INLAND MAIL ROUTES OF THE
PORT PHILLIP DISTRICT, 1838-1851

By RICHARD BRECKON

The Port Phillip District constituted part of New South Wales until its separation and establishment as the colony of Victoria in 1851. From the beginning of the first settlements in Portland and Melbourne in 1834-35, the Port Phillip District grew rapidly during the next 16 years, until the gold rush brought its own considerable momentum. By 1850, the District's white population had reached 77,000. Melbourne had 23,000 residents and Geelong had 8,000. The next largest towns were Brighton (2,000 and not yet a suburb of Melbourne), Portland (1,000), Port Fairy (900), Warrnambool (350) and Alberton (100). More than half the population at this time had arrived after 1845. There were twice as many men as women and about three quarters of adults could read and write.

Wool dominated the economy of the Port Phillip District. Wool exports worth £1,000,000 a year supplied one-fifth of Great Britain's imports of wool. Most of the Port Phillip District was divided into nearly 1,000 wool runs and almost half the population earned their income from wool-growing. Consequently, rural settlement was spread widely across the northern and western regions of the District.

The postal services of the Port Phillip District expanded rapidly to meet the needs of its fast-growing townships and widely-dispersed farming communities. By 1850, there were 40 post offices in the District and during that year 762,000 articles of mail were handled. Eleven years earlier, the entire postal system comprised a solitary, part-time postmaster in Melbourne. The amount of postal business conducted following the appointment of Melbourne's first postmaster in April 1837 was modest - only 2,405 mail articles and £34 in postage were received during the remaining eight months of that year. However, the number of mail articles during 1839 had increased to 39,218 and postage receipts to £534. Of the total mail articles handled over inland routes up to 1851, 58% comprised newspapers (which usually qualified for free postage) and the remaining 42% were letters. Twice as many articles were carried over inland routes compared to ship mail (for detailed statistics of mail carried between 1837 and 1852 , see J.R.W. Purves, *The Postal History of the Port Phillip District 1835-1851,* page 67).

A distinctive feature of the Port Phillip District's postal system was that it operated under a degree of autonomy. Although New South Wales postal legislation applied to the Port Phillip District and the Postmaster-General in Sydney, James Raymond, had overall responsibility, Melbourne's postmaster, Henry Kemp, exercised local authority. Kemp was appointed "Chief Postmaster, Melbourne" on 1 August 1842. He was placed in authority over other postmasters in the District (at that time the postmasters at Geelong and Portland). These postmasters were required to address all communications, including the remittances of postal accounts, to Melbourne, instead of Sydney as previously. A practical expression of this autonomy is the replacement of "NSW" with "Pt Phillip" datestamps.

MAIL ROUTE TO SYDNEY

During 1837, mail communications between Sydney and Melbourne was only by sailing vessels. Under favourable conditions, a voyage might take one week, but if the weather was bad (and the prevailing Westerlies in Bass Strait often saw to that) a voyage could take a fortnight or

longer. Also, ship owners scheduled voyages when justified by freight and passengers and not to maintain regularity for the carriage of mails.

The uncertainties surrounding ship mails led to the establishment of an overland mail route between Melbourne and Sydney. This commenced on 1 January 1838 and it was the first inland mail route in the Port Phillip District. The contract for carrying the mail was awarded to Joseph Hawdon, who had surveyed the route over largely unexplored country during 1837. The contract required that a fortnightly, return service be operated between Melbourne and Yass, where a connection was made to an existing mail route to Sydney, via Goulburn, Berrima, Campbelltown and Liverpool. The total time taken to carry mail by horseback between Melbourne and Sydney was 17 days and the return mail took about five weeks.

Beginning in 1839, a new contractor took over the route, William Rutledge, and from 1 April that year, the service became weekly, instead of fortnightly. As a result, the time taken for the return mail was reduced to three weeks. The mail left Sydney every Saturday and reached Melbourne the following Monday week. By this stage, the majority of Port Phillip's mail was carried by the overland route, particularly newspapers, which did not incur postage and for which prompt delivery was important. Official mail was another category of free postage and excessive use of the overland route caused Governor Sir George Gipps in Sydney to issue an instruction to government officials on 19 July 1838 that *"any heavy letters or packages destined for Port Phillip must be sent by sea . . .".*

Under the New South Wales Postal Act of 1835, postage payable on a half ounce letter carried between Sydney and Melbourne was 1/3d. This comprised 1/- postage for up to 300 miles carriage plus 1d for each additional 100 miles, which in this case is between 500 and 600 miles. This was considerably more expensive than ship postage of 3d for a half ounce letter, but the overland route offered greater reliability. Also, following the introduction of a regular steamer service on the Port Phillip run, postage on letters carried by steamer was increased to the same level as the overland route (i.e. 1/3d for a half ounce letter) in November 1841, as a means of subsidising the steamer service. (For full details of postal rates applying to the Port Phillip District see J.R.W. Purves, *The Postal History of the Port Phillip District 1835-1851*, Chapter 5).

When the contract for the overland route was renewed in 1840, the time allowed for the journey from Melbourne to Yass was reduced to nine days and that between Yass and Sydney to two days. The overland mail was often subject to delays, usually through flooding, as four major rivers had to be crossed. Aborigines, who at the outset had been a hazard to the mailmen, were later helpful in providing canoes to carry the mail across swollen rivers.

The contractor, William Rutledge, and now in partnership with Edward Green, replaced the horseback service with a two-horse cart during 1843. The following year, a cheaper contractor, Edmond Walsh, was engaged to operate the overland route, but his carrying out of the contract was considered to be *"negligently and very carelessly performed"*. Rutledge and Green once again secured the contract and from 1 January 1845, the frequency of the overland route was increased to twice weekly. By this service, the post left Sydney every Wednesday and Saturday and reached Melbourne six days later. In 1847, the partnership between Rutledge and Green was dissolved and Green operated the overland mail route alone. At the start of 1849, Green introduced a four-wheeled carriage pulled by a four-horse team to carry mail and passengers between Sydney and Melbourne.

The first post offices to be established along the overland route were opened during 1843 and 1844. These were at Kilmore (opened 1 February 1843), The Ovens (from 1854, Wangaratta, opened 1 February 1843), Seymour (opened 1 July 1844) and Broken River (from 1854, Benalla, opened 1 December 1844). It was announced that the latter post office would embrace delivery of mail for Devil's River district, as well as the local area. Later, a post office was established on the Sydney Road at Kinlochewe (from 1854, Donnybrook, opened 1 November

1850). The dates stated here and elsewhere in this article are those quoted by Purves in his Port Phillip Postal History, and these derive from research of the Post Office records by William Rundell.

MAIL ROUTES TO GEELONG

The early mails between Melbourne and Geelong were carried by sailing vessels, which provided an *"uncertain and dilatory passage"*. Steps were taken in late 1838 to establish an overland mail route between Melbourne and Geelong, but Governor Gipps decided that the amount of postal business did not justify the cost of operating an overland route. James Purves (who was the great-grandfather of J.R.W. Purves) offered to operate an overland mail route in February 1839, but his offer was rejected. A post office was established at Geelong in January 1840, which operated as a branch of the Melbourne office until it was made a separate office on 1 January 1841.

In June 1839, William Wright commenced a weekly passenger and parcel service by wagon between Melbourne and Geelong. This carried parcels for 2/6d each. A contract to carry mail was awarded to Wright on 2 March 1840. He was required to leave Melbourne every Friday morning and deliver the mail in Geelong that evening. The return journey was undertaken on Sundays. However, the overland mail route operated for only 18 months. The authorities considered Wright's contract to be too costly and a cheaper alternative by sea was sought.

In July 1841, a regular service by the steamer *Aphrasia* commenced between Melbourne and Geelong. Wright's contract was ended on 9 September that year and *Aphrasia* began carrying mails. The steamer initially operated twice a week, but this was increased to thrice weekly in June 1842. Following the introduction of a second steamer, *Vesta* in October 1843, steamers operated daily (Sundays excepted). However, *Vesta* was withdrawn from service in late February 1844 and *Aphrasia* operated alone on three days a week. A daily steamer service was re-established by late 1846, following the return of *Vesta*. A notice of 28 November 1846 in the *Port Phillip Government Gazette* advises sailing times of the two steamers. For the remainder of the existence of the Port Phillip District, mail between Melbourne and Geelong continued to be carried by steamer.

MAIL ROUTES TO PORTLAND AND PORT FAIRY

Between 1837 and 1844, mail was carried from Melbourne to Portland by sailing vessels *"as opportunity offered"*. A post office was established at Portland on 1 November 1840, the third office in the Port Phillip District. An irregular, overland mail route had begun operating by May 1843, which involved the carriage of Portland's mail by mounted police. A notice dated 15 May 1843 in the *Port Phillip Government Gazette* stated that henceforth letters would be sent by ship or by overland, depending on which offered the earliest departure, unless letters were marked specifically for either mode of transport.

A regular, overland mail route between Melbourne and Portland was established on 25 May 1844. The contractor was Edward Green, who operated a two-horse cart once a week via Ballan, Bunnenyong (*sic*), Mount Emu, Fiery Creek and The Grange. The mail left Melbourne every Saturday afternoon and reached Portland the following Saturday. The return mail departed Portland the same day.

On 29 July 1844, a new mail route commenced, which operated to and from Port Fairy, as a branch of the Portland route. The Port Fairy route operated once weekly by horseback and connected with the Portland road at Fiery Creek. Mail was despatched from Melbourne with Portland's mail and reached Port Fairy five days later. The return mail was despatched from Port Fairy every Monday and arrived at Melbourne with the Portland mail.

From 1 January 1847, the Portland mail route was operated twice weekly. Edward Green was still the contractor and the mode of carriage was still by two-horse cart. Two routes were used between Melbourne and Portland. The first involved the existing route via Ballan, Bunnenyong and Fiery Creek to Portland. The second mail route operated via Geelong to Fiery Creek and on to Portland. The Melbourne to Geelong leg was by the daily steamer service.

The branch service between Fiery Creek and Port Fairy continued to operate weekly. On 21 February 1848, a second overland mail route was established between Melbourne and Port Fairy, which operated via Geelong, The Leigh, Elephant Bridge and Muston's Creek. This route operated weekly so that Port Fairy was provided with a twice weekly connection with Melbourne. In January 1849, a weekly mail route was established between Port Fairy and Warnambool (*sic*). This operated as a branch of the Port Fairy-Fiery Creek route. Mail for Warnambool left Melbourne every Monday and arrived three days later. The return mail was despatched from Warnambool every Friday.

New post offices were established along the western mail routes at Port Fairy (from 1854, Belfast, opened 1 July 1843); The Grange (from 1854, Hamilton, opened 1 July 1844); Ballan (opened 1 September 1844 and changed to Bacchus Marsh 1 July 1850); Fiery Creek (from 1854, Streatham, opened 1 September 1844); Bunnenyong (later "Buninyong", opened 1 January 1845); Bacchus Marsh (opened 1 March 1847, closed and reopened as Ballan 1 July 1850); The Leigh (from 1854, Shelford, opened 1 July 1847); Elephant Bridge (from 1854, Darlington, opened 1 March 1848); Muston's Creek (from 1854, Caramut, opened 1 March 1848); Warnambool (later "Warrnambool", opened 10 January 1849) and Wardy Yallock (opened 1 March 1851).

MAIL ROUTE TO ADELAIDE

In 1847, arrangements were made with the South Australian government to provide an overland mail route between Melbourne and Adelaide. This involved establishing a branch route from The Grange (on the Portland road), via The Glenelg to Mount Gambier. The route to Mount Gambier was operated weekly, although the route from here to Adelaide operated fortnightly. At Mount Gambier, the mail was exchanged with South Australian mounted troopers, who carried it to the mouth of the Murray River. The return mail from Adelaide was carried with Portland's mail, via Geelong to Melbourne. The announcement of this service in the *Port Phillip Government Gazette* is dated 10 April 1847, by which time it was already in operation. Mail for Adelaide from Melbourne was despatched every second Thursday and reached Mount Gambier the following Monday. The return mail was despatched from Mount Gambier every second Tuesday and reached Melbourne the following Monday. The Port Phillip element of postage had to be prepaid, like ship letters, and for a half ounce letter this was 1/-, based on the distance between Melbourne and Mount Gambier. Newspapers were not accepted for the Adelaide overland service.

The *Argus* newspaper of 16 April 1847 had some critical remarks to make about the overland mail route to Adelaide. The South Australian troopers rode at a "*snail's pace of 20 miles per day*", so that the distance of 210 miles between Mount Gambier and the Murray's mouth took 10 days. It took 12 to 14 days for the South Australian mail to arrive at Mount Gambier. The service had improved by the following year, as it took 14 days for mail to be carried along the entire route between Melbourne and Adelaide. The route continued to be operated fortnightly until the end of 1849 and from the beginning of 1850, the route was operated weekly.

New post offices to be established in association with the Adelaide overland route were at The Glenelg (from 1854, Casterton, opened 1 July 1847) and Munro's Inn (from 1850, Border Post, and from 1854, Lindsay, opened 1 January 1849).

OTHER MAIL ROUTES

A mail route was established between Melbourne and Mount Macedon on 10 August 1843. This route was operated fortnightly on horseback by the contractor, Charles Wedge. Following the appointment of a new contractor, William Bayes on 16 February 1844, the route was operated weekly. Mail was despatched from Melbourne every Saturday and reached Mount Macedon that afternoon. The return mail left every Thursday. In July 1848, the Mount Macedon mail route was extended to Serpentine Creek, via Mount Alexander. In January 1849, the route was extended to Swan Hill on the Murray River. Both extended routes operated weekly. The mail left Melbourne every Friday and arrived at Swan Hill the following Monday. The return mail left Swan Hill every Tuesday. New post offices on this route were established at Mount Macedon (from 1854, Kyneton, opened 16 August 1843); Mount Alexander (from 1854, Lockwood, opened 1 July 1848); Serpentine Creek (opened 1 July 1848); Swan Hill (opened 1 January 1849); Gisborne (opened 1 April 1850) and Bulla Bulla (from 1854, Bulla, opened 1 March 1851).

In July 1848, a weekly mail route was established between Kilmore, via Bertram's Inn on the Campaspie River, to Maiden's Punt on the Murray River. Mail was despatched from Melbourne every Tuesday and reached Maiden's Punt the following Thursday. The return mail left every Saturday. At Maiden's Punt, a connection existed with a weekly mail route north to Deniliquin and Moulamein. New post offices were established on this route at Bertram's Inn (from 1850, Campaspie and later, Elmore, opened 1 January 1849) and Maiden's Punt (from 1854, Moama, opened 1 March 1848). Following separation in 1851, Maiden's Punt was on the New South Wales side of the Murray River. This post office was jointly operated by Victoria and New South Wales until 1 January 1855, when it reverted to the latter's control. Victoria established a post office on the opposite side of the Murray River at Echuca.

In July 1848, a weekly mail route was established between Bunnenyong and Horsham, via Burn Bank. The mail was despatched from Melbourne every Thursday and reached Horsham on the following Sunday. The return mail left Horsham every Monday. The *Argus* newspaper of 17 September 1847 referred to a new private mail route, which started from Burn Bank and ran along the Richardson and Avon rivers and up to Avoca, every alternate Saturday and returned on Monday, in time for the despatch of Burn Bank's mail to Melbourne. Presumably, a number of such private services operated following the establishment of Post Office routes. New post offices along this route were established at Burn Bank (from 1854, Lexton, opened 1 July 1848); Four Posts Inn (from 1850, Upper Wimmera, and from 1854, Glenorchy, opened 1 January 1849); Horsham (opened 1 July 1848) and Crowlands (opened 23 May 1851).

A weekly mail route was established in March 1849 between The Grange and Lake Wallace, via Upper Glenelg, and operated as a branch of the twice-weekly Melbourne to Portland route. The mail was despatched from Melbourne every Tuesday and reached Lake Wallace the following Saturday. The return mail left Lake Wallace every Monday and reached Melbourne the following Thursday. New post offices established on this route were at Upper Glenelg (also known as Evan's Store and from 1854, Harrow, opened 1 March 1849) and Lake Wallace (also known as Davidson's Inn and from 1854, Apsley, opened 1 March 1849).

A twice weekly mail route was established in July 1848 between Geelong and Colac, via Barwon. In January 1849, the route was extended to Timboon. The mail left Melbourne every Monday and Thursday and reached Timboon the following Wednesday and Saturday. The return mail left Timboon every Monday and Thursday. New post offices were established along this route at Barwon (from 1854, Winchelsea, opened 1 July 1848); Lake Colac (later Colac, opened 1 July 1848) and Timboon (from 1854, Camperdown, opened 10 January 1849).

Until 1848 mail was carried to Alberton, on the Gippsland coast, by ship, *"as opportunity offered."* On 2 August 1848, a fortnightly mail route was established between Dandenong and Alberton, via Flooding Creek. This route connected with a weekly mail route between

Melbourne and Dandenong that had been established about a month earlier. The route between Dandenong and Flooding Creek was particularly difficult as dense forest had to be penetrated and swamps crossed, where a horse could be bogged. The mail tender had to be re-advertised before it was taken up by Thomas Stephens. The mail was despatched from Melbourne every second Tuesday and reached Alberton the following Sunday. The return mail left Alberton every second Wednesday. New post offices on this route were established at Dandenong (opened 1 July 1848) and Flooding Creek (from 1854, Sale, opened 1 October 1848). Alberton's post office had been established in January 1843.

The establishment of a post office at Brighton was reported in the *Argus* of 4 August 1848 and the appointment of a "paid" postmaster. There was no gazettal of a post office at Brighton and no datestamp was provided, yet the official history of Victoria's postal services (1862) notes the opening of Brighton's post office in 1848. It would appear that a post office operated, perhaps on an unofficial basis.

A mail route was established between Melbourne and Williamstown, following the opening of a post office at Williamstown on 1 March 1850. The service operated daily, except on Sunday. The mail closed at Melbourne each evening and reached Williamstown early the following morning. The return mail was despatched and carried to Melbourne that morning.

INLAND MAIL ROUTES AND POST OFFICES OF THE PORT PHILLIP DISTRICT, 1851.
Names in brackets are subsequent changes of name unless indicated otherwise.
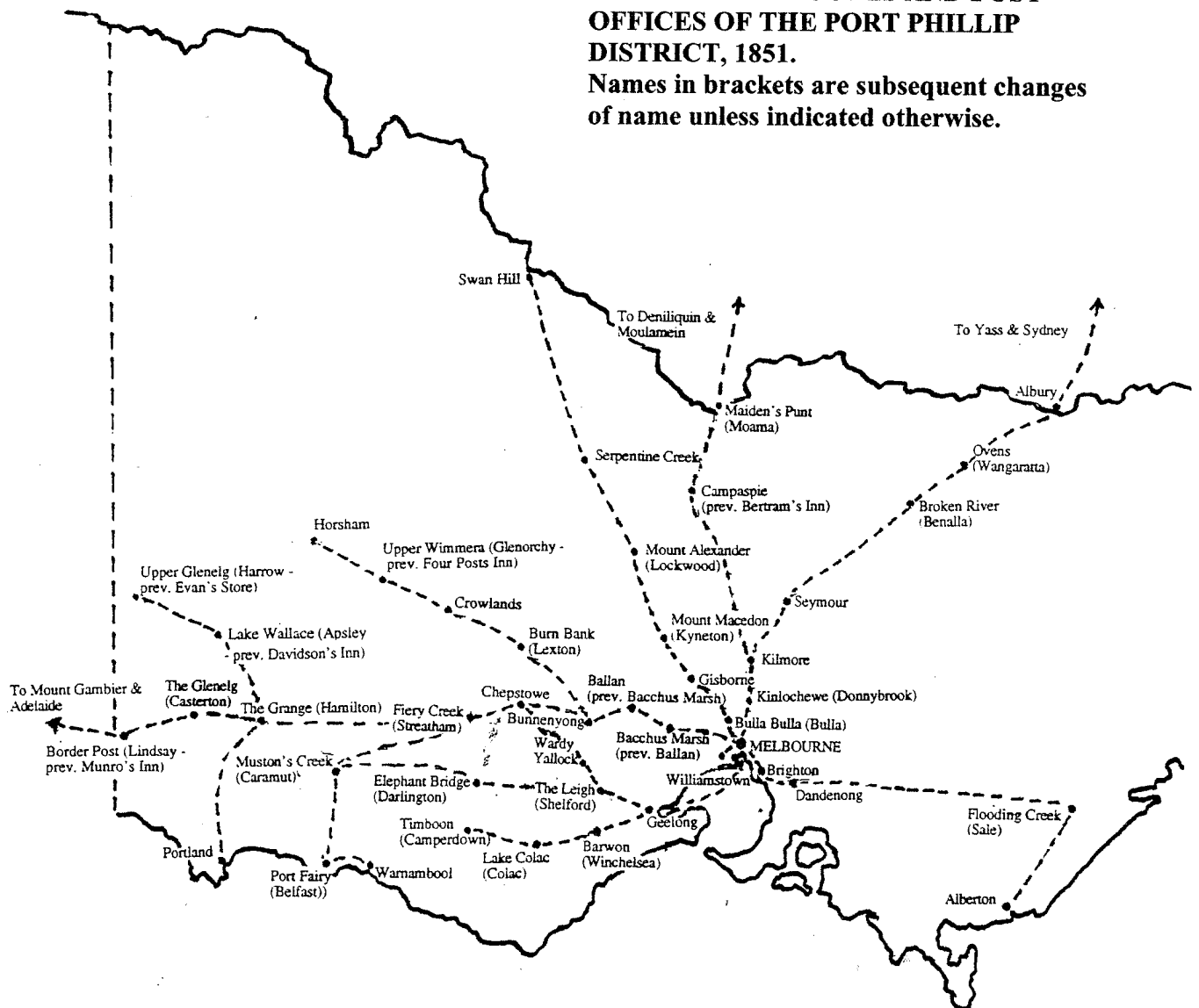
OTHER ASPECTS OF MAIL SERVICES

Until August 1839, successive occupants of the Postmaster's job in Melbourne carried out their duties on a part-time basis from their own residence. The position of Postmaster was unsalaried and the occupants were remunerated by a commission of 20% of postage collected, out of which the expenses of operating the post office had to be met. David Kelsh, who had been employed at the Sydney post office, was appointed Melbourne's first full-time Postmaster on 1 September 1839. Kelsh remained in the job for three years, which provided some continuity for the postal system, although he was described by "Garryowen", the chronicler of early Melbourne, as *"sour and uncivil, unless to a few recognised magnates of the time."*

In March 1840, Kelsh appointed a private letter carrier, who charged 1d for each letter delivered to Melbourne's residents. If the addressee objected to this payment, he or she had to call at the post office to collect their mail. The first private boxes were introduced in 1841 - about 50 for £2 each and 20 boxes at £1 each. This augmented Kelsh's income by about £120 a year. The Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, Charles La Trobe, thought that this was *"highly objectionable"* and likely to lead to abuses and that it would be better if the Postmaster was paid a salary.

In particular, La Trobe thought that the carrying out of postal business in the Postmaster's private residence to be an inefficient arrangement and in January 1841, Governor Gipps' approval was secured to erect a permanent post office. A site at the corner of Elizabeth and Bourke Streets was selected, which is the present-day site of the Melbourne G.P.O. Construction began in May 1841 and a sandstone building was erected within three moths, at little cost to the authorities as convict labour was used. The new post office was opened for business on 12 August 1841. In January 1843, Melbourne's first town clock was fitted over the post office.

Kelsh was given a salary of £200 per year and provided with two salaried staff - a clerk and a letter carrier. "Garryowen" noted that delivery by letter carrier *("a regular red-coated Mercury")* commenced in Melbourne on 10 August 1841. A second clerk was appointed on 1 November 1842 and a second letter carrier on 3 April 1843. Following an inspection tour by the Sydney authorities, Kelsh was dismissed for unsatisfactory performance, and on 1 August 1842 Henry Kemp, who was Accountant at the Sydney post office, was appointed "Chief Postmaster, Melbourne". As explained earlier, Kemp was placed in authority over other postmasters in the Port Phillip District. In the words of "Garryowen", Kemp was *"punctilious, polite and efficient."* He remained Chief Postmaster until the end of 1850, except for a period of extended absence between December 1844 and October 1846, when Stephen Usher, also from the Sydney post office, acted in Kemp's place.

On 8 July 1844, it was announced in the *Port Phillip Government Gazette* that two posting boxes had been established in Melbourne, at either end of town. One was at the Police Office in Market Square and the other was at the Watch House in Stephens Street (now Exhibition Street). The boxes were cleared twice daily, except Sundays, immediately before each town delivery. Prepaid mail had to be lodged at the post office. Following agitation from the residents of Collingwood, a posting box was provided in this suburb. On 22 February 1847, a box for the receipt of unpaid mail was fitted to William Sherry's shop window in Brunswick Street. It was cleared twice daily, except Sundays. The recent appointment of a third letter carrier at Melbourne had allowed the extension of town delivery to Collingwood.

Outside Melbourne, mail contractors could deliver letters to residents on the direct line of road, provided there was no collection of postage involved. They could also receive letters, which had to be given up to the Postmaster, on arrival at the next post office. The contractors were bound not to carry other letters and packages "per favour" to the detriment of the Post Office's revenue. A system of town delivery began in Geelong, following the town's upgrading to a "government post office" on 1 July 1848. This involved the appointment of a salaried Postmaster and a letter carrier for Geelong.

Between 1847 and 1850, the *Port Phillip Government Gazette* published an annual timetable of mail routes. Reproduced below is the latest of these timetables published in February 1850. The footnotes incorporate information about changes in mail routes and times extracted from the earlier timetables, as well as later developments up to mid-1851.

TABLE OF DESPATCH AND ARRIVAL OF THE POST-OFFICE MAILS, AT MELBOURNE, AND AT ALL OTHER POST-OFFICES, THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT OF PORT PHILLIP - FEBRUARY 1850

Post Town	Time of Despatch from Melbourne	Time of Arrival at Post Town	Time of Departure for Melbourne	Time of Arrival at Melbourne
EASTERN DISTRICT				
Kilmore [1]	Tues & Fri 1.00pm	Tues & Fri 8pm	Mon & Thur 10.00pm	Mon & Thur 3.00pm
Seymour	ditto	Wed & Sat 3.00am	Mon & Thur 4.00am	ditto
Broken River	ditto	Wed & Sat 3.00pm	Sun & Wed 9.00am	ditto
Ovens	ditto	Wed & Sat 8.00pm	Sun & Wed 4.00am	ditto
Albury	ditto	Thur & Sun noon	Sat & Tues noon	ditto
Yass	ditto	Sat & Tues 10.00pm	Sun & Thur 1.00am	ditto
Sydney	ditto	Mon & Thur 8.00am	Tues & Fri 5.00pm	ditto
. . . .				
Campaspie or Bertram's Inn	Tues 1.00pm	Wed 6.00pm	Sun 6.00am	Mon 3.00pm
Maiden's Punt, junction of Campaspie & Murray	ditto	Thur 4.00pm	Sat 4.00am	ditto
. . . .				
Dandenong	Tues 1.00pm	Tues 6.00pm	Mon 8.00am	Mon noon
Flooding Creek, Gippsland	Every 2nd Tues 1.00pm	Every 2nd Sat 6.00pm	Every 2nd Thur 6.00am	Every 2nd Mon noon
Alberton	ditto	Every 2nd Sun 6.00pm	Every 2nd Wed 6.00am	ditto
NORTHERN DISTRICT				
Mount Macedon [2,3]	Fri 6.00pm	Sat 8.00pm	Thur 6.00am	Thur 8.00pm
Mount Alexander	ditto	Sun 10.00am	Wed 1.00pm	ditto
Serpentine Creek	ditto	Sun 6.00pm	Wed 6.00am	ditto
Swan Hill	ditto	Mon 7.00pm	Tues 6.00am	ditto
NORTH-WESTERN DISTRICT				
Ballan or Bacchus Marsh [4,5]	Fri 1.00pm	Fri 8.00pm	Thur 6.00am	Thur 1.00am
Bunnenyong Via Geelong	Tues & Fri 3.00pm	Wed & Sat noon	Thur & Mon 6.00am	Mon & Thur night
Burn Bank [6,7]	ditto	Wed & Sat 9.00pm	Wed & Sun noon	ditto
Upper Wimmera or Four Posts Inn [6]	Fri 3.00pm	Sun 4.00am	Tues 3.00pm	Thur night
Horsham [6]	ditto	Mon 9.00am	Tues 5.00am	ditto

Post Town	Time of Despatch from Melbourne	Time of Arrival at Post Town	Time of Departure for Melbourne	Time of Arrival at Melbourne
WESTERN DISTRICT				
Geelong [8]	Daily (Sun exc.) with the steamers 6.00pm	Daily (Sun exc.) with the steamers 2.30pm	Daily (Sun exc.) with the steamers 7.00am	Daily (Sun exc.) with the steamers 2.30pm
Barwon	Mon & Thur 6.00pm	Wed & Sat 10.00am	Tues & Fri 10.00am	Wed & Sat 2.00pm with the steamers
Colac	ditto	Wed & Sat 3.00pm	Tues & Fri 6.00am	ditto
Timboon [9]	Mon 6.00pm	Wed 8.00pm	Thur 3.00pm	Sat 2.00pm With the steamers
. . . .				
The Leigh [10,11]	Tues & Fri 3.00pm	Wed & Sat 9.00am	Mon & Thur 10.00am	Mon & Thur night
Elephant Bridge [12]	Tues 3.00pm	Wed 3.00pm	Sun noon	Mon night
. . . .				
Chepstowe, near Mount Emu [13]	Tues & Fri 3.00pm	Wed & Sat 4.00pm	Sun & Wed 6.00pm	Mon & Thur night
Fiery Creek [13]	ditto	Wed & Sat night	Sat & Tues noon	ditto
. . . .				
Muston's Creek [13]	Tues & Fri 3.00pm	Thur & Sun noon	Tues & Sat 3.00pm	Mon & Thur night
Port Fairy [13]	ditto	Thur & Sun night	Tues & Sat 10.00am	ditto
Warnambool [14]	Fri 3.00pm	Mon 10.00am	Mon 4.00am	Thur night
. . . .				
The Grange [15]	Tues & Fri 3.00pm	Thur & Sun 2.00pm	Tues & Sat 3.00pm	Mon & Thur night
Portland [15]	ditto	Fri & Mon noon	Tues & Sat 3.00am	ditto
. . . .				
The Glenelg [16]	Fri 3.00pm	Sun 2.00pm	Wed 6.00am	Mon 8.00am
Border Post [16]	ditto	Mon 10.00am	Tues 11.00am	ditto
. . . .				
Adelaide overland [17]	Fri 3.00pm	Tues 10.00am	Wed 11.00am	Mon night
Upper Glenelg or Evan's Store [18]	Tues 3.00pm	Fri 10.00am	Tues 6.00am	Thur night
Lake Wallace or Davidson's Inn [18]	ditto	Sat 6.00pm	Mon 6.00am	ditto

Notes

1. A post office was opened at Kinlochewe, between Melbourne and Kilmore, on 1 November 1850. The mail was despatched from Melbourne every Tuesday and Friday at 1.00pm, with the Sydney mail, and arrived at Kinlochewe on the same days at 5.00pm. The return mail left Kinlochewe every Monday and Thursday at noon and arrived in Melbourne on the same days at 3.00pm.

2. Prior to the extension of the mail route from Mount Macedon to Swan Hill in 1848-49, Mount Macedon's mail was despatched from Melbourne every Saturday at 6.00am and arrived the same day at 5.00pm. The return mail left Mount Macedon every Thursday at 6.00am and arrived at Melbourne the same day at 5.00pm.

3. A post office was opened at Gisborne, between Melbourne and Mount Macedon, on 1 April 1850. The mail was despatched from Melbourne every Tuesday and Friday at 6.00pm and arrived at Gisborne on Wednesday and Saturday at noon. The return mail left Gisborne every Monday and Thursday at noon and arrived at Melbourne on the same days at 6.00pm. A new post office was also opened at Bufla Bulla, between Melbourne and Gisborne, on 1 March 1851. This was not gazetted and so no details are known of the mail times, but the Melbourne mail would have been received and despatched on the same days.

4. This refers to present-day Bacchus Marsh, which prior to 1850 was known as Ballan. The locality known as Bacchus Marsh before 1850 became Ballan (i.e. the two towns switched names). The new Ballan post office opened on 1 July 1850. Mail was despatched from Melbourne every Friday at 1.00pm and reached Ballan on Saturday at 10.00am. The return mail was sent every Wednesday at 4.00pm and reached Melbourne on Thursday at 1.00pm.

5. Prior to 1850, there was a twice-weekly mail to Ballan (later called Bacchus Marsh) and Bunnenyong. The mail left Melbourne every Monday and Thursday at 4.30pm and arrived at Ballan the same evening and at Bunnenyong on

Tuesday and Friday at noon. The return mail left Bunnenyong every Saturday and Tuesday "at night" and from Ballan every Sunday and Wednesday at 1.00pm and reached Melbourne on Monday and Thursday at 8.00am.

6. When the mail route to Horsham was established in 1848, the despatch from Melbourne occurred every Thursday at 4.30pm. The mail arrived at Burn Bank on Friday at 9.00pm; at Upper Wimmera (Four Posts Inn) on Saturday at 4.00pm and at Horsham on Sunday at 9.00am. The return mail left Horsham on Monday at 9.00am; from Upper Wimmera on Monday at 3.00pm and from Burn Bank on Tuesday at 10.00am. This mail arrived at Melbourne on Thursday at 8.00am.

7. A new post office was opened at Crowlands, beyond Burn Bank, on 23 May 1851. The mail was despatched from Melbourne every Friday at 3.00pm, with the Horsham mail, and arrived at Crowlands on Sunday at noon. The return mail left Crowlands every Tuesday at 6.00pm and arrived at Melbourne on Thursday "at night".

8. The steamers departed for Geelong in the morning. The Post Office timetable dated 5 April 1849, states that the Geelong mail left Melbourne daily at 10.00am. However, the timetables dated 15 March 1848 and February 1850 both state the mail departure to be 6.00pm daily.

9. Prior to 1850, Timboon's mail was twice weekly. The mail left Melbourne every Monday and Thursday at 6.00pm and arrived at Timboon every Wednesday and Saturday at 8.00pm. The return mail was despatched from Timboon every Monday and Thursday at 3.00pm and reached Melbourne on Wednesday and Saturday at 2.00pm, with the steamer from Geelong.

10. When the mail route from Geelong to The Leigh commenced in July 1847, it operated once weekly. Mail was despatched from Melbourne every Tuesday at 7.30am, via the steamer to Geelong, and arrived at The Leigh the same day at 6.00pm. The return mail left The Leigh every Sunday at 4.00pm and arrived at Melbourne by steamer on Monday at 1.00pm. By April 1849, the despatch from Melbourne changed to every Wednesday at 10.00am and this mail arrived at The Leigh on Thursday at 8.00pm. The return mail left The Leigh every Wednesday at 11.00am and reached Melbourne on Thursday at 2.00pm, with the Geelong steamer.

11. A new post office was opened at Wardy Yallock on 25 February 1851 and the mail carried ovia Geelong and The Leigh. Mail was despatched from Melbourne every Tuesday at 2.30pm and arrived at Wardy Yallock on Wednesday at 3.00pm. The return mail was despatched from Wardy Yallock every Friday at 3.00pm and arrived at Melbourne on Monday at 9.00pm.

12. When the mail route between The Leigh and Elephant Bridge commenced in March 1848, mail was despatched from Melbourne every Monday at 6.00pm, via the Geelong steamer, and arrived at Elephant Bridge on Wednesday at 3.00pm. The return mail left Elephant Bridge every Saturday at 1.00pm and reached Melbourne by steamer on Monday at 1.00pm. By April 1849, the despatch from Melbourne changed to every Wednesday at 10.00am and this mail arrived at Elephant Bridge on Friday at 3.00pm. The return mail left Elephant Bridge every Tuesday at noon and reached Melbourne on Thursday at 2.00pm, with the Geelong steamer.

13. When the second mail route to Port Fairy, via Geelong, commenced in July 1848, the mail's despatch from Melbourne occurred every Monday and Thursday at 4.30pm. The mail arrived at Chepstowe on Tuesday and Friday at 4.00pm; at Fiery Creek on the same days "at night"; at Muston's Creek on Wednesday and Saturday at noon and at Port Fairy on the same days at 6.00pm. The return mail left Port Fairy every Monday and Friday at noon; from Muston's Creek on Tuesday and Saturday at 6.00pm; from Fiery Creek the same days at noon and from Chepstowe also Tuesday and Saturday at 6.00pm. This mail arrived at Melbourne on Monday and Thursday at 8.00am.

14. When the Port Fairy to Warnambool mail route commenced in January 1849, the mail was despatched from Melbourne every Monday at 4.30pm and reached Warnambool on Thursday at 10.00am. The return mail left Warnambool every Friday at 8.00am and reached Melbourne on Monday at 8.00am.

15. Prior to 1850, Portland's mail was despatched from Melbourne every Monday and Thursday at 4.45pm. This mail arrived at The Grange on Wednesday and Saturday at 3.00pm and at Portland on Thursday and Sunday at 3.00pm. The return mail left Portland every Friday and Monday at 8.00am and from The Grange the same days at 6.00pm. This mail arrived at Melbourne every Monday and Thursday at 8.00am.

16. Prior to 1850, this mail was despatched from Melbourne every Thursday At 4.30pm. The mail arrived at The Glenelg on Sunday at 2.00pm and at Munro's Inn (later known as Border Post) on Monday at 10.00am. The return mail left Munro's Inn every Tuesday at 11.00am and from The Glenelg on Wednesday at 6.00am. This mail arrived at Melbourne every Monday at 8.00am.

17. Prior to 1850, the Adelaide overland mail operated fortnightly. The mail was despatched from Melbourne every second Thursday at 4.30pm and reached Adelaide "on the 14th day", also every second Thursday. The return mail left Adelaide every second Monday and reached Melbourne 14 days later, on the second Monday at 8.00am.

18. Prior to 1850, this mail was despatched from Melbourne every Monday at 4.30pm. The mail arrived at Upper Glenelg (Evan's Store) on Friday at 10.00am and at Lake Wallace (Davidson's Inn) the same day at 6.00pm. The return mail left Lake Wallace every Sunday at 6.00am and from Upper Glenelg the same day at noon. This mail arrived at Melbourne every Thursday at 8.00am.

19. A new post office was opened at Williamstown on 1 March 1850 and á daily mail route (Sundays excepted) was established with Melbourne. Mail was despatched from Melbourne each day at 6.00pm and arrived at Williamstown the next day at 7.00am. The return mail left Williamstown each day at 7.00am and arrived at Melbourne at 8.30am the same morning.

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