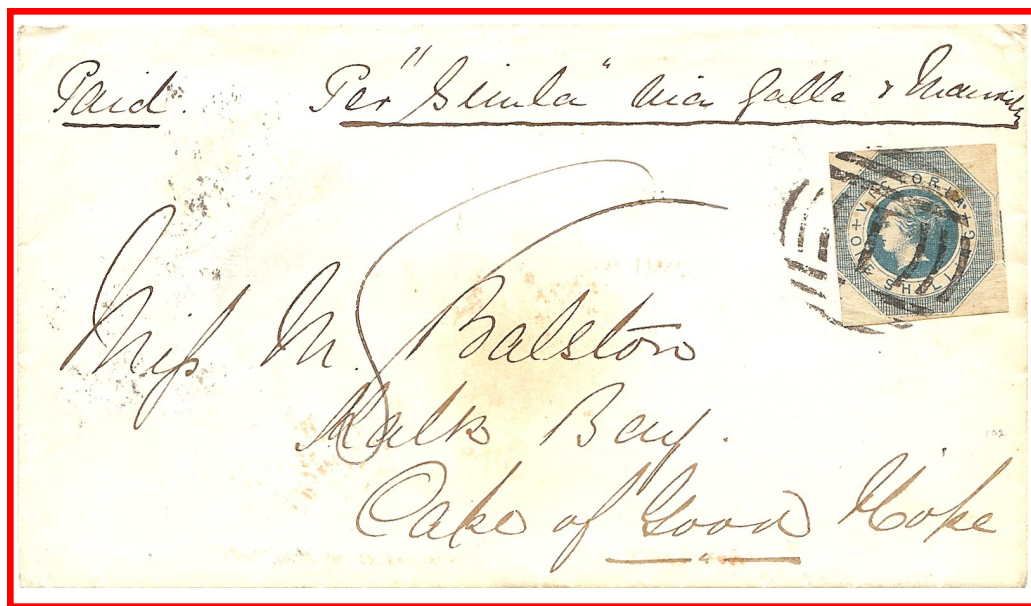


Via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

European & Australian Royal Mail Company

First successful contract steamship voyage after the Crimean War



Melbourne, 28 May 1857

Paid 1/- : 6d uniform rate to the UK, 6d packet to Cape Town

Simla : Melbourne 30 May, Mauritius 15 June, Suez 12 July

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 European and Australian Royal Mail Company's Flawed Contract

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

E&ARM had no experience with long-distance steam transport, and owned very few ships. Stiff late penalties and an impossible schedule made the company unprofitable, but the Admiralty refused to alter the contract terms. When the company failed, their contract was transferred to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. on 1 July 1858.

Via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

European & Australian Royal Mail Company

Grounding of the *Emeu* in the Red Sea



Geelong, 12 September 1857

Paid 9d via Marseilles but rerouted via Southampton after mishap at sea
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

Mail delays from grounding of the *Emeu*

On 22 October *Emeu* ran aground on a coral reef off Sudan. The Captain and 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 removed from the ship went to Alexandria and onward to Southampton.

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

Via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

European & Australian Royal Mail Company

From New South Wales for the packet at Melbourne

Paid 1/-8 via Marseilles, but
sent via Southampton

Emeu

Melbourne 17 September
Suez 3 November

Australasian

Alexandria 6 November
So'tn, 18 November

Cunard America

Liverpool 21 November
Boston 3 December

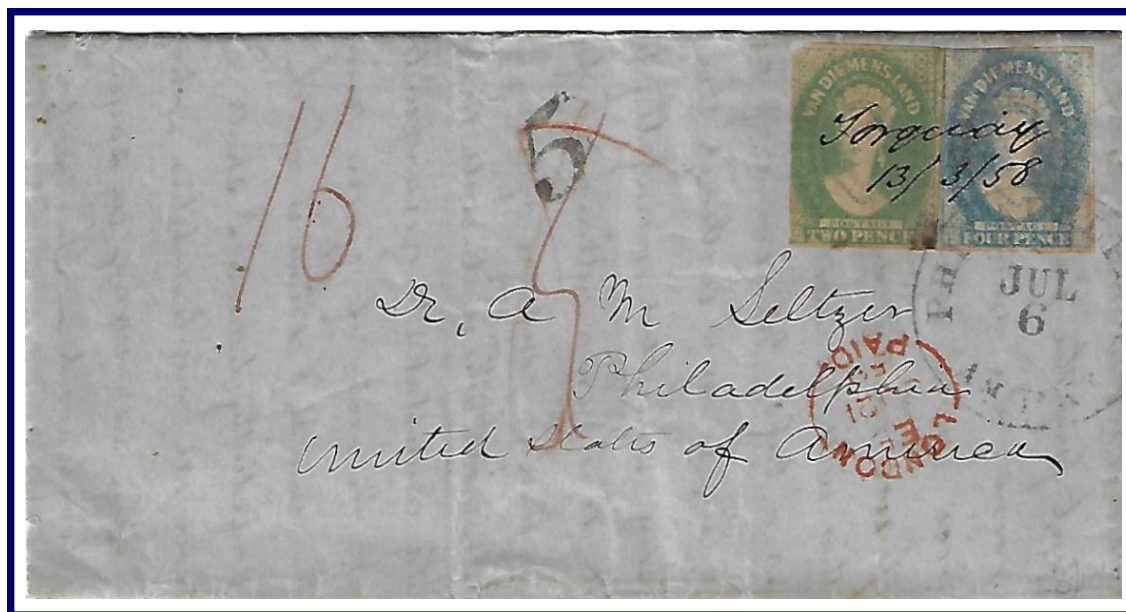
Received 4 Dec 86 days

Remained aboard *Emeu*
after grounding



Sydney, 10 September 1857

From Tasmania for the Packet at Melbourne



Torquay, 13 March 1858

Paid 1/2:

6d uniform rate
8d transatlantic

Swordfish

Hobart 16 Mar
Melbourne 22 Mar

Victoria

Melbourne 16 Apr
Suez 6 Jun

Cambria

Alexandria 8 Jun
Southampton 20 Jun

City of Washington

Liverpool 23 Jun
New York 6 Jul

116 days

British Contract Steamship

Overpaid via Marseilles but unendorsed, so sent via Southampton



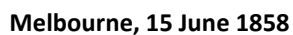
Sandhurst, 2 May 1858

Endorsed via Marseilles but underpaid, so sent via Southampton

Melbourne marked
INSUFFICIENTLY PAID
VIA MARSEILLES

Received 14 August

61 days



Via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

Royal Mail Steam Packet Company

First homeward sailing under the contract



Melbourne, 15 July 1858

Paid 1/2: 6d uniform rate, 8d transatlantic
Melbourne credited 8d to the UK for transatlantic sea postage

Emen : Melbourne 16 July, Suez 24 August
Teviot : Alexandria 26 August, Southampton 9 September

Cunard *Niagara* : Liverpool 11 September, Boston 24 September

Boston rated 5¢ due, U.S. inland Received 24 Sep 72 days

Royal Mail Steam Packet Company assumes the E&ARM contract

On 1 July 1858, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company took on 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 was 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.**

Via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

Royal Mail Steam Packet Company

First on-board sorting of Australian mail to the U.K.



Paid 6d uniform rate

European

Melbourne 17 Sep

Suez 27 Oct

Teviot

Alexandria 28 Oct

Southampton 12 Nov

Received 13 November

59 days

e

Geelong, 15 September 1858

Paid only to the U.S. port

Paid 2/4, double rate
to U.S. port

Columbian,

Melbourne 18 Dec

Suez 23 Jan

Thames

Alexandria 27 Jan

Southampton 11 Feb

Cunard Canada

Liverpool 12 Feb

Boston 26 Feb

Received 2 March 1859

76 days



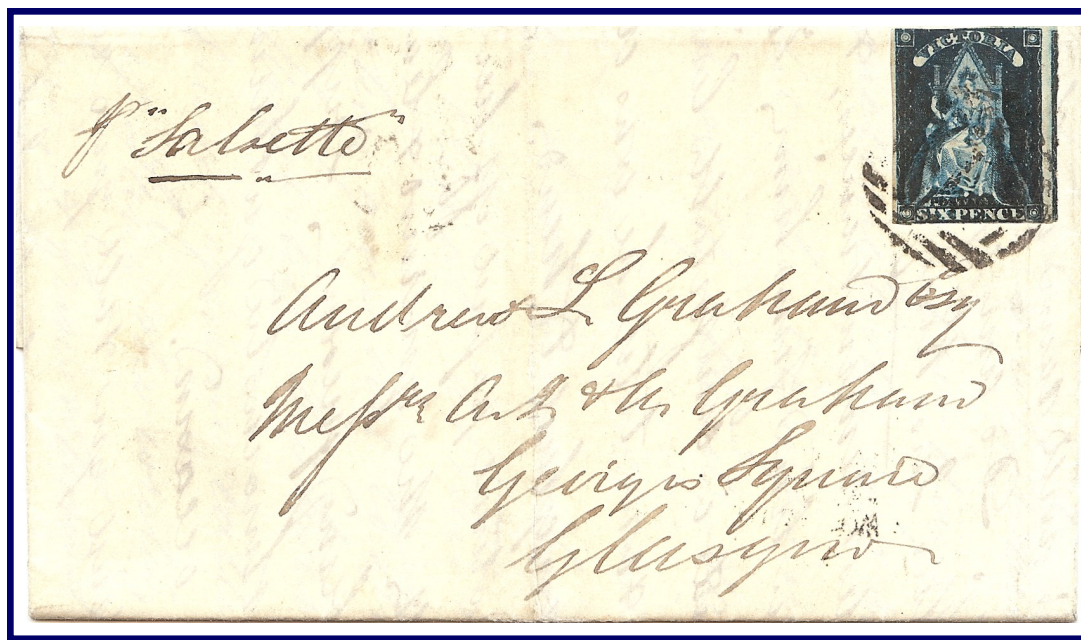
Melbourne, 17 December 1858

Via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

First homeward sailing under the contract



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

The P&O 1859 contract

Failure to profit forced RMSP's withdrawal from Australian service after the February 1859 sailing from Melbourne.

The P&O was the sole responder for tenders to replace the RMSP, so was contracted with effect from February 1859. Through February 1860, monthly homeward voyages called at Adelaide, King George's Sound and Mauritius enroute to Suez. Beginning with the March 1860 sailing, Galle was substituted for Port Louis as a more direct route. P&O's monthly mail service continued until 1880, then twice monthly into the 20th Century.

Via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Via Butterfield Stage from St. Louis to San Francisco



Front only

Melbourne, 15 February 1859

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, 5d 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

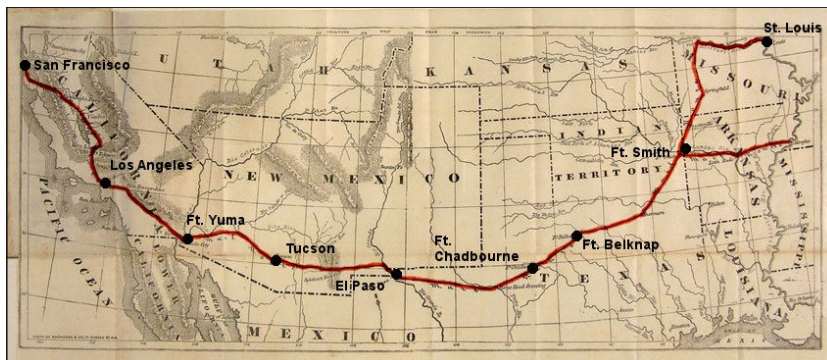
Inman City of Washington, Liverpool 13 April, New York 25 April

Rail to St Louis, then overland mail to San Francisco

Received 24 May

99 days

The only recorded Victoria cover carried by Butterfield Stage



Via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

To the mails by Victoria Express from the Goldfields



Lamplough, 12 February 1860

Paid 6d uniform rate

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

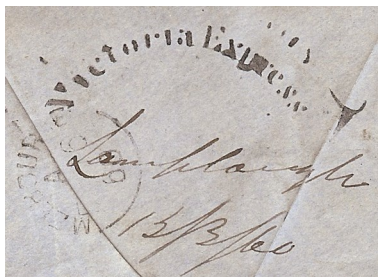
Salsette, Melbourne 16 February, Suez 25 March

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.

Via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

From the Riverina District of New South Wales

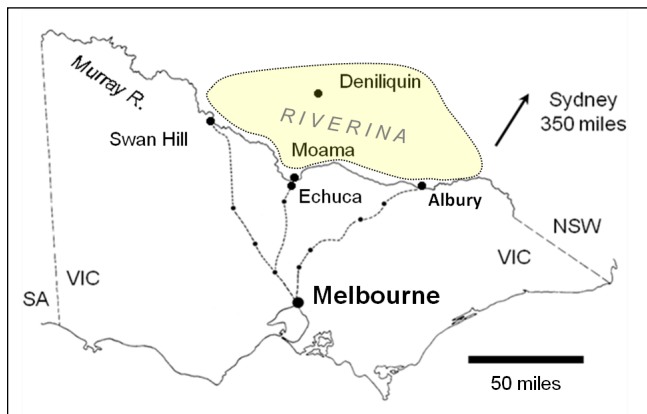


Deniliquin, 22 October 1860

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



The Riverina Mails

People along the Murray River in New South Wales 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.

25 mixed-franking Riverina covers have survived.

Via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.



Paid 6d uniform rate

Bombay, Melbourne 26 Oct

Colombo, Galle 17 Nov

wrecked 19 Nov

Nemesis

Galle 1 Dec, Suez 15 Dec

Massilia

Alexandria date unknown

Southampton 30 December

Received 31 December

69 days

Buninyong, 24 October 1862

To Canada West via Portland Maine

Paid 6d uniform rate

Bombay, Melbourne 26 Oct

Colombo, Galle 17 Nov

wrecked 19 Nov

Nemesis

Galle 1 Dec, Suez 15 Dec

Massilia,

Alexandria date unknown

Southampton 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 NNW 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. Mails were taken off in stages and carried to Suez by several ships over the ensuing weeks. Each partial shipment was forwarded on to London as it arrived at Alexandria, so London arrival dates range from 31 December to 25 January.

Via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Royal Marines Mail



Melbourne, 23 December 1867

Geelong, Melbourne 28 Dec, Galle 18 Jan

Nubia, Galle 18 Jan, Suez 31 Jan

Tanjore, Alexandria 5 Feb, Southampton 17 Feb

Penny red cancelled by **A81** mail-boat cancel of P&O steamer *Tanjore*

Most soldier's and sailors mail originated in Tasmania and New South Wales

Only three such letters from Victoria are recorded

Letter rate for non-commissioned military personnel

The concessional rate for soldiers and sailors was 1d per 1/2 ounce, and was to be prepaid. This letter was from 61 Company Wm. Grimes, Sergeant Royal Marines, who was serving on HMS *Galatea* in Melbourne. His letter was countersigned by Marine Captain R.F. Taylor, under command of the Duke of Edinburgh. *Galatea* had arrived at Melbourne on 30 November. She departed on 6 January for Sydney via Hobart Town.

Via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

To Ontario via Canadian packet to Quebec

Paid 1/-

6d to London (5d credit to UK)

6d to Canada (5d credit to CA)

Malta, Melbourne 18 July

Candia, Galle 7 August

Suez 28 August

Delta, Alexandria 30 August

S'otn 12 September

Allan Line *Hibernian*

Liverpool 16 September

Quebec 27 September

Received 29 September 78 days

2¢ credit to US for transit via NY;
irrelevant for direct to Quebec.



Geelong, 17 July 1869

From the German Consulate in Melbourne



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

Via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Via the Portland Exchange Office



Paid 1/2
6d to London
8d transatlantic

Bombay, Melb. 26 January
Nubia, Galle 18 February
Pera, Alexandria 5 March
S'hampton 17 March

London 16 cents credit to
U.S. for Am. Pkt. (8d)

Allan Line *North American*
Liverpool 17 March
Portland 31 March

Portland rated 5 cents due
(1848 US-GB Treaty)

66 days

Melbourne, 26 January 1864

Via the Chicago Exchange Office

Paid 1/- to destination,
1d overpayment

Malta, Melbourne 11 October
Candia, Galle 10 August
Pera, Alexandria 21 November
Southampton 5 December

NGL *Rhein*
Southampton 7 December
New York 18 December

Chicago exchange office PAID

Received 22 December

73 days



Golden Square, 11 October 1869

1868 U.S.-U.K Postal Convention

The U.K.-U.S rate was lowered to 12¢ on 1 Jan 1869: 2¢ U.K., 8¢ sea, 2¢ U.S. The U.K. transit fee was dropped.

Via Southampton

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

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 payment
of 3d to France

Received 24 May 59 days

**First Australian mail
to transit the Suez Canal**



Richmond, 27 March 1871



Melbourne, 28 March 1872

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, U.S. inland
NGL *Hermann*

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

Received 1 June 66 days

Reduction in postage rates

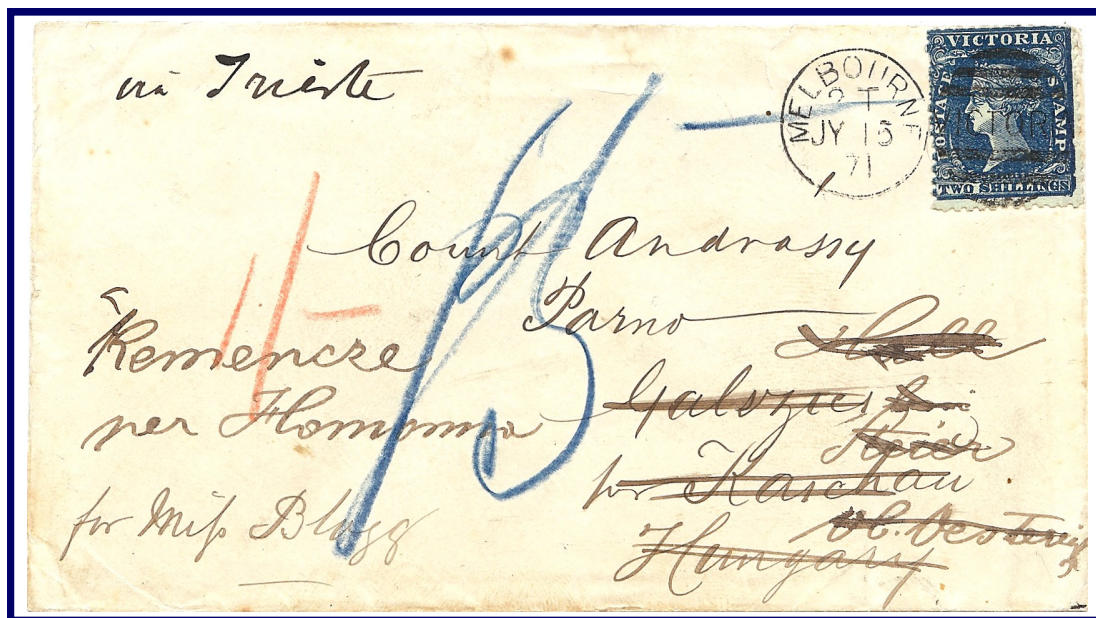
In 1854 Victorians could not prepay a letter to a U.S. destination via England: 1s took a letter to the U.K. from where it would be forwarded unpaid, with 24¢ due from the addressee. By 1870 the British uniform rate and U.S.-G.B. postal conventions had lowered the paid-to destination cost to only 8d,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

Via Trieste

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

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

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

Via Trieste

Austrian Lloyd established a monthly express 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.