

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

European & Australian Royal Mail Co.

First successful homeward sailing under the contract



Melbourne, 14 February 1857

Paid 9d, 6d uniform rate, 3d French transit (to ¼ oz.)

Simla, Melbourne 15 February, Suez 26 March; *Jura*, Alexandria 28 March, Malta 31 March
Cambria, Malta 31 March, Marseille 3 April

Marseille rated 5 decimes due for inland Received 5 April, 51 days

The earliest of three covers paying this rate

Mailing direct to France

Of 81 recorded covers to France between 1850 and 1860, only three went direct to destination from Marseille. The rest went first to London, so crossed the English Channel twice. Letters via London (6d) were forwarded unpaid to France, so the sender saved 3d. Mailing direct via Marseille cost 9d, but was more than a week faster.

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

European & Australian Royal Mail Co.

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

Paid 1/- for 1/4-1/2 oz. :
6d uniform, 2 x 3d Fr. transit

Simla, Melb. 16 Feb. to Suez
Tamar, Alex. 25 Mar. to Malta
Wye, Malta 28 Nov. to Marseille

Forwarded unpaid from Paris
Frankfurt rated 75/18:
75 kr Fr. transit
18 kr German inland = 93 kr

93 kr = 1 gulden/33 kr
due in Alzey

Received 3 April
48 days



Paris



Melbourne, 15 February 1858

To Hanover, prepaid to destination via Belgium



Melbourne, 7 March 1858

3d overpayment of 1/5 rate:
6d uniform, 3d Fr. transit,
8d to Germany

Emeu :
Melbourne 17 March,
Suez 23 April

Valetta :
Alex. 26 April,
Marseille 2 May
London marked P and 8d:
paid to destination

Aachen exchange office
noted prepayment:
ENGLAND PER AACHEN /
FRANCO

Received 7 May

62 days

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.

Too Late for Sydney departure: sent via Supplementary Mail to Melbourne



Sydney, 15 October 1858

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

Steam commuter *Telegraph*, Sydney 15 October, Melbourne 18 October
Victoria, Melbourne 18 October for Suez; **sprung a leak so mails transferred to *Oneida* at Galle**
Oneida, Galle 13 November; **broke screw so sailed to Aden and transferred mails to *Bengal***

Bengal, Aden departure unknown, Suez 5 December

Niagara, Alexandria 7 December, Malta 9 December

Wye, Malta 9 December, Marseille 13 December, London 15 December

London credited 1d to Canada

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

Montreal 2 January 80 days

Supplementary mail service in New South Wales

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

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.

Single British rate, double French transit



Paid 1/-
 6d uniform rate
 6d Fr. transit, 1/4-1/2 oz.

Victoria
 Melbourne 18 Oct
 Galle 13 Nov
Oneida/Bengal
 Galle 13 Nov
 Suez 5 Dec
Niagara/Wye
 Alexandria 7 Dec
 Marseille 13 Dec
 Dublin arrival 16 Dec

61 days

Melbourne, 16 October 1858

Double British rate, triple French transit

Paid 1/9
 2x 6d uniform rate
 3 x 3d Fr. Transit
 1/2 - 3/4 oz.

Columbian
 Melbourne 18 Dec
 Suez 23 Jan
Thames/Wye
 Alexandria 27 Jan
 Malta 31 Jan
 Marseilles 3 Feb

Received 5 Feb

51 days



Melbourne, 17 December 1858

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

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



Melbourne, 17 May 1859

Paid 3/1: 2 x 6d uniform rate, 3 x 3d French transit, 2 x 8d transatlantic
Columbia, Melbourne 19 May, Suez 20 July
Panther, Alexandria 22 July, Marseille 29 July, mails at London on 31 July

Melbourne 1/4 credit to UK for transatlantic postage, 1/2 to 1 oz.

London 32¢ credit to US for American packet

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

New York rated 10¢ due, double 5¢ inland

Received 15 August

91 days

Via Marseille

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

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Double French transit



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

Northam
Melbourne 18 July
Suez 28 July
Panther
Alexandria 5 September
Marseille 12 September
London 14 September

59 days

Melbourne, 1 July 1859

Quadruple uniform rate, quintuple French transit



Melbourne, 1859

front only

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

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Paid 1/9
6d uniform rate, 1/- registered
3d French transit, ¼ oz.

Benares
Melbourne 18 November
Suez 24 December

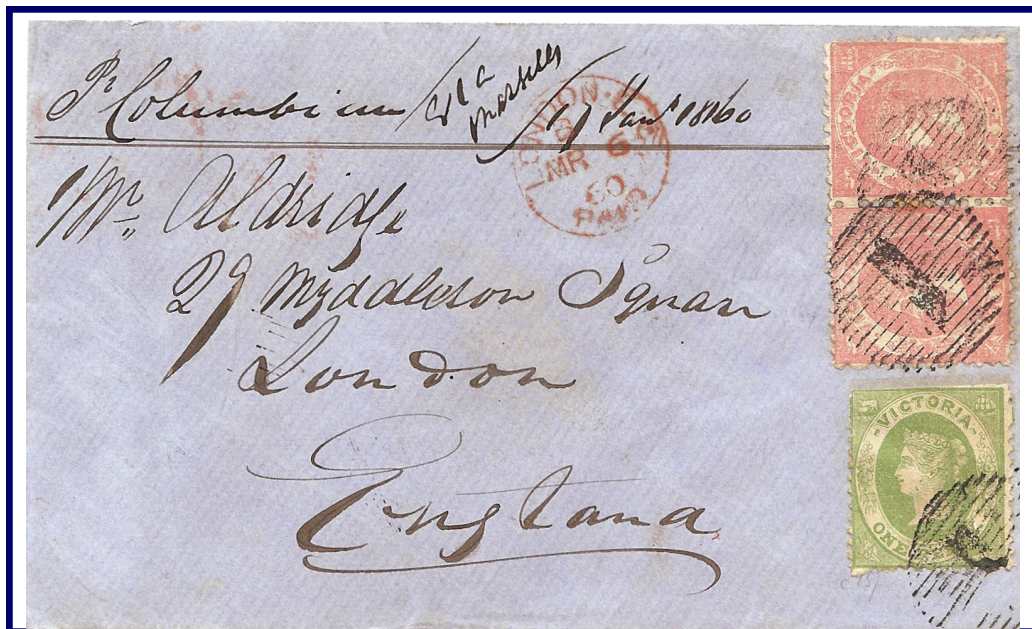
Panther
Alexandria 28 December
Marseille 5 January

London 12 January, rated 6d
due for registration

Received 14 January 59 days



Melbourne, 17 November 1859



Melbourne, 17 January 1860

Paid 9d, 6d uniform rate, 3d French transit, ¼ oz.
Columbian, Melbourne 18 January, Suez 25 February via Mauritius
Valetta, Alexandria 27 February, Marseille 4 March; mails at London 6 March

Received 6 March 50 days

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

To the Danish Frisian Islands via London, Ostende and Hamburg



Melbourne, 15 February 1860

Paid 3/2: overpayment of the 1/10½ rate for ¼ to ½ oz. via Marseille, London and Belgium
Melbourne credited 10/½ d to the UK, the rate from London to Denmark

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

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

Backstamped in Hamburg on 7 April, Wick on 8 April

Received 8 April 53 days

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

Routes to Denmark

Beginning in January 1854 two routes from the UK to Denmark were available. One was through Ostende, Belgium to Hamburg. A route through France was available for letters so endorsed, but cost nearly twice as much as via Belgium.

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.



Paid 1/-, 6d uniform rate,
2 x 3d French transit, 1/4-1/2 oz.

Geelong **M** : via Marseille

Bombay, Melbourne 26 January
Suez 4 March

Euxine, Alexandria 6 March
Marseille 13 March

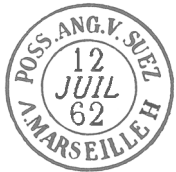
Mails at London 15 March

Received 15 March 51 days

Geelong, 24 January 1863



Melbourne bulk-rate credit
to France for unpaid letters
from Australia and
New Zealand



Marseille to Lyon
railway post office



Melbourne, 24 May 1862

Sent unpaid, 1/4 oz.

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

Valetta, Alexandria 6 July, Marseille 12 July

Marseille rated 9 decimes due

Received 13 July 50 days

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

Rate reduction for letters via Marseille



Melbourne, 25 April 1864

Written aboard *Eureka*, a trading sloop operating in Hobson's Bay

Paid 1/6 to the U.S. port : 6d uniform rate, 4d via Marseille, 8d transatlantic
Bombay, Melbourne 26 April, Galle 15 May
Simla, Galle 18 May, Suez 3 June; *Syria*, Alexandria 4 June, Marseille 11 June
Mails at London on 12 June; London 16¢ credit to U.S. for American packet
Allan Line *Hibernian*, Liverpool 16 June, Quebec 30 June

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

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

Reduction in French transit rates

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

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

To Switzerland via French mail, 6d *TOO LATE* fee paid at Clunes

Paid 10d
6d uniform rate
4d to Switzerland

Northam

Melbourne 26 September
Galle 17 October

Delhi

Galle 18 October
Suez 1 November

Syria

Alexandria 3 November
Marseille 9 November

From Marseille via Saint
Gallen-Baden-Po Schiavo

Rec'd 13 Nov 52 days



Clunes, 23 September 1865



Melbourne, 24 March 1866

Sent unpaid

Ellora

Melbourne 26 March
Galle 16 April

Bengal

Galle 18 April
Suez 3 May

Poonah

Alexandria 5 May
Marseille 11 May

Marseille 10 dec. due

Received 13 May

51 days

January 1866 Rate Reduction

GPO London reduced the letter rate to 10d per ½ ounce if conveyed via Southampton or Marseille.

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

From the Riverina District



Paid 1/4
 6d to Melbourne
 6d uniform rate
 4d French transit

Avoca
 Melbourne 28 July
 Galle 17 August

Nubia
 Galle 17 August
 Suez 2 September

Ceylon
 Alexandria 4 September
 Marseille 10 September

Arrived 11 September
 48 days

Deniliquin NSW, 26 July 1867



Geelong, 28 December 1866

Paid 8d, 2d underpayment for the 10d rate, so treated as unpaid
 Geelong, Melbourne 28 December, Galle 17 January
 Candia, 18 January, Suez 31 January; *Ceylon*, Alexandria 3 February, Marseille 9 February
 Marseille 10 dec. due Received 12 February 47 days

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

To Prussia via Belgium, double rate

Paid 1/8:
2 x 6d uniform rate
2 x 4d Fr. & Belg. Transit

Bombay :
Melbourne 28 August
Galle 4 September
Bengal : Galle to Suez
Delta : Alex. To Marseille

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

Received 15 October

45 days



Melbourne, 28 August 1866

To New Brunswick via Canadian Packet from Liverpool



Richmond, 20 June 1868

Paid 1/3
6d uniform rate
3d French transit
6d transatlantic

Geelong :
Melbourne 21 June to Galle
Surat : 14 July to Suez
Massilia : 2 August to Marseille

Allan Line Austrian :
Liverpool 13 August
Quebec 23 August

Received 31 August

73 days

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.



Paid 1/10 (3/4 oz.)
2d overpaid

Bombay
Melbourne 26 January
Galle 13 February

Simla
Galle 17 February
Suez 3 March

Delta
Alexandria 6 March
Marseille 13 March

Received 15 March

49 days

Melbourne, 26 January 1866



Geelong, 10 November 1868

Paid 10d (1/2 oz.)

Bombay, Melbourne 10 November, Galle 29 November

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

Received 24 January 52 days

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

To New Brunswick via Canadian packet to Quebec

Paid 1/3

6d uniform, 4d Fr. transit
5d to Canada

Geelong

Melbourne 15 August
Galle 5 September

Mooltan

Galle 6 September
Suez 23 September

Poonah

Alexandria 25 September
Marseille 1 October

London 3d credit to Canada

Allan Line North American

Londonderry 8 October
Quebec 19 October

Rec'd 22 October 80 days



Richmond, 4 August 1869

Quadruple rate to France, paid to destination



Beechwood, 4 December 1869

Paid 2/8

quadruple 8d rate

Avoca

Melbourne 7 December
Galle 27 December

Simla

Galle 29 December
Suez 13 January

Pera

Alexandria 16 January
Marseille 22 January

Received 24 January

52 days

Via Marseille

British Contract Steamship

Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.

From Tasmania via Melbourne



Hobart, 1 February 1868

Paid 1/-, 2d overpaid
6d uniform rate, 4d French transit

Tasmania
Launceston 3 February
Melbourne 4 February

Avoca
Melbourne 5 February
Galle 24 February

Mongolia
Galle 27 February,
Suez 13 March

Nanza,
Alexandria 15 March
Marseille 21 March

Arrived 23 March 52 days

e

To Denmark via Marseille & Belgium



Stuart Mill, 24 February 1870

Paid 1/4, 2d overpaying the 1/2 rate per 1/4 oz.: 6d uniform rate, 4d French transit, 4d to Denmark via Belgium

Avoca, Melbourne 1 March, Galle 20 March

Simla: Galle 23 March, Suez 7 April; Delta: Alexandria 10 April, Marseille 15 April

Marseilles marked paid to destination

Received 19 April 55 days