

THE EIGHT PENCE POSTAGE RATE OF 1857

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INTRODUCTION

Whilst it has been recorded by Mark Benvie, that there was such a Rate in 1873, this was on account of a Post Office Notice inserted in the *Timaru Herald*, showing such a rate in error which was corrected within six days.

No such notices were issued in 1857, and certainly not in Auckland.

Whilst a strip of three 2d adhesives would be the expected combination to pay the standard half ounce rate to the United Kingdom, strips of four are virtually non existent, in fact I am rather surprised someone has not queried its authenticity before now, notwithstanding the fact that both covers have certificates.

It was not until 27 March 1857 that mail from New Zealand could be pre-paid in New Zealand and only then if sent to the United Kingdom or via the United Kingdom, and in addition mail for the continent of Europe could be sent via Trieste at a premium rate.

Basically the standard rate for a half ounce letter to the UK either by direct sea route or via Suez to Southampton was Sixpence, which at that date six Penny stamps or the more usual three Two Pence stamps. The mail sent on the premium route via Marseilles and through France to London was an extra threepence per quarter ounce.

Whilst the rate for ship letters sent prior to the introduction of the subsidized Mail Service was Eightpence, this sum could not be prepaid in New Zealand and was paid by the recipient on arrival in the United Kingdom.

There are two covers with the postage paid with four 2d adhesives (8d) both addressed to the same person and appear to have been written by the same person. No other similar rated covers have to date been recorded, and neither has a strip of four 2d adhesives off of cover been recorded.

To the best of my knowledge, there were no published New Zealand Ship Letter Rates.

The subsidized Mail contract was being carried out by ships of The European and Australian Royal Mail Service January 1857 until February 1859, as far as the "Homeward Mails" were concerned.

The Mail service was between Southampton and Sydney, Melbourne, and King George Sound.

COVER NUMBER ONE

Originally Lot 28 "Chalon" collection Robson Lowe Auction 12 November 1968. 1857 Strip of four 2d Blue (Blue paper Richardson Print *Crease through middle 4 stamps*) Lot 1061 SPINK Auction (Joseph Hackmey Collection) January 2009.

Stated to have been received at both London and Newcastle on the 9th November 1857.

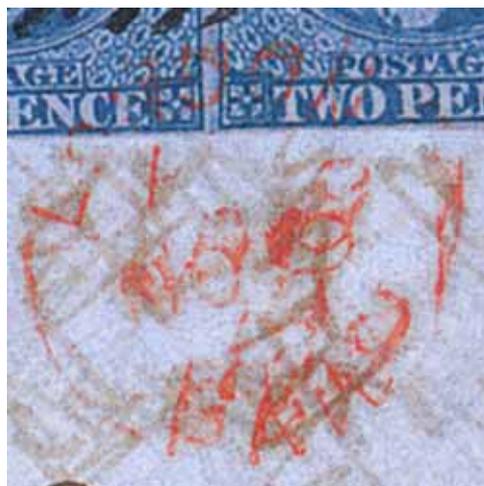


Posted in Auckland on 30 July 1857, and arrived at London on the 19th November 1857.





NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE
19 November 1857



LONDON PAID
19 November 1857

Both the Newcastle Datestamp and the London Paid Datestamp have both been misread in previous Auctions as the 9 December 1857, these enlargements make it quite clear that it was definitely the 19th.

The above cover was obviously carried on the *Australasian* from Alexandria, arriving on 18 November 1857. According to Colin Tabcart, the *Australasian* carried the bulk of the mails which were left on board the *Emeu*, after refloating off the coral reef and taken to Suez. The *Daily Packet* advised that there was none of the Australian States mail landed per the *Australasian*.

According to the Post Office Notice in the *Daily Southern Cross*, on the 28th July, the mail was closing that day for the mails to the UK via Sydney, per the *Spray*. The issue of the 31st July confirmed the departure of the *Spray* on the 28th.

The Post Office notice dated 4 August, advised that the mails close at 4 o'clock, for Sydney, Melbourne and London, per the *Bristol*.

The *Daily Southern Cross* issue of the 7th confirmed that the *Bristol* sailed on the 5th August.

From the above, it would appear that the cover would have been carried on the *Bristol* to Australia.

There was no Packet service from Australia in August, and the next sailing was the *Emeu*, which left Sydney on the 11th. September, and from Melbourne on the 17th. A Supplementary Mail was carried on the *City of Sydney* on the 12th from Sydney to connect with the *Emeu* at Melbourne

Unfortunately the *Emeu* ran aground on a coral reef off the coast of Sudan on 22 October 1857, eventually the *Emeu* reached Suez where the mails which also included the August Mails were transferred at Alexandria to several ships. The mail eventually reaching England at various dates.

The *Australasian* picked up the remaining mail from the *Emeu*, arriving at Southampton on 18 November, nearly two weeks before the mail which came via Marseilles.

The mail which was picked up by the *Vectis*, and went via Marseilles, arrived at London on the night of 28th November.

The *Ripon* with some mail from the *Emeu* arrived at Southampton on the 6th December 1857.

The *Tamar* with some mail from the *Emeu* arrived at Southampton on the 9 December.

COVER NUMBER TWO

Originally Lot 27 “Chalon” collection Robson Lowe Auction 12 November 1968. 1857 Strip of four 2d Blue (Blue paper Richardson Print). Lot 1062 SPINK Auction (*Joseph Hackmey Collection*) January 2009.



Posted in Auckland on 5 September 1857, and arrived at London on the 9th December 1857.

According to the Post Office Notice in the *Southern Cross*, newspaper dated 4 September 1857, the letter would have been dispatched on the *Gertrude*, and mail closing at 4pm on the 5th a latter shipping notice stated that the *Gertrude* left on the 10th. In the next issue of the *Southern Cross*, dated 15th it showed that the *Gertrude* left on the 12th.

The mail would have missed the September sailing from Sydney (*Emeu* 11 September) in any case, the next sailing being the *Simla* which left on 11 October 1857, that mail arriving on 9 December 1857 at Southampton on board the *Tamar*. This is confirmed by the arrival “LONDON PAID” datestamp, DE 9 57.

There is now no doubt that both covers were carried on the subsidized Packet Service and neither were “Ship Letters”

Ship Letters, are letters carried by private ship as distinct from a packet letter, carried either by a ship maintained by the government or by a privately owned ship operating under Post Office contract.

Whilst there could be conjecture that a privately owned ship was engaged at this stage, the fact that there was no regular August 1857 Packet sailing, this would not have been known in New Zealand prior to the event, making it most unlikely that the Post Office at Auckland would make this arrangement and charge an extra 2d above the standard rate of 6d.

I am now of the opinion that for some reason unexplained, the postage on both covers has been overpaid by Twopence.

There appears to be no merit in suggesting that they might be faked? or forgeries?

Late Letter Fees and regulations were not introduced in New Zealand until the 1 January 1864.

Postal History was never meant to be easy, which is probably just as well as I feel sure most Postal Historians, like me only get involved with all the associated research because of the “Challenge”

References

Colin Tabeart *Australia New Zealand UK Mails to 1880*. Colin Tabeart, Fareham 2004
Papers Past – *Daily Southern Cross*
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