

New Zealand Society of GB - 24th July 2021

Agenda (by presenter & by chronological order)

- [Pre 1840 \(Opportunistic Mailing via passing ships\) - not covered today](#)
- Post 1840 (Ship Mail and Packet Mail posted through NZ PO)
- Via Panama
- Via Suez/Galle/Brindisi/Naples
- Two Capes Route
- Via San Francisco
- Via Vancouver
- Per French Packet
- Other Carriers

Thank you to:

- Margaret Frankcom
- Paul Wreglesworth
- Bob Clark
- Lewis Giles
- John Stimson

Research aids:

New Zealand Postal Routes & Rates Pre 1874
Vols I -> III

Gerald J Elliott, ISBN 0-908588-16-X (series)

Australia New Zealand UK Mails to 1880.
Rates Routes and Ships
Out and Home (Volume 1)

Colin Tabcart, ISBN 0-9548407-2-0

Australia New Zealand UK Mails, 1881-1900
Rates Routes and Ships
Out and Home (Volume 2)

Colin Tabcart, ISBN 0-9548407-1-2

New Zealand Mail to Oversea Destinations

Prestige Philately, 27th May 2011

PapersPast (NZ newspapers)

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers>

The Times Archive

www.thetimes.co.uk

Australian newspapers online

<https://trove.nla.gov.au>



Pre-stamp mail to the UK:

20th July 1841 Letter from Auckland to Halstead, Essex.

Illustrated on Pg 37 of The Postage Stamps of NZ
vol VII. RPSNZ.

Markings on the letter:

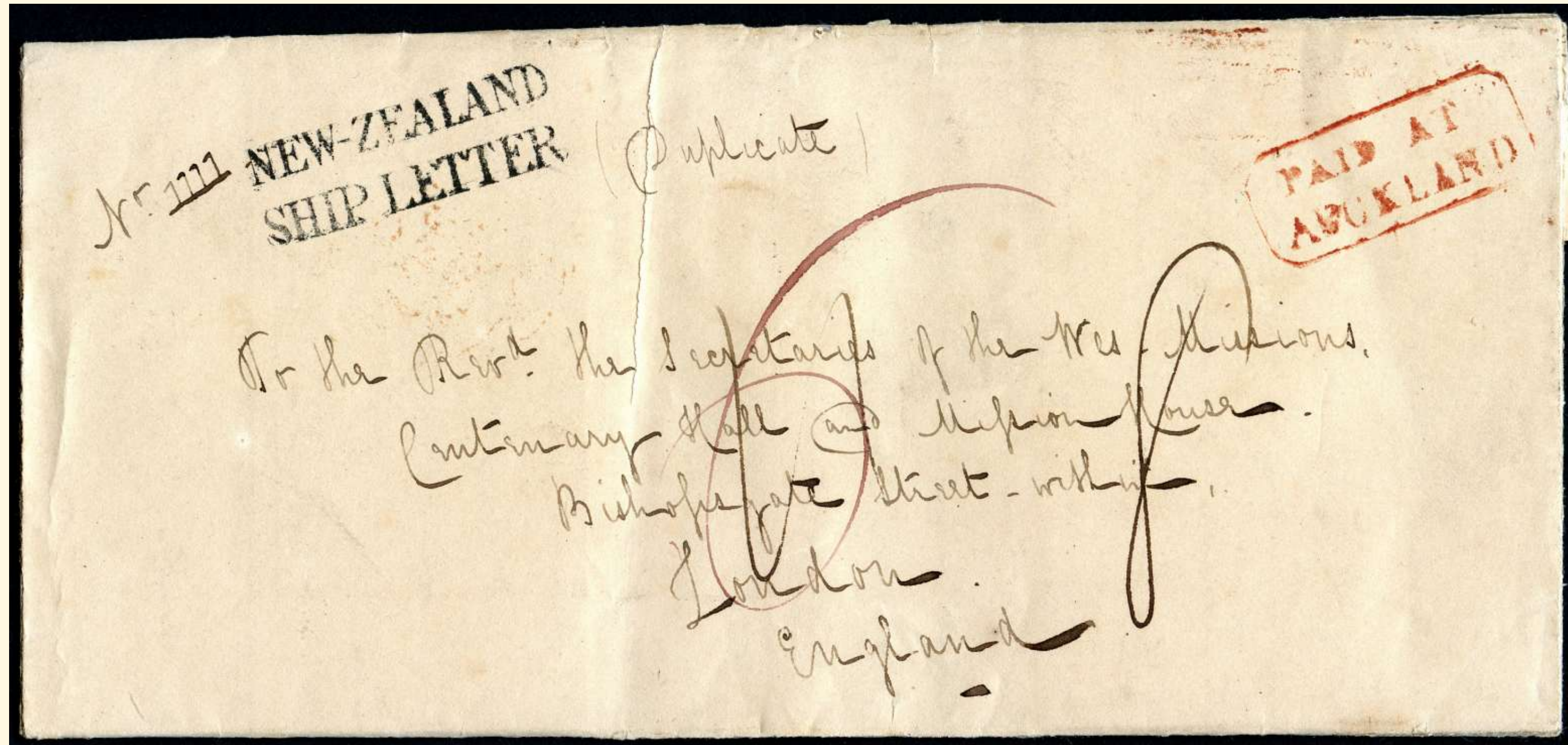
- “3” - Threepence paid by sender
- “8” - ship letter rate paid by recipient
- Rate in place 2nd May 1841 to 1st March 1842
- SWANSEA SHIP LETTER
- London receiving mark - circular date stamp 2 May 1842 (286 days after sending).

Content of the letter:

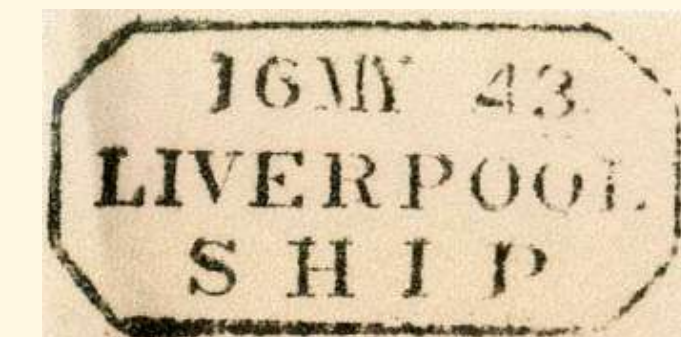
- Mr Newman to the Revd. E Prout, Halstead 20 July 1841.



1842 Ship Letter

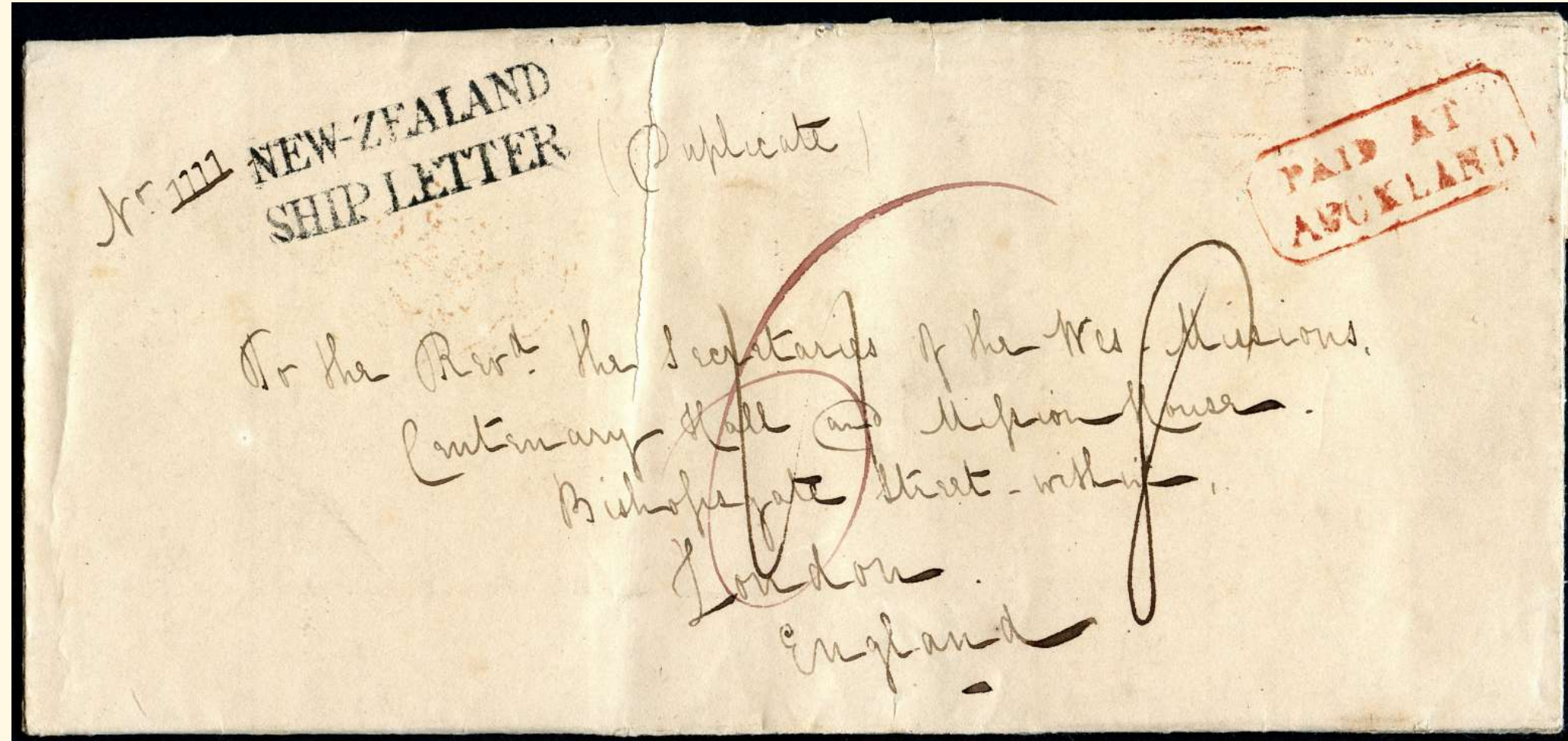


backstamps



1842 Ship Letter from the Wangarooa Mission Station, via Auckland, to London.
Postmarked Auckland 16 NO 1842, arrived at Liverpool 16 MY 43 (183 days in transit).
The brig “**Tobago**” arrived in Sydney on 7 December “*having left Auckland on the 16th*”

1842 Ship Letter



- After 1840 mail sent through New Zealand Post Office.
- Steamers didn't operate as far as Australia until the 1850s
- The 'Ship Letter' mark indicated the letter was carried on a Private Ship and not on a Packet Boat.

1848 Registered Ship Letter via Sydney



Image courtesy of Spink Ltd.
From 'Alan Holyoake's Registered Mail' to be
offered for sale by SPINK London, October 2021



Registered letter to England endorsed "Via Sydney"

- Postmarked Wellington OC 17 1848.
- **Subraon** sailed 26th October.
- Delayed after she was wrecked leaving Wellington.
- Mail arrived Devonport 17 AP 1849

Australia to New Zealand 1844

Paid Ship Letter handstamp in red dated *Sydney FE 20 1844* together with a 3 in red manuscript indicating how much had been paid.

New Zealand receiving mark in black dated *MR17 1844* and a 4 in black manuscript to show how much had to be paid on receipt. That was the rate from September 1843.

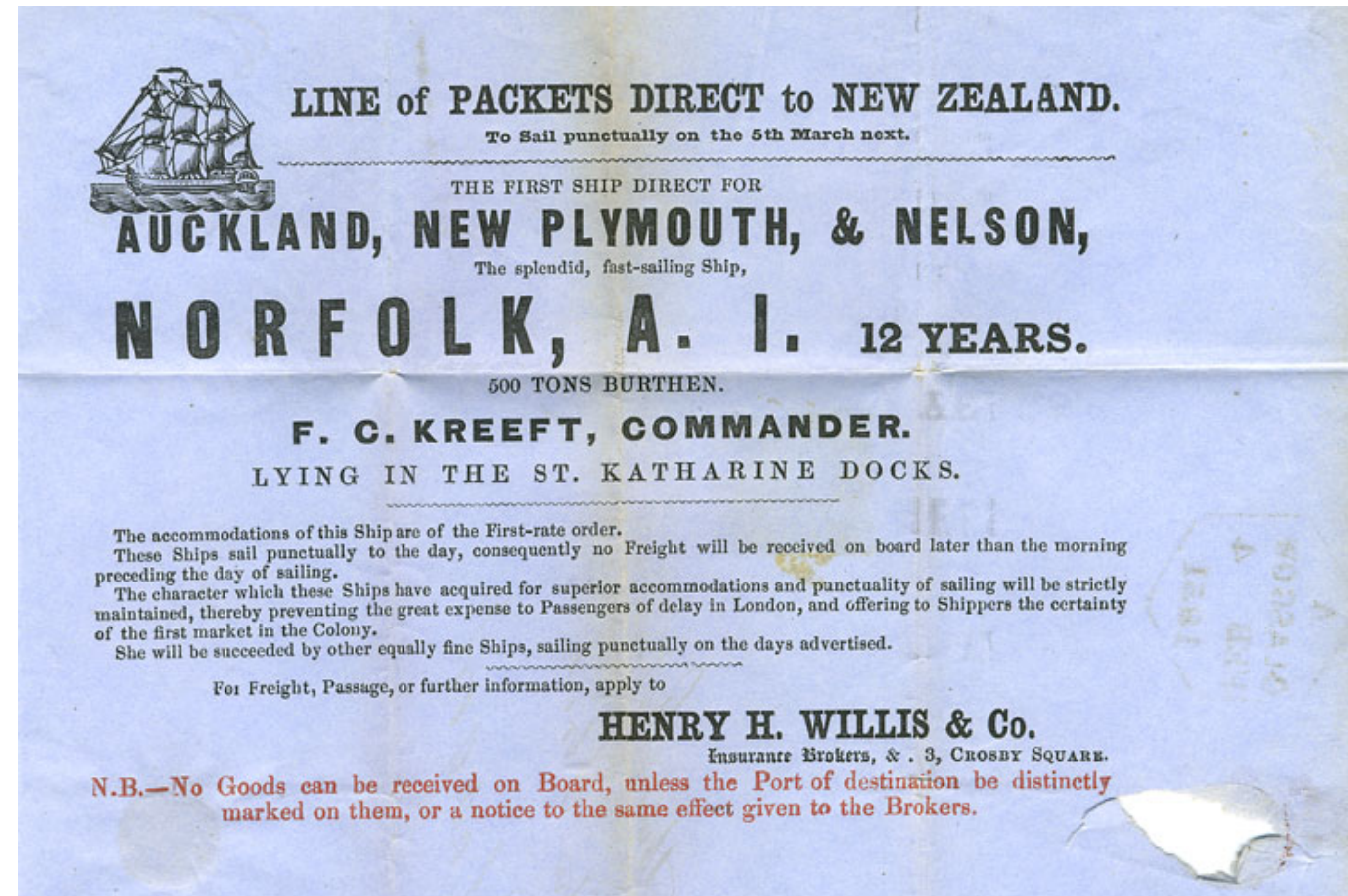


According to the *Shipping List* of the *Daily Southern Cross*, the only ship from Sydney arriving in Auckland around that time was the brig *Calypso* on 14th March.

Advertising a Ship to New Zealand, 1851

Folded entire from London to Glasgow in February 1851 advertising the first ship, the *Norfolk*, that was to sail from the UK direct to Auckland, New Plymouth and Nelson.

It sailed to Isle of Wight on 17th March and from there on 30th March with 8 passengers.



 **LINE of PACKETS DIRECT to NEW ZEALAND.**
To Sail punctually on the 5th March next.

THE FIRST SHIP DIRECT FOR
AUCKLAND, NEW PLYMOUTH, & NELSON,
The splendid, fast-sailing Ship,
NORFOLK, A. I. 12 YEARS.
500 TONS BURTHEN.

F. C. KREEFT, COMMANDER.
LYING IN THE ST. KATHARINE DOCKS.

The accommodations of this Ship are of the First-rate order.
These Ships sail punctually to the day, consequently no Freight will be received on board later than the morning preceding the day of sailing.
The character which these Ships have acquired for superior accommodations and punctuality of sailing will be strictly maintained, thereby preventing the great expense to Passengers of delay in London, and offering to Shippers the certainty of the first market in the Colony.
She will be succeeded by other equally fine Ships, sailing punctually on the days advertised.

For Freight, Passage, or further information, apply to
HENRY H. WILLIS & Co.
Insurance Brokers, & . 3, CROSBY SQUARE.

N.B.—No Goods can be received on Board, unless the Port of destination be distinctly marked on them, or a notice to the same effect given to the Brokers.

It eventually arrived in Auckland on 18th August and in Nelson on 21st September.
No record of it going to New Plymouth. On 23rd October it sailed from Nelson bound for Valparaiso.

Via Australia and Ceylon 1857 – 1859

The *European and Australian Royal Mail Company* carried mail between UK and Australia via Galle (Ceylon) and Suez with the first sailing leaving Southampton in February 1857 and the last in February 1859.

Letter franked with a strip of three 2d Chalons as the 6d Chalon was not issued until August 1859.

Franked with the Dunedin obliterator labelled 18.

Carried on the *Victoria* that left Sydney on 11th October 1858. As it was leaking, mail was transferred at Galle on 13th November to the *Oneida* which then broke her screw and had to proceed to Aden by sail. From Aden, the mail was taken by *P&O* on *Bengal* to Suez arriving on 5th December.

The mail then left Alexandria on the *Niagara* on 7th December and arrived in Southampton on 18th December. London receiving mark of 20th December 1858.



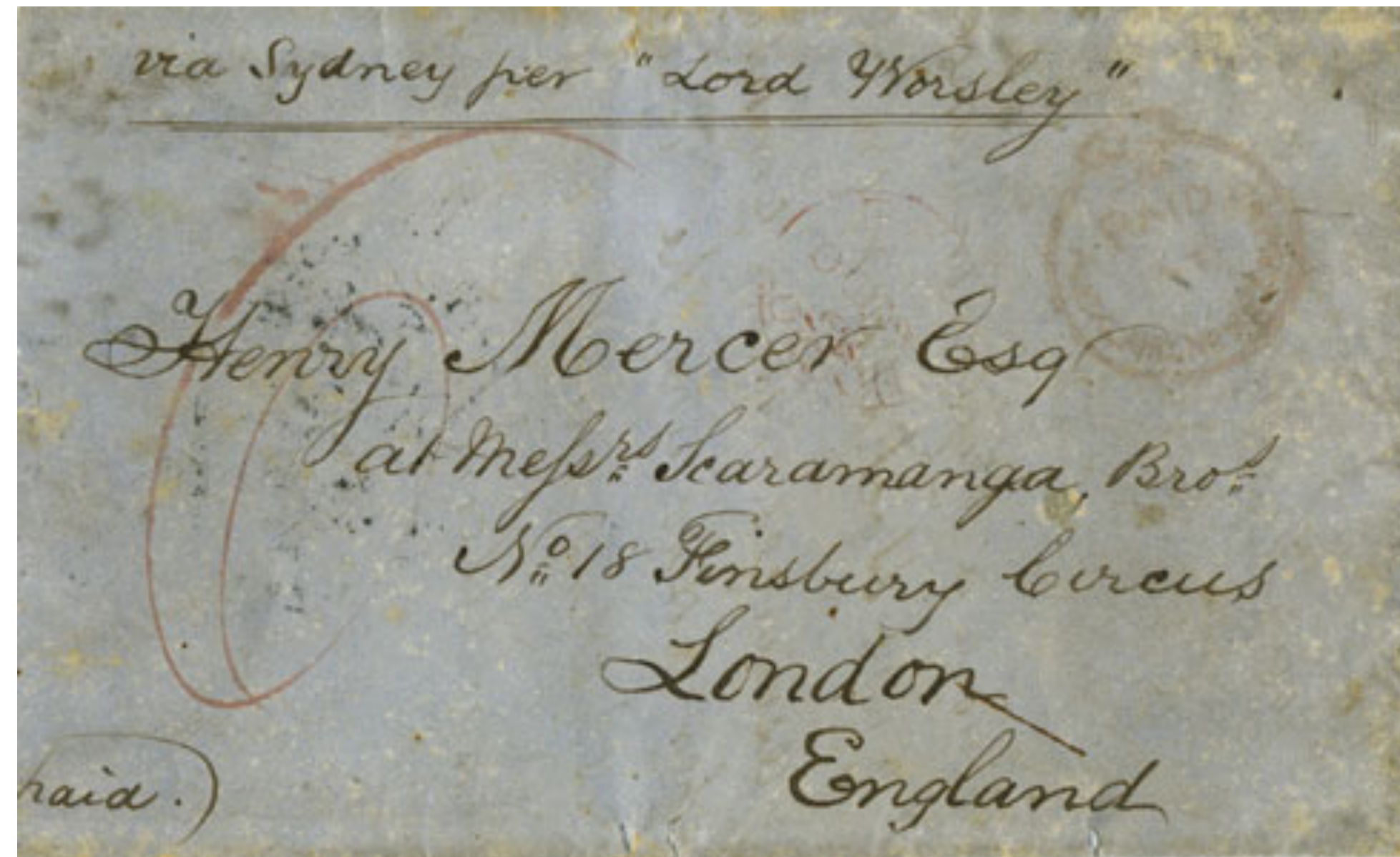
Via Australia and Mauritius 1859 – 1860

Faded *Paid Auckland* Crown Cancel, *Auckland JY28 1859* datestamp on back, very faint London paid transit mark dated *OCT* on front

Left Auckland 28th July 1859, arrived Sydney 5th August, carried by *Inter-Colonial Royal Mail Company* mail steamer *Lord Worsley*.

Left Sydney 15th August on the *P&O* steamer *Salsette*, arrived Port Louis (Mauritius) 9th September and Suez on 25th September. Overland to Alexandria.

Left Alexandria 30th September on the *Indus*, arrived Southampton 14th October.



Large manuscript 6 on front indicating postal rate to UK had been paid.

Via Australia and Ceylon 1860 – 1866

Otago datestamp on back dated JU27 1860.

Left Port Chalmers 28th June, arrived Sydney 12th July, carried by *Inter-Colonial Royal Mail Company* steam-ship *Prince Alfred*.

Left Sydney 22nd July on the *P&O* steamer *Ottawa*, arrived Galle 16th August and Suez on 4th September. Overland to Alexandria.

Left Alexandria 5th September on the *Masilla*, arrived Marseilles 11th September. Rail through France, arriving London on 12th and Irvine receiving mark on 14th September 1860.



The Marseilles route had an extra charge of 3d per ¼oz in addition to the normal fee of 6d per ½oz. Large manuscript 9 on front indicating postal rate to UK via Marseilles had been paid.



Mails from New Zealand To Sydney, Australia

New Zealand

Mails to Australia –Ship Letter

Ship Letter "A letter transmitted inwards or outwards overseas by a vessel not being a Packet Boat"
Letters forwarded loose by ship"

The "Claud Hamilton" sailed regularly between Auckland and Sydney, its schedule for the third three trips of the year 1863 :-

Port	Date	Date	Date
Sydney Leave	July 15 th	August 15 th	September 15 th
Auckland arrive	" 22 nd	" 22 nd	" 22 nd
Auckland Leave	August 1 st	September 1 st	October 1 st
Sydney arrive	" 8 th	" 8 th	" 8 th (arrived 6 th)



Backstamps



Postage rate to Sydney – 6d per ½ ounce
Stamp – Full Face Queen, Black/Brown, 1862-4. Perf. 13. Large star watermark.

Mails from New Zealand To London via Suez

New Zealand

Routes and Rates.

New Zealand - United Kingdom via Suez

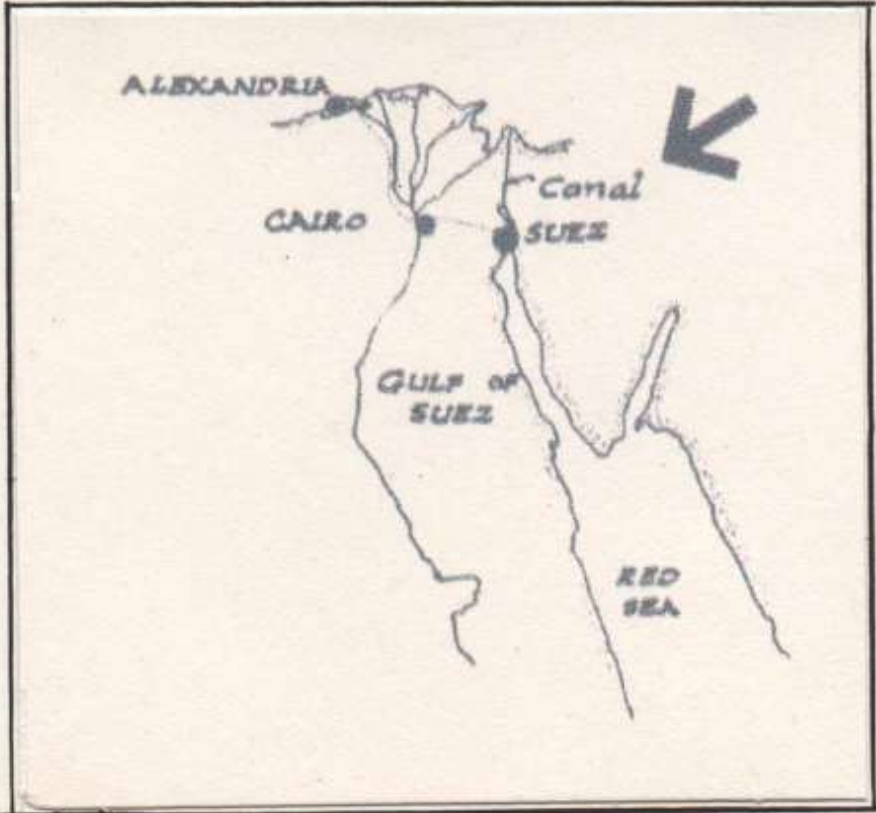
Mail via this route was first shipped to Melbourne where the service started. The mail was then shipped to Suez, by P. & O. Company. The mail was then transported overland to Alexandria, and thence to Southampton. (The Suez Canal did not open till November 1869.)

This service operated from 27th March 1857.



Cover dated April 16 1868 from Christchurch to London
Arriving on 19th June 1868. Transit time 65 days

Postage rate. Letters to United Kingdom, via Southampton or by long sea route –
Not exceeding ½ ounce 6d.



Mails from New Zealand To London via Marseille

New Zealand

Routes and Rates

New Zealand to United Kingdom via Marseilles.

From March 27th 1857 mail from New Zealand to the U.K. could be forwarded via Marseilles at an additional cost. The mails "Via Marseilles" were sent in conjunction with the mails sent via Suez. The "Via Marseilles" mail was sent in separate bags was transferred to British Packet ships at Alexandria. At this stage it was trans-shipped to Marseilles and from there it went by rail across France and thence across the Channel to London.
The advantage gained by this route could be as much as 72 hours.



This folded letter posted at Wellington on March 14th. 1865 via Sydney and Melbourne. Departed Melbourne 26th March (S.S. Northam) arrived Suez May 4th. Overland to Alexandria, departed 6th May (S.S. Pera) for Marseilles, arriving 12th May. Overland to London arriving 15th May.
Transit time 63 days

Postage rate at this time was 10d. per. 1/2 ounce.

Backstamp



Mails from New Zealand To Scotland via Panama

New Zealand

Routes and Rates

New Zealand - United Kingdom via Panama

This service operated from 24th June 1866 to 8th December 1868 from Wellington. During this period 31 sailings were made out of Wellington with U.K. mail and elsewhere via Panama. From Panama the mail was sent by rail to Aspinwall (Colon) (47 miles) on the Atlantic coast for further shipping to the U.K. This route which provided a faster service to the "Standard Rate" had a marked effect on the mails via Suez and Marseilles.



A cover dated November 27th 1867 from Clyde to Leith Scotland
Carried on the 18th sailing of the Panama and New Zealand Royal Mail Steam company service by the
Ship "Rakaia" arriving in Edinburgh on January 27th 1868. Transit time 59 days.

Postage Rate. Letters to United Kingdom and Europe "Standard Rate" 6d. per ½ ounce.



Mails from New Zealand To Ireland via Panama

New Zealand

Routes and Rates

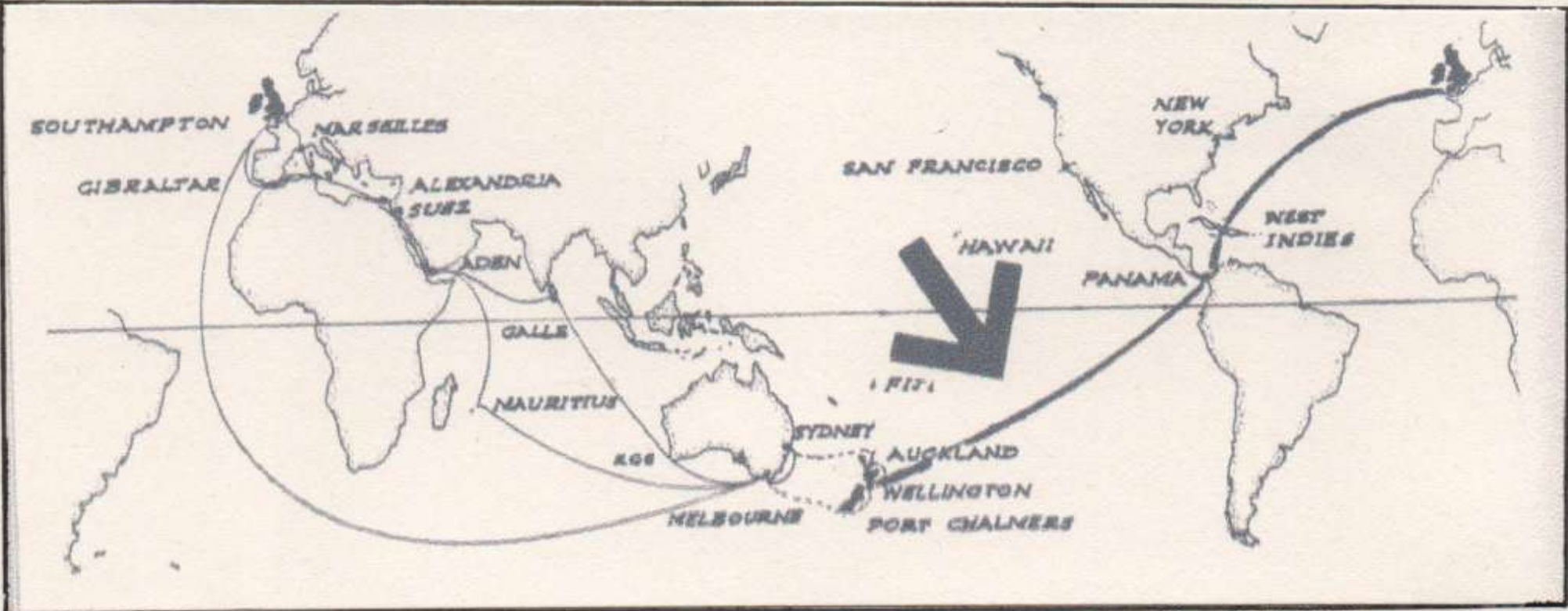
New Zealand – United Kingdom via Panama

Captain John Vine Hall, acting for the Panama and New Zealand Royal Mail Steam Company entered into a contract with J.L.C. Richardson Postmaster General to perform the Panama Postal Service. The route was some 2000 miles shorter than the Suez route. The service to begin in January 1866 but delays ensued and the first sailing was not until 24th June 1866.



A cover dated December 7th 1868 (last sailing of this service by the “Rakaia”) To Ennis, Ireland arriving in U.K. on January 28th and Ennis on the 29th January 1869. Transit time 54 days

Ship Rakaia built in 1865 by Randolph and Elder, Glasgow. 1456 tons. Average speed 10.37 knots.



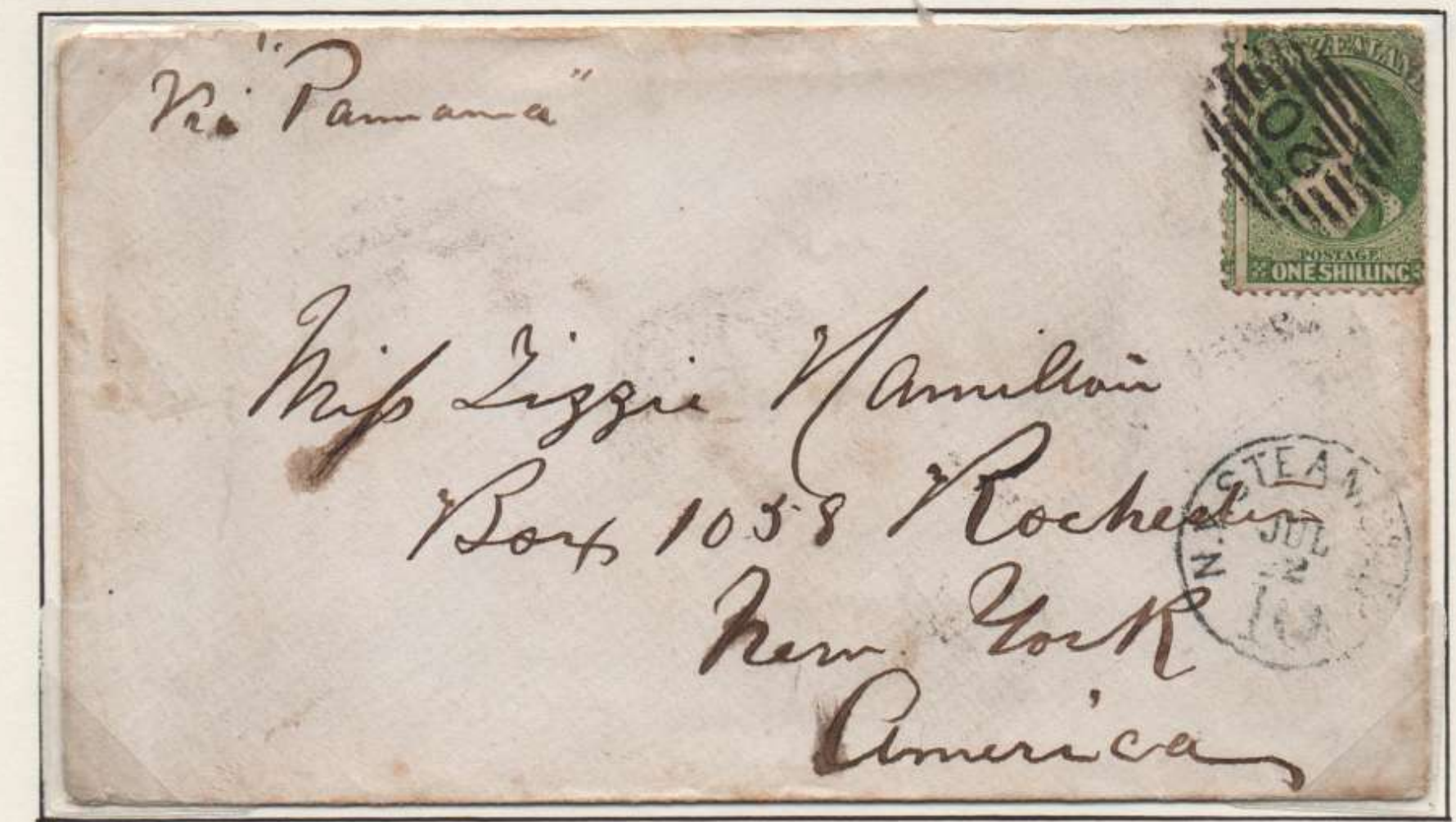
Mails from New Zealand To New York via Panama

New Zealand

Routes and Rates

New Zealand – United States of America Via Panama.

Cover to Rochester New York from Greymouth New Zealand via Christchurch dated June 1st 1867 with Yellow/green Chalon stamp with 20 (Greymouth) obliterator. NY STEAMSHIP/jul/22/10 Cds. applied to front.



Carried per "KAIKOURA" departed Wellington 8/6/1867 arrived Panama 6/7/1867.



Ex Gerald Elliott, John Woolfe & Mark Benvie.

Mails from New Zealand

To the UK via San Francisco

New Zealand

Routes and Rates

New Zealand - United Kingdom via San Francisco.

The first service run by the Californian and New Zealand and Australian Mail line of steam packets started on 2nd April 1870 with the sailing from Auckland of the Wonga Wonga. This service ended with the sailing of the Wonga Wonga on 7th April 1871.

A ½ ounce Cover to Scotland dated August 1870. (Backstamp), arriving in Edinburgh on 26th October 1870.
Journey time 57 days.



Postage charged at 6d per ½ ounce.

Stamps – Full Face Queen 2d Blue. Postmarked Obliterator "C" (Christchurch) "Alf" manuscript.

Mail for the United Kingdom would be in a sealed packet and no delays would be made across the U.S.A or across the Atlantic by packet ship.

Backstamps



Mails from New Zealand

To the UK via Suez & Brindisi

New Zealand – United Kingdom via Brindisi (Italy)

Route Suez – Alexandria – Brindisi – Mount Censis Tunnel- Calais

Cover addressed to Croft Darlington dated February 23rd 1872 arriving in Darlington
Croft. June 11 1872.

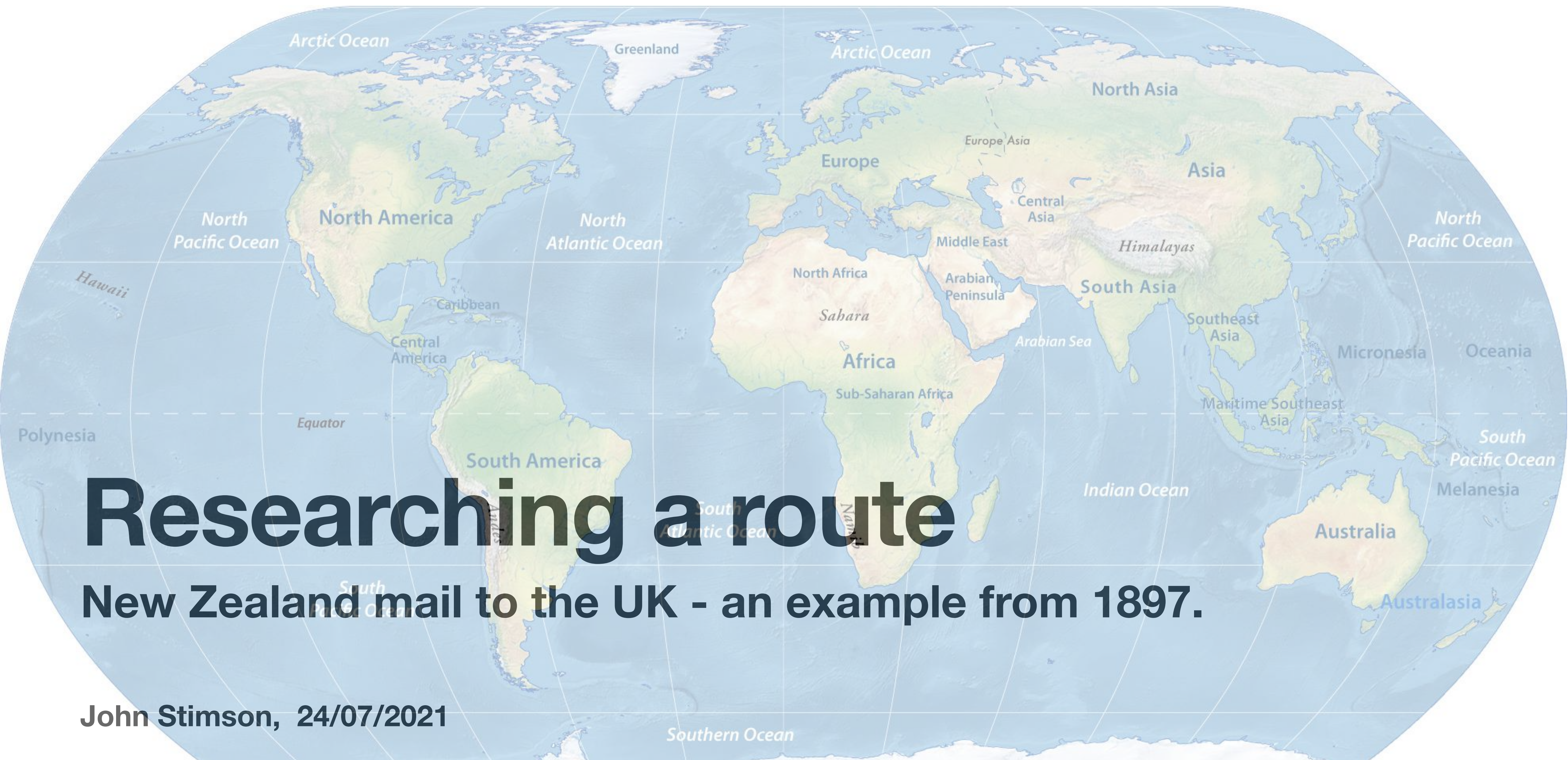
Postage rate from 6/9/1873 for a ½ oz. letter 10d. Journey time 109 days



Letter to Edinburgh dated May 14th 1873 From Dunedin arriving in Edinburgh July 9th 1873

Postage rated was reduced on 2nd January 1873 to 9d per ½. ounce.
Journey time 127 days.





Researching a route

New Zealand mail to the UK - an example from 1897.

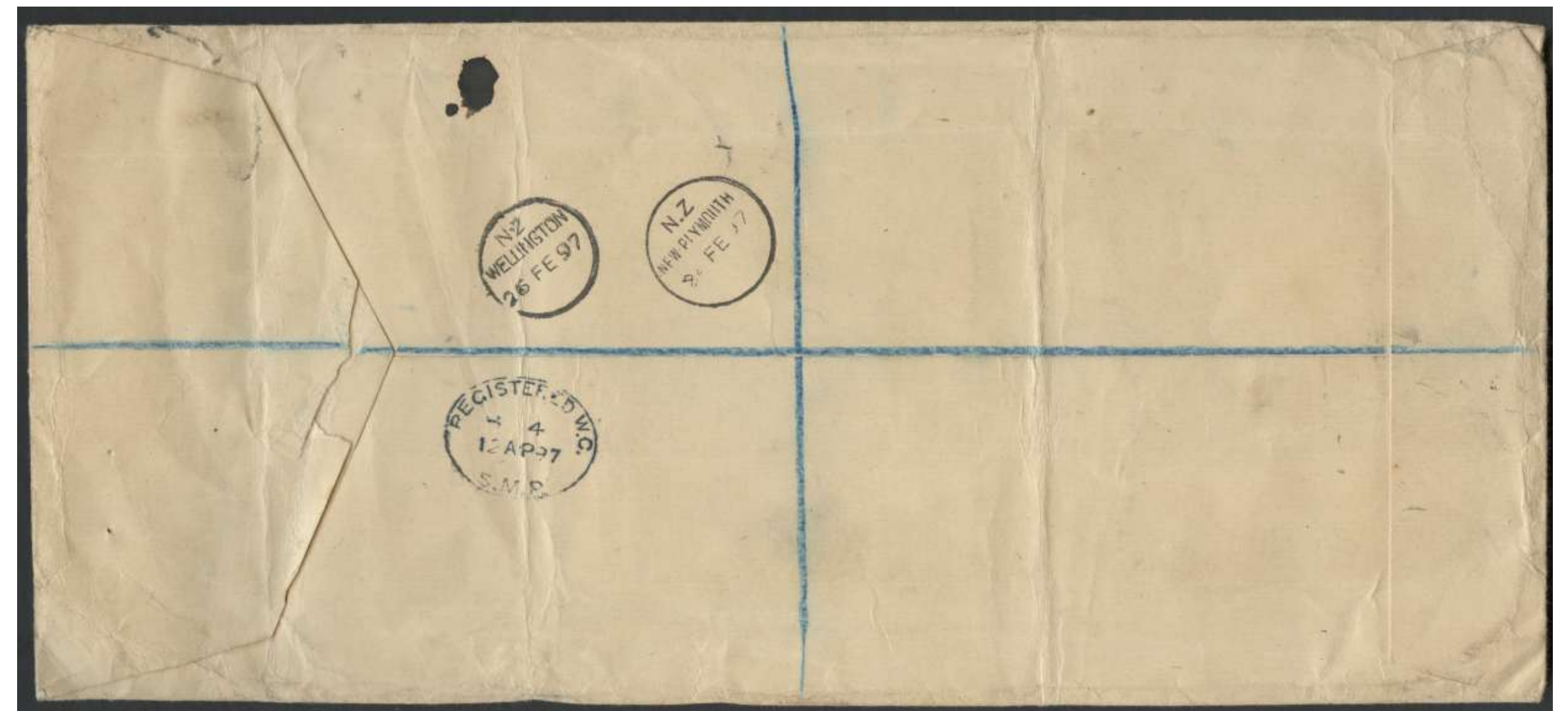
John Stimson, 24/07/2021

Record all details: (Front & back)

- Annotations: (none)
 - Ship: e.g. "Per Ruapehu"
 - Route: e.g. "Via Brindisi"; "Via Naples"; "first direct steamer" "San Francisco" (default normally San Francisco); etc...
- Postmarks: (several)
 - Stratford, 24/2/1897
 - New Plymouth, 24/2/1897
 - Wellington, 26/2/1897
 - London, 12/4/1897
- Registration markings: (several)
 - "Registered Stratford No 156"; Circle with R; London receiving Registered cancellations
- Rate:
 - 7 x Overseas letter rate (2½d per ½oz) plus 3d. registration
 - ½d overpaid?



1897 Registered cover from Stratford, NZ to London



Back of cover showing cancellation datestamps from New Plymouth, Wellington and London

Method of research

Follow the annotations & verify with the dates:

- If no clue to route taken is provided by annotations on the cover then follow the dates
- Don't accept annotations as 100% accurate or a true account, verify the dates match up to the "desired" route of sender
- Often easiest to start with receiving date in UK if this is apparent
- Tabeart provides tables of sailings "Outbound from the UK" and "Homebound from NZ". Tables provided for each year (1881-1900).
- Start by looking at the tables for the default "via San Francisco" route - chapter 5, if the dates don't match look at the other routes.

Examples of annotations for the route



"Per Manapouri" Via Melbourne



Via Brindisi



Per RMS "Moana", Via San Francisco

Arrival date in London: 12/4/1897

From Tabeart...

- Date of arrival (12/4/1897) **doesn't match mail** sent via San Francisco (27/3 or 20/4)*. This was the default route for mail to the UK at the time.
- Date of arrival (12/4/1897) **doesn't match mail** sent via Naples on "The Orient Line" (3/4 or 18/4)*
- Date of arrival (12/4/1897) **doesn't match mail** sent via "The All Red Route" (22/3 or 21/4)*.
- Mail via "The Two Capes Route" after 1892 would have been ship letters and been endorsed with the ship's name e.g. "Per Ruapehu"
- Date of arrival (12/4/1897) **does match** mail sent via Adelaide to Brindisi by The P&O Company see Tabeart page 79 - table provided here:

1897 Homebound

Adelaide dates from Australian newspapers – none reported by *The Times*. Even the Australian papers available often did not report departures – dates in [brackets] are advertised dates only. The "Mails due London" are taken from estimates reported in *The Times* on arrival of the steamer at Brindisi.

Ship	Depart Adelaide	Depart KGS	At Aden	Arrive Brindisi	Mails due London	Notes
Himalaya	13 Jan 1340	16 Jan p.m.	Arr 4 Feb	12 Feb 0700	14 Feb at 1700 [Sunday]	
Oceana	27 Jan 1230	30 Jan	Arr 18 Feb	27 Feb 0830	1 Mar p.m. [Monday]	
Valetta	10 Feb 1345	15 Feb evng	Arr 4 Mar	13 Mar 1300	15 Mar night [Monday]	
China*	24 Feb 1500	27 Feb p.m.	?	26 Mar 0700	28 Mar p.m. [Sunday]	
Massilia*	10 Mar 1330	14 Mar a.m.	Arr 1 Apr	10 Apr 0700	12 Apr p.m. [Monday]	
Arcadia*	24 Mar 1330	27 Mar p.m.	Arr 15 Apr	23 Apr 0600	25 Apr p.m. [Sunday]	
Parramatta*	7 Apr 1325	11 Apr a.m.	Arr 30 Apr	9 May 1100	11 May p.m. [Tuesday]	1.
Ballaarat*	21 Apr 1330	25 Apr	Arr 14 May	23 May a.m.	25 May p.m. [Tuesday]	
Rome	5 May	8 May evng	?	4 Jun 0500	6 Jun p.m. [Sunday]	
Himalaya	19 May 1320	22 May	Arr 10 Jun	17 Jun 0500	19 Jun 1200 [Saturday]	
Oceana	2 Jun 1230	5 Jun 1410	Arr 25 Jun	3 Jul 0530	5 Jul a.m. [Monday]	
Victoria	16 Jun 1310	19 Jun p.m.	Arr 8 Jul	16 Jul 0500	18 Jul 1200 [Sunday]	
China	30 Jun 1500	3 Jul p.m.	Arr 22 Jul	29 Jul 2000	31 Jul late [Saturday]	
Australia	14 Jul 1110	18 Jul evng	Arr 5 Aug	13 Aug 1630	14 Aug evng [Saturday]	

Tabeart: Chapter 3, The P&O Company, page 79

* (27/3 or 20/4) - these are arrival dates of mail in London via this route

Australian ports for contract mail en route to the UK from New Zealand via Australia

- Mail to and from the UK was usually loaded/landed at Adelaide.
- Mail to and from Australia to New Zealand was usually loaded/landed at Melbourne or Sydney. Then transported by rail to and from Adelaide, a journey that took a day from Melbourne or two days from Sydney.
- The cover was transported to the London on the SS Massilia, leaving Adelaide on 10th March 1897.
- Tabeart does not provide details or dates of sailings between Australia and New Zealand. So for these journeys Papers Past provides the best source of information.
- How did the cover get from New Zealand to Adelaide?



Ports of call used by contract mail packets

Papers Past

Mail Notices

- The back of the cover has a New Plymouth date stamp of 24th February 1897 along with a Wellington date stamp of 26th February 1897.
- A number of New Zealand newspapers carried Mail Notices from Chief Postmasters announcing closing dates for mail to the UK.
- A search using keywords “Mail Notices” on Papers Past restricting the dates to a 10 day period around the date stamps found on the cover provides the relevant notices for the intended route and the name of the ship
- The mail notices typically contain the route, and the date mail is due in Australia. In this case Sydney on 6th March. This provides confirmation that the cover would arrive in time to travel by rail from Sydney to make the sailing of the SS Massilia from Adelaide on the 10th March

MAIL NOTICES

MAILS will close at the Chief Post-office, New Plymouth, as follows:—

For Australian Colonies, India, &c., also for United Kingdom and Continent of Europe, via Brindisi, close on Friday, February 26th, at 6 a.m. Mail due in London April 13th.

FRED D. HOLDSWORTH,
Chief Postmaster.

Taranaki Herald 24/2/1897

MAIL NOTICE

THIS DAY, FEBRUARY 26.
For Napier, Gisborne, Auckland and Australia (due in Sydney 6th March), per Rotomahana, at 1.20 p.m.; late fee, 1.40 p.m.
For Southern offices of New Zealand, per Tasmania, at 2.20 p.m.; late fee, 2.40 p.m.

New Zealand Times, 26/2/1897

POST-OFFICE, NAPIER.

Mails close for the undermentioned places—

Saturday, February 27.
For Wairoa, per Te Kapu, at 7 a.m.
For Northern ports and Australian colonies, and United Kingdom, via Brindisi, at 5.45 p.m. Late fee 8 p.m. Per Rotomahana.
Also Hawaiian Islands, Victoria (B.C.), Vancouver, Canada, and United States, connecting with Warrimoo leaving Sydney 10th March. Correspondence to be specially addressed "Per Warrimoo."

Hawkes Bay Herald, 27/2/1897

The Steamships

SS Rotomahana & SS Massilia



SS Rotomahana, 1879-1925

First merchant ship build of mild steel, fitted with bilge keels. In her day the fastest ship in Australasian waters.
Owned by Union Steamship Co. NZ.



SS Massilia, 1884-1903

Built in Greenock for the Australian service
154 passengers in first class & 75 in second class cabins
Owned by P&O

New Zealand "Second Sideface" covers used 1891 - 1900
 7 x Overseas rate of 2½d. per ½oz (17½d.) plus 3d. registration (½d overpaid)



Said to be the first recorded date of the
 Stratford Registered mark

First recorded date of use 24/02/97
 Last recorded date of use 27/10/04

Colours recorded:
 Purple 24/02/97
 Blue 26/01/04
 Violet 27/10/04

Cover from Stratford to Clement's Inn, London.
 7 x 2½d. per ½oz for Great Britain & 3d. registration. (½d. overpaid).
 Stratford "F Class" cancellation 24 FE 97.
 b/s: NEW PLYMOUTH 24 FE 97; WELLINGTON 26 FE 97; & LONDON 12 AP 97

Cover carried by SS Rotomahana to Sydney for rail connection to Adelaide
 Carried by the SS Massilia to Brindisi arriving 10th April 1897
 Transport then by rail to arrive in London on the 12th April 1897.

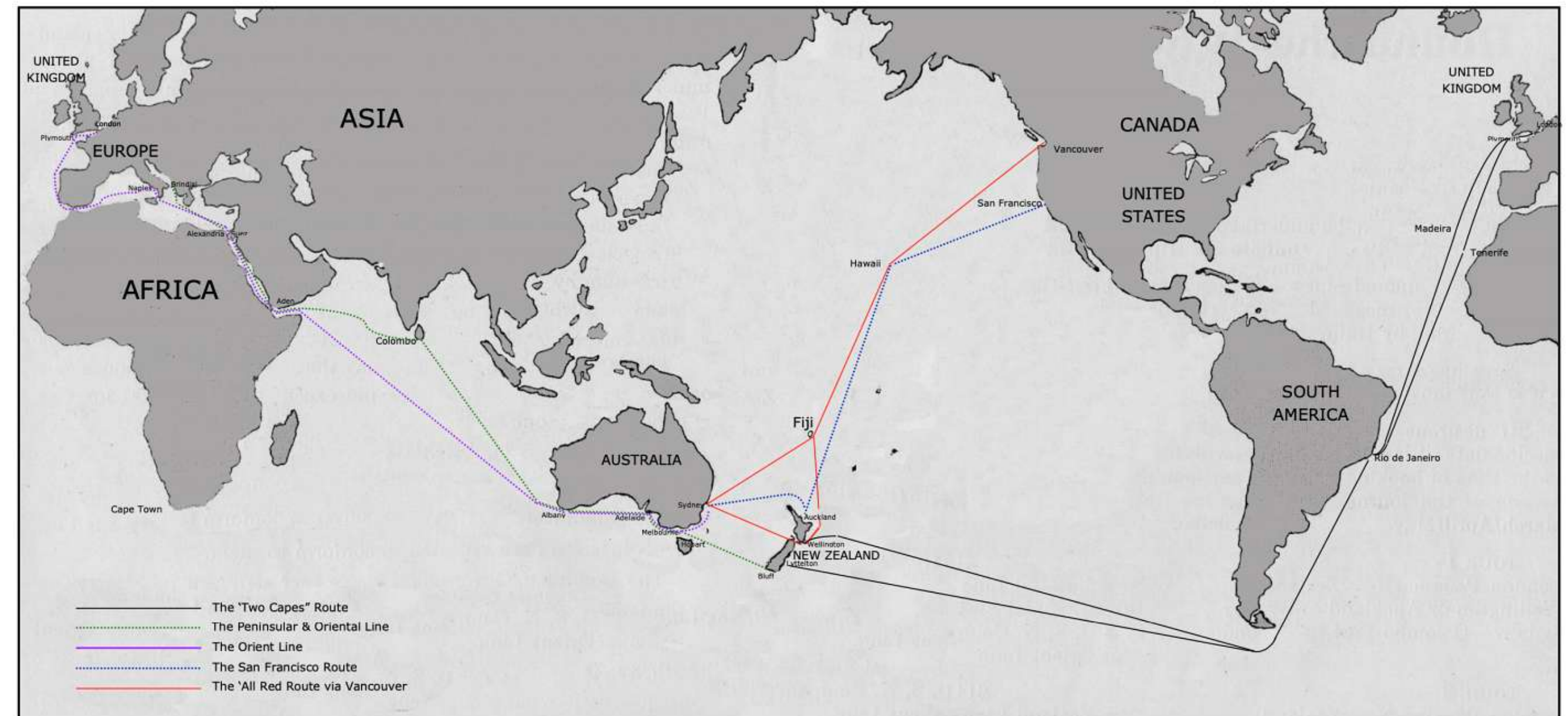
1d. Rose perf 11
 2d. Lilac perf 10x11
 6d. Brown perf 10
 1/-. Red-brown perf 10x11

Examples of the Routes in use 1882-1900

The P&O Company or The Orient Line

Via Australia, Aden, Colombo, Suez & Brindisi/Naples

- These services both carried mail from Australia to the UK
- Mail from NZ would be taken on board in Melbourne.
- Mail arriving in Australia from NZ at other ports (Sydney or Adelaide) would be transported by rail to Melbourne.
- From 1888 a new contract provided a weekly service, alternating between two carriers.



Routes from New Zealand to the UK
(Some routes varied a little during their period of operation)

The Orient Line

Via Bluff, Melbourne & Brindisi

Cover to Sale in Cheshire. Postmarked Dunedin 29 JL 92, b/s Bluff 30 JL 92, Manchester 14 SP 92.

SS Wairarapa (Union Steamship Co. of NZ) sailed Bluff 30th July, & arrived Melbourne 8th August 1892.

SS Orient (The Orient Line) departed Adelaide 10th August, arrived Naples 10th September

Mail offloaded in Naples and transported by rail to London arriving 13th September.

Sources:

PapersPast: Shipping Telegrams 1st August: The Wairarapa sailed from Bluff July 30th.

Tabcart: Vol 2 Pg137:SS Orient departed Adelaide 10th August and arrived Naples 10th September, mail arrived London 13th September.



The P&O Company

Via Australia, Suez & Brindisi/Naples



Cover “Via Suez = Brindisi” to Germany (6d + 2d) - dated Auckland 1884
b/s Camen 6th May 1884

Tabcart states that mails 1880 to 1888 went overland Alexandria to Suez by rail not by the canal. From 1888 mail was carried through the canal by ship.

Tax marks indicate underpayment (should have been 9d).



Cover to Germany “via Brindisi”. (6d + 3d) - dated Invercargill 8th May 1888.
b/s Bluff 9th May 1888; Brindisi 21 JU 88 & Celle.

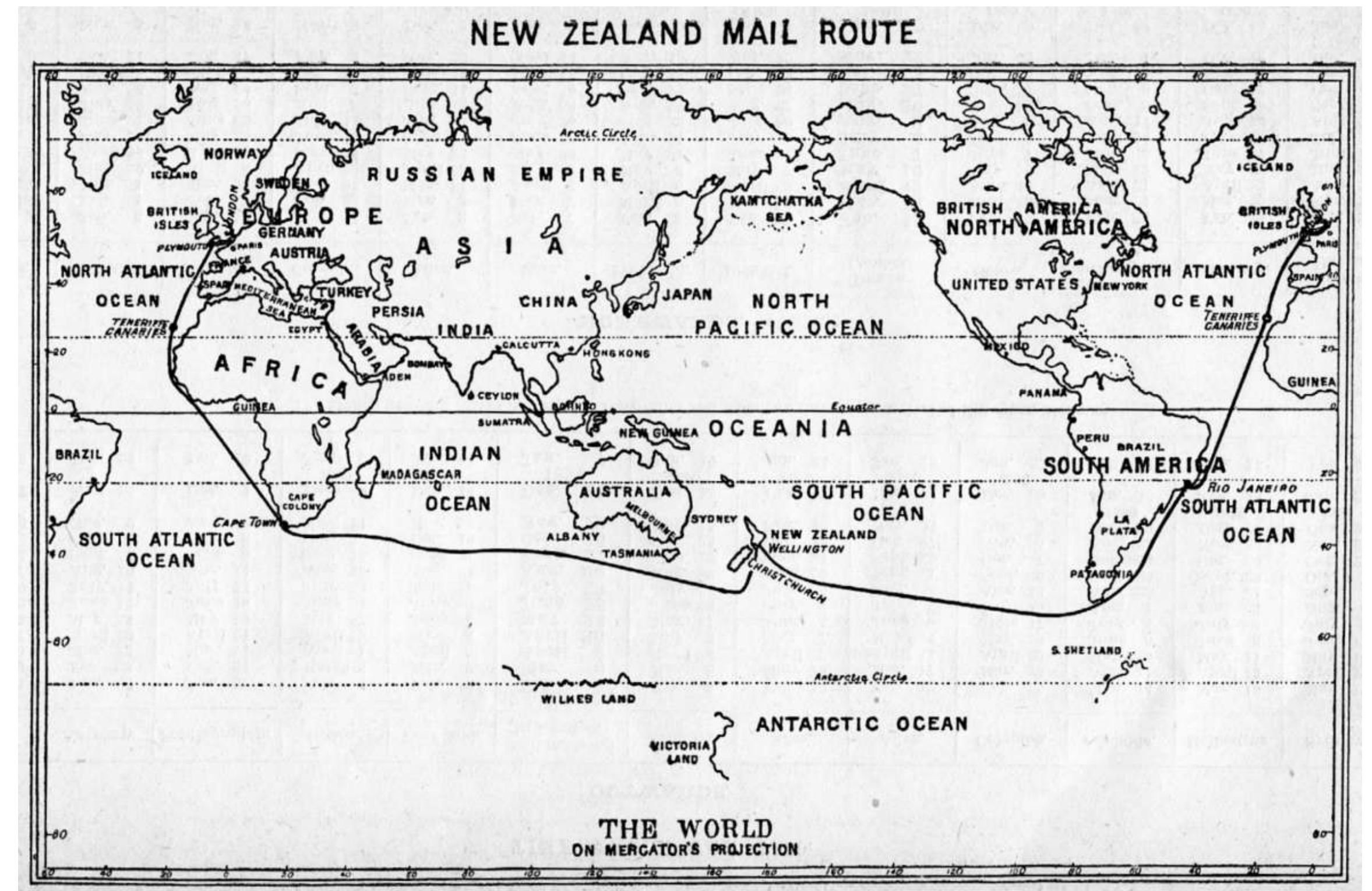
P&O Company SS Britannia, departed Adelaide 21st May 1888,
arrived Brindisi 21st June 1888.

Tax marks indicate underpayment
(should have been 10d at this time).

“The Two Capes Route”

Or “The Direct Route” - out via Cape Hope, & home by Cape Horn

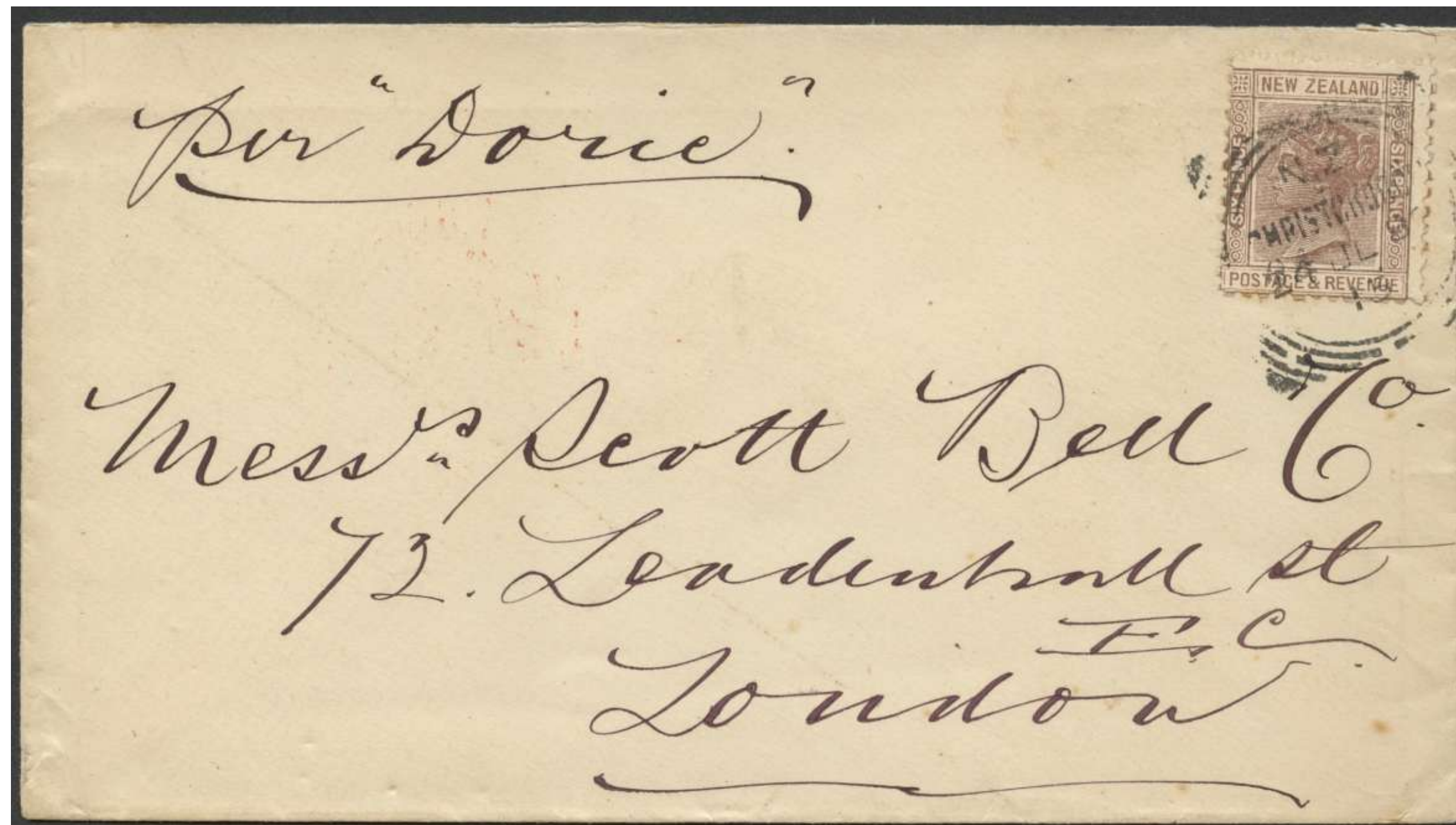
- Until 1879 this route was by sail or clipper
- Post 1879 steam ships (also using sail) were introduced
- In 1883 a call at Hobart, Tasmania was added
- Operated by:
 - The New Zealand Shipping Company, 1872 (clipper route)
 - Shaw, Savill and Albion Company Ltd, 1879
- The departures were timed to alternate between the two companies, offering a fortnightly service. In reality this was very often not adhered to. Sailings of Shaw, Savill and Albion Company occurred in the same week as the service via San Francisco
- First mail contract with The New Zealand Shipping Company came into force in December 1884, renewed in 1889 for 1 year, and then again in 1890 for a final year
- So pre 1884 and post 1890 mail sent this route was “non contract” mail
- 45 days out from UK, 42 days home vs 35 to 40 days if sent via San Francisco



The “Two Capes Route” or “Direct Route”
Out via Cape of Good Hope and home via Cape Horn

“The Two Capes Route”

Or “The Direct Route” - out via Cape Hope, & home by Cape Horn



Cover from Christchurch 24th July 1889 to UK.
Carried by SS Doric, via Two Cape Route, sailed Wellington 25th July,
arriving Plymouth on 2nd September having stopped at Rio and Madeira en route.
b/s London 3 SP 89.

The dates of sailings via San Francisco meant that if this cover had waited and gone that route, the letter would not have been delivered until around the 16th of September 1889.



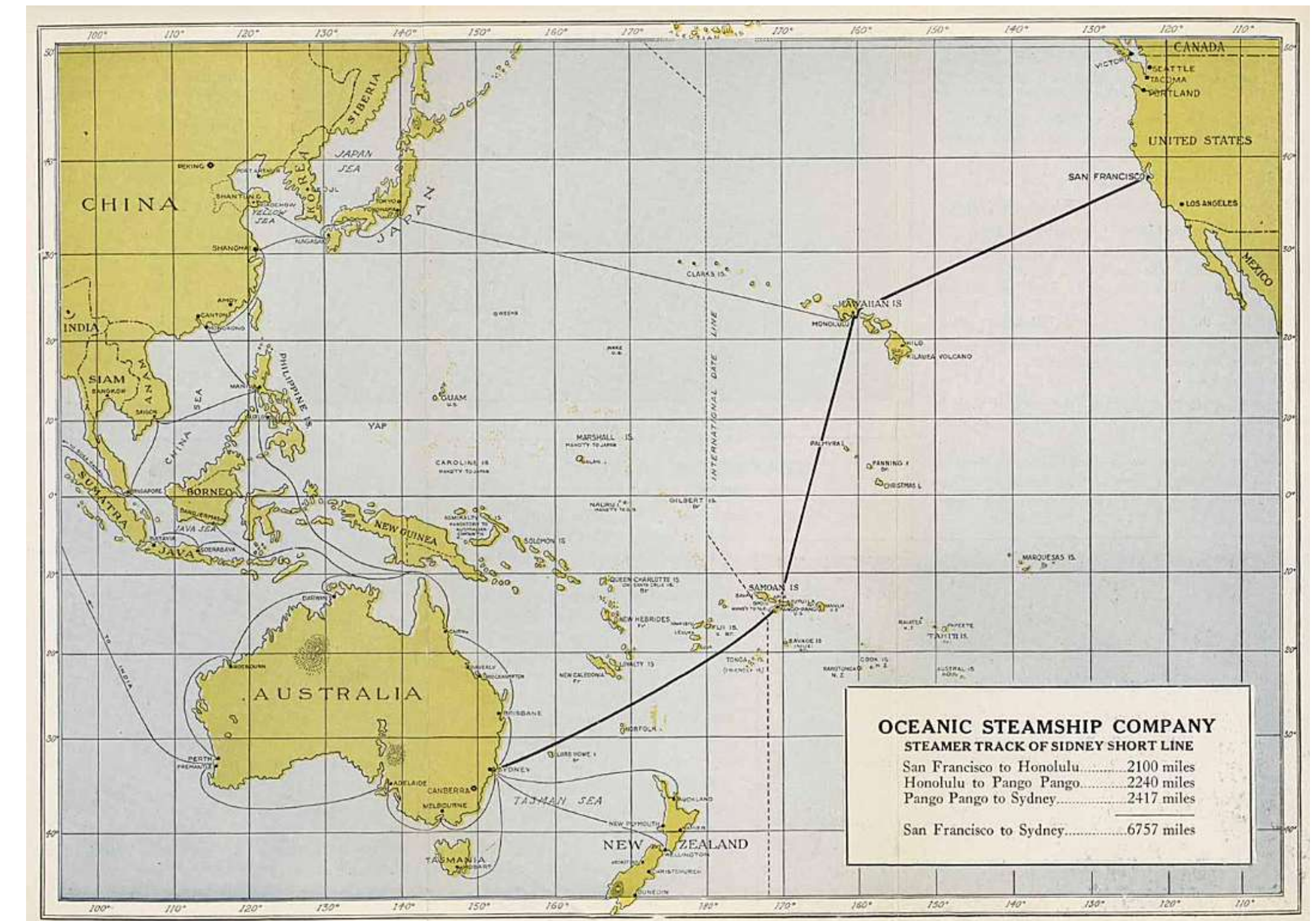
Cover from Napier 12th March 1885 to UK.
Carried by SS Rimutaka, via Two Cape Route, sailed Lyttelton 15th March,
arriving Plymouth on 24th April having stopped at Rio and Madeira en route.
b/s Lutterworth 26 AP 1885.

The dates of sailings via San Francisco meant that if this cover had waited and gone that route, the letter would not have been delivered until around the 8th of May 1885.

“The San Francisco Route”

Via Sydney, Hawaii, the Trans-Continental Railroad & Steamship from New York

- The Route:
 - Commenced in 1870, shortly after the completion of the trans-continental railroad between San Francisco and New York.
 - Mail from New Zealand connected with mail from Australia in Sydney, and joined the first available transatlantic steamer to England.
 - Rail journey across the USA generally took 5 days, extending to 7 or occasional more in bad (snowy) weather during winter months.
- The Contracts:
 - 1870-1880 saw rapid turnover of contractors
 - 1875-1885 The Pacific Mail Steamship Company held the contract between New South Wales, New Zealand and San Francisco.
 - 1885-1900 Joint venture between the Union Steamship Company of New Zealand and the Oceanic Steamship Company of the USA.
 - Post 1900 The Oceanic Steamship Company were sole agent, after the Union Steamship Company withdrew from the contract.
- Sailings were typically at 4 weekly intervals & mail took between 35 and 40 days from Sydney to reach the UK.
- Postage was 6d. for letters to half an oz, until 1891 when NZ joined the UPU, after which the rate was reduced to 2½d.
- Mails to & from the UK passed through the USA in closed mailbags, no US markings are found on letters carried this route.



The “Two Capes Route” or “Direct Route”
Out via Cape of Good Hope and home via Cape Horn

“The San Francisco Route”

Via Sydney, Hawaii, the Trans-Continental Railroad & Steamship from New York



Cover from Shag Point Junction 13th March 1888.
b/s Dunedin 13th March 1888; & Middlesborough 30th April 1888.
6d. per half oz. Letter rate prior to joining UPU.

Carried by SS Zelandia, sailed Auckland 26th March, arriving San Francisco on 14th April
&
SS Eider, Norddeutscher Lloyd Line on 21st April from NY to the UK, arriving 30th April 1888.



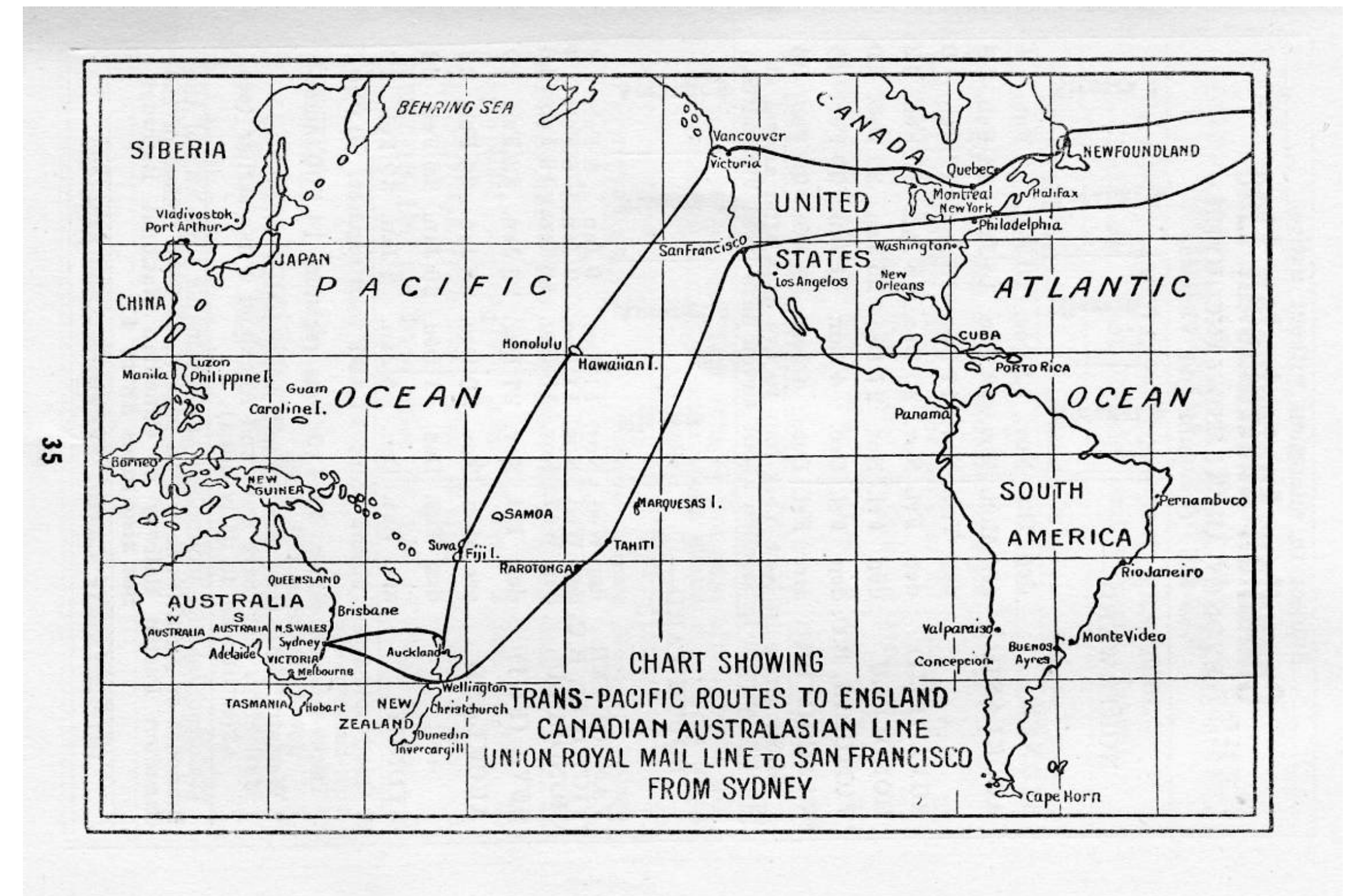
Mourning cover to Galashields, Scotland. 12th June 1895.
b/s Galashields, 18 JY 95.
2 x 2½d per half oz. Double letter rate.

Carried by SS Alameda, sailed Auckland 15th June, arriving San Francisco on 3rd July
&
SS Paris, America Line on 10th July from NY to the UK, arriving 18th July 1895.

“The All Red Route”

Via Fiji, Hawaii, Vancouver, the Canadian-Pacific Railroad & steamship from eastern seaboard to UK

- The Route:
 - Varied according to which colonies contributed to the mail subsidy
 - Sydney and Vancouver remained as termini throughout
 - From 1897 a stop was made in Wellington
- The Contracts:
 - 1893 James Huddart operated a service from New South Wales, subsidised by Canada and NSW.
 - 1897 New Zealand provided a £7,500 inducement to stop in Wellington
 - 1899 New Zealand didn't renew the contract
- Monthly service, one ship out, another to return between Sydney and Vancouver
- Overall mail took about 40 days from Wellington to London



“The ALL Red Route”

Mail from New Zealand passing through Fiji, Honolulu and Vancouver
(Map from 1931, so indicative of route taken)

“The All Red Route”

Via Fiji, Hawaii, Vancouver, the Canadian-Pacific Railroad & steamship from eastern seaboard to UK



Cover to San Diego, California, USA.
From Christchurch on 16th March 1898.

b/s: VICTORIA, BC 23 AP 98; SEATTLE 23 AP 98; & SAN DIEGO.

2½d. Overseas letter rate, but 3d. paid (½d overpaid?).



This letter would have been carried by the SS Warimoo, on “The All Red Route”
Left Wellington 31st March, stopped in Fiji, before arriving Vancouver on 23
April 1898.

Not clear why this route was taken. Via San Francisco would have been quicker.
SS Alameda left Auckland on 19th March & arrived San Francisco on 6th April