

NEW ZEALAND ROUTES AND RATES pre 1874

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When I first became interested in New Zealand Postal History, I soon found out that the early routes and rates were shrouded in mystery. The standard Stamp Catalogue tells you very little about the postal use of the stamps and the reason for their issue.

I know that these days stamps are issued for many reasons, and some are nothing whatsoever to do with the postage rates but more as an easy way of raising money from collectors for the Government. However, when stamps, or correctly speaking 'adhesive labels', were first issued in New Zealand they were issued to pay for a specified postage rate.

In 1866 New Zealand issued adhesive labels so that they could be used on envelopes (covers) to prepay the cost of postage. Prior to this, the postal clerks would indicate payment either by a "handstruck" figure marking or by writing the amount with pen and ink. In fact this was still allowed and commonplace until 1 April, 1862. Surprisingly enough, when you sent an inland letter prior to 1 April, 1862, you had the option of prepaying the postage, or sending the letter unpaid in which case the recipient had to 'pay up' before the letter was handed over.

After 1 April, 1862, there was no option whatsoever, and it was also compulsory to use an adhesive label. As today, if a letter was sent unpaid there was the deficient postage to be paid plus a fine!!

Different rates applied for letters sent overseas, and all mail after 27 March, 1857 had to be prepaid. Mail to Great Britain was forwarded provided at least a single rate was prepaid, and the deficient postage plus fine was collected on delivery. However, mail to all other overseas countries unless prepaid in full was detained. Compulsory prepayment of mail to Australia was not introduced until 1 January, 1859, when the Foreign Rate of sixpence for a ½oz letter came into effect.

It is important to know why a particular value stamp is issued as this will be a good indication of their proper usage.

In 1866 three values were issued, a penny, twopenny and one shilling. The **one penny value** was issued primarily to pay the "Soldiers' and Sailors' Concession" ½oz letter for one penny rate, which applied to all soldiers and sailors on active service. British soldiers and sailors had been in New Zealand since 1840, and the last troops did not leave until 1870, with up to 10,000 being in New Zealand during the height of the Maori Wars.

The **twopenny value** prepaid the **Colonial Rate** for a letter not weighing more than ½oz. This applied to both inland and overseas mail prior to 27 March, 1857, when a Foreign Rate of sixpence was introduced.

The **one shilling value** was issued to prepay the postage on heavier letters, book post exceeding ½lb, and to meet the cost of the registration fee.

New values were later added to the first three values. The next to be issued was a **sixpenny value** on 8 August, 1859. This value was required to pay the Foreign Rate introduced on 27 March, 1857. Prior to its issue, one had to resort to using either six 1d adhesives, or three 2d adhesive stamps, or a combination of both. The Dunedin Postmaster decided to 'create' his own sixpenny stamps and cut his supply of one shilling adhesive stamps in half (bisects), and placed half a one shilling stamp on the cover to pay the sixpence rate!

At the same time as the Foreign Rate was introduced, provision was made to send mail on a faster alternative route across France (via Marseilles route), instead of travelling through the Straits of Gibraltar from Alexandria. Incidentally, mail travelled overland from Suez to Alexandria, as the Suez Canal did not open until November 1869. Even then, the New Zealand to United Kingdom mail still went overland until 20 September 1874 when the mail aboard the P & O Steamer TEHERAN was taken through the Canal and direct to the U.K. (Southampton).

The rate of sixpence for a ½oz letter also applied for mail which was carried on ships going on the "long sea route" direct (i.e. not via Suez).

A **threepenny value** was issued on 1 January, 1863, to meet the additional charges incurred on the "Via Marseilles" route. The importance of the Via Marseilles route was two fold; firstly, the closing time for the mail in N.Z. was later than for the mail Via Suez, and secondly, the mail was transferred at Alexandria and travelled to Marseilles and then across France by rail, across the English Channel Calais to Dover, arriving in London some 6 to 7 days earlier than the Suez mail which had travelled via the Straits of Gibraltar to Southampton.

The rate was based on quarter ounce progressions, each being charged at the additional cost of three pence. As you can imagine, with the normal rates being on a half ounce basis, there was some confusion in ascertaining the correct charges. For example, the rates Via Marseilles were as follows:

¼oz - 9d

½oz - 1s0d

¾oz - 1s9d

1oz - 2s0d

based on the basic rate for a ½oz letter at 6d and a 1oz letter 1s0d.

This particular rate, introduced on 27 March, 1857, was changed on 12 September, 1863 to an additional rate of fourpence per ½oz, due to the confusion in using the ¼oz rate. The quarter ounce progressions

were eliminated and the new rate was on a ½oz basis. The Via Marseilles rate therefore became ½oz - 10d, and 1oz - 1s8d.

As you will readily see, the threepenny value was only used to make up either the 9d or 1s9d rate for nine months. Of course, after this time it could be used in conjunction with other values to make up the rate; however, it was not really needed again until 1 January, 1867, when an Inland InterProvincial Rate of threepence for a ½oz letter was introduced.

There was now an immediate need for the last new value of the first issue of N.Z. stamps (Chalon Heads, or Full Face Queens), i.e. a **fourpence value**, this being issued on 1 June, 1865, nearly two years after the 10d Via Marseilles rate was introduced. The fourpenny value was also used to pay the book packet 4oz rate introduced on 1 January, 1859.

The following tables 1-5 show the postage rates applicable up to 1874. The various overseas routes during this period were as follows:

1. pre 1857 - Direct by ship or via Australia
2. 27 March 1857 - ditto, and via Suez and Southampton or via Suez and Marseilles.
3. 24 June 1866 to 8 Dec 1868 - Via Panamá, and ditto
4. 2 April 1870 to 21 April 1873 - Via San Francisco and ditto but exclude Via Panamá (resumed 22 December 1873)
5. 1 Jan 1870 - Via Brindisi, ditto (via Marseilles terminated 22 December 1870)

Table 1 - Inland Rates - Ship Letters

Incoming Mail to New Zealand and Port to Port	
1 March 1842	6d per ½ oz
6 Sept 1843	4d per ½ oz
19 Dec 1848	1d per ½ oz
1 April 1851	2d per ½ oz
1 Jan 1859	No charge +

+ Incoming mail from the U.K. or via the U.K. as from 27 March 1857 was delivered Free of additional charges.

Table 2 - Inland Rates - Letters

Date	Rates		
1840	4d per sheet (by sea)		
17 August 1840	1s Od per sheet (Bay of Island to Hokianga)		
1 March 1842	6d per ½ oz		
6 Sept 1843	4d per ½ oz		
1 April 1851	2d per ½ oz		
1 Jan. 1859	½ oz - 2d 1 oz - 4d Plus 4d for each oz or part		
	Section I Town*	Section II Country	Section III Inter-Provincial
1 Jan. 1867	½ oz-1d 1oz-2d +2d-1oz or part	½oz-2d 1oz-4d +4d-1oz or part	½oz-3d 1oz-6d +6d-1oz or part
1 April 1870	1d per ½ oz	2d per ½ oz	3d per ½ oz
1 Aug. 1870	1d per ½ oz	2d per ½ oz	combined with Section II 2d per ½ oz
1 Jan. 1874	1d per ½ oz	Section II Inland 2d per ½ oz	N/A

* Not applicable to the County of Westland and the Chatham Island, 1 January 1868.

Table 3 - Foreign Rates (Direct Not Via United Kingdom)

Note: Not applicable to specified Countries listed in Schedules of Rates, after 27 March 1857.

Date	Rates
1840	4d per sheet
1 March 1842	6d per ½ oz
6 Sept. 1843	4d per ½ oz
1 April 1851	2d per ½ oz
27 March 1857	6d per ½ oz 1s0d - 1 oz Plus 1s0d for each additional ounce or part
1 April 1870	6d per ½ oz

Table 5 - to Australia - Letters

Date	Rates
1840	3d per sheet
1 March 1842	6d per ½ oz
6 Sept. 1843	4d per ½ oz
1 April 1851	2d per ½ oz
1 Jan. 1859	6d - ½ oz 1s0d - 1 oz Plus 1s0d per additional oz or part.
1 April 1870	3d per ½ oz
15 July 1870	3d per ½ oz includes W. Australia
1 Jan 1874	T35 2d per ½ oz

Table 4 - Letter Rates N.Z. Mail to U.K.

Note: 1840 to 27 March 1857 all as Table 3

Date	route	Via Suez, and Southampton or by Longsea Route, via Panama, via San Francisco	Via Marseilles	Via Brindisi
		Standard Route	Premium Route	Premium Route
27 March 1857		½ oz - 6d 1oz - 1s0d plus 1s0d additional oz or part	*Additional charge 3d per ½ oz ¼ oz - 9d ½ oz - 1s0d ¾ oz - 1s9d 1oz - 2s0d	—
12 Sept. 1863		ditto	*Additional charge 4d per ½ oz ½ oz - 10d 1 oz - 1s8d	—
1 Jan. 1870		ditto	ditto	½ oz - 1s3d 1 oz - 2s6d plus 2s6d additional oz or part
1 April 1870		6d per ½ oz	10d per ½ oz	1s3d per ½ oz
22 Dec. 1870		6d per ½ oz	Route terminated transferred to via Brindisi	1s3d per ½ oz
3 Jan. 1870		6d per ½ oz	—	9d per ½ oz
6 Sept. 1871		6d per ½ oz	—	10d per ½ oz
2 Jan. 1873		6d per ½ oz	—	9d per ½ oz
3 Oct. 1876			—	8d per ½ oz