

USAGE OF THE IMPERFORATE STAMP

The 1/- General Ship Letter Rate

INTERCOLONIAL MAIL TO NEW SOUTH WALES

The 300% increase in the Victorian ship letter charge brought a retaliatory response from New South Wales. From 1st May 1854 to 1st January 1855 that Colony treated mail from Victoria as unpaid and levied a 3d inwards ship letter charge on each letter.

[16]



29th August 1854 lettersheet from Melbourne to Sydney, carried by *City of Sydney* arriving at Sydney 2nd October (Ship Letter backstamp). Handstruck "3"(d) inwards ship letter charge collected from addressee.

[39]



19th June 1855 lettersheet from Melbourne to Sydney, incorrectly endorsed 'per *Havilah*' (that ship went to Adelaide). Carried per *Waratah* arriving at Sydney 27th June (Ship Letter backstamp).

The First P. & O. Packet Service

At the time of issue of the 1/- stamp, the packet service to the United Kingdom was provided by P. & O. steamers via a feeder to Galle which linked with the Far East service. Only four voyages were made after July 1854 (two each by *Norna* and *Madras*) before the vessels were withdrawn for service in the Crimea.

TO THE UNITED KINGDOM



[11]

14th September 1854 envelope from Melbourne to Barton Stacey, Hants. Carried per *Madras*, and thence per *Bengal* and *Indus*, arriving at Southampton 4th December.

The British Post Office reacted to Victoria's non-adherence to the 6d Empire rate by treating all letters arriving before 1st January 1855 as unpaid, and charging the recipient 1/- as an unpaid incoming packet letter. Thereafter the charge was reduced to the standard 6d.

TO HAMBURG



[4]

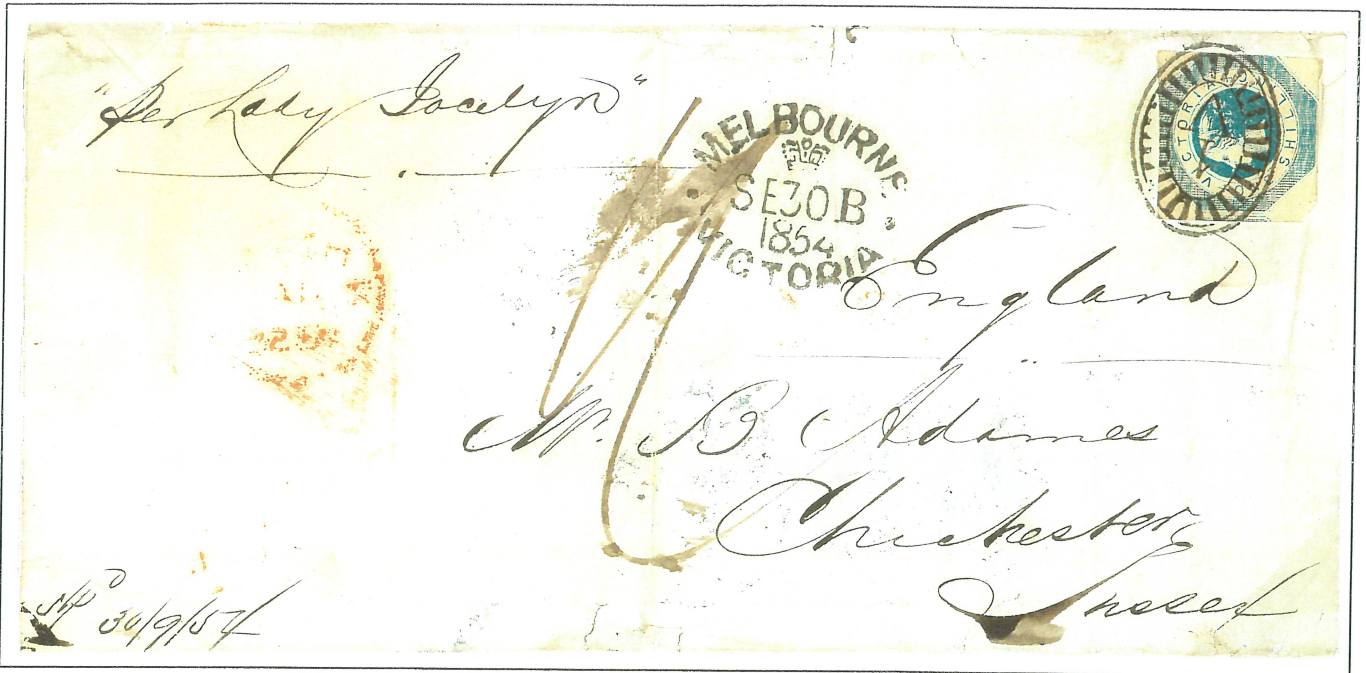
27th January 1855 lettersheet from Melbourne via London, carried per *Madras*. Prepaid to London only, arriving 6th April. The ship letter rate to Hamburg was 8d per ¼ ounce. 10d due to British Post Office, comprising 6d incoming packet charge plus half the ship letter rate to Hamburg, and included in 16 silver groschen due from addressee.

USAGE OF THE IMPERFORATE STAMP

The General Screw Steam Shipping Co. Packet Service

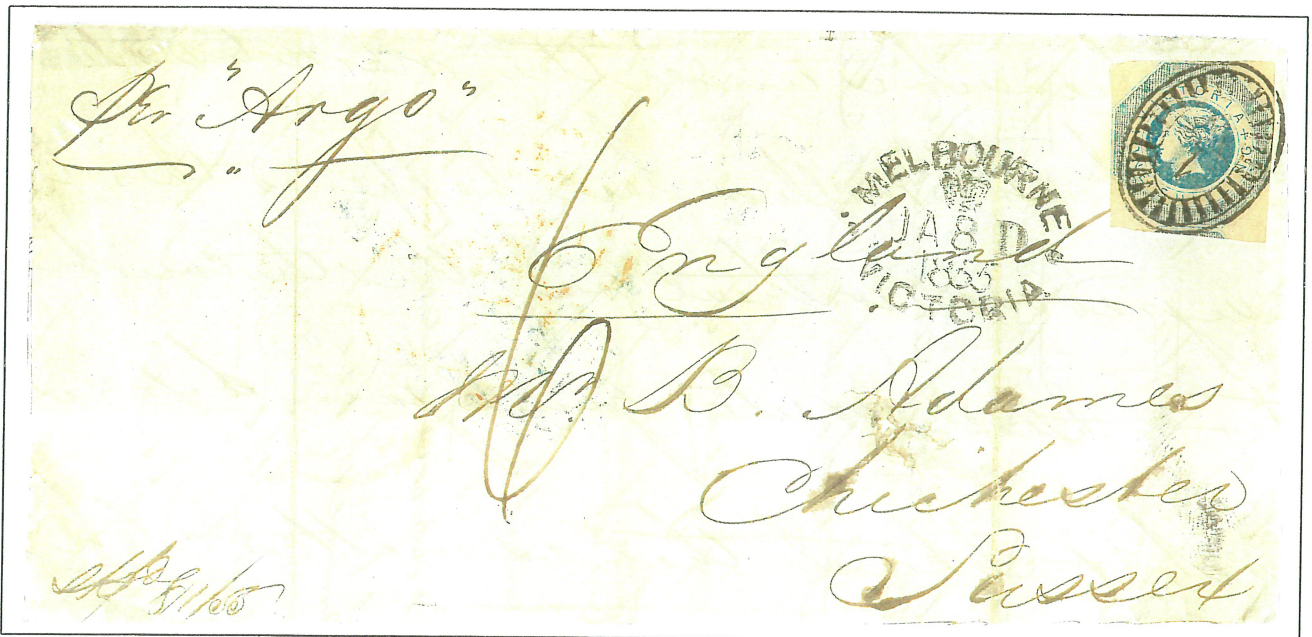
Following several non-contract voyages in 1853-84, the General Screw Steam Shipping Co. provided four contract voyages via Cape Horn in 1854-55, after which the ships were withdrawn for service in the Crimea.

[20]



30th September 1854 lettersheet from Melbourne to Chichester. Carried by *Lady Jocelyn*, and backstamped at Chichester 2nd January 1855.

[1]



8th January 1855 lettersheet from Melbourne to Chichester. Carried by *Argo*, and backstamped at Chichester 17th March 1855.

These two entires show the change in British Post Office treatment of incoming Victorian mail after the beginning of 1855, the incoming charge being reduced from 1/- to 6d.

Clipper Mail

The void left by the termination of the P. & O. and General Screw steamer services was filled by contracts signed with sailing clippers. The Companies used were the Black Ball and White Star lines, with outward contract voyages (via Cape of Good Hope) running from December 1854 to October 1856, but not all return trips (via Cape Horn) were under contract. The U.K. delivery charges identify the contract voyages.



[7]

2nd June 1855 envelope from Melbourne to London, carried by Black Ball clipper *Boomerang* leaving Melbourne 7th June, and arriving Liverpool 19th September (Australian Packet backstamp). 1/- packet rate for a ½ ounce letter. The 1/- incoming packet charge levied on the recipient suggest the letter was rated above ½ ounce by the British P.O.



[4]

23rd March 1855 lettersheet sent from Melbourne to Glasgow, carried by White Star clipper *Shalimar* leaving Melbourne 23rd March, and arriving at Liverpool 8th June. Prepaid 1/- for a ½ ounce letter and charged 6d for an incoming packet letter. Incorrectly backstamped with the boxed Liverpool Ship datestamp.

USAGE OF THE IMPERFORATE STAMP

Clipper Mail

Two covers carried on the first Black Ball contract voyage per James Baines, leaving Melbourne 11th March 1855, and arriving at Liverpool 21st May.

2/- (2 x 1/-) DOUBLE RATE LETTER (½ -1 OUNCE)



[6/14]

10th March 1855 lettersheet from Melbourne to Dalkeith, Scotland. Charged 1/- (2 x 6d) as a double rate incoming packet letter. Backstamped Dalkeith 22nd May 1855.

4/- (4 x 1/-) QUADRUPLE RATE LETTER (1½-2 OUNCES)



[11]

[22] [3] [35]

10th March 1855 envelope from Melbourne to Bilston, Staffordshire. Charged 2/- (4 x 6d) as a quadruple rate incoming packet letter. Backstamped Bilston 22nd May 1855.

Clipper Mail

REGISTERED MAIL TO SWITZERLAND



[16]

22nd May 1855 registered envelope from Hepburn to Locarno. Carried per Black Ball clipper *Boomerang* leaving Melbourne 7th June, and arriving at Liverpool 19th September. Backstamped Locarno, 25th September 1855. Franked 1/- Octagonal and 1/- Registered (Die I), paying the registration fee and the ½ ounce packet rate to London only.

Posted as a registered letter, as indicated by the use of the 1/- registration stamp and the inscribed ledger numbers for Hepburn and Melbourne, but apparently mis-bagged at Melbourne and subsequently treated as ordinary correspondence.



[25-26-27-28]

29th December 1856 envelope from Hepburn to Locarno via France. Carried by the Black Ball clipper *Donald Mackay*. London arrival datestamp, 6th April 1857, and backstamped Locarno, 9th April 1857. Franked with strip of four 1/- Octagonals, two 1d Queen-on-Throne and 1/- Registered (Die II). The total of 5/2d represents the fully prepaid rate of 5/2d for a ½ ounce registered letter to Switzerland via France. The credit to the British P.O. was 3/9d, plus an additional 6d registration fee.

From the Perry collection

Clipper Mail to Europe via the United Kingdom

TO HOLLAND



[26]

10th March 1855 lettersheet from Melbourne to Amsterdam carried per Black Ball clipper *James Baines*. Franked 1/- for the general ship letter rate. The unpaid rate to Holland via Belgium was 8d per ¼ ounce, of which half was due to the British Post Office. 6d incoming packet charge included in 10d due the U.K., deducted from 70 cents charged to addressee.

TO ITALY



[16]

5th June 1856 lettersheet from Melbourne to Milan, Lombardy, carried per Black Ball clipper *Champion of the Seas*. Franked 1/- for the double ship letter rate. Arrived London 20th September, where the "COLONIES/ART-18" Anglo-French accountancy handstamp was applied to indicate an underpaid letter.

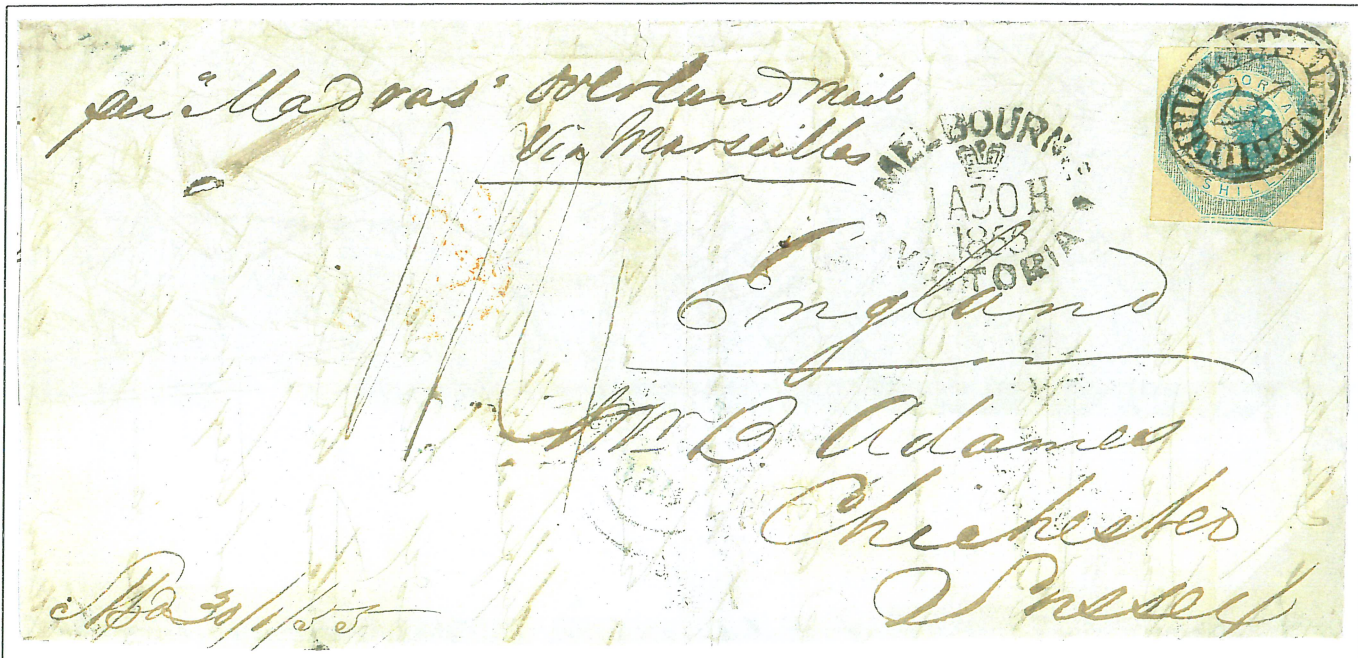
USAGE OF THE IMPERFORATE STAMP

The First "Via Marseilles" Services

1854-55 P. & O. SERVICE

A prepaid service via Marseilles became available from 30th September 1854, the rate being 1/- per ½ ounce plus French transit charge of 5d per ¼ ounce. Only the last two P. & O. voyages in late 1854/early 1855 provided the necessary connections. Via Marseilles letters are rare and full prepayment is not recorded from Victoria.

[7]

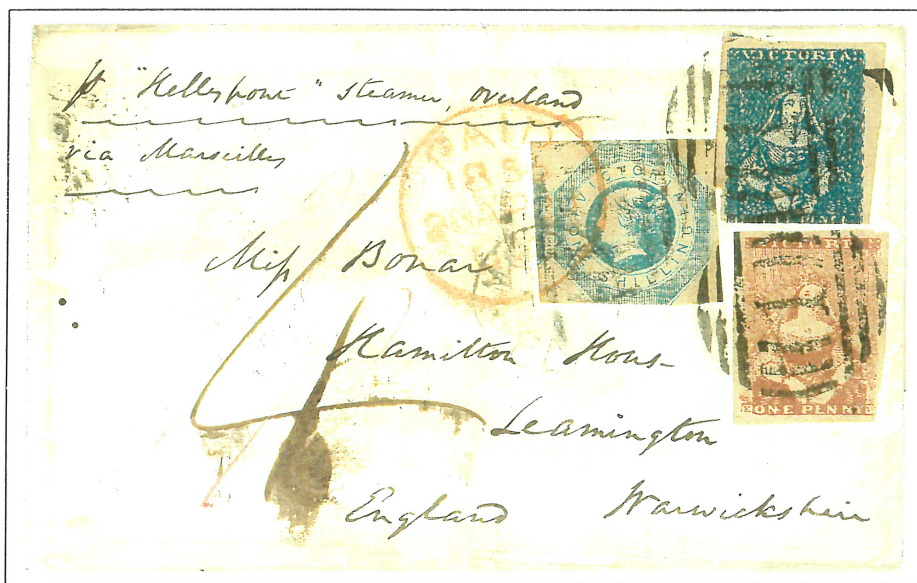


30th January 1855 lettersheet from Melbourne to Chichester. Carried by *Madras*, and connecting with *Hindustan* and *Valetta*, arriving at Marseilles on 29th March. Backstamped Chichester, 1st April. Prepaid 1/- for ship letter rate only, and 1/4d collected from addressee, comprising 6d incoming packet charge plus 2 x 5d French transit charge.

1856 VOYAGE OF THE HELLESPONT

During the period of the Crimean War when no westbound contract services operated, two voyages by private ships provided a link with the P. & O. Far East service, and the Victorian P.O. took the opportunity to advertise a Via Marseilles mail.

[40]



16th February 1856 envelope from Melbourne to Leamington. Carried per private steamer *Hellespont* to Singapore, thence per P. & O. steamers to Marseilles).

Franked 1/- plus 1d and 3d Half-Lengths (Campbell & Fergusson printings), representing full payment for a ½ ounce letter (6d ship letter plus 2 x 5d French transit). The British P.O. reckoned that the 6d ship letter paid only for the *Hellespont* voyage, and that an additional 4d Far East rate was applicable. Hence the circular 'MORE TO PAY' and '4' in black. Mss. '1/1' is the proportion of postage due to the British P.O., comprising 3d for a private ship letter plus 10d for French transit.

Ship Letters

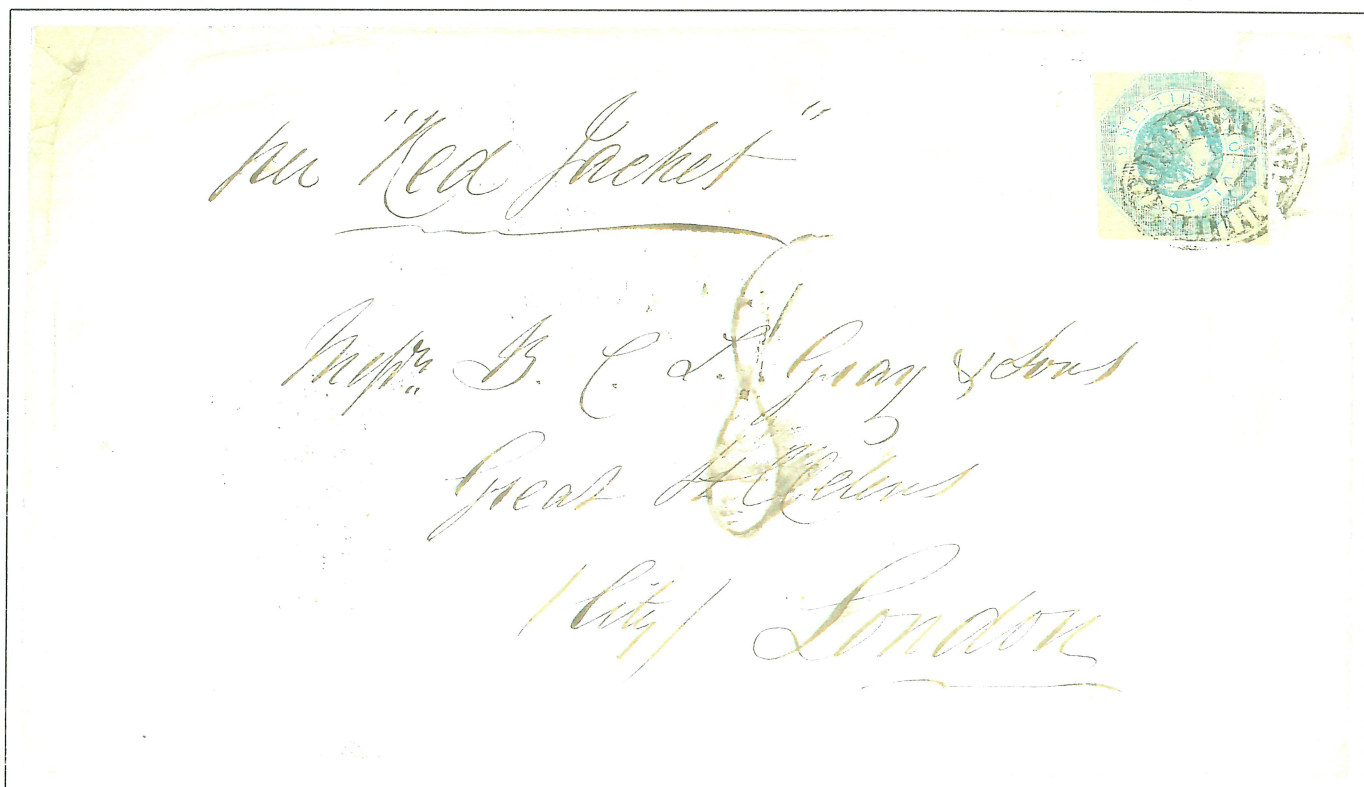
Due to the irregularities in the packet services, the carriage of mail by private ship was important up to the beginning of 1857. The Victorian charge was the relevant general ship letter rate, and the British P.O. collected an incoming ship letter delivery charge of 8d per ½ ounce from the addressee.



3rd April 1855 lettersheet from Melbourne to Glasgow, per steamer *Gipsy Bride*. Arrived at Liverpool 1st July 1855 (boxed Ship Letter backstamp), and at Glasgow the next day.

NON-CONTRACT CLIPPER LETTER

[18]



30th April 1855 envelope from Melbourne to London carried on a non-contract voyage of the White Star clipper *Red Jacket*, leaving Melbourne 30th April and arriving Liverpool 25th July. Backstamped London, 26th July.

USAGE OF THE IMPERFORATE STAMP

Ship Letters to Europe via the United Kingdom

Two covers carried by the same private ship to Liverpool, arriving 22nd August 1857

TO DENMARK



27th April 1857 lettersheet from Geelong to Tondern, Denmark, via Hamburg (27th August 1857 backstamp). The prepaid rate to Denmark was 1/4½d for a ½ ounce letter, and the underfranking of 1/- Octagonal and 2d Queen-on Throne lithograph (Campbell & Co. printing) represents the rate to Hamburg, and was probably the result of the manner of addressing. "3(d)" accountability for a private ship letter, with "8(d)" the portion of Victorian postage due to U.K. for European delivery; "6½(d)" due from British P.O. to Hamburg; and "2 (schillings)" in red to be collected from addressee.

TO PRUSSIA



11th May 1857 lettersheet from Port Albert to Halle, Prussia, via Belgium and Aachen. Franked 1/- Octagonal and two 1d Emblems watermark Large Star, prepaying the 1/2d rate for a ½ ounce letter. Manuscript "8(d)" represents the portion of Victorian postage due to British P.O. for European delivery.

USAGE OF THE IMPERFORATE STAMP

European & Australian Royal Mail Co. Contract

After the end of the Crimean War, it was not until February 1857 that a new packet steamer service operated by the European & Australian Royal Mail Company was inaugurated. There were only 24 monthly voyages up to February 1859, when the Company went bankrupt.

Two double ship letter rate ($\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 ounce) letters carried on the *Columbian*, leaving Melbourne on 18th December 1858.

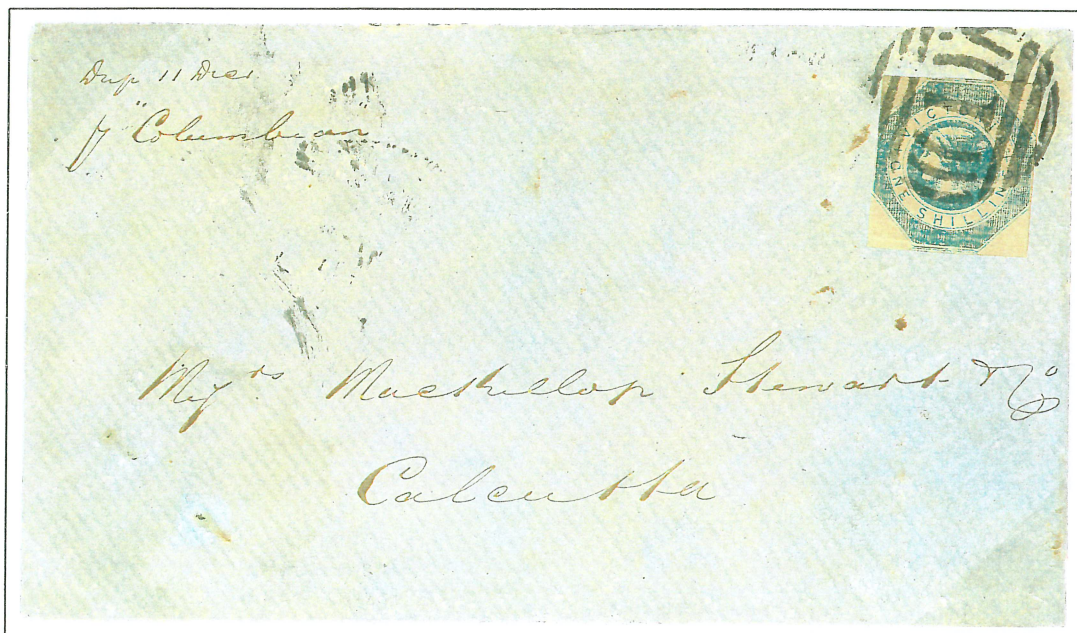
TO THE UNITED KINGDOM



[25]

17th December 1858 envelope from Melbourne to Dublin via Southampton, subsequently re-directed to Kingstown. Charged "2(d)" for e-addressing.

TO INDIA



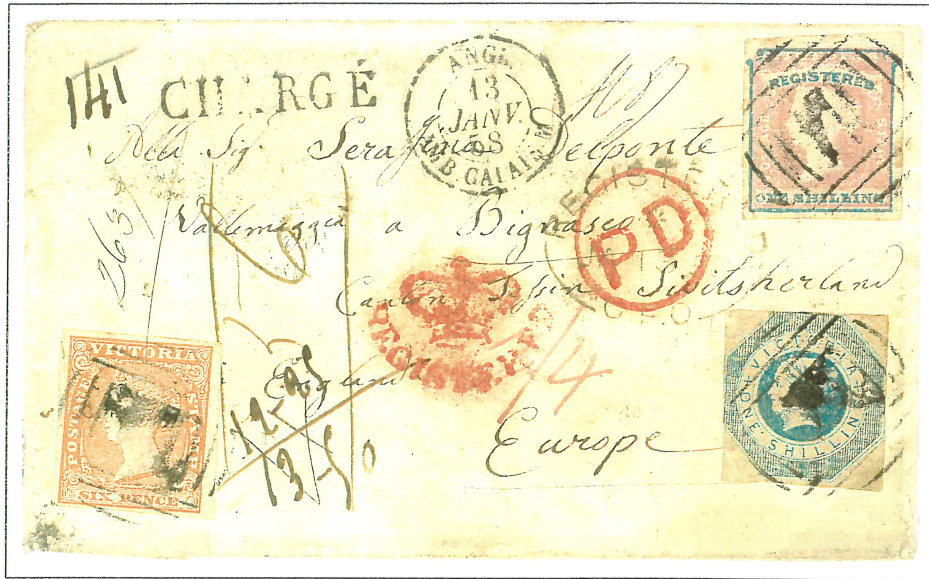
[20]

17th December 1858 envelope from Melbourne to Calcutta, trans-shipped at Point de Galle.

The use of two different types of obliterator on the same day suggests that the obsolete Barred Oval type (upper cover) might have been brought into use on days of heavy mail volume, such as the despatch of the monthly overseas mail.

Mail to Europe via the United Kingdom

REGISTERED MAIL TO SWITZERLAND



[14]

13th October 1857 registered envelope from Yackandandah to Locarno, Switzerland. Arrived in Melbourne too late for the October mail, and had to wait for E. & A.R.M. Emeu leaving Melbourne 16th November. Thence per Teviot, arriving at Southampton 11th January 1859, and carried to Switzerland via France. Franked 1/- Octagonal, 6d Woodblock and 1/- registered, prepaying the rate for a ½ ounce registered letter.

TO GERMANY



[9]

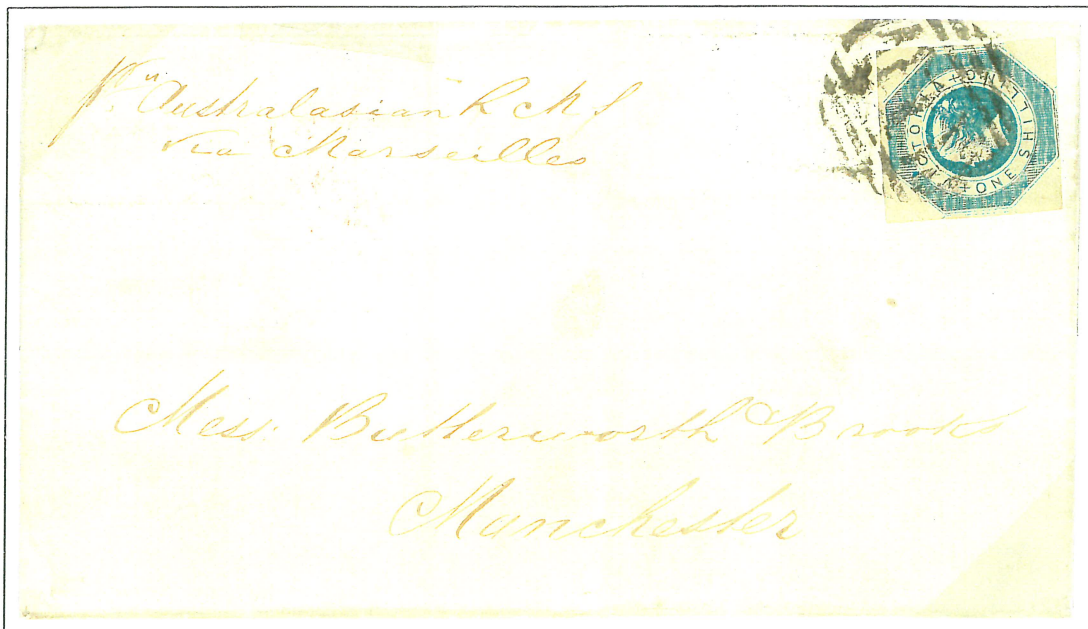
16th October 1858 envelope from Melton to Hanover, Germany. Arrived at Southampton 19th December 1858, and sent to Germany via Belgium. Franked 1/- and 4d Emblems roulette on vertical laid paper, representing a 2d overpayment of the 1/2d rate for a ½ ounce letter. Manuscript "8(d)" is the proportion of postage due to the British P.O. for continental postage.

This cover was carried on the Victoria, whose engine room became flooded at Galle. The mails were transferred to Oneida, which broke its propeller shaft and arrived at Aden under sail. The mails were then transferred to Bengal for Suez, and carried by Niagara from Alexandria.

The "Via Marseilles" Service

The European & Australian Royal Mail Co. offered a fully prepaid service to the United Kingdom via Marseilles. Carriage by rail across France accelerated delivery by 7 to 10 days compared to the all-sea route to Southampton. The Marseilles rate was 6d per ½ ounce packet rate plus a French transit charge of 3d per ¼ ounce.

Two letters to the same addressee carried on the *Australasian*, leaving Melbourne on 16th June 1858, thence per *Cambria* and *Wye*, arriving at Marseilles 7th August. Backstamped Manchester, 9th August.



[4]

1/- ½ ounce rate (6d packet rate + 2 x 3d French transit)

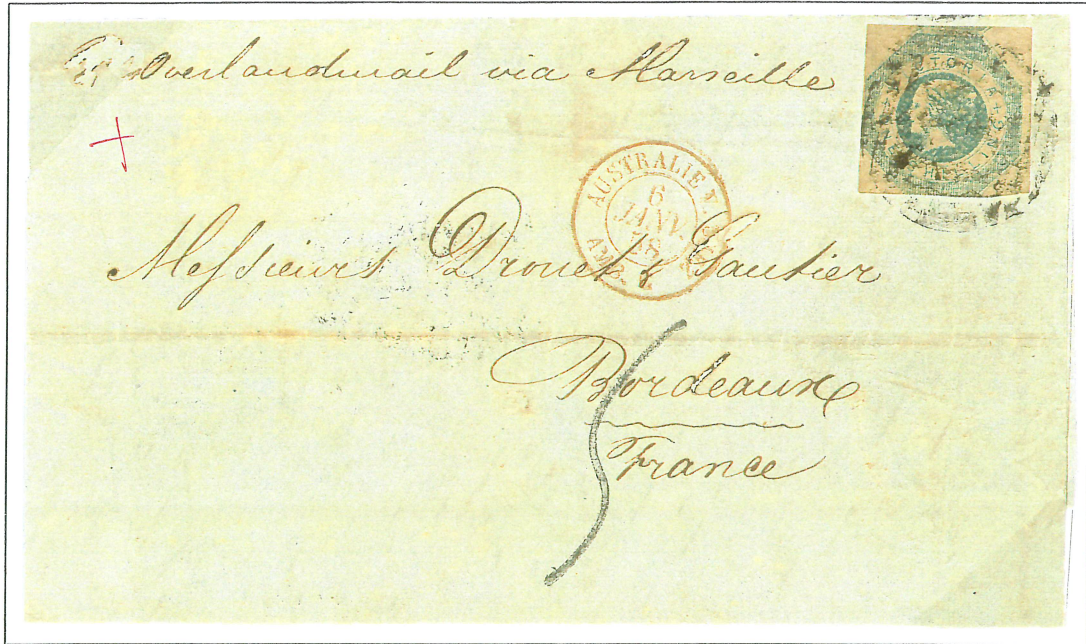


[28]

1/- used with 6d Woodblock and 3d Half-Length (Campbell & Fergusson, Stone B) for 1/9d ¾ ounce rate (2 x 6d packet rate + 3 x 3d French transit).

The "Via Marseilles" Service

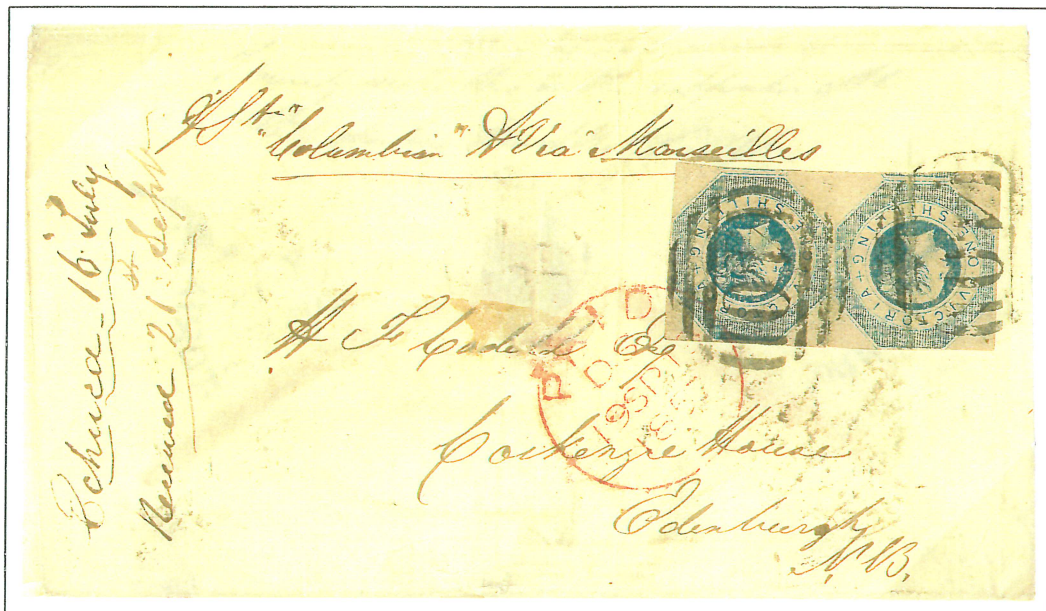
DIRECT MAIL TO FRANCE



[40]

16th November 1857 lettersheet from Melbourne to Bordeaux, carried by E. & A.R.M. City of Sydney. Franked 1/- for ½ ounce rate.

THE 1 OUNCE RATE



[21-22]

17th July 1857 envelope from Echuca to Edinburgh, carried per E. & A.R.M. Columbian. Franked 1/- pair for the 1 ounce rate (2 x 6d packet rate + 4 x 3d French transit).

The "Via Marseilles" Service

Two covers carried on the same voyage of the E. & A.R.M. steamer *European*,
leaving Melbourne 25th June 1857



[34]

24th June 1857 lettersheet from Melbourne to Glasgow. Carried per E. & A.R.M. *Vectis* from Alexandria, arriving at Marseilles 27th August. Backstamped Glasgow, 30th August 1857. 1/- rate for a ½ ounce letter.



[39]

25th June 1857 lettersheet from Melbourne to Bristol. Apparently mis-bagged at Melbourne with the Southampton mail despite "Via Marseilles" endorsement, and carried by E. & A.R.M. *Ripon* from Alexandria to Southampton, arriving 4th September. Backstamped Bristol, 5th September 1857. Franked 1/- for the ½ ounce rate via Marseilles, but overpaid 6d for the route used.

The Wreck of the *Emeu*

The E. & A.R.M. steamer *Emeu* left Melbourne 14th September 1857, and on 22nd October struck the Guttal el Bunna reef 120 miles off Jeddah, Arabia. The mail was subsequently handled in two ways.



[32]

14th September lettersheet from Melbourne to London. 1/- Marseilles rate for a ½ ounce letter.

Most of the Marseilles portion of the mail was taken ashore by Arabian boats, then back to sea to be placed on board P. & O. Madras en route to Suez. It was taken by Vectis to Marseilles, arriving 27th November. The mail arrived in London on 30th November.



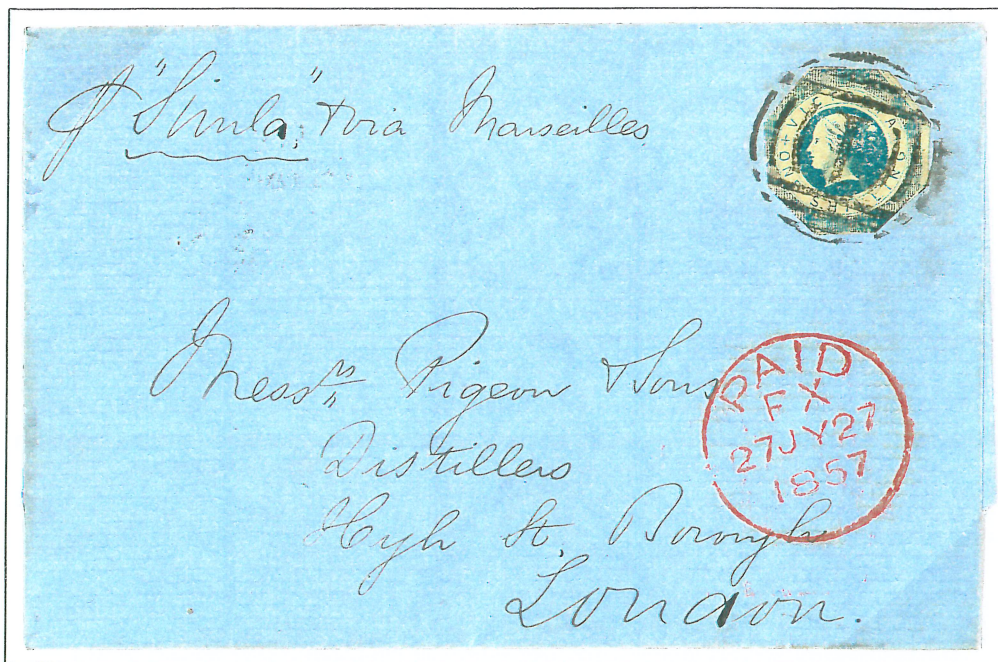
[9]

7th September 1857 lettersheet from Prahran to Strabane, Canada West. Franked 1/- and 2d Emblems on wove paper, representing the 1/2d ½ ounce rate. Carried by Cunard steamer *Persia* from Liverpool, Backstamped Strabane, 28th December 1857, with handstruck "1d" delivery charge.

The Southampton mail (together with the remaining Marseilles mail) remained on board *Emeu*, which was eventually refloated and proceeded to Suez. She arrived too late for the usual steamer, and the mail was carried by P. & O. Ripon to Southampton, arriving at London 7th December.

The Delayed Voyage of the *Simla*

Another disastrous E. & A.R.M. trip was the 5th homeward mail by *Simla*, which departed Melbourne on 30th May 1857 but did not reach Suez until 12th July, by which time the connecting vessel at Alexandria had left. The British Consul chartered the *Scamander*, which sailed on 14th July bound for Liverpool. The mail was trans-shipped at Malta to E. & A.R.M. *Cambrian* reached London via Marseilles on 26th/27th July.



[39]

28th May 1857 lettersheet from Melbourne to London. 1/- Marseilles rate for a ½ ounce letter.



[25]

26th May 1857 lettersheet from Ballarat via Geelong to Glasgow. Franked 1/- for a double rate letter via Southampton. At London the PAID d.s. was applied, but since the whole of the *Simla* mail was routed via Marseilles, the letter was underpaid for this routing, and the circular MORE TO PAY was overstruck. Rated over ¾ ounce and thus liable to 1/9d postage, the mss. "9" indicates the postage collected from the addressee. No additional fine was imposed since the franking was correct for the intended route.

This would appear to be the first "via Southampton" cover reported from this voyage, and indicates its treatment. It might have been logical to leave the Southampton mail on Scamander all the way to Liverpool; in that case, however, the mail would have been further delayed until 12th August.

USAGE OF THE IMPERFORATE STAMP

The New P. & O. Contract, 1859

The last European and Australian mail steamer left Melbourne in February 1859. The mail contract was taken over by P. & O. later the same month.

VIA MARSEILLES TO FRANCE - THE FIRST HOMEWARD VOYAGE



15th February 1859 lettersheet from Melbourne to Gironde. Carried by *Salsetta*, and thence per *Panther*, arriving at Marseilles 4th April. Backstamped Gironde, 6th April. Franked 1/- for the ½ ounce rate to France.

TO THE PAPAL STATES VIA LONDON - THE SECOND HOMEWARD VOYAGE



19th March 1859 envelope from Beechworth to Bologna. Carried by *Malta*, thence per *Ceylon*, arriving at London 11th June. Sent to the Papal States via France, and backstamped Bologna, 15th June. Franked with 1/- Octagonal, and perforated 1d and 4d Emblems on wove paper, prepaying the 1/5d ½ ounce rate. 11d credit to the British P.O.

The imperforate 1/- stamp is rarely found on mail from this contract because the perforated stamp was issued in February 1859 and quickly came into general use.

USAGE OF THE IMPERFORATE STAMP

Mail to the United States of America

The preferred service for mail to the U.S.A. was via the United Kingdom using contract steamers, which from the beginning of 1857 had to be fully prepaid. Irregular private shipping also carried letters, usually by the transpacific route. This was slow but cheaper, with the general ship letter rate applying.



[18]

9th November 1858 envelope from Ararat to Blackstone, Massachusetts, Carried per E. & A.R.M. Emeu, arriving at Southampton 11th January 1859. Transferred to Havre Line Arago at Liverpool, arriving at New York 29th January. Prepaid with 1/- Octagonal and 1d emerald Emblems no watermark pair, representing the rate for a ½ ounce letter. Transatlantic portion of postage (8d) was due to the U.S. Post Office. 5c incoming packet charge to addressee.



[16]

16th March 1858 lettersheet from Melbourne, to Philadelphia. Without route endorsement and prepaid 1/- for a double-rate ship letter, this was carried by private ship on the transpacific route. At San Francisco, the red "SHIP" was applied together with the "12" rate datestamp, representing the transcontinental rate to be collected from the addressee. Endorsed as being received at Philadelphia 30th September 1858.

A late usage of the Barred Oval 1 obliterator. From the Forster collection.

USAGE OF THE IMPERFORATE STAMP

Transpacific Mail

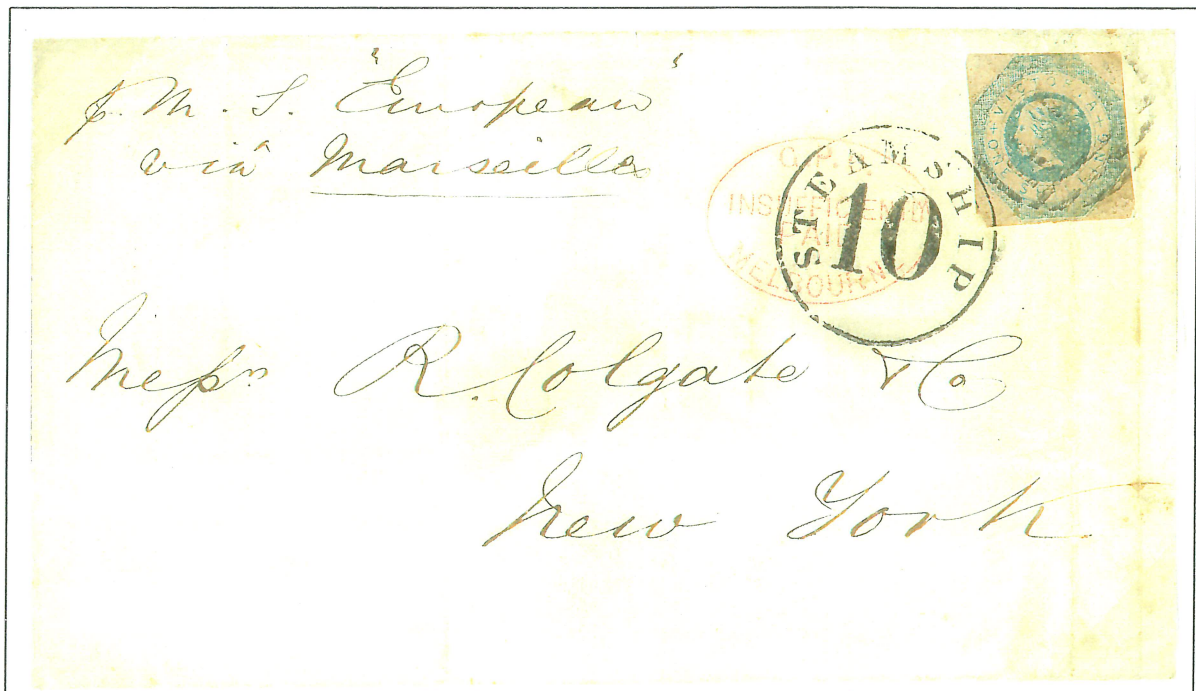
Postal regulations stated that underpaid mail would be forwarded provided letters were prepaid with at least a single rate by the cheapest route. The transpacific route by private ship was used for American mail which was endorsed for delivery via the United Kingdom, but was underpaid.

[35]



21st September 1858
lettersheet from
Melbourne to Baltimore
Held over for additional
postage, to make up the
1/2d ½ ounce rate via
Southampton, but the
deficiency was not
forthcoming. Endorsed as
being received 29th
January 1859, and
charged 10c as an
incoming ship letter.

From the Gartner
collection



[1]

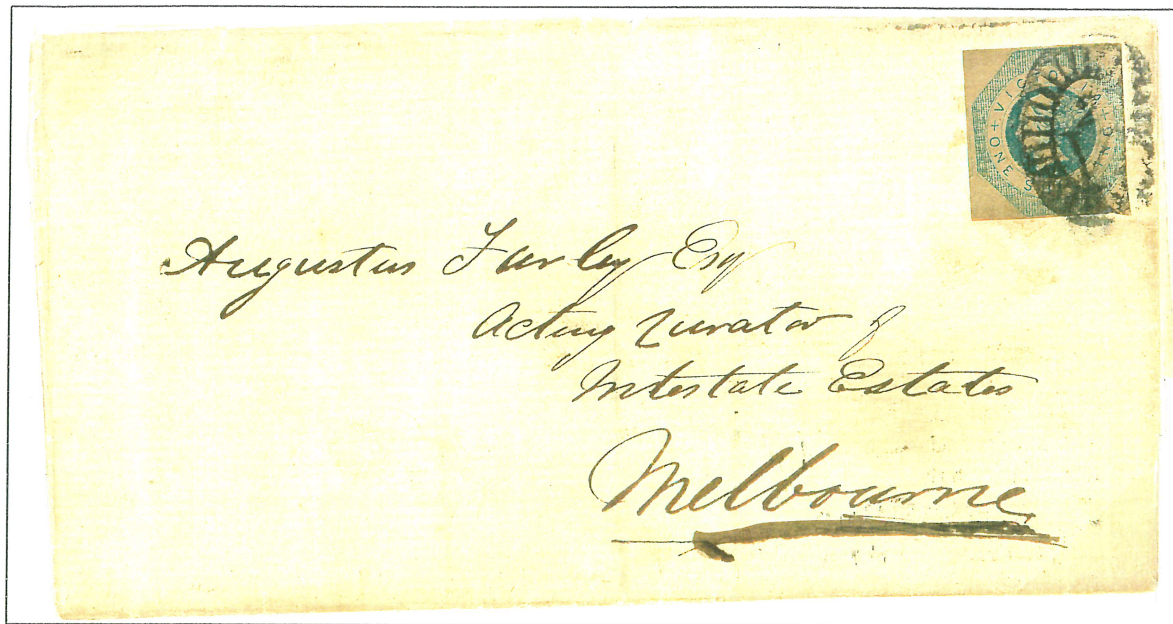
15th September 1858 lettersheet from Melbourne to New York. Franked only 1/-, instead of the correct rate of 1/8d for a ½ ounce letter via Marseilles. Endorsed as being received at New York 29th January 1859, and charged 10c as an incoming ship letter.

Both covers were probably carried on the Beejapore to Callao, and have been struck with the oval "G.P.O. INSUFFICIENTLY PAID/MELBOURNE"

USAGE OF THE IMPERFORATE STAMP

Inland Mail

From 1 May 1854 the inland rate was raised from 2d to 6d up to ½ ounce, 1/- from ½ to 1 ounce, and 1/- each additional ounce; the 1/- Octagonal was used for overweight letters.



[16]

6th February 1855 lettersheet from Geelong to Melbourne. 1/- rate for double-rate inland letter.

On 1 July 1855 the inland rate was reduced to 4d up to ½ ounce, 8d from ½ to 1 ounce, and 8d each additional 1 ounce. As a result, the use of the 1/- Octagonal on inland letters becomes scarce.

[10-12]



22nd July 1857 O.H.M.S. lettersheet from Sale to Melbourne. Franked 1/- strip of three and 4d vermilion Emblems watermark Large Star, representing the 3/4d rate for a sextuple-rate inland letter weighing 4 to 5 ounces.

From the Baetgen collection

The 1/- Registration Fee - Period 1

An important usage of the 1/- Octagonal was for the registration fee. On 1 May 1854 new postal rates included the raising of the registration fee from 6d to 1/-. At the same time it became necessary to prepay this fee with stamps. A special registration stamp, whose use was compulsory, was issued in November 1854. Prior to this, between May and November 1854, the fee was paid with ordinary stamps. Covers from this brief period are rare.

[16] [3]



3rd August 1854 registered envelope from Sandhurst to St. Georges, Bermuda. Carried per private ship *John Banks*, leaving Melbourne 14th August, and arriving at London, 6th December (backstamp). Thence per Cunard steamer *America* leaving Liverpool 9th December to Halifax, and by steamer to Bermuda. No arrival marking.

Franked with two 1/- Octagonals, prepaying the 1/- ship letter rate for a ½ ounce letter, plus 1/- registration fee. Manuscript "1/-" comprises the British packet rate to Bermuda of 6d plus 6d registration fee, to be collected from the addressee.

The earliest recorded registered cover from Victoria showing the 1/- registration fee prepaid by stamps.

USAGE OF THE IMPERFORATE STAMP

The 1/- Registration Fee - Period 2

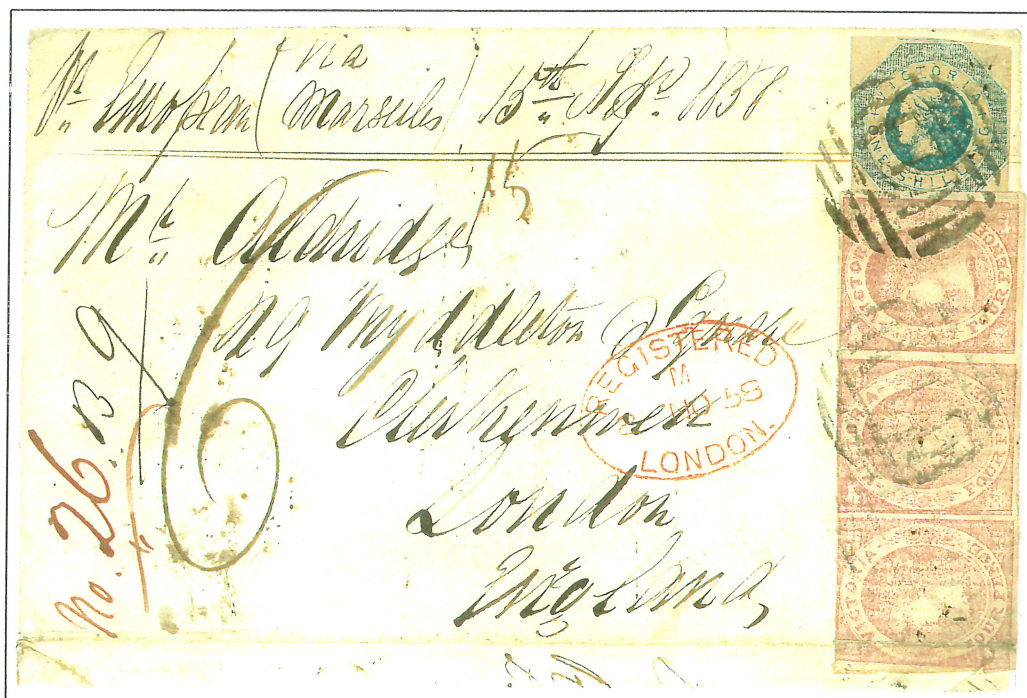
Following the withdrawal of the special Registered stamp in January 1858, the 1/- Octagonal again became available to prepay the registration fee. This fee remained in force for the life of the 1/- stamp, but use of the imperforate stamp is scarce since it was on issue for only a further twelve months.

Two covers carried on the same voyage of E. & A.R.M. *European*, leaving Melbourne 16 September 1858.



[20/28/36]

15th September 1858 registered envelope from East Collingwood to London via Southampton. Prepaid 3/-, the quadruple packet rate (4 x 6d, for a letter weighing 1½ to 2 ounces) plus 1/- registration fee. Arrived London, 13th November 1858.



[12]

15th September 1858 envelope from Melbourne to London via Marseilles. Franked with 1/- Octagonal and 4d Emblems roulette strip of three on vertically laid paper, prepaying 1/- for a ½ ounce letter via Marseilles, plus 1/- registration fee. Arrived London, 8th November 1858.

Both covers show the additional 6d registration fee collected by the British Post Office on all incoming mail up to the end of the E. & A.R.M. contract.

Late Fee Mail

Letters could be posted up to quarter of an hour after the closing of the mail upon the payment of a la

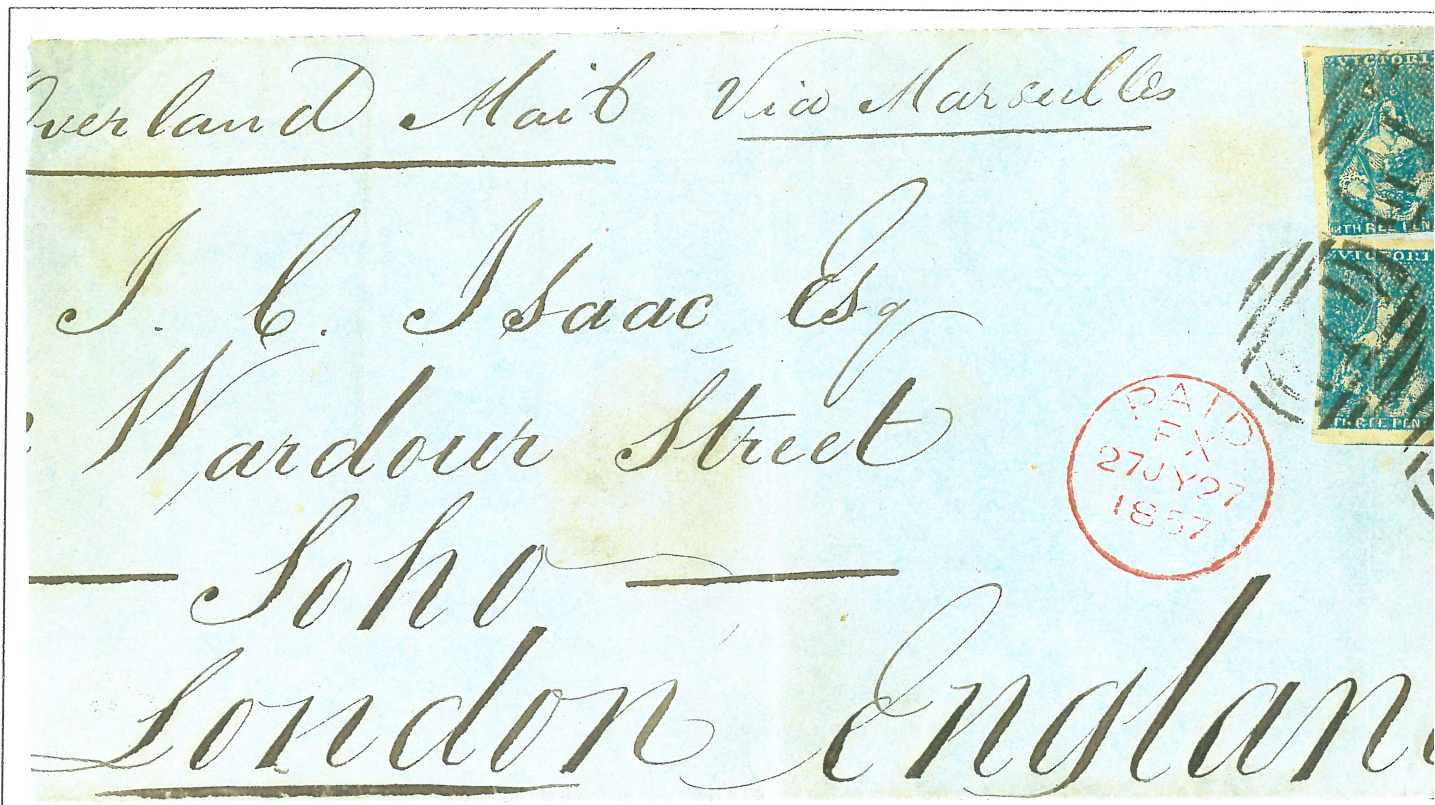


[36]

1st May 1855 letter to Sydney carried arriving at Sydney. Franked 1/- plus repaying the 1/- late fee.

Three usages in combination with

From the Sydney collection



30th May 1857 linen-lined envelope from Melbourne to London. Carried per E. & A.R.M. steamer *Simla*, reaching Suez 12th the Alexandria boat and sent by *Scamander*, a chartered sailing ship to Malta, connecting with E. & A.R.M. *Cambria*, which 24th July. London arrival datestamp, 27th July. Franked 3/6d with three 1/- Octagonals and two 3d Half-Lengths (Car printing, Stone D). This does not represent an exact amount for the Marseilles route. The only logical explanation is that Marseilles rate for a letter weighing 1¼ to 1½ ounces, plus 6d late fee.