited until this sailing, the envelope would have arrived at Liverpool on the 9.4, a full two months before the arrival of the "South Carolina" on the 6.6.

An unusual cover with the sender offered two different types of transportation

3.2 The Clipper Sailings

Via Cape Horn



Single Rate:

Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

Postal Markings:

Unusually, the Victorian 6d stamp is cancelled on arrival at Liverpool, England on the 5.4.1858.

Melbourne, Victoria 31.12.1857 to London, England

Route - Non contract clipper: Departed Melbourne 1.1.1858 per "Morning Light" to Liverpool 5.4; by rail to London, arriving 6.4.1858. (94 days).

Note: If the sender had waited another eleven days, the letter would have sailed on board the European and Australian Royal Mail Co. steamer "Columbian" which departed on the 17.1.1858, arriving Southampton on the 15.3.1858, three weeks beforehand. This shows the range of choices that the early colonists had for sending their mail to England.



Single Rate:

Prepayment of 6d for a ½ oz ship letter to England.

Sydney, New South Wales 9.9.1860 to London, England

Route - Non contract clipper: Departed Sydney 13.9.1860 per "Damascus" to Southampton; by rail to London, arriving 10.12.1860. (88 days).

Note: If the sender had waited another nine days, the letter would have sailed on board the P&O Line steamer "Jeddo" which departed on the 22.9.1860, arriving Southampton on the 17.11.1860, almost four weeks beforehand.