

State of Victoria Early Postal Cancels (and History) Illustrated

Section II: 1851 to 1853

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1851 Post Office Openings

There were three new post offices opened in 1851 prior to separation.

Wardy Yallock - which opened less than three weeks after Black Thursday.

Bulla Bulla - which apparently opened a week later, and **Crowlands**, which opened a month before separation.

Wardy Yallock is first cab off the rank. This one gave me a lot of trouble 😞

WARDY YALLOCK (Pitfield, Pitfield Plains)

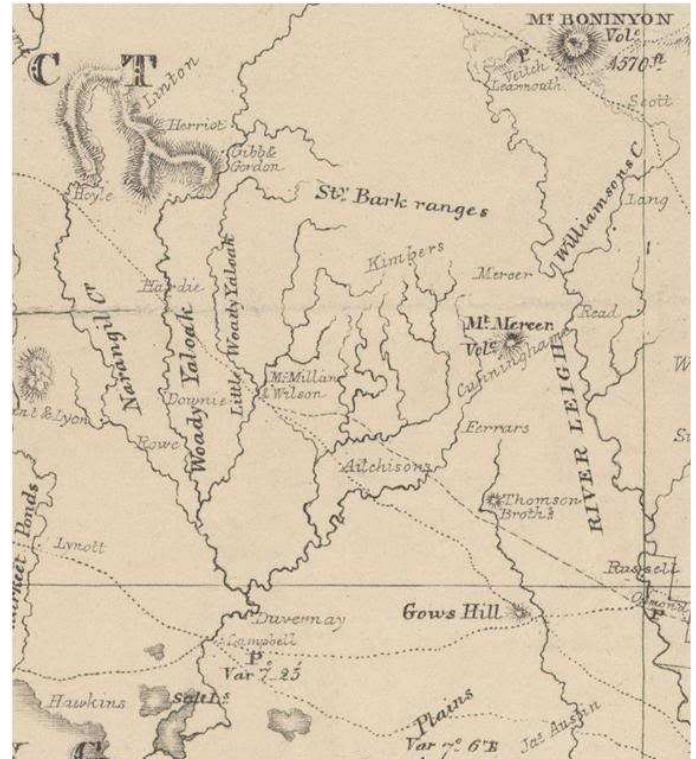
Opened 25th February 1851
Closed 1st July 1852

Reincarnated as **PITFIELD** 19th October 1857
Closed, again, 4th July 1893

Reincarnated, again, as **PITFIELD PLAINS** 1st January 1897
Closed (for the last time) 3rd September 1946.

To begin, it is very important to know just where this post office was, as at the time it opened the area known as Wardy Yallock was large. There were two inns on the Woody Yaloak river from very early in the 1840s; one, known as "Frenchmans Inn" Wardy Yallock, was owned and operated by Frederick and Rosine Duvernay and, in the turn of the wheel, the area around the inn became Cressy (the post office opened in 1858); the other, THIS Wardy Yallock, was originally known as Hardie's Inn.

Peter Hardie, who is listed in Port Phillip with his brother Thomas in 1840, had established his little pub on the banks of the Woody Yaloak river, next to the inevitable ford, sometime in 1841-42. By this time he had the lease on his 10,000 acre "Mindi" run.



If you look closely at the above section of this 1845 map, you can see "Hardie" written across the Woody Yaloak river on the line-of-road which led from Geelong through Shelford, and on to Hamilton (and so to Portland).

Less than 12 months after the map was published, the following notice appeared in the Melbourne Argus;

Melbourne Argus (Vic. : 1846-1848) [about](#) [Friday 5 June 1846](#) [Page](#)

THE WARDY-YALLOCK.—A by-mail from Geelong to the Emu Inn, (formerly Hardy's) at the Wardy-Yallock, has been established by Messrs. Edward Langhorne (formerly of William's Town) and Mr. Macnamara (late of the customs,) who are now the proprietors of that establishment. This will be a very great convenience to the settlers in the populous country intervening, who will doubtless gladly avail themselves of Messrs. L. and M's, enterprising undertaking.

The mail service was availed less than a fortnight later when David Aitchison placed advertisements in the major papers of N.S.W., Victoria and Tasmania looking for a "thoroughly qualified" medical person – preferably married – to be established amongst the settlers. An annual salary of £100 was guaranteed.

The Postal Department had taken control of the delivery of mails to Wardy Yallock by mid-1850 when the department allowed £60 for the "conveyance of mails between Chepstow and Wardy Yallock".

ing Herald (NSW : 1842-1954) [about](#) [Monday 8 July 1850](#)

PORT PHILLIP. POST OFFICE.			
Two assistant clerks, Melbourne	...	...	200 0 0
Postage stamps...	...	...	170 0 0
Conveyance of mails between Melbourne and Ballan	...	...	60 0 0
Conveyance of mails between Chepstow and Wardy Yallock	...	...	60 0 0
			490 0 0

By 1850, Messrs Langhorne and Macnamara had moved on, and the Emu Inn was under the control of Stewart Matthews. A bridge was built across the river by the time Mr. Matthews was gazetted as official Postmaster in February 1851.

NEW POST OFFICE.

HIS Honor the Superintendent having been pleased to approve of the establishment of a Post Office, at Wardy Yallock. Mr Stewart Matthews, to be Postmaster.

Notice is hereby given that the same will be brought into operation from this date.

Mail to close at Melbourne, every Tuesday, half-past 2 P.M.

To leave Wardy Yallock, every Friday, 3 P.M.

To arrive at Melbourne, every Monday, 9 P.M.

To arrive at Wardy Yallock, every Wednesday, 3 P.M.

NOTE.—Parties wishing to receive their letters, &c., through this office should caution their correspondents to address them distinctly to the office in addition to any private residence; and notice should be given to newspaper offices as an advice to the publishers to correct the addresses of newspapers also.

A. M'CRAE,
Chief Postmaster

1 Post Office, Melbourne,
February 25. 1851.

Wardy Yallock was issued with butterfly 44. To date this number has not been sighted. (Okay, so now, hopefully, someone will prove me wrong!!) 😊

His lease of the inn was cut short when the owner died intestate and the (fully furnished, six bedroomed) property was put up for auction on the 22nd June 1852, with possession to take place on 1st July 1852. This was the day the post office closed. Stewart Matthews moved up to Smythe's Creek and involved himself in local politics. (Maybe a reason no-one's seen the butterfly??)

The Inn was bought by Mr. Baird, and although there was no official post office in the area for the next 5 years Baird was in the habit of picking up the mail and newspapers from Ballaarat when he went there on business. In December 1855 he was awarded a £600 contract for the weekly delivery of mails to Pitfield (a nice bonus!!)

This was over 18 months BEFORE the Pitfield post office opened. Pitfield had been surveyed and the area declared a township in 1852.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne 6th April, 1852.

PITFIELD.

NOTICE is hereby given, that a site has been fixed upon for a Township at the undermentioned place, and that a copy of the approved plan may be seen at the Surveyor General's Office, Melbourne; or, at the Police Office, Chepstow: viz—

1 Pitfield, at the Woody Yaloak, on the main road from Geelong to the Fiery Creek.

By His Excellency's Command,
W. LONSDALE.

When the post office shut its doors in July that was the end of Pitfield.

Pitfield was allocated barred numeral 151. There was only one issue, and it's RR-rated.

Hugh has just sent me these lovely scans - I hope everyone's as grateful to him as I am!



The Pitfield village slowly grew, slightly to the west of the bridge across the Woody Yaloak river close to the Emu Inn. (The authorities had realized very early on that townships HAD to be surveyed and reserved, else every man and his dog would be digging holes everywhere!)

The accepted theory is that Pitfield was named after one of the gold escort officers – John Charles Pitfield Lydiard. I don't know how that may be, but I do know that since the aborted Daisy Hill gold-rush in 1849, rumours of gold coming out of the Wardy Yallock district had been rife.

Ten allotments of land were put up for sale in the last week of July 1852, but it took over 5 years before there was any real development was seen, and even then it wasn't anything to write home about. There was the Pitfield Hotel, which doubled as a coaching stop, and when the post office opened, the "Upper Western Road" through Pitfield had been officially gazetted, which meant – in theory, anyway – that money was spent on its upkeep.

Over the next few years, thanks mainly to the gold in them thar hills, the little township did grow. There were at least 2 churches, with their attendant cemetery; a common school was set up for the miners' children; and the area could boast its own Registrar for Births, Deaths and Marriages, as well as an Electoral Registrar. (Actually, it was the same bloke – but it sounds good!)

There was a visiting presence of the police (they had their own area of about 12 acres set aside in the township) and a town hall reserve was established (I don't know for sure that it was built). Through the 1860s and '70s the little town did very well for itself. Then the wheels fell off. By the 1880s the population was down to about 65 in the whole district.

The title of township was revoked in 1884, and was re-proclaimed 10 months later in a smaller version. Pitfield's public lands reserve was revoked 12 months later, and over the next few years the township declined, until, in 1893, the last man standing was the postmaster.



But wait – there's more!

Ironically, less than 12 months after the post office closed, new mining methods were introduced into some of the areas around Pitfield, and gold began to be won again from the district. At least a half dozen mining companies were involved, and with the company came

the company man.

About 2 miles from the old township of Pitfield a new post office was set up 4 years after the old one closed. It served the mining companies, which continued in the area until at least 1914, when 2d per share was made payable in December of that year.

Pitfield Plains held on through WW1, and through the Depression, and it made it through WW2 – just. The tiny country villages couldn't compete with the larger towns in the age of the motor vehicle, and Pitfield Plains post office was a victim of its time.

Pitfield Plains was issued with barred numeral 1981. This has an S rating;



Thanks Hugh!

Today virtually nothing remains in the area to remind us of its history. Roads have been decommissioned and buildings demolished, or moved.

BULLA BULLA (Bulla)

Post office opened 1st March 1851
Shortened to **BULLA** 1st January 1854

A few km north-west of Melbourne's international airport is the small township of Bulla. Today the town sits higher up the bank of the Deep Creek than the original village which was proclaimed in 1847.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, 23rd June, 1847.
**VILLAGE OF BULLA — PORT
PHILLIP.**

NOTICE is hereby given, that a site has been fixed upon for a Village at the undermentioned place, and that a copy of the approved plan may be seen at the Office of the Surveyor General, in Sydney, or at the Police Office, Melbourne, viz:—BULLA, in the County of Bourke, on the road from Melbourne towards the Campaspie River and the Lower Murray.

By His Excellency's Command,
E. DEAS THOMSON.

In early June 1835 John Batman had gone for a walk about before getting his leases signed. He followed the Maribyrnong river up to "Mt. Iramoo" (Mt Macedon) before heading east to present day Yan Yean and south back to Melbourne over "Lucy's (that was his daughter) Rivulet" – Plenty river – somewhere near South Morang.

His journal of this trip is mostly concerned with the excellence of the "most beautiful sheep pasturage I ever saw in my life." He passed through, or close by, the Bulla

area on Thursday 4th June 1835.

When Richard Bourke came down to the Port Phillip settlement in April 1837, he enlisted William Buckley as a tour guide and went for a look around. Buckley took him out as far as Mt. Macedon, and on the way through they called in to the Brodie brothers who had established a run in the Deep Creek (Bulla) area.

During the next 6 years more farmers moved into the area. In 1843-44 William ("Tulip") Wright built the Bridge Inn to service the wants of the locals. For a few more years his hostelry and home were all that marked the area, but after the village was surveyed and proclaimed he was joined by Messrs Campbell and Stewart who built a blacksmith forge, and not long after them a store and Mr. Dean's butcher shop were established. (The butcher was supplied by a slaughter-house in the area.)

As early as 1848 there were calls for a cemetery reserve to be established. It appears that a very nice business was being done in certain parts of Melbourne in quantities of "that liquid poison, which under the name of Cape, finds such a ready market in this colony", and Tulip Wright had established a little burial ground near his pub for those men who'd succumbed.

No blame was being attached to him for the deaths, and there were loud calls for a consecrated ground, not to mention a minister for the area. A Church was established at Broadmeadows in 1850, but it took another 9 years for a Presbyterian church to be built at Bulla, and 14 years for Bulla to get a proper cemetery.

For some years the mails for Mt Macedon (Kyneton) had been passing through Bulla, and over time it became an accepted practice to leave a mailbag with Tulip

containing the papers and mail for the locals. This practice came to a screeching halt at the end of 1850 when the route was changed to go through Keilor (along what is now the Calder freeway).

The natives weren't happy. First the letters poured into the newspapers of the day, and then in February 1851 a petition was got up and presented to La Trobe. It was printed in the Argus on Monday 10th February 1851.

“To His Honor Charles Joseph La Trobe, Esquire, Superintendent of Port Phillip - The memorial of the undersigned landholders, farmers, and other residents in the vicinity of the Deep Creek, respectfully sheweth, that a numerous and rapidly increasing population, has, within the last two or three years, grown up in the vicinity of the Deep Creek, who, by the present postal arrangements, are entirely shut out from mail communication, the nearest post office being Melbourne, a distance of seventeen miles, on the one hand, and Gisborne a distance of seventeen miles, on the other. That the township of Bulla, on the Deep Creek, distant seventeen miles from Melbourne, from its central position, as it regards the residences of your memorialists, and the great bulk of the population of the district, affords a suitable locality for the establishment of a post-office, which would be of very great convenience to your memorialists, and the other residents in the vicinity, and your memorialists are authorized to state that Mr. William Wright, the innkeeper at Bulla, would if appointed, act as postmaster. Your memorialists therefore pray that your Honor will be pleased to sanction the establishment of a post-office at Bulla, and issue instructions accordingly; and your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray, & c.”

(Here followed close on a hundred signatures.)

Tulip Wright was Bulla Bulla's first postmaster when the village got its official post office in March 1851. The accounts vary about whether the post office was in the pub or in the store (Tulip owned both), but he continued as postmaster until his death in November 1856. (He was buried in the 'New Cemetery' in Melbourne!)

In late 1854 the mail contractor who serviced Broadmeadows, Bulla, and Sunbury died, and the postal department appeared reluctant to (or incapable of) finding a replacement. It was nearly 6 months before mail deliveries were officially resumed, and in that time the locals had to operate a "private post", as none of them were too keen to join the "jostling mob" at the Melbourne Post Office to collect (when they could) their mail.

In the early 1850s Cobb & Co. had a staging post in Bulla, and by 1855 kaolin (porcelain clay) deposits had been discovered. The early residents of Bulla had used the stuff to *'paint the walls of their huts, and brighten*

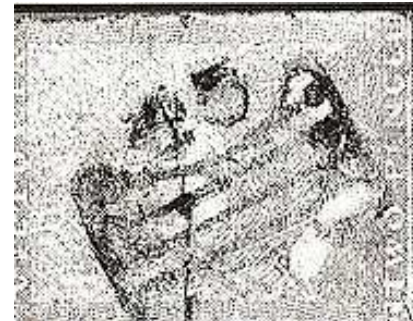
their hearths, and make the outside walls shine in the sun.'

It is believed that up to 40 men were employed in the early days of the kaolin mine, but the works were washed away in a flood in March 1860, and it took 3 years to become operational again. The mine never realized much potential, partly because as it expanded the quality deteriorated, and partly because the possibility of a rail link between Bulla and Melbourne was nullified after W.J.T. Clarke (the owner of 'Rupertswood') pressured the government into having the 'Main Line' railway go through Diggers Rest – closer to his front door.

After being proclaimed a shire in 1866, the bluestone Shire Offices were built in Bulla a year later, and for a time it was the largest town in the district, boasting two schools, three churches, a couple of manufactories, and a steam-driven flour mill.

But you can't compete with 'progress', and within 10 years the lack of the rail service had been felt, with Sunbury taking over in size and services.

Bulla Bulla was issued with the R-rated butterfly 45;



and its barred oval - number 35 - was always in RED ink. This has a 4R rating, and the only image I have is almost indecipherable.

I can't say that the barred numeral is much better. I have three copies of Bulla's '24', and this is the best ? of them;



If someone can show a better strike, I would be grateful!!



To my knowledge, Bulla has never had a stand-alone post office. At the time of Federation in 1901, the post office was in the Bulla Hotel.

CROWLAND (Crowlands)

Post office opened 1st June 1851
Closed c. August 1851

Officially reopened as **CROWLANDS** 18th April 1853
Closed AGAIN 31st December 1854

REOPENED AGAIN 1st MAY 1858
CLOSED AGAIN 29th August 1975

In 1848 William John Turner Clarke (an absentee landholder) was issued with a lease for 184,000 acres in the Wimmera District. The run, known as 'Woodlands', was bisected by the track from Buninyong through to Horsham, via Burnbank, and his neighbor in the area along the banks of the Wimmera River was James Allan Cameron.

It was about this time that Matthew Harland built an inn and small store on the track, near the river, to cater for the workers on the surrounding stations. George Langlands and his family passed the inn on their way up to Horsham in 1849, and it became a habit with the

passing teamsters to leave the letters and newspapers at Matt Harland's store for the locals, on their way through from Burnbank to Four Posts Inn (Glenorchy) and on to Langlands store in Horsham over the next couple of years.

Crowland was proclaimed a village only 2 months after Horsham got the nod, and nearly 18 months before Burnbank got its 'township' papers. This makes Crowland one of the earliest official settlements in the area.

*Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, 15th July, 1850.*

CROWLAND.

NOTICE is hereby given, that a site has been fixed upon for a Village at the undermentioned place, and that a copy of the approved plan may be seen at the Office of the Surveyor General, Sydney, or at the Office of the Surveyor in charge, Melbourne, namely:—

CROWLAND, in the District of Port Phillip.

By His Excellency's Command,
E. DEAS THOMSON.

With the mails already being delivered there was no need to establish an official post office, but as people bought the town blocks and established themselves, the existing arrangement proved unsatisfactory. The post office was officially opened at the inn, and Robert Harper named as postmaster.

NEW POST OFFICE

HIS Honor the Superintendent having been pleased to approve of the establishment of a Post Office, at Crowlands, beyond Burn Bank.

Notice is hereby given that the same will be in operation from and after this date. Mr. Robert Harper, postmaster.

Mail to close at Melbourne, every Friday at 3 p m

To arrive at Crowlands, every Sunday at noon.

To leave Crowlands, every Tuesday 6 p m.

To arrive at Melbourne every Thursday night.

Note.—Parties wishing to receive their letters, &c, through this Office, should caution their correspondents to address them distinctly to the Office, in addition to any private residence, and notice should be given to Newspaper Offices as in advice to the publishers to correct the address of Newspapers also.

A. M'CRAB,
Chief Postmaster.

Post Office Melbourne,
23rd May, 1851.

the time the mail contracts for the following year were tendered in September 1851, and mail deliveries to the people of Crowland went back to being a mailbag dropped off at the store on the way through town. Crowland was an important stopover on the track, being about 40 miles (a day's haul for the bullock wagons) from both Burnbank to the southeast, and Glenorchy to the northwest.

The unofficial post office (it couldn't sell stamps) continued in the store until Frederick Long was gazetted as postmaster in the reopened Crowlands post office on 18th April 1853. This time the post office remained official under his care until the end of 1854, when he too succumbed to the lure of the gold fields.

By the time Frederick Long left, there was a Police depot in town, which came in useful when things got out of hand down on the Ararat Diggings, and within 12 months a Court of Petty Sessions had been established.

There were about 20 families in town by the time the Post Office reopened again in 1858, but there were plenty more in the district. From about 1855 people had been scratching around and picking up small quantities of gold, and in late 1857 the rash became a rush when the Glen Dhu field was swamped with diggers.

The population in the Crowlands district ebbed and flowed for nearly 10 years; at times the reports estimated anything up to 9,000 men in the immediate area, and in 1863 Crowlands Common School (no. 756) was established, and the Teacher, one Mr. Butler, combined his duties with that of Post Master, amongst other things. The school building did duty as the Public Hall, the Lending Library, and the venue for various church services until the mid 1900s.

By the end of the 1870s, the little township could only boast 49 inhabitants, "**including children**", with slightly more than that in the surrounding district. Crowlands had been bypassed by newer, and better, roads in the region, and even the advent of a branch line of the railway through to Navarre in the early 1900s failed to do more than give the town a small railway station.

When Crowland Post Office first opened it was allocated butterfly 46. Given the fact the original post office was only open for a few months it may come as no surprise an example has not been sighted to date.

When Crowlands reopened in April 1853 it was allocated barred oval 58, which has a 4R-rating. A proving cover which is dated December 1854 is known, and that would have been shortly before the post office closed again.

It is possible that the original CROWLAND datestamp issue was used for a considerable period. The image below is dated January 1860;

When the news of the gold finds started becoming more extravagant, Robert Harper was one of the many who got itchy feet, and by the end of 1851 he had chucked in his job and went to make his fortune. (He apparently soon decided running a store on the diggings would bring in more gold than digging for the damned stuff himself.)

The post office had definitely been decommissioned by



When the post office reopened in 1858, it was allocated barred numeral 169. There were two issues, the first has a 4R-rating;

and has been recorded on 'roos, and KGV;



and the second issue, which came out about 1870, has an SS rating;

My thanks to Hugh Freeman for supplying the above images.

The Post Office in Crowlands closed for the last time in 1975, after being housed in at least 4 buildings. I don't have a verified image of any of it's locations 😞

Separation...

All manner of celebrations were planned for the 1st July 1851, when the separation became into effect. Unfortunately, most of these were overshadowed by the carryings-on north of the border, after a small epidemic of gold-fever had broken out when Mr. Edward Hammond Hargraves got up on his soap-box.

In the first week of July, agreement had been reached regarding the postal system between N.S.W. and Victoria, and the writs were issued for elections to be held in the 29 electorates.

*Colonial Secretary's Office
Sydney, 30th June, 1851*

POSTAGE BETWEEN NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIA

His Excellency the GOVERNOR-GENERAL, having conferred with His Honor the Superintendent of Port Phillip, relative to the Postage which will become chargeable on letters, packets, and newspapers, passing between this Colony and Victoria, on the erection of the latter into a separate Dependency of the Crown, has been pleased to direct, that, pending the necessary legislation on the subject, the same charges for Postage shall continue to be made as at present on all such letters, packets, and newspapers; but it being necessary to make such arrangements, in reference to this matter, as will ensure to each Colony, so far as circumstances will permit, the benefit of its postal Revenue, it is to be understood, that Postage Stamps of each Colony will only be available in posting letters, packets, or newspapers in the Colony to which they are issued; but they will nevertheless, if of sufficient value, free them from further charge on delivery in the other Colony to which they may be conveyed. If not prepaid by money or in stamps they will nevertheless be forwarded to their destination, and in such case they will become chargeable (newspapers excepted) with double postage in the Colony in which they may be delivered. If the value of the stamps be insufficient, the difference necessary to make up the proper amount of postage will also be charged double on delivery of the letters and packets, and newspapers not prepaid will be carried to the credit of the revenue of the Colony in which the same is collected.

*By His Excellency's Command,
E. DEAS THOMSON*

There was a township laid out by 'Nimble-Nine-Pence' (aka Josiah M. Holloway) with the title of "Separation" (near present-day Mernda) which, in its hey-day in the 1870s, could boast about 60 houses, with its own church and school, and it was the pious wish of the editorial of "The Argus" on Tuesday, 1st July, 1851, that Victoria could be held up as a Model Colony.

What happened next blew **THAT** wish out of the water!

Gold...

The funny thing about the gold rushes in Victoria was that since the early 1840s, the gold in them thar hills had been an open secret. James Gumm (*remember him? He had started out as John Batman's overseer down at Indented Heads, and after Batman's death had worked for a while for John Fawkner, but, like many before and after, had one quarrel too many with 'Little Johnny', and went bush*) was known locally as "Gumm the Gold-hunter" in the area around the Plenty Ranges, and considered as mad as a hatter. But he found enough gold to trade with the jewelers in Melbourne to keep him going.

The new baby of the sciences – geology – was less than 20 years old in the 1840s, but even then men with a scientific bent went around stirring the pot, pronouncing gold "was there for the finding". The Cornish miners in Australia didn't need book-learning to tell them what was under the ground.

Of course, the lieges were keen to keep the secret. A sniff of gold can do funny things to people, and the authorities didn't want to upset the status quo, so if someone did turn up with a nugget they were in for a kick in the pants rather than a pat on the head.

In late January 1849, Thomas Chapman, a shepherd on the 'Daisy Hill' run in the Pyrenees, arrived on the doorstep of Charles Bretani, a jeweler in Collins St, Melbourne, with a lump of ore. Bretani asked Mr. Duchene (one of his neighbours in Collins Street) to assay the lump, and he pronounced it "a fine specimen of 'the root of evil'".

Bretani and Duchene then coerced Tommy to take them to the spot, but during the trip Tommy changed his mind. There's a suggestion that Tommy was then threatened with a criminal charge if he refused to divulge the site, but he took off and hopped the first boat out to Sydney.

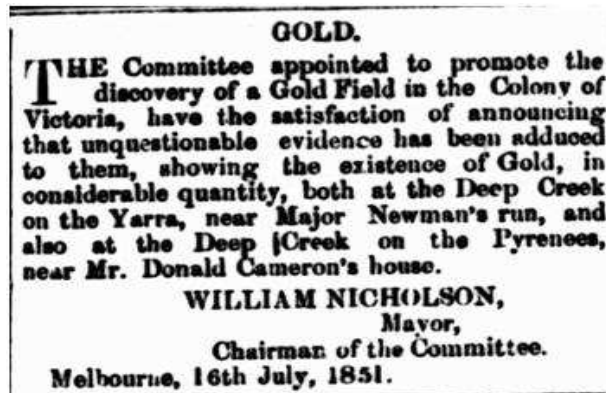
Of course, news like that couldn't be kept quiet, particularly after Duchene had been talking to the newspapers, and within a fortnight there was upwards of 50 men in the area, and more on the way. La Trobe had been in Portland when all this was going on, and as soon as he got back to Melbourne he sent a contingent of Native Police to the area, to break up the rush "in the name of the Queen".

The original police numbers had to be reinforced by more from Portland before things quieted down. Very few of the men on the ground had found anything (not surprising, since Tommy had picked up the ore some 10 miles away a few months earlier), and soon it was branded as a hoax. News of the California gold fields arrived not long after the Daisy Hill fiasco, and many took off.

After Hargraves had opened the way for legal "plundering of the Queen's cash-box" in February 1851, hundreds of workers from Port Phillip headed north. In the words of Robyn Annear, in her excellent book "**Nothing but Gold**", Victoria's separation from N.S.W. was starting to "look more like an amputation, with Victoria the doomed appendage."

Melbourne was in a panic, and "one of the largest meetings ever held at mid-day in Melbourne" on Monday 9th June, formed "A Gold Discovery Committee", offering 200 guineas reward for the discovery of a viable goldfield within 200 miles of Melbourne. The "Argus" on page 4 of the 11th June issue, reported the whole tenor of the meeting, which took up nearly 3/4 of the page.

There may have been a very good political reason why it took four weeks before Melbourne's Mayor, Bill Nicholson could advertise:



GOLD.

THE Committee appointed to promote the discovery of a Gold Field in the Colony of Victoria, have the satisfaction of announcing that unquestionable evidence has been adduced to them, showing the existence of Gold, in considerable quantity, both at the Deep Creek on the Yarra, near Major Newman's run, and also at the Deep Creek on the Pyrenees, near Mr. Donald Cameron's house.

WILLIAM NICHOLSON,
Mayor,
Chairman of the Committee.
Melbourne, 16th July, 1851.

Any significant gold discoveries prior to 1st July 1851 would have meant that all the loot would have wound up in the N.S.W. kitty. Not a happy thought.

So it was fortunate that Louis Michel and James Esmond announced their findings early in July. Of the two, Esmond became the pin-up boy for the Gold discovery committee.

For the rest of the year the gold trail led from Andersons Creek in Warrandyte and Don Cameron's 'Clunes' run to Buninyong in August, to Golden Point at Ballaraat in September, to Mount Alexander in November. From Mount Alexander, many went home when the heat, flies, and lack of water got too much for them.

But the good ship Gold-Fever picked up speed again in April 1852 when Bendigo became the star attraction. Later in the same month the Ovens diggings took off, and from then on things got so crazy you had anything up to a half dozen new rushes per week.

While all of the above was going on, there was just one Post Office opened for the remainder of 1851.

BALLAARAT

Although the post office officially opened on 1st November 1851, the following notice was published in the Government Gazette on 22nd October 1851;

General Post Office,
Melbourne, 10th October, 1851.

A MAIL for Ballarat will for the future be despatched from this Office and Geelong, from the former on Tuesday and Friday of each week at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 2 p. m., and from the latter Office on Wednesday and Saturday of each week at 4 a. m.

A return Mail from Ballarat will be despatched thence twice a week, in time for the despatch of the Mail from Buninyong.

A. M'CRAE.
Postmaster General.

William Cross Yuille had the 10,000 acre Ballaarat lease in 1838, which his cousin Archie took over in 1847. When the going got too hard on the Buninyong gold field in late August 1851, a few of the blokes decided to head back to Clunes through the Ballaarat run.

As they headed north, they stopped and panned in the creeks, as you do, and they struck pay-dirt in Canadian Creek. The Geelong Advertiser first carried the news on the 8th September, by which time there were already upwards of 120 men on the ground, and all of them (if the writer is to be believed) extremely happy. I wonder how happy they were a month later when they had about 10,000 men to keep them company?

It didn't take long for the surface gold to be snapped up, so it was natural that when the news of another rush filtered through many were off again. But there were enough people left behind for an official post office to be established, which was just as well, because by May 1852, the new Ballaarat rush - the 'Eureka' rush - was in full swing.

The officials hopped in and reserved a village site pretty quickly.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 29th July, 1852.
BALLAARAT.

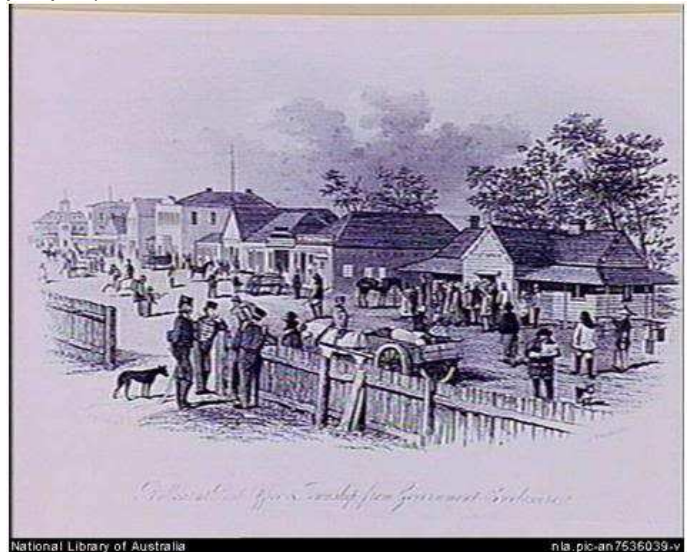
NOTICE is hereby given, that a Site has been fixed upon for a Village at the undermentioned place, and that a copy of the approved Plan may be seen at the Surveyor General's Office, Melbourne, or at the Police Office at Buninyong.

BALLAARAT—on the Yarrowee River, near Yuille's Head Station.

By His Excellency's Command,
W. LONSDALE.

Geelong and Melbourne was staggering, even more so if the claims are true that it was only about half of what was found. In February 1854 the Ballaarat township was laid out and in the Gazette notice there is the caution "**that persons already in occupation of land within the said limits, under Mining Licenses, will be required to use all reasonable diligence in removal**".

Within the new township, the post office was built on the corner of Mair and Lydiard streets. The following image comes from the pen of S.T. Gill and was drawn in 1857 (you can tell the post office - just look for the crowd of people!);



From this Post Office contractors carried mails out to Avoca and Creswick from 1854, and within 2 years Ballaarat had an electric Telegraph service to Melbourne. Within 4 years (about the time Mr. Gill drew the picture above) the Ballaarat Post Office was the main sorting centre for mails to be delivered to at least 18 other post offices, including those as far away as Stawell and Castlemaine.

At the end of 1854, the miners were so fed up with gold licencing system that they burned their licences, and in a 15 minute battle with Government troops, 36 men died and over 100 were arrested. The leaders of the Ballaarat Reform League, Lalor and Black, escaped and ended up with a bounty on their heads.

For the next 18 months the amount of gold sent down to

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 18th December, 1854.

FOUR HUNDRED POUNDS REWARD.

WHEREAS two persons of the names of **LAWLOR** and **BLACK**; late of Ballaarat, did, on or about the 13th day of November last, at that place, use certain treasonable and seditious language and incite men to take up arms with a view to make war against our Sovereign Lady the Queen: Notice is hereby given that a reward of £200 will be paid to any person or persons giving such information as may lead to the apprehension of either of the abovenamed parties.

DESCRIPTIONS.

LAWLOR.—Height 5 feet 11 inches, age 35, hair dark brown, whiskers dark brown and shaved under the chin, no moustache, long face, rather good looking, and is a well made man.

BLACK.—Height over 6 feet, straight figure, slight build, bright red hair worn in general rather long and brushed backwards, red and large whiskers meeting under the chin, blue eyes, large thin nose, ruddy complexion and rather small mouth.

By His Excellency's Command,
WILLIAM C. HAINES.

Lalor had been badly injured and needed a doctor. There was one at Buninyong, but that was too close, so Black took him to Geelong, where he had his arm amputated and recuperated while he was in hiding from the law.

Less than a week after the 'Eureka Stockade' uprising, 6 Commissioners had been appointed to conduct an enquiry into the whole licensing system. 3 months later they published their report (*which was 430 foolscap pages and weighed in at about 2kg*), and on the 23rd May 1855 the "**GOLDFIELDS LAW AMENDMENT BILL**" was passed. Amongst other things the monthly Gold Tax was abolished and was replaced by a yearly £2 miner's right, and miners were given the right to vote. All those arrested for the rebellion were released.

In a nice aside, Peter Lalor was elected to the Legislative Council as the member for Ballaarat in November that year, and went on in later years to become Speaker of the House.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 19th November, 1855.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HIS Excellency the Governor has directed it to be notified that writs have been returned to His Excellency certifying the return of the undermentioned gentlemen to serve as Members of the Legislative Council of Victoria for the Electoral Districts specified in connexion with their respective names, viz. :—

Ballaarat.—**PETER LALOR**, Esquire, **JOHN BASSON HUMFFRAY**, Esquire.

Castlemaine.—**VINCENT PYKE**, Esquire, **JAMES ATKIN WHEELER**, Esquire.

Avoca.—**DUNCAN LONGDEN**, Esquire.

By His Excellency's Command,
WILLIAM C. HAINES.

S.14680.

R.14863-4.

No. 115.—NOVEMBER 20TH, 1855.—9.

Over the years, Ballaarat continued to prosper, and in 1862 plans were drawn up for a very fine Post Office. The following advertisement appeared in the Gazette early in 1863;

WANTED TO RENT,
PREMISES for a temporary Post Office at Ballaarat.
Particulars at this office, and at the Post Office, Ballaarat.
Public Works Office,
Melbourne, 4th March, 1863.
J. S. JOHNSTON.

I can't find where the temporary P.O. was housed, but on 29th December 1864 Ballaarat officially opened its nice new Post Office.



The above drawing was done in the 1870s. 140 years later, the building is still there;



When Ballarat Post Office opened it was issued with barred oval 24 which is unrated, and I have no clear image 😞

Of Ballarat's 28 issues of the barred numeral no. 5, only 4 are rated. The highest rating (3R) is reserved for the 10th duplex, which is distinguished by the '5' lying off-centre on the right-hand side of the obliterator. Below is my cover with the 4th duplex.



With respect to the spelling of Ballaarat/Ballarad, Archie insisted on the 'aa', but it appears the spelling in official papers started out as 'a' in 1851, then changed to mostly 'aa' from 1852 through to 1863 when it swung back to 'a'. Both are fine. 😊

1852 Post Office Openings

By the end of 1851, there were 44 official post offices operating in the Colony of Victoria. They were attempting to cater for the needs of a population of 83,350, of which nearly 14,000 had arrived since March 1851. Many of these new arrivals were inter-colonial arrivals from South Australia and Tasmania after July.

At the end of the year, there were 23,143 people living in Melbourne, and 8,291 in Geelong. It's safe to say at least 10,000 of the remaining people were scratching around in the dirt at Ballaarat and Mount Alexander, etc.

Between them, the offices had handled over a million articles of mail and derived an income of £7,929/9/1. The expenses, which came to £11,483/7/5, included the salaries for all postal workers. That also meant the contractors for the 23 mail runs that existed at the beginning of 1852.

I don't think it's too much of an exaggeration to say that from now on, for the next few years at least, the Colony of Victoria was at war, certainly with the postal services. The ideal of a Model Colony had been thrown out the window, and from now on the authorities, having been thrown in the deep end, coped as best they could.

It certainly didn't help matters when many clerical workers (and that included those working for the Post Office) decided to try their fortunes on the gold fields. The result was chaotic at best, with people waiting hours to receive their mail (if they were lucky), or told to "come back tomorrow".

Very early in 1852 there were calls to increase the wages of postal clerks, with the view to retaining them, but, for the first few months at least, it was a forlorn hope.

There were nine new post offices opened in 1852.

FOREST CREEK (Castlemaine)

Opened 1st March 1852

Replaced by **CASTLEMAINE** 1ST January 1854

From the early 1840s, William Barker held the 30,000 acre 'Mount Alexander' run, and in early October 1851, gold had been found in Forest Creek, one of the many creeks that fell away from the western side of the range down to the Loddon river. Within a fortnight the men who had found the gold were joined by around a hundred more, and by the beginning of November the number

had grown to 2000.

As the news of the easy pickings spread, more hopefuls arrived, and spread out. In one of C.J. LaTrobe's dispatches to London during November, he wrote; ***"Right and left throughout the whole region gold is found to exist. The field is reported to be illimitable..."***

By the end of 1851, a township had been proclaimed, and a Court of Petty Sessions established with William Hogarth named as Clerk at Castlemaine and at Mount Macedon (Kyneton). While one version of history has W.H. Wright naming the town, another, more plausible,

version is that LaTrobe named it after the town in Ireland.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 19th November, 1851.

HIS Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor in pursuance of the powers vested in him by the 17th section of the Act of the Governor and Council of New South Wales 3rd William IV. No. 3, has been pleased to appoint

THE TOWNSHIP OF CASTLEMAINE,
on the Forest Creek, Mount Alexander, (east Loddon district) to be a place for the holding of Courts of Petty Sessions, under the provisions of the aforesaid Act.

By His Excellency's Command,
W. LONSDALE.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 29th December, 1851.

Clerk of Petty Sessions.
CASTLEMAINE.

HIS Excellency the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to appoint

MR. WILLIAM HOGARTH,
Clerk of Petty Sessions at Mount Macedon, to be
Clerk of Petty Sessions at Castlemaine,

By His Excellency's Command,
W. LONSDALE.

On 28th January 1852, William Henry Wright was one of nearly 200 men who were assigned or affirmed as Territorial Magistrates. Not long after, he took control of the Mount Alexander diggings and set up a government camp near present-day Castlemaine. By the middle of the year he had nearly 300 untrained and ineffectual men to deal with a population of between 25,000 and 30,000; and from 1st May, Wright was Chief Commissioner of the Central Victorian Goldfields (all of them!) and his camp was the administrative centre.

Between February and May 1852, James Bonwick went for a tour of the gold fields. He took note of the commercial premises serving the needs of the diggers at Forest Creek;

51 butchers, 25 smiths, 16 'Medical Gentlemen', 15 lemonade and ginger-beer sellers, 9 lodging and eating houses, 6 bakers, 4 'druggists', a tobacconist, and a barber.

And this list didn't include the 100 or so store-keepers, and certainly did not encompass the more questionable trades.

Bonwick also made note of the unofficial post office (for married men – "the most sacred spot on the diggings") which was operated by a Mr. Howard until about February 1852, when he handed over to another private operator who carried on until the official office opened on 1st March.

Howard's tent on 'Post Office Hill' (between Wattle creek and Adelaide creek) was open 7 days a week, being

visited by upwards of 5000 men – over 700 of them on Sunday afternoons alone.

After the official post office opened, it was discovered there were more than 6000 unclaimed and undelivered letters laying in the private office tent, along with the rumours of postbags that had ended up in disused mineshafts after being looted.

This wasn't the only instance, but it was the most publicized, and led in time to notices issued by the Colonial Secretary's Office, cautioning the public to use only "authorized Post Offices on the Gold Fields".

On Tuesday 15th February 1853, 204 town lots were offered for sale in the township of Castlemaine at the upset price of £8 per acre. The town was slow to take off, as most of the activity was centred around the government camp, but about 12 months later Wright issued the edict which moved everyone to the area around the new commercial centre.

By that time the first Castlemaine District Hospital had been opened, the jail had been built, and Castlemaine was moving from 'tent' town to Bricks and Mortar. Within 25 years the residences numbered over 2000, and there was a population in the township of 7,500.

There were two newspapers – the "Representative" and the "Mount Alexander Mail" – and a gas works, an iron foundry which manufactured steam engines and general mining machinery, abattoirs, gold offices and sub-treasury, Supreme Court, Lands and Survey Office, flour mills, tanneries, and so on, and so on.

The Post Office handled money orders, and there was a separate Telegraph Office. The earlier Bank of New South Wales had been replaced by the Bank of Victoria, and there was even a general newsagency "where the colonial and other newspapers may be obtained."

Forest Creek was allocated barred oval 37, which is unrated;



When the barred numerals came into effect, Castlemaine, along with Ballarat and Sandhurst were the three most important post offices after Melbourne

and Geelong.

Castlemaine came in at number 3. Of the 9 issues 3 are rated - the first duplex (3R), about 1861; the third duplex (SS), 1868 to 1870; and a non-duplex (S), 1873 to 1897. Below is an image of the fourth duplex;



and the sixth;



I have two images of the Castlemaine Post Office. The first was taken before the clock tower was finished;



and then again a few years later;



I haven't been able to definitively date either photo. 😊

CARISBROOK

Officially opened 1st May 1852

Closed 30th November 1854

REOPENED 1st November 1855

Donald Campbell Simson held the 180,405 acre "Charlotte Plains" sheep station from the early 1840s. In

February 1851 a Court of Petty Sessions was appointed at "Carisbrooke, on the Loddon River";

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, 27th Feb., 1851.
PETTY SESSIONS—PORT PHILIP.
HIS Excellency the Governor has been
pleased to appoint
Carisbrooke, on the Loddon River,
and
Hexham, on the Hopkins River,
to be places for the holding of Courts of
Petty Sessions, under the provisions of
the Act of the Colonial Legislature 3rd
William IV., No. 3.
By His Excellency's Command,
E. DEAS THOMSON.

(Don Cameron, not too far away down on his Clunes run, had been a magistrate since 1845), and in May, Thomas Dennis Stratford Heron was appointed Clerk of Petty Sessions (He later went on to become Chinese Protector.)

Within a couple of months there was a police camp on site and Henry Fitz Maurice had been appointed Chief Constable. The Carisbrook Police district covered the enormous area from Talbot to Swan Hill, St. Arnaud to Mount Alexander.

Carisbrook was also named as a "Polling Place", along with Burn Bank and Serpentine Inn, for the Pastoral District of Loddon for the elections in July 1851. By the end of 1851 the first Court House had been completed, and mails were being received and sent from the police barracks.

When the gold fever struck, Carisbrook was well placed to become an administrative centre. The township was proclaimed in January 1852;

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 20th January, 1852.
CARISBROOK.
NOTICE is hereby given, that a site has been
fixed upon for a Township at the under-
mentioned place, and that a copy of the approved
plan may be seen at the Surveyor General's
Office, Melbourne, or at the Police Office,
Carisbrook, viz.—**CARISBROOK**—at the junction of
the Mount Greenock and Tullaroop Creeks, on
the main line of road to the Avoca, Pyrenee,
and Lower Loddon.
By His Excellency's Command,
W. LONSDALE.

and within a few years there were over 800 residents and the industries from the town were supporting the surrounding gold fields.

These included a steam-driven flour mill, abattoirs, a tannery, a brick-works, and most importantly for the diggers, at least 2 breweries. There was also a race-course (with grand-stand) included on the recreation ground which shows up on the 1855 town plan.

Carisbrook lost out to Maryborough as the administrative centre in 1856, but within 12 months began to pick up

speed again when gold was found close to home. For over 40 years the town hosted workers from mines in the areas of Talbot and Majorca, even as far away as Clunes.

From the late 1850s to the '70s there was a significant Chinese presence in the area and a number operated market gardens on the edge of the township.

By the early 1880s Carisbrook had a population of 900 people and a railway service to Melbourne 3 times a day. The railway station was "a handsome brick edifice, with large brick goods shed", with botanical gardens opposite.

The post office included telegraph, money-order, and savings bank facilities; and the "handsome brick" state school (which held 500 students) was bigger than the Town Hall.

When the Carisbrook Post Office officially opened on the 1st May 1852 (it had been named in the mail contracts in September 1851), it was issued with barred oval number 4, which has a 4R rating. I have no image for you 😞

When the post office closed, there was a lot of activity going on in the town. The Carisbrook Hotel had not long opened and another hotel was being built. There were between 300 and 400 diggers down on the creek, and the township itself was "...rapidly becoming a town of considerable importance: there are now about 2000 persons resident there."

Which begs the question; why did the official post office close? I have been unable to establish any proof of a reason, and am left with the suspicion the very success of the area may have had something to do with it. All suggestions welcome!! 😊

There was definitely a delivery service which carried on to Carisbrook during 1855, and not long after an official Office reopened in November of that year, Carisbrook was allocated barred numeral 100.

There were 4 issues. The first (A2) is R-rated; the second has an S-rating;



The third issue, a duplex is rated 3R, and the second duplex is unrated.

Sorry, no images 😞

The following image of the Carisbrook Post Office is dated 1968;



Just one last useless piece of information. Carisbrook, for a time in the 1930s, was the largest supplier of eggs to the Melbourne markets, with **255 TONS** of eggs being sent by train in 1933 alone.

BENDIGO CREEK (Sandhurst, Bendigo)

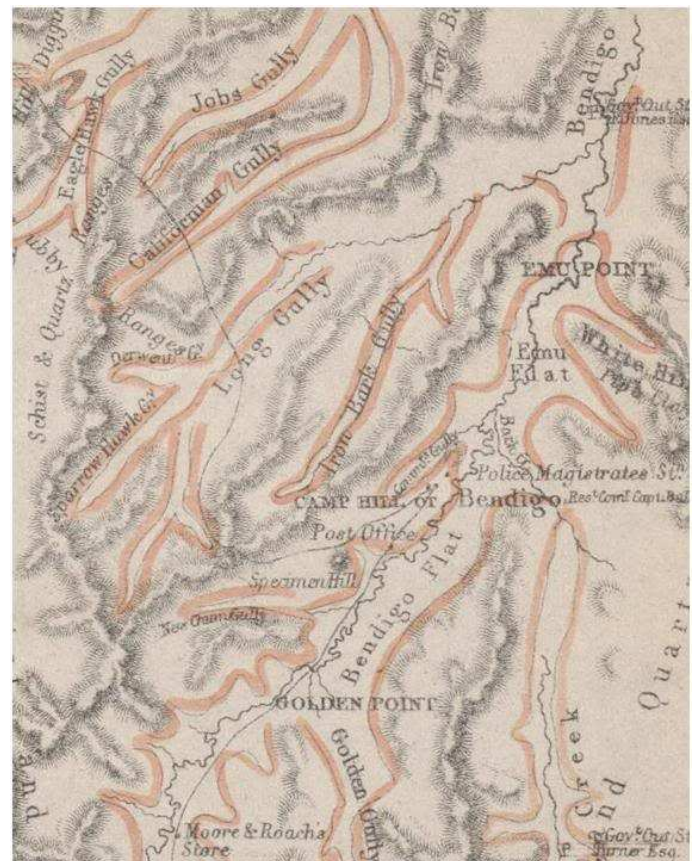
Official Post Office opened 1st July 1852
Name changed to **SANDHURST** 1st January 1854
Renamed **BENDIGO** 18th May 1891

The name, Bendigo Creek, derived from a nickname given to a shepherd on 'Ravenswood' run who was handy with his fists.

(From the 1830s in England, a fellow by the name of Thompson was very well-known for his ability as a boxer. He was one of a set of triplets whose parents had saddled them with the biblical names from the Book of Daniel - Abednego, Shadrach and Meshak – and Abednego was known as 'Bendy' because of his exploits in the ring. This became "Bendigo".)

Incidentally, our shepherd shot through to California when news of the gold rushes there reached Australia.

As the diggers fanned out from Forest Creek and began exploring the rest of the Mount Alexander range, they moved north and, on following the creeks, came to an area that stopped them in their tracks. Bendigo Creek was on the map.



The image is a section of a map surveyed by William Swan Urquhart in 1853.

It's unclear who the first party was on site, and it didn't really matter. Originally just an extension of the Forest

Creek ('Mount') rush, by April 1852 it was regarded as a field in its own right, and the authorities stepped in.

On 27th April a Court of Petty Sessions was established, and a fortnight later **Robert Petty Stewart** was appointed Resident Police Magistrate. By June a mail delivery service was established between Forest Creek and Bendigo Creek, and, learning from their mistakes, the postal department was quick to put an Official Post Office on the ground.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 27th April, 1852.

HIS Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, in pursuance of the powers vested in him by the 17th Section of the Act of the Governor and Council of New South Wales, 3 William 4th, No. 3, has been pleased to appoint the Junction of Bendigo Creek and the Golden Gully, Mount Alexander, (Loddon District,) to be a place for the holding of Courts of Petty Sessions under the provisions of the aforesaid Act.

By His Excellency's Command,
W. LONSDALE.

General Post Office,
Melbourne, 2nd June, 1852.

CONVEYANCE being required for the Post Office Mails from and to the undermentioned Places for Six Months, from the 1st July next.—Persons disposed to Contract for providing the same, are invited to transmit their offers in writing by Eleven o'clock, on Tuesday the 22nd day of June instant, endorsed "Tender for Conveyance of Mails:—"

From and to FOREST CREEK and BENDIGO CREEK POST OFFICES, once a Week on Horseback.

A. M'CRAE,
Chief Postmaster.

The gold rush coincided with the beginning of the overseas arrivals, and there were many ethnic communities, including the Germans at Ironbark Gully, the Irish at St. Killans, and of course the Chinese at Emu Point.

In August 1852, The Government Gazette ran 6 full pages of unclaimed letters lying at the Bendigo Creek Post Office, and that didn't include the 73 registered letters which had been returned!

The establishment flirted with the idea of calling the region 'Castleton', but thought better of it, and by the middle of January 1853 decided on the name 'Sandhurst'.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 2nd December, 1852.

REFERRING to the Notice of the 27th April, 1852, declaring the Junction of Bendigo Creek and the Golden Gully, Mount Alexander, (Loddon District) to be a place for holding Courts of Petty Sessions, under the provisions of the Act of the Governor and Legislative Council of New South Wales, 3rd Will. 4th, No. 3, His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor directs it to be notified for public information that the said place shall, from and after the date hereof, be called and known as "CASTLETON."

By His Excellency's Command,
W. LONSDALE.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 18th January, 1853.

NOTICE.

REFERRING to the Notice of 2nd December last, declaring that the place for holding Petty Sessions, situate at the junction of Bendigo Creek and the Golden Gully, Mount Alexander (Loddon district), should, from and after the date of the said notice, be called and known as "Castleton," His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor directs it to be notified for public information that he has been pleased to rescind the said notice, and to direct that the said place shall, from and after the date hereof, be called and known as "Sandhurst."

By His Excellency's Command,
W. LONSDALE.

By the late 1870s, when Balliere's issued their directory, Sandhurst had grown into a "fine handsome town" with nearly 28,000 residents. The rail link with Melbourne, which had opened in October 1862, operated 3 times per day; and the post office was the sorting centre for upwards of a dozen smaller offices in the region.

When Bendigo Creek post office opened, it was issued with barred oval number 5, which is unrated.



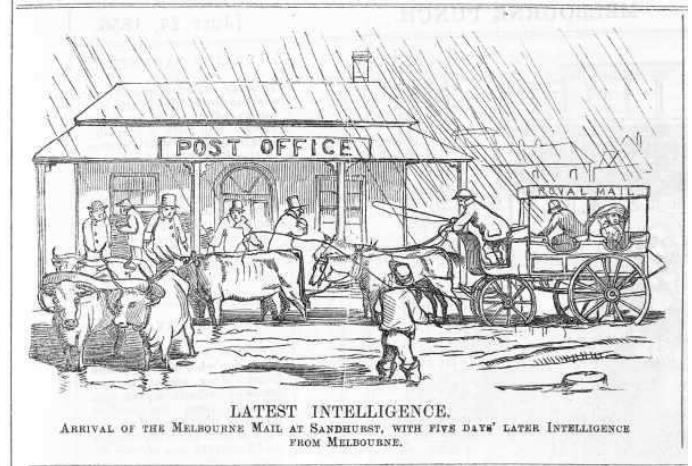
It was officially renamed Sandhurst on 1st January 1854, and as such was allocated barred numeral 4.

As Sandhurst, the post office had 13 issues, including 10 duplexes with a variation on the tenth. Of these, four are rated; the first duplex has an R rating, the second has an S rating and uses a datestamp with "Victoria" instead of the numeral, the third duplex is similar to the second and has a RR rating.

The unrated sixth duplex;



The Post Office at Sandhurst looked like this in 1856;



and the 3R rated ninth;



And 12 months later, tenders were called for a new building. I have no image of the post office which was in use from the late 1850s to the 1870s. In the early 1880s a new office was built, and this image comes from about 1900;



After a petition from the commercial sector in August 1890, and corresponding pressure from the mining interests, the Executive Council in Melbourne gave the nod for the "City of Sandhurst" to be changed to the "City of Bendigo", and it took place "on the 4th day of May, 1891".

The Post Office changed its name a fortnight later. Bendigo was issued with 5 duplexes, the fourth, with three variations, using numbers 1 - 3 on the base of the datestamp, and there were 2 types of the fifth duplex. The image below could be either from a 4th OR a 5th duplex;

Over the 50-odd year period from 1851 to 1954 the 3,600 hectare area which made up the Bendigo gold field yielded 25,000,000 ounces of gold.

BROADFORD

Post Office opened 1st July 1852

On the banks of the Sunday Creek (so named because Hume and Hovell camped there one Sunday) and once part of Stewart's Station, Broadford was originally known as Sunday Creek. A day's hike north of Kilmore, it was a resting place on the Sydney road.

In the early 1840s a pound was established. The original pound-keeper was evidently notorious for his ability to impound stock and sell them off for a profit, and the pound was closed at the end of June 1846, to the district's relief. It was about this time that a former publican from Hobart, Reay Clarke, established the Sunday Creek Inn.

Clarke had been quite successful down south in the 1830s, and decided to try his hand in Melbourne. Unfortunately for him, he walked into the tail-end of the speculation boom, and lost his shirt. He was declared insolvent in August 1843, but 3 years later had enough behind him to start again.

Clarke's Inn survived mainly on the passing trade, but it didn't take long to become a byword, and the Sunday Creek camp-site became so popular a blacksmith's forge set up shop within 12 months. As the traffic continued to grow on the Sydney road, so too did the number of businesses to cater for the travelers.

By September 1847, Reay Clarke had built up the business sufficiently to be able to sell the Sunday Creek Inn licence to John Ferguson and take up the 'Currency Lad' inn in Kilmore, where he held a prominent (but, on at least one occasion, questionable) position until his death in December 1882.

Sunday Creek continued to expand, and as the number of permanent residents grew there was an *ad hoc* mail arrangement with Kilmore.

It's not quite certain how the name Broadford came to be adopted. Both Ireland and Scotland have towns of that name, and there were strong links with both countries in the area.

What is definite is that the Post Office adopted the name in 1852. The original mail service from Melbourne started out of the G.P.O. on Tuesdays and Fridays at 1 p.m.

This was more than 18 months before the Township of Broadford was proclaimed on 24th February 1854.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 21st February, 1854.
BROADFORD.

NOTICE is hereby given that a site has been fixed upon for a Township at the under-mentioned place, and that a copy of the approved Plan may be seen at the Police Office, Kilmore, or at the Surveyor General's Office, Melbourne, viz:—
BROADFORD—At the Junction of the Sunday

and Dry Creeks at Ferguson's Inn, in the parish of Broadford, in the County of Dalhousie, containing six hundred and fifty-seven acres, more or less. Bounded on the east by a line commencing at a point on the Sunday Creek, about 30 chains in a direct line below the confluence of the Dry Creek, and marked by a boundary post No. 1, bearing south 35 degrees, east 35 chains 75 links to post No. 2; thence to post No. 3, by a line at an angle of 90 degrees with the last described line, and bearing south 55 degrees, west 53 chains 39 links; thence to a post No. 4, by a line at an angle of 145 degrees with the last line, and bearing west 11 chains 70 links; thence to a post No. 5, by a line at an angle of 145 degrees with the last line, and bearing south 55 degrees, west 48 chains 10 links; thence to a post No. 6, by a line at an angle of 90 degrees with the last line, and bearing north 35 degrees, west 62 chains 15 links to Dry Creek; thence on the north by Dry Creek to its junction with Sunday Creek; and thence by Sunday Creek to the point of commencement.

By His Excellency's Command,
JOHN FOSTER.

Throughout the 1850s Broadford's success continued to rely on the passing traffic. In October 1858 the track through to Albury had been declared the "Main Sydney Road, from Melbourne to the River Murray", and for the next few years improvements, which included realignments, bridges, and toll-gates, were built.

Broadford got its toll-house in 1860, the year gold was found in the vicinity. For the next few years the township prospered accordingly. The wheels fell off with the coming of the rail link between Melbourne and Albury in the 1870s. The railway proved so popular that many of the businesses which fed on the passing traffic closed, including the Sunday Creek Inn in 1874. (The building was recycled some years later as a general store.)

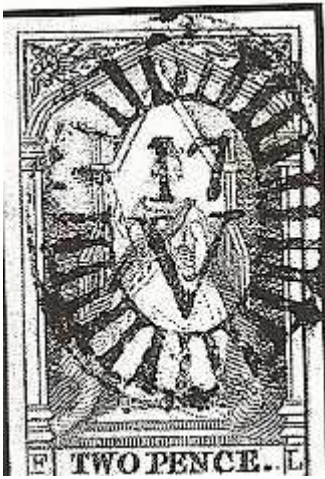
By the end of the 1870s, Bailliere's stated there were 150 people in "the surveyed township", and the only industry was a tannery; the district being mainly agricultural and pastoral with only a couple of mining companies operating about 10 miles away. There were four churches and four Temperance Halls, and no

theatre or racecourse; "the inhabitants, as a whole, *now* being noted for sobriety and industry."

The Bailliere's also mentioned a disused Flour Mill. In 1890 (not long before the Broadford Courier went to press for the first time) the site was redeveloped as a paper mill and initially employed about 30 men. This was the fourth such mill to be established in Victoria and originally used mainly straw as the raw material, "the only strawboard mill in the British Empire", and could produce about 50 tons of strawboard a week.

About 5 years after it started, the Broadford mill combined with those in Geelong and Melbourne to create the "Australian Paper Mills" Company, which is still going today.

When the Broadford Post Office opened it was issued with the barred oval number 17 which has a 3R rating;



Broadford was allocated barred numeral 20, and there were two issues, neither of which are rated. The first is an A2, and I have no image 😞

And the second issue was a duplex, issued about 1889. This is known, although scarce, on the early 'roos.



Finally, a photo of the Broadford Post Office, taken about 1960.



An addendum to Broadford 😊
An example of the A2;



MOUNT STURGEON (Dunkeld)

Opened 1st July 1852

Renamed **DUNKELD** 1st January 1854

Although WWW and PPA both note that the post office closed for most of 1855, my research shows that the mails were still being sent to, and from, Dunkeld for the whole of the year from the G.P.O. in Melbourne.

Mount Sturgeon sits at the south-west base of the Grampians, and is the 5th highest peak in the range. Mitchell's party would have been able to see it for miles on their way back up from Portland, and camped at the base for 3 nights.

As with most of the south-west of Victoria, the land in the area was taken up by the late 1830's by sheep farmers, with the original Mount Sturgeon run held by Robert Martin, which included 112,000 acres capable of carrying 20,000 sheep. (An interesting side-light is that Robert Martin was one of the original "Captains" of the Port Phillip Volunteers; established in 1842 to counter the lack of police presence in the district at that time.)

Within 10 years a tidy little hamlet was established on the road between Melbourne and Portland, about 20 miles east of The Grange (Hamilton). The hamlet took its name from the Mount but in 1852, when the authorities surveyed the site, a new name was chosen, supposedly a concession to the ancestry of most of the inhabitants;

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 3rd February, 1852.

DUNKELD.

NOTICE is hereby given, that a site has been fixed upon for a Village at the under-mentioned place; and that a copy of the approved Plan may be seen at the Surveyor General's Office, Melbourne, or at the Police Office, Hamilton, Grange Burn,

DUNKELD—near Mount Sturgeon.

By His Excellency's Command,

W. LONSDALE.

When the Post Office opened 5 months later, the village of Dunkeld was still mostly a sheep paddock (the first land sales didn't take place until September), and the hamlet of Mount Sturgeon, home to a few families working on the surrounding stations, was also home to the "Woolpack Inn" - the new post office. Over the next couple of years Dunkeld grew slowly and steadily (being on the main road didn't hurt), so the following incident must have been a blow

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 3rd July, 1854.

TWENTY POUNDS REWARD.

LOST MAILS.

WHEREAS the Mail Bags from Hamilton for Geelong, from Dunkeld for Geelong, and from Dunkeld for Streatham, together with various smaller bags enclosed in the said Mail Bags, were duly dispatched from Dunkeld on the morning of the 18th of June last, and were lost on the road between Dunkeld and Streatham: Notice is hereby given that a reward of Twenty Pounds will be paid to any person who will give such information to the Postmaster General as will lead to the recovery of the said Mails.

By His Excellency's Command,

7049.

JOHN FOSTER.

No. 58.—JULY 4TH, 1854.—5.

The Woolpack Inn had originally been known as "Finn's Inn", but had been taken over in the late 1840's by Woodhead and Templeton. This Inn, which was also known as 'Templeton's Inn', had an excellent reputation, and James Templeton continued to operate the 17-roomed hotel until March 1855 when it apparently closed down after not being able to be sold.

About 6 months later, in late September 1855, the Royal Mail Hotel opened its doors. Mr. Thomas Keegan (or Reigan), "the old-established Mailman" ran a series of advertisements inviting custom to the "commodious family hotel, recently erected by himself." By this time Dunkeld had had its rumours of gold in the vicinity, untrue, but the fossickers had come up with something almost as good - the local freestone was excellent material for grindstones and millstones (also monumental sculpture), and a small quarry was established.

[Throughout the early 1850's, the latent racism of the Europeans was aroused by the numbers of Chinese entering Victoria to work on the gold-fields. While never becoming as ugly as the massacres in California, or the Lambing Flat riots in N.S.W., there had been enough concern for questions to be raised in government corridors.

A Chinese Protector had been appointed in 1853; the same year "An Act to make Provisions for Certain Immigrants" was passed. This was aimed at restricting the number of Chinese nationals allowed entry, and limited vessels to one Chinese passenger for every 10 tons of registered tonnage. On top of that, each Chinese immigrant had to pay £10 "poll tax" on entry (about what it cost for the trip from Hong Kong), and a "residence tax" of £1 per month.

The backdrop of war, famine, and starvation, had led many Chinese men to take the drastic step of

indenturing their families to pay for loans to get to Victoria, in the hopes of making enough money to live comfortably. An ambition shared by most of the Europeans.

Okay, what has this to do with Dunkeld??

To avoid the poll tax, between 1856 and 1858, more than 16,500 Chinese landed at Robe, in South Australia, and walked the 250-odd miles to Ballaarat and Bendigo. They couldn't very well hide (one account details over 600, walking in single file, east of Penola; it took the writer more than a half-hour to pass them), and local farmers along the roads were quick to take advantage of the men's fear of delays in reaching the gold-fields. The cavalcades were stopped, and the men were bribed, or threatened (depending on the farmers' dispositions), into providing free labour.

Dunkeld farmers were no exception. On Mount Sturgeon station, the Chinese men built the sheep-wash, and a stone fence, still in existence today; while at nearby Fulham station, owned by the same family, some men were waylaid and blackmailed into building stone cottages. The well near the Royal Mail Hotel in Dunkeld was also built by Chinese labour, and throughout the district there are still fine examples of Chinese craftsmanship.]

Dunkeld, on one of the main roads in the colony, was never large. It was proclaimed a Town in 1861, the year it got its Police station (cost - £1,153), and throughout the 1860's and 1870's maintained a steady progress. Schools and Churches were established, and the town got its own Court of Petty Sessions in 1864.

The railway arrived in April 1877, only to suffer a setback a couple of months later when two engines collided. Several people were injured, as were the engines.

By the end of the 1870's, there were about 150 people living in town, which as many again in the immediate vicinity. The Bailliere's noted that although there were 3 churches in town, there was no resident minister.

This photo of the Dunkeld Post Office is undated, but, according to the Government Gazette in February 1891, Mr. H Kohn was awarded the contract to construct this Post and Telegraph Office, for the sum of £775.0.0.



When Mount Sturgeon post office opened, it was issued with barred oval number 40, which has a 4R rating. I haven't got a clear image for you 😊

Below are two examples of the first issue of Dunkeld's barred numeral 112. These have a 3R rating;



There were two more issues, neither are rated. The second issue is a recut version of the above examples, with only the single bar at the side. The third issue was a duplex, issued in the mid-1870's... no examples of them, I'm afraid 😊

VIOLET TOWN

Post Office opened 1st July 1852

Officially closed 1st December 1854

Reopened 1st February 1859

Our mate Tom Mitchell and his crew were heading home to Sydney after gadding about south of the Murray River in late 1836; after finally getting across the Goulburn River down at what would become known as Mitchell's Town, for the next week or so they had to cross several streams and chains of ponds as they headed north. One of these creeks was rather picturesque, with the native flowers growing around it, and Tom called it Violet Ponds.

The site for Mitchell's Town was approved in October 1838, and less than 12 months later, about 50 miles north, the site for the village of Violet Creek was approved.

*Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, 9th September 1839.*

NOTICE is hereby given, that a site has been fixed upon for a Village in the undermentioned place, and that a copy of the approved plan may be seen at the Office of the Surveyor General, in Sydney, or at the nearest Bench of Magistrates, namely:—

VIOLET CREEK, on a Stream of that name on the Road to Port Phillip.

**By Command of His Excellency the Governor,
E. DEAS THOMSON.**

It didn't take long for the locals, at least, to realize the authorities had made a major stuff-up. The site was in the middle of a swamp and when the rains came, well, the area got really, really, wet. And when it wasn't raining – this is what one traveller had to say about the place in early 1841;

"The third township is "Violet Creek", [the writer had eulogized over Gundagai and Albury on his way down from Yass] known here only by the name of Honey Suckle Creek, situated about half-way between the Ovens and the Goulburn rivers, being nearly 50 miles from each. It is a miserable scrub in the midst of a barren wild, with not a human habitation near it. The soil is poor, the timber is stunted and perfectly useless, except for fuel: and the water, which is by no means in great abundance, has a very muddy appearance. It is quite blue, hence, I suppose, the new name imposed on the place. With the exception of one water hole we could find no water for many miles on either side of it. While our party was encamping here, I rode for several miles, at nearly right angles to the road, into the bush, when I had an opportunity of seeing the nature of the soil, and the aspect of the country. And

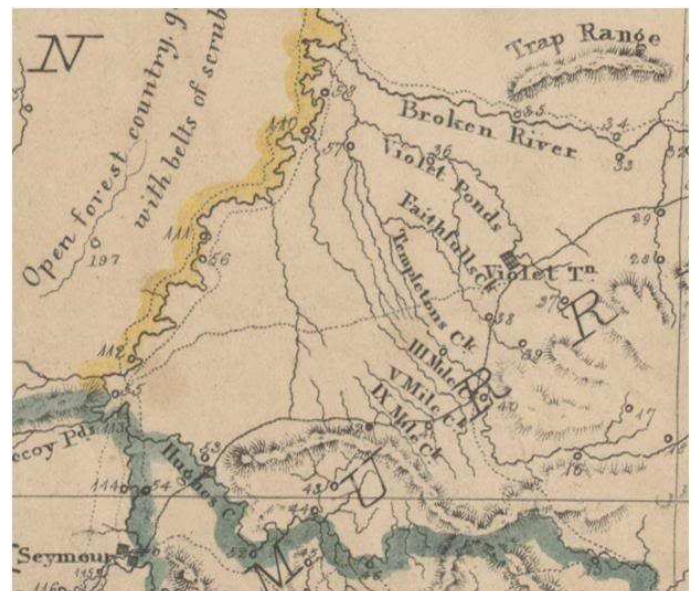
really I could not help wondering that your functionaries in Sydney should have fixed for a township on a spot which possesses so very few, if any natural advantages, but you will probably say that there is still a greater wonder than this, viz., that men should have been found foolish enough to buy at such high prices, allotments in a township so unfavorably situated. As I am no scholar myself, I wish I knew some clever fellow who, through the newspaper, would ask the Governor what has induced him to fix on this place for a township?"

The village went ahead, but moved slightly south-east of the original survey. In 1846 a few allotments were sold, and the village was saddled with 'Hyacinth', 'Tulip', 'Cowslip', and 'Rose', as the "names of its Principal Thoroughfares". Amongst the early landholders were Edward Sherman, a hawker in the district; Henry Ward Mason, a businessman in Melbourne (who seems to have spent most of his time in court); and Thomas Clarke, Reay Clarke's brother (we met Reay in Broadford).

Thomas Clarke built the Royal Mail Hotel (but known locally as the 'Honeysuckle Inn'), and got his general publican's license about the same time his brother did in 1846.

A couple of months later, in November 1846, the mailman between Violet Creek and Ovens – a man by the name of Lundie, who lived just outside of town – had left home to collect the Melbourne mail about 8 p.m., and his wife was attacked by two men pretending to be travellers. The intended robbery was foiled by Clarke, and another man who was coming to collect his mail from the mail-driver's (Lundie's) hut.

On Thomas Ham's 1847 map of the Port Phillip district, the township of Violet Town shows up clearly. This image is culled from his 1849 version:



The township was only one of many on the Melbourne road, and through the rest of the '40s grew slowly. During the Black Thursday fires "...bush fires are blazing all round us, but Violet Town is yet all right and safe."

Gold was found in the area in 1852, a couple of months after Violet Town got its official Post Office, and the town became a supply centre for the district, and a junction for the track which led to Bendigo in the west. In March of 1853, a commentary on the town was dismissive of Tom Clarke's hotel;

"The Honeysuckle Inn is a small, old-fashioned public-house, utterly inadequate to present exigencies. Its sleeping accomodation is, I believe, limited to four beds, although it is the only intermediate house of call between Longwood and Benalla, a distance of more than forty-five miles. It is to be hoped Mr. Clarke will erect a larger edifice, and more in consonance with the times, which his means are supposed to well enable him to do."

While another, a month or so later, stated;

"Violet Town presents, apparently, a more bare, arid, and barren aspect, than any place I recollect meeting with on the road; yet the individual incredulous as to the general fertility of the colony, has only to enter the garden of the Honeysuckle Inn, to behold developed a luxuriance of vegetation, little if at all inferior to anything of the sort at home. By the way, that garden is one of the most complete and productive of any I have yet seen in the colony. It is also well kept and arranged, and reflects credit on the energy of Mr. Clarke."

There was no bridge over the Violet Creek, and the crossing was treacherous, to which the many accidents and near-fatalities bore witness. The mail-carts, in particular, were frequent victims, and the delays in mail deliveries were regular news items in the papers. In the Argus, dated Tuesday 28th June 1853, tucked away in an article about another delay in the mails, was the following paragraph:

"It may, perhaps, be not unimportant to some of your readers to state that Violet Town, or the Honeysuckle, has ceased to be a post town, and that all letters for that locality should be addressed via Longwood, as they are sent to the former place in a loose bag from the latter. Again, I mention that all letters for residents at the Devil's River, should be directed via Benalla, or Broken River."

But then, in January 1854, the following notice appears;

OVERLAND Mail to Sydney.—The Contractor for the Government Mails to Pentridge, Somerton, Kilmore, M'lvor, Seymour, Violet Town, Benalla, Euroa, Wangaratta, Beechworth, and Albury, also to the Upper Plenty, hereby gives notice to the public that he has made arrangements with the landlord of the Albion Hotel, opposite to the Bull and Mouth, Great Bourke-street, to open a Booking Office there, from which passengers and parcels can be forwarded to any of the above localities. Parties going to Kilmore can do so daily by Mr. J. Bently's Four Horse Coach—The Star—which leaves the Albion at 9 p.m. Persons proceeding further can do so only twice a week by the mail, leaving Melbourne in the morning by the Star to Kilmore, where they will be taken up if booked in town. The proprietor wishes it to be distinctly understood that he will hold himself responsible to passengers for any unforeseen delay that may occur on the road through accident. At the same time he begs to remark that having engaged the best and most experienced drivers for the mail that could be procured, trusts he will be enabled to give satisfaction to the public generally.
GEORGE FOSTER, Contractor.
Melbourne, 13th January. 61 feb 1

Over the next few years, Violet Town was an important site during election time, and its agricultural and pastoral produce commanded good prices, both in Melbourne and Sydney. In 1857 the Telegraph line between Belvoir (Wodonga) and Melbourne passed through the town, and within 18 months the Post Office had re-opened.

Less than 4 months later, on the 24th May 1859, the mail coach to Beechworth was stopped, north of Broadford, by 4 armed men and robbed.

The coach contained the mails from all the undermentioned places, and the bags—as we were informed—having been ransacked and burnt by the robbers, there is but little doubt of the complete loss of the letters:—Avenel, Albury, Beechworth, Benalla, Belvoir, Buckland, Euroa, Indigo, Longwood, Myrtle Creek, Seymour, Tarawingee, **Violet Town**, Wangaratta, and Yachandandah, none of which have arrived at the Post-office. The mails for the following **towns** have been duly received:—Broadford, Campbellfield, Donnybrook, Kilmore, Somerton, and Wallan Wallan. A certificate expressive of their satisfaction with the conduct of the guard was handed to him by the passengers immediately on their arrival in Melbourne. The description given of the robbers is as follows:—First man: Between 35 and 40 years of age, about 5 feet 9 inches in height, wearing a blue shirt or jumper; an Irishman; rode a bay horse.—Second man: 5 feet 10 inches; wore a dark blanket or plaid over his head and shoulders; an Irishman; rode a bay horse, having a swag or saddle.—Third man: 5 feet 6 inches; wore a black pea jacket, and had a cap or handkerchief tied on his head.

Such excitement for the 5 passengers!

Over the next ten years, the town grew to include 3 hotels, and supported a Wesleyan School for the kids. The railway station opened in 1873, which was a good thing because the excellent rainfall in the area made for impassable roads, which were difficult to maintain. By 1879, Bailliere's description of Violet Town, or Honeysuckle, was short and to the point – "a small postal township and railway station on the N.E. line...The population numbers about 150 persons."

Thirty years later, the population had peaked at 500. The growth of Euroa and Benalla saw a decline in Violet Town, a trend which continued until the 1960's.

When the Post Office first opened, it was issued with a barred oval. The problem is, no number has definitely been tied to the office, although there is a suggestion number **23** is a candidate.

When the Office re-opened in 1859, it was allocated barred numeral 243. There were two issues; the first, a 2B;



(sorry about the quality of the image 😊)

and a duplex, which has smaller figures. Neither issue are rated.

A few years after the railway station opened, the post office was transferred there, and stayed there until 1890 when Violet Town got its own Post Office. This photo was taken a couple of years after it was built;



Today, the Post Office is still operating out of the same building, but the residence is now used by a local Opportunity Shop.

While I was looking for my other image of Violet Town's barred numeral (still can't find it; my computer files are in a worse state than my stamp desk, and THAT makes Glen's look positively TIDY!!! 😊), I did find some photos the MOTH and I took on our post office crawl at Easter;



LONGWOOD (Longwood East)

Post Office opened 1st July 1852

Renamed **LONGWOOD EAST** 21st October 1890 (it closed 31st July 1948)

BECAUSE Longwood R.S. Post Office opened 1st August 1881

And became **LONGWOOD** Post Office 21st October 1890

Which went **BACK** to the Railway Station 1st February 1894

And moved (**AGAIN**) 15th October 1910

While the Railway Station was also the Telegraph Office from 15th October 1910, until it closed in 1916. 🚨

(For a little country town, you ain't boring!!!)

On the 27th June 1851 (less than a week before separation) the Government Gazette of the day published the notice proclaiming the township of Longwood (along with 7 others);

*Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, 27th June, 1851.*

TOWNSHIPS.—PORT PHILLIP.

NOTICE is hereby given, that sites have been fixed upon for Towns, at the undermentioned places, in the District of Port Phillip; and that copies of the approved plans will be deposited, for the information of the public, at the Office of the Surveyor General, in Sydney, and at the Office of the Surveyor in charge, at Melbourne, namely :—

WINCHELSEA, at the Barwon River.
PORTARLINGTON, at Indented Head.
LONGWOOD.
AVENEL, at Hughes' Creek,
CAVENDISH.
EUROA, at the Seven Creeks.
GISBORNE.
BUNINYONG, near Mount Buninyong.

By His Excellency's Command,
E. DEAS THOMSON.

It only took a few years for the township to become a hit. Being on the Sydney road, Longwood was one of the stops for wayfarers. Hugh Middlemiss, mine host at the Salutation Inn, and his wife were greatly appreciated for their "old-fashioned, and warm" hospitality.

In 1856, Longwood was in the news again, for all the wrong reasons. Hugh Middlemiss had leased the Salutation Inn to James Henry Clarke, who was murdered in rather unsavory circumstances; something that had the town gossips buzzing for months after.

The Telegraph line between Melbourne and Sydney was completed less than two years later, and I found it interesting that to send a telegram from Longwood to, say, Adelaide, cost 7 shillings for 10 words, with an additional 3d for each additional word. There was great wonder that a message could be sent from Melbourne to Sydney, or Sydney to Adelaide, in less than two minutes.

Middlemiss had taken up his publican's license again after the events in 1856. (He had concentrated on store-keeping in town for a couple of years.) He changed the name of the hotel to the "Longwood Hotel", and built a substantial stables to cater for the coaching trade. In early January 1860 the whole of the stables, including the 7 horses inside, were burned to the ground, in what was deemed to be an accident. The value of the property lost was estimated at about £2,000, none of which was insured.

From the early 1860's, Longwood became an important road junction. It was through this town that the track led to the emerging gold-fields of northern Gippsland, and the gold escorts came from Jamieson through Mansfield and on to Longwood.

In 1861, the postmaster at Longwood, Joshua Walter Nunn, was a witness in a nasty case of embezzlement involving the postmaster, Arthur Poyntz, at Wangaratta. Nunn had been asked to relieve Poyntz, who had been taken ill, and arrived in the middle of a dispute. Poyntz had apparently misappropriated a postal order for £16, and the postmasters from Kilmore and Beechworth ended up involved in the affair. Initially pleading 'Not Guilty', Poyntz was convicted and sentenced for a few years, not long after.

The 1860's were an exciting decade for Longwood. Because the town was the accepted route through to Gippsland (and for the gold to get back down to Melbourne), bushrangers and thieves had a field-day; and there were frequent calls for better roads (that didn't happen very soon) and better security (that didn't happen at all). Towards the end of the decade new roads were established on the southern side of the ranges, and Longwood started to lose its edge.

When the North-Eastern Railway was completed in the early 1870's, and Longwood got a station - nearly two miles from the township - the railway station very quickly became the hub of activity in the area. Closer to the action, the 'White Hart Hotel' was in operation in 1875, and the 'Commercial' not long after. Both hotels were used as mortuaries; the former for a murder-suicide in 1875, and the later for a railroad accident in 1883.

By then, Longwood had been in the news, again, because a bloke in Melbourne had jumped ship. This made the news because it was HIS ship, which he had stolen, then changed the name, and tried to sell to some gullible person. The papers had a field-day - was it theft?, forgery?, larceny? - and our Mr. Henderson,

owner of the "Ferret" (aka "India"), was picked up in Longwood by a very wide-awake policeman.

While all of the excitement above had been going on, a little notice had appeared in the papers on Monday 1st August 1881.

"Post-offices will be opened at the under-mentioned places on the 1st prox., viz. - ...Longwood (old Township);...from the same date the name of the present post-office, Longwood, will be changed to Longwood railway station."

Ok, so now we have TWO Longwoods.

Naaah.

On the 14th April 1885, the town which had mushroomed around the railway station was officially known as "Longwood (at the railway station)". Within 5 years, the authorities had figured out that wasn't going to work, so, on the 21st February 1890, they named the 'new' township "West Longwood".

Eight months later, the "old" township became East Longwood and the township at the railway station was known as just "Longwood".

When Longwood Post Office opened in 1852, it was allocated a barred oval. There has been no definite tie, but it is thought it may be number 47.

In 1856, when the barred numerals were issued, Longwood came in at number 87, which is unrated.



When the post office at the Railway Station opened in 1881, THAT post office was issued with barred numeral 1232, which has an S rating. Sorry, no image. 😞

When the railway station became Longwood, the renaming went on, and the "old Longwood" became Longwood East. Longwood East received barred numeral 1816, which also has an S rating;



Maygar was one of only 6 Australian V.C. awardees from that conflict. He enlisted again in WW1, but lost his life in Palestine in November 1917.

This photo was taken at the unveiling of the memorial not long after the Boer War;



On a recent trip through the area, we stopped and took a photo of the store which now houses the L.P.O.;



Maygar was joined in WW1 by nearly 60 young men from the area, including Major Fred Tubb. Fred's dad was the local school teacher in Longwood (he'd donated a few acres for a school in the first place), and knew Les Maygar very well. Fred also was awarded a V.C. for his actions at Lone Pine in August 1915, but was badly wounded and died in Belgium two years later.

Not content with that effort, just over 20 years later, the area threw another 30-odd men into war.

VALE TO ALL, FROM ALL CONFLICTS, WHO DID NOT RETURN

Longwood, for a small country town (in 1880, the whole district numbered 300 souls), threw a lot of man-power into the Empire's defenses. 11 local men took up arms in the Boer War; one, Lieutenant Leslie Cecil Maygar of the Fifth Victorian Contingent, was awarded the V.C..

PENTRIDGE (Coburg)

Post Office opened 1st August 1852

Renamed **COBURG** 22nd January 1870

Robert Hoddle sent his team of surveyors out to map the District of Port Phillip in 1837 and 1838; when the boys got to the area around Merri Creek, they found a fellow by the name of Hyatt had set up his sheep run, and built himself a cozy hut on the bank of the creek. A 327 acre area just to the south of Mr. Hyatt's hut was reserved for a village, close to the northern edge of what became known as the parish of Jika Jika. While they were at it, the boys were also instructed to survey a road (track? 😊) towards Sydney.

It is reported that the village was named Pentridge in 1840, by a surveyor who lived in the area. That may be so; Henry Boorn Foot was definitely a surveyor, living in

Brighton in 1843 when things turned sour - nearly 10 years later he was back on his feet as an Assistant Surveyor. Apparently he named the village after the one in Dorset, England, where his wife was born.

By the time the village had a name, George Jones had built a store on the Sydney track, and it wasn't long before he was joined by the inevitable pub, the "Golden Fleece" Inn. The pub had a few licensees over the years, this ad comes from 1846;

**THE GOLDEN FLEECE,
PENTRIDGE.**

MR. ROBERT WELLS respectfully informs travellers and others, that having obtained the transfer of the license of the **Golden Fleece Inn, Pentridge**, he has made ample arrangements for the comfortable accommodation of his customers, having completely refurnished the house, and procured an extensive stock of the best wines, spirits, and malt liquors.

R. W. particularly directs the attention of parties driving cattle or sheep, or having drays on the road, that he has, at considerable expense, fitted up large and well-secured cattle yards, and well-watered paddocks for their accommodation.

The area was becoming popular with farmers; in discussing the villages popping up around Melbourne, the Sydney Herald had this to say;

“Pentridge lies to the north, on the line which is marked out for the principal road to Sydney – the small farms in the neighbourhood are numerous, and fill the fertile valley of the Merri Rivulet.”
(Thursday, 14th April 1842)

I don't know what constituted 'numerous'; by the end of 1848 there were about 20 farms in the area. These farms were responsible for the production of ¼ of Port Phillip's grain, and potatoes. The Wesleyan Church had been granted about 3 acres in September of that year, 2 acres for the Chapel, and 2 roods each for the Minister's residence and for the School house. (1 rood equals about ¼ acre.) 18 months later, in March 1850, the Church of England got the same deal, except they only got 1 acre for the Church; as did the Catholic Church in April 1851.

In October of 1850, the institution which is inescapably tied to the name 'Pentridge' was proclaimed. It was originally established as a stockade to house offenders employed on road-works, or other public works. The following notices appeared on the same page of the Port Phillip Gazette;

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, 28th October, 1850.

HIS Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint
SAMUEL BARROW, Esquire,
to be Superintendent and Visiting Justice of a gang of prisoners, under sentence of hard labor on the Roads or Public Works of the Colony, employed at the Stockade at Pentridge, Port Phillip.
By His Excellency's Command
E. DEAS THOMSON.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, 28th October, 1850.
PENTRIDGE STOCKADE – PORT PHILLIP.

HIS Excellency the Governor directs it to be notified, that the Stockade erected at the Village of Pentridge, near Melbourne, including the whole of the Government Reserve of forty-three acres three roods and nineteen perches, on which the Stockade is situated, has been appointed a place at which male offenders under order or sentence of transportation, or any order or sentence passed in pursuance of an Act of the Governor and Legislative Council, passed in the eleventh year of Her Majesty's reign, intituled, "An Act to substitute other punishments for transportation beyond the seas," shall be detained and be liable to be kept to hard labor.

2. His Excellency also directs it to be notified, that under the provisions of the said Act, any person found at or near or in any manner communicating with the said Stockade, or on the said Reserve, without the permission of the Governor or other proper officer, will be guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction, be liable to a fine or penalty of Twenty Pounds, or to imprisonment for three months, or both;—of which all persons are hereby required to take notice.

By His Excellency's Command
E. DEAS THOMSON.

Even though the prisoners ate, slept, and worked in chains, the locals weren't keen on their company; particularly when the stockade was surrounded by a wooden fence about four feet high. The Native Police were used to guard the perimeter, but that didn't stop the escapees. The first 7 shot through in March 1851. For 6 or so years, the Government Gazette was peppered with notices like the one below;

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 21st April, 1854.

FIVE POUNDS REWARD.

WHEREAS the undermentioned prisoner effected his escape from the Main Depôt, Pentridge, on the evening of the 17th of April: Notice is hereby given that a reward of five pounds will be paid to any person or persons who shall lodge in any of Her Majesty's gaols the said prisoner.

By His Excellency's Command,

F. 54. | 4213.

JOHN FOSTER.

DESCRIPTION.

Name—**CHARLES SHAW.**
Age—Forty years.
Complexion—Fresh.
Hair—Dark brown.
Eyes—Hazel.
Height—Five feet eight inches.
Particular Marks—Scar on head above the left temple, scar on each eyebrow, scar on under lip, scar on right shoulder blade, scald mark on the chest, scar on the right elbow, scar on the first joint of the right thumb, a small scar on the lower part of the left arm inside, several scars on the right shin, two scars on the back of the right leg, scar on the lower part of the calf of the right leg, several scars on the left shin, scar on the lower part of the left leg outside.
Ship to the Colony—Arrived at Sydney by the *Mary Anne* in 1835, under sentence of transportation for seven years.
Sentence in this Colony—Five years on the roads.
Date of conviction in this Colony—20th May, 1853.
Remarks—Has a sister in Sydney (a widow) named *Eliza Conroy*, residing near the Catholic College.

ground. By then, the village of Pentridge (thanks to - ahem! - the prison) had been connected to mains water from the Yan Yean reservoir.

In September 1863, the village was effectively proclaimed a suburb of Melbourne, through the proclamation which brought it within the city postal limits.

BRIGHTON, CAULFIELD, MALVERN, AND PENTRIDGE BROUGHT WITHIN CITY POSTAL LIMITS.

At the Government House, Melbourne, the twenty-eighth day of September, 1863.

PRESENT:

His Excellency the Governor

Brigadier-General Chute	Mr. Hervey
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. Francis
Mr. Heales	Mr. Grant
Mr. Michie	Mr. Sullivan
Mr. Higinbotham	Mr. Fellows
Mr. Verdon	

WHEREAS by an Act passed in the twenty-first year of the reign of Her present Majesty Queen Victoria, intituled, *An Act to enable the Postmaster General to issue Money Orders in the Colony of Victoria*, it is amongst other things enacted that the Governor in Council may from time to time order and direct what shall be deemed "separate post towns or places" within the meaning of the third section of the Act of the Governor and Legislative Council of Victoria, passed in the eighteenth year of the reign of Her present Majesty Queen Victoria, intituled, *An Act to amend an Act intituled "An Act to amend the Law relating to the Post Office."* Now therefore His Excellency the Governor, by and with the advice of the Executive Council, doth by this present Order direct that Brighton (including East Brighton and South Brighton), Caulfield, Malvern, and Pentridge shall be deemed as within the limits of the city in which the General Post Office is situated, for the purposes of the above-recited Act; and that all letters forwarded between the several post offices of Brighton, East Brighton, South Brighton, Caulfield, Malvern, and Pentridge, and between those offices and the General Post Office, or other post offices situated within the limits of the city as aforesaid, shall be subject to the town rate of postage, viz., Twopence per single rate of half an ounce, and so on in proportion.

And the Honorable James McCulloch, Her Majesty's Chief Secretary for Victoria, shall give the necessary directions herein accordingly.

J. H. KAY,
Clerk of the Executive Council.

4 years later, a public meeting was called by Father Charles O'Hea. The residents had never been happy about the association with the name of their village.



After the little "picnic" at the Eureka Stockade, the Government got nervous about 'civil unrest', and other crimes among the burgeoning population; so decided to build a few of Her Maj. style guest-houses. Alfred Buck was appointed Supervisor of Works at H.M. Pentridge in 1854, and one of his first tasks was to design cages to hold the prisoners while the construction was going on. From 1857, the transformation from stockade to 'Pentonville' type prison began. The bluestone quarries (there were over 40 by 1875) were a rich resource of material, and within 10 years the "Bluestone College" was complete.

Outside the walls, Pentridge village was growing. There was a Cricket Club established in 1856, and the Pentridge District Roads Board set up 3 years later. The Board had the unenviable job (amongst others) of attempting to get a decent road through the low-lying

Queen Victoria's hubby was due for a visit to the colony, and the suggestion was made that it would be nice to rename the suburb after him (him being from the royal house of Saxe-Coburg, after all). The government finally said "yeah, ok", and the change became effective in March 1870. (The postal department hopped in a bit quicker!)

Even then, nearly half of Coburg was under crops. There were orchards, and vineyards, and Chinese market gardens, and a lot of farmers were producing feed and straw for Melbourne's growing horse population. All those quarries were producing a lot of material for foundations, road-works and the like. About this time, there were roughly 1,300 people in the village and immediate district, not including the warders and their families who lived inside the jail walls.

Within 20 years, Coburg, now a shire, was described as a very 'pretty' suburb. The rail connection with Melbourne opened in 1884, and a horse-drawn tram service to Brunswick (which connected with the cable-tram) started less than 3 years later. The "Toorak of the North" was touted during the land boom, but it was mainly speculators, not settlers, who took advantage of the land sales; when things went belly-up a few years later, the thistles had a field-day.

One last thing. The final irony, to me, is that when H.M. Pentridge finally closed in the late 1990s, the area was redeveloped as a high-class residential area. It is now a very desirable address.

I haven't been able to absolutely confirm *where* the first post office was situated, but this photo gives me one hell of an idea 🤔



The Post Office Hotel is stated as being built about 1855. In this photo, the licensee, Patrick Reilly is standing in the doorway. This photo was taken about 1870.

The next photo was taken in 1885;



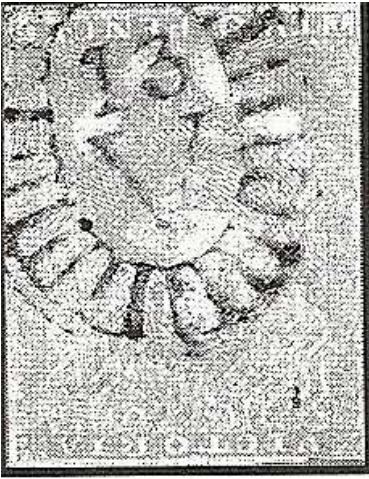
but this one was taken in 1873;



Coburg got a you-beaut Post office in the late 1890's;



When the post office (where-ever it was) opened, Pentridge was allocated with barred oval, number 13, which has a 3R rating;



whereas the recut issue is worth 5R. (oh, yeah; I wish!!!!
😞)

There was one more non-duplex issue, just after the renaming. It has an R-rating. Then, Coburg was issued with two duplexes, neither of which are rated, and I think it would be hard to find a collection without one of them.

(Oh!, by the way, it is very hard to verify the truth with so many bodies sticking in their oars. It muddies the waters
😁)

The History of Pentridge/Coburg has been written by so many people, on the 'net, sorting fact from something else, is more than I am capable of.)

When the barred numerals were issued, Pentridge was allocated B.N. 67. The first issue has a 4R rating;



SANDRIDGE (Port Melbourne)

Post Office opened 16th September 1852

Renamed **PORT MELBOURNE** 6th March 1884

The Liardet family was the first to enter the lists in the area south of the village of Melbourne. Wilbraham (yes, you read that right!) Frederick Evelyn Liardet, his wife Carolina, and their 11 children left England on 24th July 1839, in the 'William Metcalfe', and arrived in Hobson's Bay on either the 14th or 15th of November that year. There were 29 children in total on board, as part of the 230-odd emigrants.

Originally bound for Sydney, while the ship was in the bay for a fortnight or so, Papa Liardet had a look around and liked the place. He left the family in charge of his eldest son, 17 year-old Frank, taking only his second son, Frederick, with him on the trip to Sydney to finalize things, and they were back in Hobson's Bay on 10th February 1840.

They settled down close to the beach; their nearest neighbours were a couple of fishermen living in a hogshead (don't laugh; at somewhere about 100-140 gallons, it was do-able), and set to work. A hut was built (thank goodness the weather was mild) and Liardet bought a whale-boat.

By the second week of April, the Port Phillip Gazette reported;

"A private individual, Mr. Liardet, has undertaken the establishment of a conveyance for the transmission of the mails to and from the Post-Office and the shipping in the Bay. This conveyance is also fitted up for passengers, and from its expedition and certainty, must prove of great advantage to the community." (11th April 1840)

Although he also established a little hotel – the Pier Hotel - Papa Liardet was no great shakes as a business man. He applied for some remuneration for his thrice-daily mail service in July, and was shown the door. W.H. Dutton, J.P., offered to keep the service going, for free;

an offer "as you may suppose has been gladly accepted."

(At about the same time Dutton paid £3,000 for a 50% share of the Port Phillip Herald, and was in the process of building some competition for the Pier Hotel.)

Son Frank took over the licence of the hotel in December 1841 (by which time the small pier which gave the hotel its name was finished), and regained the mail service, and his father kept busy as a net fisherman (he once pulled in a 12-foot stingray), and entertaining the community with his music. Papa Liardet was also quite a competent artist. When Frank extended to hotel to accommodate the visiting pleasure-seekers, Papa organized archery contests, rowing regattas, and horse races to entertain the visitors.

In February 1842, the Pier Hotel came to the rescue of a Mr. McDonnell. McDonnell had been entertaining a few friends, one of whom was leaving for England, and afterwards went for a ride down to the 'Beach', where he was thrown from his horse. The mail cart was sent from the hotel, and Mr. McDonnell brought back, where Mr. David Kelsh (Melbourne's Postmaster), who happened to be there at the time, attended to him until Dr. Sandford arrived.

In 1844, the mail service Papa Liardet had established was finally, officially, recognized. On the front page of the Port Phillip Government Gazette, Tuesday, 27th August, 1844, at the tail end of the 5 contracts for the 'Conveyance of Mails' was the following;

*"From the Post Office in Melbourne to vessels in Hobson's Bay, twice a day; and from vessels in Hobson's Bay to the Post Office in Melbourne, as often as mails may arrive; **always by the Eastern Beach.**"*

Frank Liardet (using a one or two-horse mail cart) was paid £100 per year for the contract. By this time, No. 3 son, Hector, was running the hotel, and unfortunately Papa Liardet was insolvent. Mother Liardet had had enough, and packed up the 5 youngest kids and gone back to England.

The area was still known as Liardet's (or Eastern) Beach, right through to at least 1849, even though the village of Sandridge had been surveyed. The electoral lists for 1848/49 show only 2 electors in Sandridge, which was about the same time the furore over running water-pipes to the pier started. At £2,842, many people thought the cost excessive, and unwarranted. During one council meeting, in June 1848, where the matter was hotly debated,

"some amusement was also occasioned from the same worthy Councillor (Smith) referring in the course of his argument to the great loss of Murphy's Ale, occasioned by the staving of the casks on the Williams Town jetty, which induced Councillor

Johnston to ask if, as the proposed water pipes were admittedly of no other use, they might not be intended to convey Mr. Murphy's ale, and thus prevent the loss complained of."

But, after 10 years, Sandridge finally took off. In 1850, the year Papa Liardet sold the Pier Hotel and returned to England, land sales were held, and the little community began to thrive. There had been men flirting with the idea of a rail line from Melbourne to the bay for a few years (Robert Hoddle had made provisions in his surveys in the late 1830's), but it needed the impetus created by the gold-rushes for the action to begin. The Post Office opened in 1852, but the really big year for Sandridge was two years later.

In 1854, the electric telegraph line from Melbourne to Sandridge was connected. (That means Morse Code, folks.)

A mail depot was built in Sandridge;

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 28th June, 1854.

MAIL DEPOT, SANDRIDGE.

TENDERS will be received until Eleven o'clock on Tuesday, 11th July, 1854, for the erection of a Mail Depôt at Sandridge.

Plans and a specification may be seen at the office of the Colonial Engineer, Melbourne.

Tenders to be endorsed "Tender for the erection of a Mail Depôt at Sandridge," and addressed, prepaid, to the Chairman of the Tender Board, Melbourne.

By His Excellency's Command,
2106. **JOHN FOSTER.**

While a railway had been established in South Australia in May, the goods train which operated between Goolwa and Port Elliot used pure horse-power. Four months later, on 12th September 1854, a locally built steam engine was used on the first completely mechanical railway line in Australia. (It took 3 months for the imported job to be ready for service.)

Papa Liardet's little pier had grown, and was proclaimed as the Railway Pier (most people today would know it as Station Pier);

SANDRIDGE RAILWAY PIER.

PROCLAMATION

By His Excellency SIR CHARLES HOTHAM, Knight Commander of the Most Honorable Military Order of the Bath, Lieutenant Governor of the Colony of Victoria, &c, &c, &c.

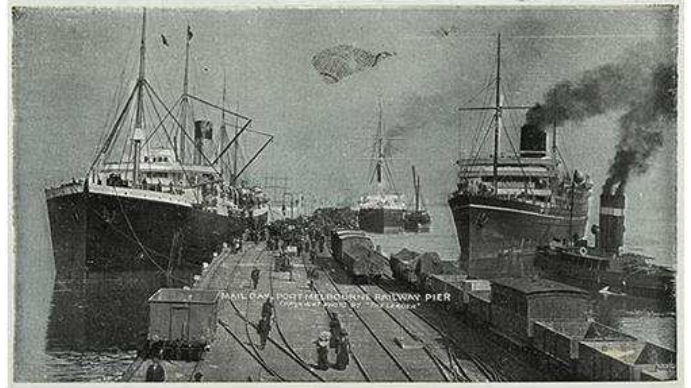
BY virtue of the authority in me vested by the fifty-fourth section of the Act 16 Victoria, No. 23, intituled, "An Act for the general regulation of the Customs in the Colony of Victoria," I, the Lieutenant Governor of the said Colony, do hereby appoint the pier at Sandridge, known as the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay Railway Company's Pier, to be a Wharf for the landing of passengers, baggage, and perishable goods not liable to duty, and for the shipment of goods not under bond.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the Colony, at Melbourne, this twenty-third day of October, in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and fifty-four, and in the eighteenth year of Her Majesty's Reign.

(L.S.) CHAS HOTHAM.

By His Excellency's Command,
JOHN FOSTER.

11393. GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!



The gold rushes created plenty of problems. **In just one week in 1853** nearly 4000 passengers from 138 ships arrived in Hobson's Bay. The sheer numbers made it very easy for crew members to jump ship, like one fellow, named Joseph Thompson, who deserted by hiding in an empty water-cask. (He went on to become a rather notorious book-maker.)

At one stage it was said you could walk across Hobson's Bay on the decks of ships, many of which had been abandoned. A few of these hulks went on to become prison ships, but at least one was obtained by a church, and converted into the "Bethel Sailor's Club", the forerunner to the Missions to Seamen. While the hulk was anchored off Williamstown, the need was so great that land was obtained in Sandridge, and a new "Bethel" was built, on the present site of the Church's Missions to Seamen.

The 1875 edition of the Bailliere's had this to say about Sandridge;

"There is communication with Williamstown (also a shipping port by steamer every hour, and by train every half-hour with the other places; also by cabs, which run throughout the day. Sandridge is a telegraph terminus; it has two piers, which have been erected at great expense—one, the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay railway pier, whence the cargoes of vessels discharging are forwarded by rail; and the town pier, whence cargo is conveyed to Melbourne by lorry and dray. About two-thirds of the shipping of the port discharge and receive cargo at one or other of these piers. There is a steam biscuit manufactory, a steam flour mill, a malt house, a distillery, chemical works, bone mills, & soap and candle manufactory, and two foundries. Sandridge is lit with gas."

It doesn't mention anything about all the pubs. 😊

The name of the post office was changed less than two months after the proclamation was issued to change the name to the Borough of Port Melbourne.

The following photo was taken about 1880;



and another image, titled "Mail day, Port Melbourne Railway Pier" was taken about 20 years later;

THE BOROUGH OF PORT MELBOURNE.

PROCLAMATION

By His Excellency The Most Honorable George Augustus Constantine, Marquis of Normanby, Earl of Mulgrave, Viscount Normanby, and Baron Mulgrave of Mulgrave, all in the County of York, in the Peerage of the United Kingdom; and Baron Mulgrave of New Ross, in the County of Wexford, in the Peerage of Ireland; a Member of Her Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council; Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George; Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Colony of Victoria and its Dependencies, &c., &c., &c.

WHEREAS by an Act passed by the Parliament of Victoria in the forty-seventh year of Her Majesty's reign, intituled *An Act to remove Doubts as to the power of the Governor in Council to change the names of Shires, Boroughs, Towns, or Cities, and of the Corporations thereof*, it was enacted that the Governor in Council might at any time, on the request of the Council of any Shire, Borough, Town, or City, alter by Proclamation to be published in the *Government Gazette* the name

of any such Shire, Borough, Town, or City, and of the Corporation thereof: And whereas the Council of the Borough of Sandridge has requested that the name of that borough be changed to Port Melbourne: Now therefore I, the Governor of Victoria, with the advice of the Executive Council, do by this Proclamation alter the name of the said Borough of Sandridge to

THE BOROUGH OF PORT MELBOURNE.

And do direct that henceforth the Corporation thereof shall be designated as The Mayor, Councillors, and Burgesses of the Borough of Port Melbourne.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the Colony, at Melbourne, this seventeenth day of January, in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and eighty-four, and in the forty-seventh year of Her Majesty's reign.-

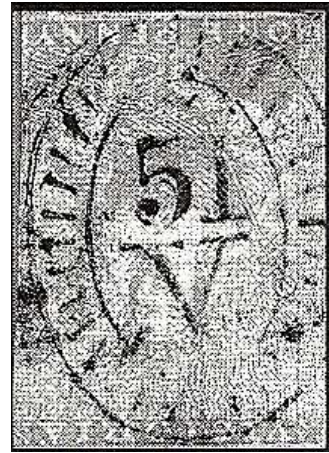
(L.S.)

NORMANBY.

By His Excellency's Command,

ALFRED DEAKIN,
Acting Commissioner of Public Works.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!



4 years later, Sandridge was allocated Barred Numeral 73. The 1st issue (A2, with 2 side-bars) has a RR rating. After that there were 5 duplexes, all unrated. Below are images of the 4th duplex, and the 5th. The fifth is faint, but I'm proud of it - it was one of the first b.n. I owned 😊



I hunted everywhere for a contemporary image of the Port Melbourne Post Office 😊
Thank goodness for Google Earth;



Now a book store and café.

When the Sandridge Post Office opened it was allocated Barred Oval 51 which has a RR rating;



Papa and Mother Liardet returned to Melbourne about 1853. They remained in Victoria until the late 1870's, when they moved to New Zealand.

For the last 4 years of his life, Wilbraham Frederick Evelyn Liardet worked on a history of Melbourne, illustrated with his own water-colour drawings, which he

dedicated to Redmond Barry. His drawings, and notes, are now housed in the LaTrobe Library, in Melbourne.



A beautiful example of Sandridge's first barred numeral.

Life in 1853...

Sandridge was the last official post office opened in Victoria in 1852.

By the end of the year, 94,664 immigrants had arrived in Victoria ports - that was the official count anyway - but somewhere between 25,000 and 35,000 people had left, for all sorts of reasons. Colonial life was pretty raw, and didn't suit everyone. By the end of the year the population of Victoria stood at 148,627, which was over 65,000 up on 1851.

Customs reports stated that gold exports (based on the figure of £3/10/- per ounce) were worth £6,912,415, an increase of over 1200% in just 12 months. And this is just the OFFICIAL figure; estimates vary that between 15% and 45% more left without paying duty.

The ports in Hobson's Bay were obviously rather busy, but the facilities were primitive in the extreme. From about August 1852, when the flood of immigrants really began, (in just four months in 1852, 619 ships arrived in Hobson's Bay, carrying 55,057 passengers), the boatmen did a roaring trade.

Then, there was no such thing as just pulling up alongside the pier, and walking off to the waiting cab. For a start, effectively, there were no piers, and certainly no organized transport. If you were lucky, you could hire a boatman (for anywhere up to £5) to land you and your personal luggage. (Carboni Raffaello, one of those who

took part in the Eureka Stockade 2 years later, reported such an instance.) The going rate for just yourself was about 3 shillings to get by rowboat to Liardet Beach.

But the fun was just beginning. Any other items you brought; beds, mattresses, pianos (? 😞), or other furniture, might wait up to a month before it was unloaded. (An engaging tableau – hundreds (thousands??) of mattresses littering the beaches around Hobson's Bay for years; just some of the detritus abandoned by would-be diggers unable to face cartage costs.)

Okay, so now you're getting your land-legs back. That's good, because you're faced with a couple of miles walk (over 8 if you landed at Williams Town) to look for some accommodation. Well, it's either that or be robbed blind. But don't expect paved streets, lighting, or anything much else in the way of order and civilization. You have to remember Melbourne is only about 16 years old, and like all teenagers, has some growing up to do. You get to walk along a deeply rutted little track, closely bordered on both sides by scrub.

Most welcoming, if you've come from London. 🤪

Accommodation? If you're coming up from Liardet's Pier Hotel (after maybe downing a beer at 2 shillings a quart pot) you might be able to find some shelter in the "Canvas Town", on the Sandridge road, just south of the city, before you get to the bridge. There's always the possibility of space in a stable (at 5 shillings a night for a straw mattress and a blanket.)

Just after Separation, LaTrobe had outlawed weatherboard buildings in Melbourne, on the basis they were a fire hazard. (Not to mention they lowered the tone of the town.) That was fine for the period when Race Week was the only time the town was busy, but, by the time Sandridge post office opened, circumstances were a bit different. Like many of Joe's other good intentions, a Brick and Mortar township was put on hold, while anything, and everything, was used to house the newcomers.



"New Chums, refreshing sleep, 10/- a night!"

The Government, along with a few charities, quickly improvised Immigrant Homes, but these were only capable of sheltering about 1/2 to 2/3 of the weekly influx. So you might be lucky, and find a bit of floor in someone's sitting room.

These boys were lucky, rats and all;

1852 is still known as "Crisis Year", and for very good reason. The teenage Melbourne had to grow up, and fast.

By my count, there were 50 post offices open by the end of 1852. Wardy Yallock, Crowlands, and Serpentine Creek had closed during the year.

These offices had handled 972,176 letters, of which about 1/2 which carried by ship, and a total of 709,837 newspapers. The income for the postal department was £12,453/12/9, over 4,500 pounds more than the year below, but completely overshadowed by the expenses, which amounted to £25,312/0/8, more than double the income.

1853 Post Office Openings

Just to start the ball rolling for 1853, here is the official notice in the Government Gazette on page 558 of the 20th April edition.

You'll notice that among the openings is Sandridge, which all my information tells me opened 7 months earlier. Oh, well.

General Post Office, Melbourne,
18th April, 1853.

THE undermentioned Post Offices have been established and re-opened, by authority of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, and are now open for the despatch and receipt of Mails on the days and hours below specified.

OFFICES.	POSTMASTERS.	CLOSE AT MELBOURNE.	ARRIVAL AT POST TOWN.	DESPATCH FROM POST TOWN.	ARRIVAL AT MELBOURNE.
<i>Established.</i>					
Collingwood	William Prosser	- - - -	10 A.M. - - -	3 P.M. - - -	4 P.M.
Richmond	John Ellis Turner	Daily, 9.15 A.M.	10 A.M. - - -	12 A.M. - - -	- - -
Prahran	Hurdman Charles	- - - -	- - - -	- - - -	Daily, 12.30.
St. Kilda	John Glass Crammond	Sundays excepted	10.30 A.M. - -	11.30 A.M. - -	- - -
Brighton	Ambrose Draper	Tuesday, 1 P.M.	10.45 A.M. - -	11.15 A.M. - -	- - -
Sandridge	Henry Harris	- - - -	Tuesday, 3 P.M.	Monday, 10 A.M.	Monday, noon.
Hardy's Inn	J. B. Hardy	- - - -	Daily, 10 A.M.	Daily, 10.30 A.M.	Daily, 9.30 A.M.
Cavendish	James Brake	- - - -	Thursday, 6.30 P.M.	Tuesday, noon	Saturday, 1 P.M.
Spring Creek	John Whitty	- - - -	Tuesday, 2.30 P.M.	Friday, 9 A.M.	Tuesday, 10 A.M.
			Tuesday & Friday, 1.30 P.M.	Thursday & Sunday, 8 A.M.	Saturday & Wednesday, 12 noon
<i>Re-opened.</i>					
Elephant Bridge	Matthew Turnbull	- - - -	Saturday, 6 P.M.	Wednesday, 6 A.M.	Thursday, 9 P.M.
Timboon	Samuel Cozens	- - - -	Friday, 2.30 P.M.	Sunday, 10 A.M.	Tuesday, 2 P.M.
Crowlands	Frederick Long	- - - -	- - - -	Sunday, 10 A.M.	Friday, 3 P.M.
Wimmera	Robert Jenkins	- - - -	- - - -	Sunday, 4 P.M.	Saturday, 6 A.M.
<i>A Receiving Office has been established at—</i>					
Collingwood	{ Peter Virtue, grocer, Gertrude-street	Where Stamped and Unpaid Letters only will be received and conveyed to the General Post Office, at the hours of 11 A.M., and 3 P.M. daily, Sundays excepted.			

A. McCRAE,

Chief Postmaster.

COLLINGWOOD (East Collingwood, Fitzroy)

Post Office officially opened 1st April 1853

Evidently closed December 1854 (but I've got a problem with that!)

Reopened as **East Collingwood** 2nd February 1858

Renamed **Fitzroy** 11th January 1860

Renamed (for the last time) **Collingwood** 18th November 1865

terms of their health, and the opportunity to “live in healthier localities such as Richmond, Prahran, and St. Kilda, at which places they will be enabled to arrive in sufficient time after their day’s work, to improve their dwellings, or walk out with their wives to make any purchases they may require.”

Of course, that was fine for those who **did** have jobs. Collingwood (along with other inner suburbs) had been forced to set up a communal Soup-Kitchen in the early 1850’s, and it was the life-source for 100’s (if not 1000’s) of families in the area for many years. Many of the immigrants who landed in Victoria were totally unsuited to colonial life, and quickly came to realize the gold wasn’t laying around waiting to be picked up. They tended to gravitate to areas which offered cheap accommodation and at least the possibility of employment.

Throughout the 1860’s and 70’s, the one recurring issue for Collingwood was drainage. More than once, newspaper editors used their soap-box to descry the drainage “in East Collingwood that surpasses even the stinks of the city; and they have this to distinguish them, that they are allowed to flow in the day-time.”

In 1876 Collingwood was proclaimed a city, and the Council worked hard to address the problems which dogged it.

As early as 1866, there had been deputations to the Government for a Post Office in Smith Street. There was a reluctance on the part of the Government to spend money on too many postal facilities, so the combined Councils of Fitzroy and East Collingwood came together and agreed on the Smith Street site. They asked the Government for £3,500 toward the costs of a building which would incorporate the Post Office, Telegraph Office, and Savings Bank, as well as a public library and Mechanic’s Institute.

The present Heritage listed building was built in 1891-92.



And this is Smith Street in 1906;



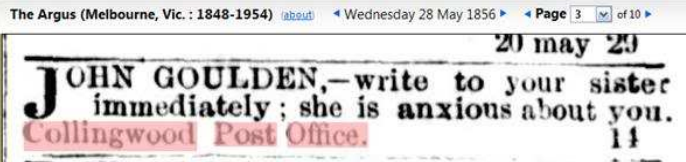
with the Post Office on the left.

When the Collingwood Post Office first opened in 1853, it was allocated one of the barred ovals from the second batch (no’s 51 to 110), which were received some time in October 1852.

The requisition is dated 22nd March 1853, and the canceller was received at the Melbourne G.P.O. on 15th April, a fortnight after the Post Office opened. Collingwood is a candidate for one of three untied barred ovals, 53, 54, and 56. All of these numbers have a 4R rating.

I have some difficulties with the closure of the Post Office in December 1854. It is my personal belief that the office was downgraded to a sub-branch of Melbourne for

some reason. During the period of its 'closure', there are several advertisements in the Melbourne newspapers, like the one below;



On at least one occasion, there's a reference to the post office in George Street in Collingwood. And then, there's this



October 3 1853

With regards to the barred numerals I now quote Hugh Freeman, on page 135 of *The Numeral Cancellations of Victoria*;

"157 and 158 were opened on 2.2.1858 with Postmasters H.R. Austin and S. Rhodes respectively, each receiving £50 per annum. Value of correspondence was also 'shared' in some way at £45/13/8 each. This value could best be explained by one office being a 'Receiving House' to the other and agreeing to share the correspondence. On 15.11.1865 the post offices of Fitzroy (then using 158) and Collingwood (then using 157) were amalgamated and 'the postal business of the two municipalities was conducted temporarily at the corner of Smith and Moor Streets, Collingwood'. Both 157 and 158 cancellers continued in use at this office, the 157 one not being used after 1887 or thereabouts."

Barred numeral 157 has an S-rating



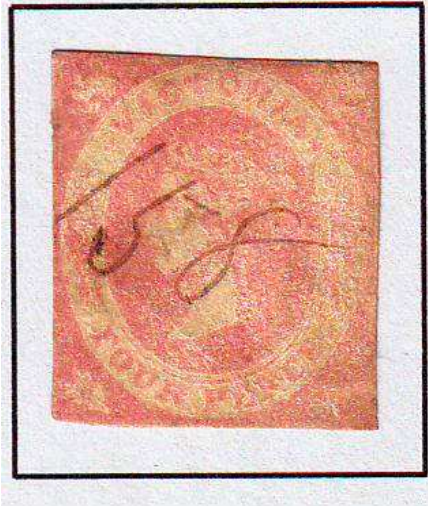
Barred numeral 158, up to about 1893, had five issues. The first, similar to '157' has an SS-rating, and the other 4, all duplexes, are unrated. This is the fourth duplex



During the period 1908-1910 there were a few "home-made" cancellers, which were used for parcel post. They were pretty rough-n-ready, and all show one, or two, bars above and below the number 158. At least one is unframed, while others had side bars within a circle. All of these types have a RR-rating, and I don't have an example.

As an addendum to Collingwood, below are a few images of barred numeral 158, the Fitzroy branch of the post office.

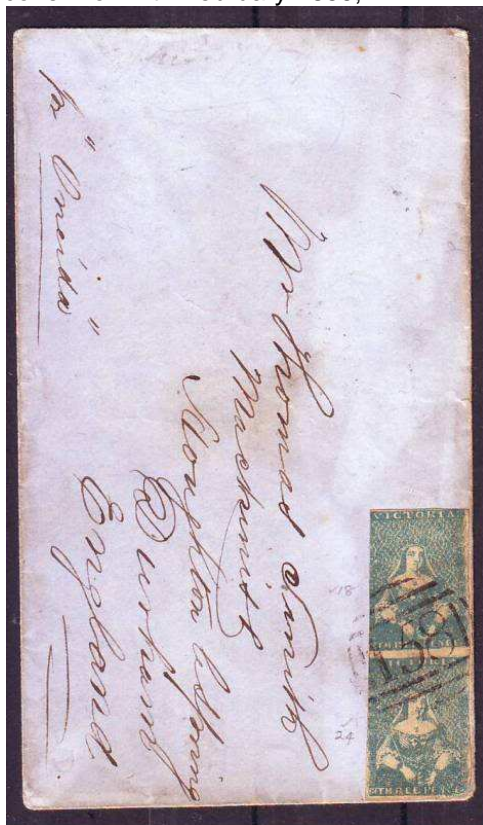
First, a manuscript cancel from about 1858;



The next two are examples of the 'home-made' cancellers I spoke of earlier;



Next, a cover from 4th February 1859;



And finally, a 1913 example of the 4th duplex;



One from about 1860;

BRIGHTON

“In 1840 the British Government's Land and Emigration Commission approved procedures for the sale of "Special Survey" land allotments of eight square miles (5,120 acres at one pound each - 2,072 ha.), chiefly as a revenue-raising arrangement.”

Henry Dendy was working at a brewery in England when his father died in 1838, leaving him an inheritance of a few farms in Surrey. He sold the inheritance, and purchased a special survey of 8 square miles in Melbourne, sight unseen. He and his wife brought their son, 5 year-old Henry jnr. to Melbourne in February 1841.

His arrival to claim the surveyed land caused a flutter in the Melbourne dove-cote. His purchase, if applied to urban land, was worth something in the order of £100,000; not bad for a £5,000 investment. After some wrangling with the powers-that-be, mainly because of the water frontage, his purchase was finally approved.

On the 8th June 1841, 8 special surveys were approved; the three at Corner Inlet – John Orr, John Reeve, and William Rutledge; William Rutledge's Kilmore survey; Hugh Jamieson's Mount Martha survey on the Mornington Peninsula; and three in the future metropolitan Melbourne – Frederic Unwin's Bulleen, Henry Elgar's Templestowe, and Henry Dendy's Brighton.

Within a few months a township was surveyed and allotments were offered for sale.

“To the south, on the sea coast of the harbor, Brighton has been lately founded, having been laid out as a portion of the first special survey taken in the province. For invalids requiring the benefit of sea air and bathing, this spot will possess qualities superior to inland localities.”

Port Phillip Gazette (March, 1842)

It was a great plan, for a great location. By the end of 1842 Brighton had a population of approximately 300, and through the patronage of Henry Dendy the game of cricket had been introduced to the area. He sponsored matches (including a notable match against the M.C.C. in November 1842), and afterwards treated the teams to champagne lunches and extravagant entertainments.

Baker's Australian Country Atlas (1843-46) shows Dendy's special survey;



Unfortunately for Dendy, things started to go sour. The agricultural and financial droughts meant fewer purchasers for his township. Our mate Henry Foot (we met him in the suburb of Pentridge) was one of the early buyers, but he had problems of his own. This was found in the Government Gazette on 1st March 1843;

BRIGHTON.
TO BE LET, a new four roomed brick cottage, immediately fronting the sea.
 Rent £1 10s per week, Apply to Mr. H. B. Foote, surveyor Brighton.
 Feb. 20,

Throughout 1843, after sponsoring 29 families, and 22 single workers under the 'land regulations' which should have guaranteed employment (but he couldn't find work for them), he also offered assistance to other migrants.

To Industrious Immigrants.

THE proprietors of the first SPECIAL SURVEY: THE BRIGHTON ESTATE, CONTAINING 5,120 ACRES, 5 MILES FROM MELBOURNE, offer to industrious families cultivation allotments as follows—

Five to fifty acres at a yearly rental of two shillings per acre for three years, with a right of purchase at the end of that time, at £5 per acre, on a deposit of 20 per cent., and the remainder at 12 months' credit.

Dairy cattle allowed to run free on the survey for each family supply, and the rent and purchase money will be taken in produce.

Apply to Henry Dendy, Esq.; or Mr. H. B. Foote, Surveyor, Brighton; or to

WERE, BROTHERS, & CO.

Custom-House Square.

July 11.

But his bad debts continued to accumulate. He managed to keep his head above water, until called on to honour a guarantee he'd made against a bank loan for £1,500 to his agent, Jonathan Binns Were, in late 1843. J. B. Were's bankruptcy was the final straw for Dendy, who was declared insolvent in 1845.

(In an ironic twist, it was Were's older brother Nicholas, in England, who bought the Brighton Estate, and helped his little brother to make a fortune, which he lost again in due course.)

By the end of 1846, when Melbourne was back on its feet, Brighton was the third most populous township, after Melbourne itself, and Portland. Those who had the money wanted nice big plots of land close to the beach for their nice big houses, and sea-bathing was becoming very fashionable. The farming land behind the posh homes was snapped up to grow food for Melbourne. (Brighton was famous for the "superiority of its cabbages".)

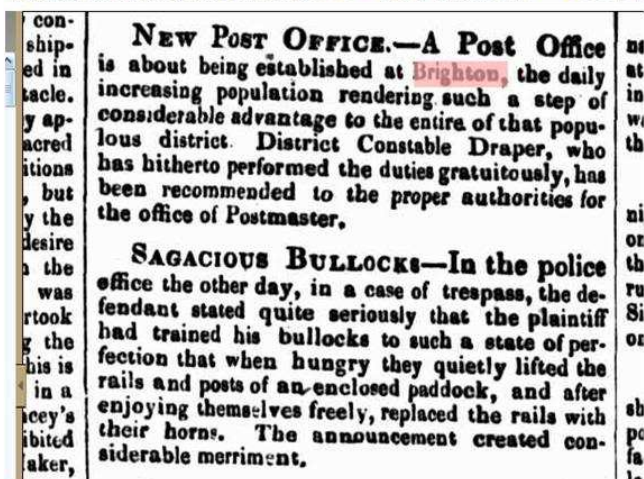
Sometime about now, the man who would go on to become Brighton's first official Post Master, District Constable Ambrose Draper, began his unofficial job as postmaster. In September 1847, in the descriptions of the contracts for the conveyance of mails;

"From and to Melbourne and Alberton, by way of Brighton, Dandenong Bridge, Mount Ararat, Tyers Cut, and the Woolpack Inn in Gipps Land (Sale), once a week or once a fortnight, or separately."

"From and to Melbourne and Dandenong Bridge, by way of Brighton, once a week"

There was a recommendation for an official post office to be opened as early as August 1848, with D. C. Draper nominated as the postmaster,

The Melbourne Argus (Vic. : 1846-1848) [about](#) [Friday 4 August 1848](#) [Page 2](#)



but that fell flat on its face. It took nearly five more years before Brighton got its official office.

Over the next 10 years Brighton grew in leaps and bounds. The 1854 census shows Brighton with a population of 2,731 people, who had their pick of four churches, and three schools for their kids. In August 1853, the "Melbourne, St. Kilda, and Brighton Railway Company" was formed; and in 1859, the year the Brighton Municipality was proclaimed, the rail link reached North Brighton. Within two years the rail line went down to Brighton Beach.

Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer described Brighton in 1865 as -

"BRIGHTON, (Co. Bourke) is a borough and postal township in the parish of Moorabbin, and electoral district of S. Bourke, situated on the E. coast of Port Phillip. There is one steam flourmill at Little Brighton, in the district, which is an agricultural one. The nearest places are Elsternwick, 2 miles N.; Oakleigh, 7 miles W.; and Cheltenham, 7 miles S. With all these places there is communication by car and Omnibus. There is one insurance office in Brighton, a branch of the Australasian. The communication with Melbourne is by rail, distant 8 miles. There is a mechanics institute in the township, and 5 hotels - the Devonshire, Railway (Irish's), Marine, Royal (Grimbly's), and Little Brighton (Keys's). There are 2 licensed carriers, who convey goods to and from Melbourne, Baker and Cutts. The surrounding country is undulating, and tolerably well cultivated. Brighton is a seaside bathing village, and a favourite place of resort for pleasure and pic-nic parties; there is a fine pier, and a spacious and well-fitted bath enclosure (Kenny's). There is a long sandy beach; and the breeze which blows across the bay is invigorating, pure and salubrious. The buildings consist chiefly of boarding houses, which are usually full during the summer months, and the suburban residences of Melbourne merchants and others. The geological formation of the district is pliocene tertiary; and the regular population numbers about 3000 persons."

In the twenty-year period from 1872 to 1893 most of the Churches replaced their buildings, and there were several private schools opened. Brighton's famous "bathing-boxes" started appearing in the early 1860's, and although there is some confusion about the total numbers, it's possible something like 200 sites were allocated in the following decades, until the late 1920's.

I can't really date the building of the Post Office. Below are three images - I believe the first was taken sometime in the early 1900's.



The last was taken in 1945.

I can only assume that Brighton's first obliterator was ordered at the same time, i.e. early February 1853, as the other 5 suburban post office barred ovals. Like Collingwood, Brighton is a candidate for one of the numbers 53, 54, or 56 Barred Ovals.

(Here is probably a good place to mention the three candidates for the three numbers – Brighton, Collingwood, and the re-opened Elephant Bridge.)

Brighton was allocated number 19 in the Barred Numerals. Of the four issues, the first two were non-duplexes; and only the first, the A2 is RR-rated, the

second issue, with large figures and no side-bars is un-rated.

Neither of the duplexes are rated. The first, issued about 1875, has smaller numerals than the second issue, which came in about 1890;



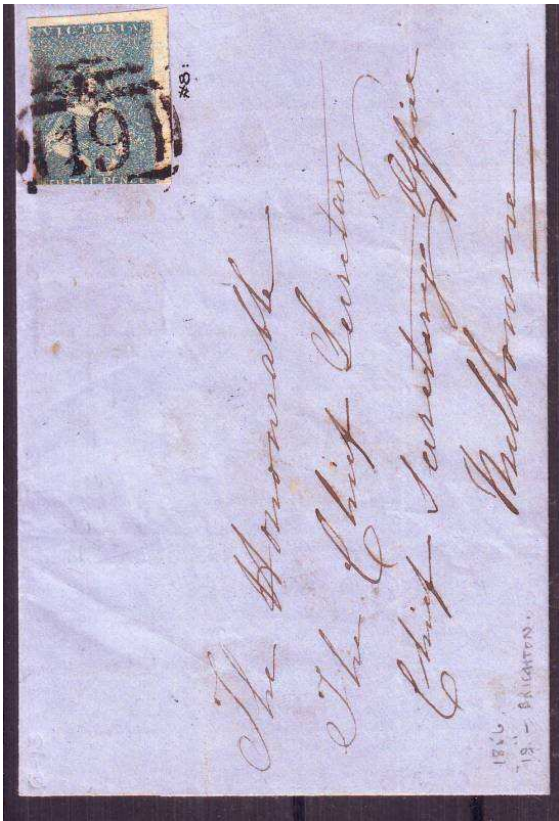
For those who are interested, Henry Dendy did make a recovery, of sorts. He lost his home, 'Brighton Park' in 1848, after trying to save it by setting up a brewery in Geelong. He then tried squatting, first in Christmas Hills from '49-'53 (which was miserable), then near Nathalia for a couple of years. He walked straight into the booming meat market, the proceeds of which enabled him to return to England for a few years.

On his return, he set up as a sheep farmer again, this time at Werribee; then established a flour mill at Eltham, and became a Magistrate for the County of Bourke. It was while he was here that his wife died, and a few years later he sold up and moved to Gippsland.

He poured all his capital into the Thomson River copper mine, to no avail, and, for the last few years of his life, lived with his son who was an engine-driver at Walhalla's Long-Tunnel gold mine.

He was nearing his 81st birthday when he died in February 1881, and is buried in the Walhalla cemetery. 'A good, honourable, kind master, but no businessman'.

This first image comes from 30th December 1856



A nice example of the 1st Duplex, issued about 1875



The second (non-duplex) issue, which was handed to Brighton about 1870. The top bars above the number started to break up in the early 1890's

GOING.....
GOING..... GONE!

ST. KILDA

St. Kilda PO 1/4/1853, closed 2/2/2001

On 22nd December 1841 a 136-ton schooner anchored off Williamstown, having brought down from Sydney 72 tons of cedar for building purposes. Some of the crew had shore leave, and headed for the nearest pub, where they proceeded, in time-honoured tradition, to get drunk and show off their fighting prowess.

After being escorted back to the schooner by the Williamstown Water Police and poured on board, the Captain, J. R. Lawrence, took the boat to the other side of the bay, and anchored her off-shore south of Liardet's Beach, effectively marooning the boys who were sleeping off the effects of their spree.

A few days later, *"in the beautiful Tea Tree scrub, growing along the eastern shores of Hobson's Bay"*, C. J. La Trobe was a member of a picnic party hosted by J. B. Were, whose brother Nicholas was one of the owners of the schooner, and the legend is that La Trobe pointed to the schooner, and suggested naming the area after her.

The "Lady of St. Kilda" (with a different Captain), was a common sight off the same beach, for the same reasons, for another 18 months or so, until she was "wrecked at Tahiti, date unknown" sometime in late 1843.

Thomas H. Nutt surveyed the site for a village some way inland of the beach, in January and February 1842, and apparently suggested the name Fareham, but that name didn't last long - the following letter can be found in the Lands Dept., in Sydney;

Council Office,
Sydney, 3rd Aug., 1842.
No. 42/26.

Sir,
I have the honor to transmit to you herewith the plan of the village of Fareham (St. Kilda) near Melbourne, which was laid before the Executive Council on 15th ultimo, Minute No. 41, 18.
I have &c.,
Francis L. S. Merewether
Clerk of Councils

*Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, 31st October, 1842.*

VILLAGE OF ST. KILDA.

NOTICE is hereby given, that a Site has been fixed upon for a Village, at the undermentioned place, and that a copy of the approved Plan may be seen at the Office of the Surveyor General in Sydney, or at the Survey Office, in Melbourne, viz:—

St. KILDA, in the County of Bourke, on the Sea Coast, about three miles from North Melbourne, and a mile Eastward from the present landing place at the Beach.

*By His Excellency's Command,
E. DEAS THOMSON.*

When the land sales were held at the end of 1842, one of the buyers was J. R. Lawrence, the original captain of the "Lady of St. Kilda", and he gave the name Ackland Street to the road on his eastern boundary. (The schooner had started life as the personal yacht of Sir Thomas Dyke Acland.)

For the next few years, the village grew slowly. There is an advertisement in the Port Phillip Patriot, from October 30 1843, advising of a property to let, which included, with the "snug house", **"good stabling, coach house and servants' room; also three acres of land, with promising crops of barley and potatoes. Rent moderate."**

At that time St. Kilda Road *"was sufficiently made to permit a settler, residing in St. Kilda, to drive to Melbourne."* Of course people still had to rely on the punt to get across the Yarra (if it didn't sink – which happened occasionally), until the first bridge was opened for business in October 1845.

A couple of years later, in 1847, the residents of St. Kilda village decided that the bush track (sorry, St. Kilda Road) needed upgrading. At a meeting £25 was pledged, and the Melbourne Corporation was so moved by this display of public spirit that they matched it pound for pound. For the princely sum of £50, improvements (like tree-stump removal and some metalling over the worst patches) were carried out. At the time St. Kilda was described as **"a pleasant spot, with some agreeable residences on its rising ground, facing the shipping in the bay. It is scarcely large enough to be considered a township."**

The popularity of the area was growing, particularly amongst the younger people who would go down to the area for picnics, or to visit the fishermen's tents for some hair-raising yarns, and then take a room for the night at Mr. Howard's Royal Hotel. (If the weather was fine, they would sometimes camp on the beach.)

It was all very peaceful and pleasant, until 1851. The first

of the gold-seekers came from South Australia and Tasmania, and apparently "Little Adelaide", one of the tent towns which sprang up to cater for the arrivals, was situated somewhere just to the north of St. Kilda.

With all that loose change burning a hole in people's pockets, St. Kilda's population increased amid a building boom. I found this description of one house, rented in 1853, almost irresistible;

"We enjoyed a joint stock share in a crazy wooden structure, which we were fortunate to obtain at the rate of four guineas a week. It was built of palings, and shingles, and comprised four rooms on the ground, only one of which had a calico ceiling, but the other three offered nightly facility through the roof for star-gazing, and allowed our beds to be watered by every genial shower. Servants were then about as plentiful as balloons, and we had to fetch our own milk, and make our own nests. We are not sure that we are much the worse for it."

(From the "Illustrated Melbourne Post" in the 1860's.)

Among the immigrants who came looking for wealth was one class of 'gentlemen' the Colony could have done without. Escaped convicts, ticket-of-leave men, and bond-breakers - in pirated boats from Tasmania, or stolen horses from N.S.W. – slipped into the colony when no-one was looking. The area to the south of Melbourne was one of their favorite haunts, and 'highway robbery' their favorite pastime.

Starting on Saturday afternoon, 16th October 1852, four, five, or six (depending on the account) bushrangers, "armed to the teeth", terrorized the country-side between St. Kilda and Brighton. During that afternoon they bailed up and robbed 19 people, tying them up and hiding them in the scrub for over three hours before abandoning them. They chased one man into St. Kilda, where he gave the alarm to the Royal Hotel. James Mooney, licensee at the time, barricaded the doors, and the bushrangers terrorized the hotel, trying to smash their way in, for over an hour. They only gave up when one of Mooney's customers, George Francis, managed to sneak out and, releasing the bushrangers' horses, made them stampede.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 19th October, 1852.

£2000 REWARD.

INFORMATION having been received to the effect that several persons were waylaid and robbed on the road between St. Kilda and Little Brighton on the afternoon of Saturday, the 16th instant, by five armed Bushrangers, His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to direct that a Reward of £200 be paid for each of the offenders apprehended in any country, and that the Reward be doubled on the apprehension of all.

Further information may be obtained at the office of the Superintendent of Police, Melbourne,

By His Excellency's Command,
W. LONSDALE.

It was reported that the men were seen in Bacchus Marsh a few days later, and four of the men were known to be convicts from Tasmania, who had broken their tickets-of-leave. Only two of the "St. Kilda Bushrangers", Thomas Williams and John Flanagan, were caught.

At that time, there was no resident police presence, apart from the occasions when a Constable pitched a tent (the address of which was sarcastically referred to as "somewhere in the bush"), and it wasn't until after the Victorian Police Force was established in 1853 that St. Kilda got a Station and lock-up.

The tenders for the buildings were called in February;

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 15th February, 1853.
**TO CARPENTERS, BUILDERS, AND
OTHERS.**

TENDERS will be received until 11 o'clock of Tuesday, the 8th March, from parties willing to contract for the erection of Police Station, Stable, and Lock-up, at St. Kilda, according to plans and specification to be seen at the office of the Colonial Architect, No. 88, Lonsdale-street.

Tenders to be endorsed "Tender for Police Station, &c., St. Kilda," and deposited in the Tender Box at the Treasury.

The Government will not necessarily accept the lowest, or any Tender.

By His Excellency's Command,
W. LONSDALE.

Early in 1853, private enterprise was hard at work delivering parcels to and from Melbourne. The licensee of the Royal Hotel had been in the habit of carrying letters and newspapers on his daily passenger 'bus' to town, but had banned parcels. He changed his mind when three or four St. Kilda residents started carrying the parcels for a small fee.

The 1850's was an exciting time for the town. As well as

the opening of the Police Station and the Post Office, St. Kilda was proclaimed a Municipality in April 1855; the Race-course was in full swing; the Jetty was (sort of) complete; and the private sea-baths, which included Kenny's, were gaining increased patronage from the railway links which were in operation from 1857.

The image below, from 1855, shows the jetty, and Kenny's bathing house (that's the Hulk in the background);



When St. Kilda Post Office first opened, it was allocated barred oval 60.

When the barred numerals came in, St. Kilda was allocated number 78. There were seven issues, including five duplexes.

The first issue, an A2, has an R-rating, as does the first duplex.

The other non-duplex, issued about 1871, has a SS-rating;



The second duplex, with thinner and closer numerals than the first duplex, which was issued about 1872 has an S-rating.

The other three duplexes are unrated. The image below is of the fourth duplex, issued in 1889 and also seen in blue;



This image of the St. Kilda Post Office comes from the 1920's;



The St. Kilda cemetery also opened in June 1855, although the first burial had taken place a month or so earlier. Over 40 years later, at 3 p.m. on 27th August 1898, the final chapter of one of St. Kilda's earliest sagas was closed at the cemetery.

In a London newspaper of the 1830's – the 'Weekly Dispatch' - there had been an article published in November 1839 which denounced "many ship-owners between London and Blackwall who possessed sufficient influence to get a leaking waterbutt, if they wished it, chartered to take out emigrants or convicts."

Due to the lack of Government inspections, it was widely known that ships condemned as totally unfit for further service in any trade were patched up, and chartered to convey emigrants to Australia. Pumps were in constant use to prevent the ships sinking, they were overcrowded, and the provisions...well, they weren't always provided.

On 17th April 1840, the 505 ton barque "Glen Huntley"

(imputed to be one of these ships) arrived in Hobson's Bay. Under the command of Capt. Buchanan, she had left Greenock on 14th December 1839, carrying 157 Government sponsored immigrants. The port authorities quickly learned she was a "fever ship", 10 of the passengers having died from fever on the way out (the last, George Denham, was buried at the mouth of the Exe [now, Little] River, after the ship had entered Port Phillip bay), and immediately ordered her across the bay to Red Bluff, which was isolated enough to become an effective quarantine area. (They were spooked by the fact Hobart Town had had a typhoid outbreak not long before, and Sydney was contending with numerous cases of the same disease.)

Police were stationed on land, and the revenue cutter "Prince George" patrolled the immediate vicinity to ensure there was no interaction between the settlers and the quarantine station.

The emigrants finally began to disembark on Tuesday, 22nd April, and were divided into two camps. The "Sick Camp", under the charge of Surgeon Superintendent Browne, held 39 patients, which eventually increased to 50; and the "Healthy Camp", which was controlled by Dr. Cotter, held the so-called healthy 108 emigrants. The last of the passengers left the "Glen Huntley" on Monday, 28th April.

The housing, in both camps, consisted of canvas tents. Red Bluff was an exposed site. The weather had turned sour as the first people were brought ashore, and young James Mathers was the first to succumb, on the 22nd. He was buried the following day.

He was followed not long after by John Craig, who left a wife and seven children. On 5th May the last person to die in the camp, George Armstrong, succumbed, not to typhus but to dysentery which he'd been at pains to hide for much of the voyage.

Within a month, the 'healthy camp' was evacuated, and a fortnight later those remaining were allowed to move to Melbourne.

Both John Craig and George Armstrong were buried next to James, and for years the graves stood as a mute testimonial. Time and tide encroached on the graves, and at 7.00 a.m. on the 27th August 1898, their remains were exhumed in the presence of representatives of the Government and the St. Kilda Council, and laid to rest again in the St. Kilda cemetery in the presence of relatives of the passengers of the "Glen Huntley".

RICHMOND

Post Office opened 1st April 1853

Closed 1st January 1857

Reopened 1st January 1858

Robert Hoddle had Richmond subdivided into 25 acre "Rural Retreats for Gentlemen" in 1838, and one of the first purchasers in the first round of land auctions a year later was the Rev. Joseph Docker, a squatter in the Ovens district. Another early purchaser was a speculator, Farquhar McCrae, who lived on Richmond Hill. McCrae was a surgeon, and brother of Andrew Murison McCrae, who joined him in Melbourne in 1840.

(Andrew, a lawyer, went on to settle at Arthur's Seat, near Dromana, and became a Magistrate at various places, then a warden on the gold-fields, and finally a Crown Lands Commissioner.)

Over the next 10 years or so, a lot of the land was broken up into smaller (and smaller) blocks, and part of the area was given over to industry. An early industry was candle-making; Gilbert Marshall set up his chandler's business in 1842, and was soon joined by a hotel, whose owner offered free transport to and from Melbourne (a 20-minute walk).

From the early 1840's, a privately operated punt had operated over the Yarra at the end of Bridge Street. The roads leading to and from the punt were in a bad state, and many complaints were made; but it wasn't until 1854 that government tolls were imposed, and the roads began to improve.

(Throughout the years the Yarra River flooded fairly regularly, and this created havoc with the dwellings and factories on the flats.)

Before very long other manufacturers set up their businesses – according to the 1843 Melbourne Directory, Richmond was host to brickmakers, bootmakers, and carpenters. After the gold rushes started, all of that meat people were eating left a few by-products, including skins, so tanneries, and wool-scouring plants, joined the lists.

As has been already noted, another by-product of the gold fever was crime. Richmond was declared the site of a Government Stockade in June 1852, and received 45 prisoners from the overcrowded Melbourne Gaol when the Stockade opened. (This was closed in 1855, as jails were opened in Castlemaine and Beechworth.)

Richmond was also the site of the first Police (Headquarters) Depot when the Victorian Police Force was created in January 1853.

At about the same time the Police Depot was established, a fellow by the name of James Ellis built himself a hotel down by the banks of the Yarra. The Cremorne Hotel became a very popular spot, even more so after Ellis laid out substantial gardens, and took control of the menagerie which had been housed in the botanical gardens on the other side of the river.

Ellis had been in the same business back in England, and he catered very nicely for the people. The Cremorne Gardens were popular, and can be said to be Victoria's first Amusement Park. On New Year's Day in 1854, over 5,000 people attended the Gardens. The menagerie included native animals like kangaroos and emus, as well as the more exotic lions, elephants, and monkeys.

Admittance was free, and you could wander around the side-shows, or dance on the large dancing platform (for a small fee, you could take instruction for the latest dance, "Pop Goes the Weasel"), and buy refreshments at the kiosks, or at the bar.

The bar was Ellis' undoing. He had applied for a Sunday liquor-trading licence, and everything was going fine, until the complaints started about the drunken and disorderly behavior in his Gardens on a Sunday. The Sunday license was revoked, and the money stopped coming in. In his statement to the Insolvency Court in 1855, he deposed that he had lost almost two-thirds of his income, and he couldn't cover his expenses. Even after a large Benefit Concert was held, arranged by many of the day's notable entertainers, Ellis' creditors were still out of pocket.

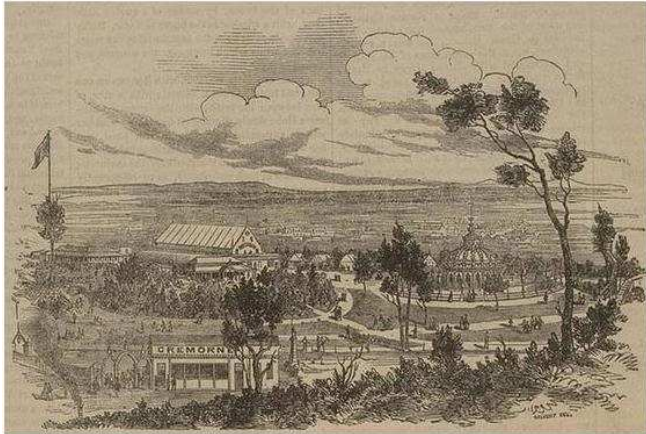
The Cremorne Gardens were taken over by George Coppin, in 1856. Coppin was an entrepreneur, and a well-known actor of the day. He extended the Gardens by including a lake with hire boats, an open air theatre, nightly displays of fireworks, and enlarged the side-show area to include things like billiards and bowling alleys. The Gondola Steamboat company was formed, just to ferry people from the city to the Gardens.

In early 1858, the first Balloon Ascent in the Australian colonies happened from the Cremorne Gardens. Englishmen, William Dean and C. H. Brown, used Coppin's 40-foot diameter balloon, named 'Australasian'; partly inflated at the Melbourne Gas Works, and partly filled from Coppin's home on Richmond Hill, but the 31,000 cubic feet of coal gas could only lift one man. Brown jumped out, and Dean sailed away to land in Brunswick, 7 miles away. Dean and Brown made two more ascents from the Gardens before moving on to Sydney later in the year.

By the end of 1858, when the first Richmond railway line and station opened, Coppin had persuaded the railway company to run a line from Punt Road to his Gardens. And then, having spent over £100,000 on the Cremorne Gardens, George Coppin sold the lot in 1863 for £14,000. The menagerie was moved to Parkville,

becoming the start of the Melbourne Zoo, and the site was used for a Lunatic Asylum before a preserving factory was built there (Rosella's).

This is an image of the Gardens, done by Samuel Calvert in 1862;



During the 1850's Richmond continued to grow. By 1854 the population was about 12,000, and the shop-keepers had realized rents were cheaper than in the city. In 1855 Richmond was declared a municipality, and then a Borough in 1863, the year George Coppin sold out.

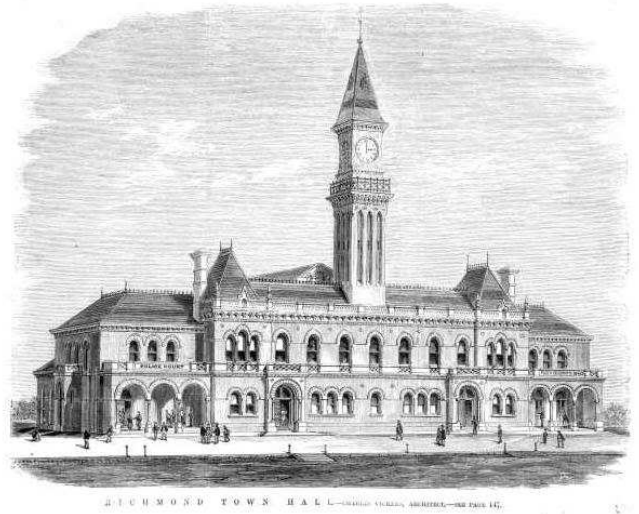
The 1860's were a busy time for Richmond. In 1862 the first Free Library was established, and the plans were approved for a rather impressive Town Hall, which was finished by the end of the decade.

And just to add to the excitement in the '60s, 1864 was the year which saw devastating flooding of the Yarra River, when the flats below Dight's Falls were under 36 feet of water.

The Post Office opened in 1853, but evidently for the first few years its role was more of a receiving house. According to my information, Richmond didn't become a fully fledged Post Office until January 1857, and then it closed a month later.

Until the official Post Office was re-established in January 1858, Melbourne's letter-carriers were used to deliver the mail, and an unofficial post office operated from the chemist in Church Street, (when they had stamps in stock!)

I don't know where the Post Office was housed before 1870, but after that date it had its own wing of the Richmond Town Hall building. The following image comes from the 'Illustrated Australian News', 13th August 1870, and shows the finished Richmond Town Hall, with the Police Court on one end, and the Post and Telegraph Office on the other end.



It is generally accepted that Richmond was allocated Barred Oval 61 which has a 4R rating.

None of the 6 issues of the Barred Numeral 71 are rated.

An image of the first issue;



And one of the fourth duplex, which was issued about 1893;



PRAHRAN

Post Office opened 1st April 1853

The words “pur-ra-ran”, meaning ‘almost (or, partially) surrounded by water’, was a fitting description by the original inhabitants. The Yarra river is close by, and what is now Albert Park Lake sits to the south-west. Robert Hoddle got close enough to the original pronunciation with Prahran, in 1840.

The area of Prahran was originally intended as a farming district. Being close (about 3 miles, or 5 km) from the city, ‘Gentlemen residences’ began appearing on the allotments in the north and east – South Yarra and Toorak respectively – while in the south and the west, today’s Prahran and Windsor, the area was heavily subdivided during the early years of the gold-rush immigration to provide housing.

In September 1851, there was a momentary hiccup when a number of the locals banded together and a spirited (but brief) attempt was made to change the name of the village to Millers Town, after Henry Miller, an early, local, politician. In the face of a lot of opposition, the attempt soon died. One of the arguments against the name-change at the time was that Mr. Miller hadn’t benefited the area at all, but over the years he did work for his constituency, and ended up with a nice bust of himself in the Town Hall.

Another fellow, far more active in Prahran’s early years, was William Moss. Although he didn’t arrive on the scene until 1850 (originally coming to Victoria expecting to be a tutor to the sons of the Browning family), he became the first ordained pastor in Prahran’s Independent Church.

The church was the social centre of the village (incidentally giving its name to Chapel Street, Prahran’s main street), and William Moss was instrumental in the founding of the Prahran Mechanics’ Institution in 1854, a year before Prahran was raised to a Municipality in April 1855, whose first meeting was held at the Institute.

Moss went on to help establish the ‘Prahran and South Yarra Ladies Benevolent Society’, the Prahran Town Mission, the Prahran Deaf and Dumb Asylum, and in later years was a superintendent of the local Asylum and School for the Blind. He was also very heavily involved in education, in spite of a lot of resentment about clerical involvement in state schools.

By the end of the 1850’s Prahran had its own railway station, being on the Brighton line, and within 20 years was well serviced by public transport. This was of great benefit to the people who worked in the city, but the many farmers in the district still had transport problems.

From 1847, the closest market for their produce was the

Eastern Market (about where the Southern Cross Hotel used to stand on the corner of Bourke and Exhibition streets). That involved a trip of 3 or 4 miles, and, after tolls were introduced in the 1850’s, additional costs to the “exhorbitant” rates charged for the stalls at the Market.

In 1860 just over 3½ acres was set aside for a market-place in Prahran, now the site of the Prahran Gardens, but it took nearly four years before the market finally went ahead. The population of Prahran at the time was about 10,000 people, and growing. The market outgrew its premises within 20 years, and was moved to Commercial Road, its present site, in 1881.

Bailliere’s 1879 edition describes Prahran (population 18,400) as having 20 principal streets, most of which were flagged or at least metalled, lit with gas, and supplied with mains water. It was still home to several dairy farms, sitting cheek to jowl with the mills and factories, and there was an Industrial Home to accompany the other institutions William Moss had help establish.

When the Post Office first opened in Prahran, it was housed in the chemist shop of Mr. H. C. Cresswell. The chemist (or ‘druggist’), with a couple of changes of ownership, continued to double as the Post Office until it moved into its own purpose-built rooms in the Town Hall. I believe the following photo was taken in the late 1860s;



During the early years, newcomers to the area were disconcerted (to say the least) to find there were no mail deliveries. This could mean quite a walk to find out there wasn’t any mail. By the time the first telegram was received in the Town Hall Post Office in October 1872, things were looking up for the residents.



In 1928 a new, purpose built Post Office was opened, across the road, on the corner of Greville and Macquarie streets.



It lasted less than 90 years before being turned into a commercial and retail block;



and now the Post Office is a shop front down the road.

Prahran was allocated Barred Oval number 59, which has an R-rating.

When the Barred Numerals were handed out, Prahran got number 69. Of the 7 issues, the first (A2), and the first duplex (about 1869) have the highest rating – SS. I doubt few collections would be bereft of at least one example of this numeral.

This cover shows the A2;



HARDY'S INN (Durham Ox)

Opened 1st April 1853

Renamed **Durham Ox** 31st December 1854

Closed 31st July 1993

Just over 20 miles (about 43 km on today's Loddon Valley Highway) north of the little village of Serpentine Creek, an inn was built on the eastern bank of the Serpentine Creek.

For at least 12 months prior to the Post Office opening,

the inn, known as the Durham Ox Hotel, was owned by the leasees of the 'Duck Swamp' run (estimated area of 115,000 acres), Messrs Booth and Argyle, who ran a slaughterhouse and butcher's shop in Flinders Lane in Melbourne. Our Mr. Hardy appears to be an elusive fellow. Apart from the one reference to J. B. Hardy concerning the opening of the Post Office, I can't find him.

(Useless information. The breeding program which led to the Durham Ox (the original was a steer) was the forerunner to the Shorthorn breed of cattle.)

By 1854 William Wood was the licensee, and

presumably also the postmaster. On the date the post office changed it's name.....it closed. 🤪 This is the notice which appeared on page 5 of the Argus, on Tuesday, 2nd January 1855;

POST OFFICE NOTICE

The undermentioned Post Offices being closed from this date, all letters directed to them will hereafter be sent as follows: - Carlsruhe and Malmesbury to Kyneton; Kingower to Maryborough; Fryer's Creek, Maldon and Hardy's Inn, or Durham Ox, to Castlemaine; Woodend to Gisborne; Horsham, Glenorchy and Crowlands to Lexham.
(Signed,) A. McCrae,
Postmaster General, General Post Office, Melbourne,
1st January, 1855

The locals were *not* happy. The following gem was tucked away in the advertisements on the back page of the Friday, 12th January edition of the Argus;

NOTICE.—To Settlers, &c, residing in the Lower Loddon District.—“In consequence of the general reduction of the different Departments of the Government Service, it has been found necessary to close your Office (Durham Ox) for the receipt and dispatch of Mails—Dated, General Post Office, Melbourne, 30th December, 1854.”
In conformity with the above intimation from the Postmaster General, the “Durham Ox” Post Office was closed this day without any previous notice; thus to save a paltry salary of £20, all the intermediate letters and papers for parties from Castlemaine to Swan Hill were left at the former Post Office, the consequence of which is the entire disarrangement of the commercial communications of a district extending upwards of 140 miles. To add to the absurdity, a weekly mail is still kept running from Castlemaine to Swan Hill, passing the Durham Ox on its route! How long will such imbecility be tolerated, without the necessary inquiry of a Commission to examine into the incongruities of this Department?
W. B.
38
Lower Loddon, 4th January, 1855.

There was also a letter to the editor the following day, using language not quite as strong. By the end of the month, Durham Ox Post Office was back on the lists.

It should be remembered that Serpentine Creek, the only other Post Office in the area, had closed at the end of July 1854 and didn't reopen for another 4 years.

I don't know exactly when the town got its Police Station, but it was definitely up and running by August 1858, when the constable and William Wood were witnesses in a little murder-trial.

Two blokes, Martin Loemann (from Poland) and Christian Von See (from Mecklenburg, Germany), were partners on a mining claim down Eaglehawk way. Their neighbours in the area were used to the constant quarrels, and were surprised when they stopped. Loemann and Von See took a trip up toward Swan Hill, but only Von See returned. A body was found in the

bush near Terrick Terrick, and the finding was reported to the Durham Ox constabulary.

Wood, and a couple of other publicans along the track, stated that Von See had spent money in the pubs as he headed back toward Eaglehawk. Those that knew him found this strange as he was always broke. Von See told those who asked that he had lost Loemann in the bush. He was found guilty of murder and sentenced to hang. Christian Von See was executed on 29th November 1858 at Melbourne Gaol.

By the end of the decade the Cobb and Co. “Telegraph Lines of Mail Coaches” were operating, and there were daily lines of coaches which connected to the extremity of the northern railway line at the time – Digger's Rest. One of their lines ran to Swan Hill, stopping at Castlemaine, Sandhurst, Serpentine Creek, and Durham Ox, on the way through, and Durham Ox became a changing station for the coach line. It cost about four to five pounds for the trip through to Swan Hill.

One of Burke and Will's team, Georg(e?) Neumayer, made good use of this service on his way back to Melbourne in December 1860. He had rested his horse at Swan Hill, after it was hurt by a clumsy farrier, and took the coach back to Melbourne to file a report, staying the night at the Durham Ox Hotel.

The increased custom at the Inn had the inevitable consequence. The village grew. The Bailliere's of 1879 describes Durham Ox as a small postal village with a population of about 60 persons.

I wonder if the reporter stopped there?? By then, the powers-that-be had decided to lay out a township with the name of Towangurr (or, Towang-gurr), and that name wasn't rescinded until 1953. I doubt if the locals took any notice – the Postal Department certainly didn't, and wherever 'Towangurr' was used, (Durham Ox) came straight after.

The township of Towangurr (Durham Ox) had at least one bank, a General Store, Draper and Milliner, which kept the hotel, police station and Court House company. There was a Wesleyan Church (which is still there), a consecrated cemetery (listed as Yarrowalla [Durham Ox]), and a State Primary School (no. 1537A, also known as Yarrowalla [Durham Ox]).

The township was also given its own recreation ground, reserved as a “Site for Cricket and other purposes of public recreation” in 1879.

When the post office opened at Hardy's Inn it was allocated Barred Oval 52, which has a 4R-rating. Not surprising really, given that there weren't too many people in the district.

The area was still dominated by the large grazing leases in 1856 when Durham Ox received its Barred Numeral

35.

The first issue also has a 4R-rating,



But after that the Post Office was well patronized. The recut has an R-rating, and the duplex, issued about 1880, to the township of Towangurr (Durham Ox) is unrated.



While chasing an image of the Durham Ox post office, I also found a few more of the township. The first shows the General Store about 1875;



And this one is of the Durham Ox hotel about 1907;



(Love the car!!!!)

This image of the Durham Ox General Store and Post Office is dated 1969;



Today there is little to remind travelers of the hospitality once shown to wayfarers. If you drive along the Loddon Valley highway today, you would possibly not even notice Durham Ox.

The Church and Memorial Hall are on the Boort road. Thanks, google earth. 😊



CAVENDISH

Post Office opened 1st April 1853

After 20 year-old James Riley had 'enjoyed' himself nearly getting killed in Paul Strzelecki's jaunt through Gipps Land in 1840, he teamed up with Edward Barker to take out the lease of the 'Kenilworth' run on the banks of the Wannon River in the Western District in 1841, and the two boys held the lease until it was broken up in 1849.

Within 12 months the boys had the company of a fellow named John Waddell, who set up a small inn on a nearby fording place on the track over the Wannon River, which led from Dunkeld up through Harrow, Apsley, and on to Adelaide. Mr. Waddell called his inn the Bunyip Hotel (being close to the river, and therefore close to some of the mythology of the area, may have had something to do with the choice of name).

A small hamlet grew around the inn. Some of the seasonal hands on the outlying stations built their homes there, and, as the track grew in importance, the people enjoyed a constant stream of traffic through their little town.

During the 1840s the population grew, and toward the end of the decade there was a meeting of most of the squatters in the surrounding district to set up a school for the children in town. There were over a dozen men at the meeting, including John Waddell, and Mr. Pilmer, who had just established a General Store which had ***"an excellent stock of everything both useful, and ornamental, combined with economy, suited to the taste of the fair Australian belle or hardy bushman."***

One of the other members of the meeting was George Faram who had moved up from Melbourne to begin work on a five-span bridge over the Wannon River *"which will be a great boon to the public, and a blessing to bullock-drivers."* A couple of years later when the area flooded, Mr. Faram's bridge was one of the few in the area which withstood the torrent.

In June 1851 the Township of Cavendish was proclaimed, and not very long after that, the school opened, becoming one of the first National Schools in the Colony of Victoria. The Cavendish Primary School today can boast of being the only school in Victoria to have been open on the same site since its inception.

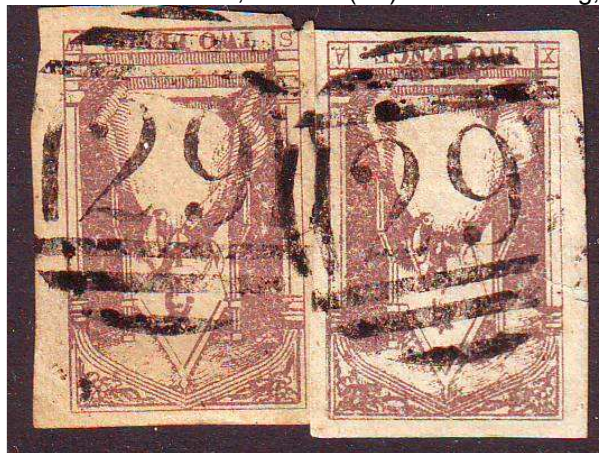
Over the years, the town continued to serve as the community centre for the predominantly pastoral community. A Police presence was established in the late 1850s, with a stone lock-up built in 1862. By the 1880s Cavendish was declared a Parish, with its own shire council, and was home to three places of worship (Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Church of England). The road from Dunkeld through Cavendish to the north

had been declared a Main Road, and the town was a coaching stop on the road.

In early 1910, the Station of Kenilworth and its neighbor Mooralla were subdivided under the "Closer Settlements" scheme, and many families took up the approximately 640 acre blocks.

When the Cavendish Post Office opened, it was allocated Barred Oval 57, which has a RR-rating.

In 1856 Cavendish was allocated Barred Numeral 29. There were two issues, the first (A2) has a RR-rating;



And the recut version is rated S;



A 1960s image of the Cavendish Post Office;



At the 1849 meeting, to establish the school, James Riley was the Chairman. Edward Barker had given up

farming earlier in the year and gone back to Melbourne. A trained doctor, he went on to become the first surgeon at Melbourne's Benevolent Asylum, and in later years was on the surgical team at Melbourne Hospital. He was closely involved in the establishment of the Medical Society of Victoria, and was one of the driving forces behind the Australian Medical Journal.

Another of the squatters who did attend the meeting was Thomas Chirnside. He was one of the first squatters to

employ local Aboriginal men as stockmen. Thomas and his younger brother Andrew, after arriving from England, in 1839, acquired a number of leases in the district, and about the time of the December 1949 meeting Thomas had finalized the purchase of some land in Wyndham (today's Werribee), where he went on to build himself a rather nice house, known as Werribee Mansion.

SHORTLAND'S BLUFF (Queenscliff)

Post office opened 1st May 1853

Renamed **QUEENSCLIFF** 1st January 1854

As early as 1838, pilots had been established in the area to assist ships coming in through the notorious "Rip" at Port Phillip Heads, and within five years the first lighthouse had been built. A grazing lease covering a large part of the peninsula had been taken out by Nicholas Alexander Fenwick, who was appointed Police Magistrate of Geelong after Foster Fyans was transferred to Portland in March 1840.

A township was surveyed at Shortland's Bluff in 1852, and was originally gazetted, on 20th June 1853, as "St. Leonard's", but less than a week later the powers-that-be changed their minds and called it Queenscliff. A month earlier, a Postmaster had been appointed to accept all mails coming through the heads which were bound for Geelong, and, through that office, out to the Western District.

An Act was passed in July 1853 "to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the ports, harbours, and shipping in the Colony of Victoria", and within that Act regulations were proclaimed for the "observance of vessels carrying mails" entering all ports in the colony;

"MAILS. – All vessels having mails on board for Geelong are, on entering between the Heads of Port Phillip, to hoist a white flag at the peak, as a signal for the mail-boat to come off, and are to heave-to, or anchor within one mile of Shortland's Bluff until such mails be landed."



(Although this sketch of a landing at Shortland's Bluff was done in January 1853, it gives some idea of the conditions that prevailed for the mails for the next couple of years.)

Unfortunately for some Captains, they were out of town when the new Postal Regulations came in, and at least two, Isaac Warner from the "Shamrock", and William Bell from the "Waratah", pleaded ignorance as their defence when hauled over the coals for not delivering the mail bags to the postmaster at Shortland's Bluff. (Mr. Warner was fined £13.12s and £5 costs. Mr. Bell, who didn't bother turning up for his hearing, got clobbered with a £25 fine and ordered to pay £13 costs.)

This happened in August 1853, about the same time the first town lots were sold in the Queenscliff township. Building began almost immediately. Close to the lighthouse, the existing pilots' cottages were taken over by the Customs boat-crews, while the pilots commissioned nice new homes in town, and a house for the Health Officer of the Quarantine Station was one of the first houses to go up, quickly followed by the first hotel.

By the time the telegraph office began operations in January 1855, the town had its own school and church, and a second lighthouse was built, and over the next few years more houses were built, and shops began appearing in the main street.

Melbourne's increasing wealth brought fears of invasion, with the Russians high on the list, particularly after the Crimean War in the mid 1850s, and in consequence a detachment of Victoria's Volunteer Artillery was raised in Queenscliff in 1859, and a gun battery was constructed on Shortland's Bluff. The original lighthouse, which stood on the site, was replaced by a new one in 1862 (known as the 'Black' or 'High' lighthouse [to distinguish it from its fellow – the 'White' or 'Low' lighthouse – further down the coast]).

Within 10 years, the population of the town had reached 1,000. It was a favoured watering place for tourists from Melbourne, with steamers operating daily, and there were also daily coaches, including the mail coach, to Geelong. A fishing industry had been established, and the townspeople had access to all the modern facilities,

which, by the end of the 1870s included a rail link with Geelong. This, originally built as a military railway line to service the Fort at Queenscliff, enabled a better supply of building materials and over the years some impressive buildings began to appear, including Queenscliff's Post Office.



The above photo was taken in 1945.

When the first postmaster was issued with Barred Oval 62 in 1853, the population was starting to grow, and fairly rapidly. The first obliterator has an R-rating.

After Mr. Charles Dod, who ran the local store and newsagency, became postmaster in 1854, Queenscliff was already on its way to becoming the popular tourist spot it is today. When the Barred Numerals were issued in 1856 Queenscliff was allocated number 70, and there were 3 issues, all of which are unrated.

The first, A2;



And the first duplex, issued about 1878;



The second duplex has thicker, more widely-spaced, figures, and was issued about 1894.

Regarding the fort at Queenscliff, it has been claimed that the first artillery shots fired by the British Empire in WW1 occurred when the German Freighter "Pfalz" was attempting to leave through the Heads. Coincidentally, the same gun, with a different barrel, is also alleged to have fired the first Australian artillery round of WW2.

SPRING CREEK (Beechworth)

Post Office opened 1st May 1853

Renamed **BEECHWORTH** 1st January 1854

In 1843 23 year-old David Reid took up the 13,000+ acre Yackindandah grazing lease, after managing a family lease near Wangaratta from 1838. Within 10 years, in February 1852, gold was discovered on the run and within a very short space of time the pastoral value of the lease was ruined. For several months he continued on his lease running a store, close to the flour-mill he had established in 1845, where he used to sell the miners their meat and buy their gold. He sold the lease in 1853 and turned to trading, which was profitable enough for him to purchase another grazing lease south of Albury a few years later.

The first gold fields, at Spring and Reid's Creeks, were quickly followed by other gold discoveries in the vicinity and they all came under the banner of the "Ovens Diggings". The lavish reports of gold were enough to send the hopefuls, in their thousands, into an area where living conditions were harsh and weather conditions extreme.

In April 1853, a reporter on the diggings wrote; ***"I do not think that there is much likelihood of a dry season [winter], as it has rained almost every third or fourth day since the commencement of the month. The mornings and evenings are very cold, and the rains are generally accompanied by heavy gusts of wind, from the west and south-west....The Yackandando (sic) Creek, which does not appear to be subject to very sudden freshes, rose nearly a foot on three or four separate occasions during the***

period I have mentioned, and in one instance, it rose six or seven inches in three or four hours."

A pen-portrait from Englishman William Howitt in 1853 can also give some indication;
"...for nearly two miles, a wide valley is completely covered by tents and the soil turned upside down by diggers. A more rowdy and uninviting scene I never saw....., all the trees were cut down; the ground where it was not actually dug up was eaten perfectly bare by lean horses... more shabbiness and apparent wretchedness it would be difficult to conceive. Reid's Creek has the character of being a disorderly and dangerous place. There have been no less than fifteen murders committed at it..."

The majority of the murders were the result of claim ownership disputes – hardly surprising when there was as little as one short step between the holes. As early as February 1853 a Court of Petty Sessions had been established at May-Day Hills (as the area was then known), and there was a police camp, but the limited police numbers, in the face of about 8000 miners, could scarcely check the violence. In addition to these disputes there was also the rivalry between the two groups of diggers, the "Monkeys" who worked the streams, and the "Punchers" who worked the gullies and the dry banks.

Dangerous or no, people still looked forward to their mail and newspapers. An early competitor of David Reid's, one Mr. Roper, established a store at Spring Creek. Our friend Mr. Roper just happened to be the brother of the postmaster at Albury. There was an arrangement between the brothers that *"caused all letters and newspapers addressed to the Ovens Diggings to be forwarded by a private conveyance"*, to the store, where the recipients' names were posted outside.

This magnanimous gesture had a catch. To collect your mail, you had to hand over a shilling for each letter, and sixpence for each newspaper. There weren't too many complaints though; it was better than no mail at all! And an official Post Office was nowhere in sight; at least, until the end of April 1853.

The first official mail delivery to the Spring Creek Post Office arrived on 29th April 1853, and was handed into the charge of Mr. John Whitty. Mr. Whitty was *"a gentleman of education..., and his painstaking and courteous manner is likely to make him popular with the diggers."*

That first Post Office was a purpose-built, single-roomed, weatherboard dwelling. That's not so bad, I hear you say. No, and it wouldn't have been – except for the minor detail that Mrs. Whitty and all the little Whittys lived there too.

I don't know how long John Whitty had to cope, before Beechworth's first proper Post Office was built, and I doubt it would have been easy to maintain his courteous

manner, especially when the mails were consistently delayed. In the first month of the official twice-weekly service, the mail was lucky to arrive once every 10 days.

Below is a watercolour of Beechworth Post Office, by Arthur J. Stopps, about 1855-56;



In June 1855 there were rumours that an unnamed storekeeper was to be given the job, and the townsfolk held a meeting, at which the government decision to cut costs was roundly condemned. By then the Beechworth Post Office was handling around 1,500 letters every week, and there were angry criticisms of the idea that someone would be willing to take on the position for £20 per year. The unnamed storekeeper, Henry Glenny, was awarded the twin positions of Postmaster and Clerk of Court for the princely sum of £50 per year; positions he held for a bare 12 months, before resigning to go to Castlemaine.

Henry Glenny doesn't appear to have made himself very popular when he chose to not work on Sunday afternoons. His stance got a mention in parliament, when a particular local member – Daniel Cameron – wanted the Colonial Secretary to give Glenny a rap over the knuckles. The request was denied; the Secretary rather testily pointing out he could see no reason why Glenny shouldn't enjoy the same liberty as most other people.

(I wonder if Henry Glenny had voted for Cameron, or was even impressed by Cameron's rather extravagant solid gold horse-shoes, with which he had his horse shod for a one mile parade through town on voting day. [The story goes that the horse-shoes shed one ounce of gold over the mile.])

In any event, Glenny was gone by July, and I know that Mr. John Buckley Castieau, a warder at Beechworth Gaol, wanted the job, but I'm unsure if he got it. Didn't really matter anyway; Castieau went on to become Beechworth Prison Governor (it was known as "Castieau's Castle" while he was in charge), and he was Governor of Melbourne Gaol when Ned Kelly was executed in 1880.

In 1857 Mr. Edwin R. Elliot was Postmaster and he had an assistant, Thomas Parry. By then, Beechworth was

hitting its peak. There were about 30,000 people in the area, and the area around Beechworth of 1857 offered over 70 restaurants, and that isn't counting the more than 30 pubs offering counter-meals!

Actually, a run through the business directory of Beechworth in 1857 wouldn't be out of place in a Melbourne suburb of 2010; if you swapped the livery stables for car-hire businesses, the farriers for tyre-marts, the coach-builders for car repairers...you get the idea. Laundries, gardeners, dressmakers and tailors, cordial makers, travel agents, grocers, jewellers, carpenters, wine merchants, dentists, shoe shops, hair dressers, chemists, butchers, watch makers, brewers, real estate agents, doctors, photographers, in fact any kind of store you can think of. (Funny, the directory didn't mention the brothels, the drug-dens, and the other, seamier, sides of business.)

There were the two daily newspapers, the hospital, the convent, the court-house, the churches, the schools (including the State school, which could hold 1,000 kids), the Gold Office and sub-Treasury, the Telegraph Office, the banks, the Police Station, and so on, and so on.

Over the next few years, things only got better. Beechworth was the largest town in the area - the municipal capital, in fact - and with over 14,000 oz. of gold being sent to Melbourne every fortnight it was inevitable the town attracted some interesting characters. (Believe it or not, some were even respectable!)

Then, about 11 p.m., on 23rd March 1867, a fire started in a livery stable close to the post office. Within one hour, due to faulty water-hydrant equipment, more than £12,000 damage had been caused along one side of the street. The Post Office was gone, and nearly every other building between it and the temporary office of the Bank of Victoria went with it. The wonder is that only one life (a poor horse) was lost. Most of the mails from the post office were saved, with a little help from the solicitor down the road.

For the next 17 months, post office business was conducted from a rented house, until the new Post Office was built. This image comes from "The Illustrated Australian" in 1869;



Even after the easy gold (alluvial) was snapped up, Beechworth still had more to offer. With the commencement of deep-lead mining a powder magazine was built some way out of town to store the gunpowder, and some truly amazing feats of engineering (including around 900 miles of water races, some driven through solid rock) were accomplished, as well as some substantial environmental damage.

By 1880 Beechworth, itself, had a population of 3,400, and the 1879 Balliere's guidebook rhapsodized over the town. The public facilities had been expanded, and there were over a dozen factories supplying regular wages.

After the meeting of the police and the Kelly Gang at Glenrowan, it was the Beechworth postmaster, Mr H. Cheshire, who arranged for the telegrams which alerted the public. Glenrowan had no telegraph facilities, so Mr. Cheshire cut the telegraph wires near the Glenrowan Railway Station and attached a portable telegraph key and sounder. By this method, over the next 24 hours or so, Mr. Alex Thomson, the chief operator, and his staff relayed about 300 telegrams, several containing over 1000 words; and Beechworth hosted Ned's committal hearing in August 1880 before sending him back to Melbourne.

John Whitty was issued with Barred Oval 55 when he became Spring Creek's first postmaster. As you might have gathered, it saw a fair amount of use and is unrated.



The fourth duplex was in use from 1878 to 1889;



And it was Henry Glenny who received the first Barred Numeral obliterator when Beechworth was allocated number 9. That first issue, an A1 with three side bars, also got plenty of use and is unrated.

The fifth duplex, 1889-1904;



The life of the first duplex, issued in 1864, was cut short by the fire which destroyed the Post Office. It had "VICTORIA" in the bars, as did Sandhurst, Ballarat and Creswick. It has a 3R-rating.

And the sixth and last duplex, from 1904. Its last noted use was on a 'roo in 1913.

The second duplex, issued in 1866, survived and was in use until 1870. With a 22mm diameter datestamp to distinguish it from the third duplex, it has an R-rating.

The last four duplex issues – third to sixth – are all unrated. The third was issued in September 1867, while the Post Office was in the rented house, and was in use for not quite 8 years. The right bar on the obliterator began to disappear within a couple of years.



There was one other, rather unusual, obliterator used at Beechworth. The design was similar to the Melbourne 'Killer', with the number '9' within 12 bars. Possibly experimental, and apparently in use for a short time before the fire in 1867, there are only a couple of known examples and it has a 5R-rating.



And the Post Office still stands;

McIVOR (Heathcote)

Post Office opened 1st July 1853

Name changed to **HEATHCOTE** on 1st January 1854

Mclvor Creek was apparently named after one of Tom Mitchell's crew in 1836, and within a few years Mr. M. Murray established an Inn at a fording place on the creek. The Mclvor Inn was an established landmark by the mid-1840s (even being used as a reference point for lease boundaries in the area), and rose to prominence when gold was discovered at Mt. Alexander in 1851.

In November 1852 three men found gold near the Inn, and 2 months later, in January 1853, Mr. Murray sold up. (*Hmmmm.*) By April there were somewhere between 16,000 and 40,000 diggers in the area, and a Commissioner for the Mclvor gold field had been appointed, and within a month D'Arcy Haggit had been appointed Police Magistrate in charge of the Court of Petty Sessions, where Hodson Peters was Clerk.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 10th May, 1853.

HIS Excellency the Lieutenant Governor
has been pleased to appoint
MR. HODSON PETERS,
to be Clerk of Petty Sessions at Heathcote,
McIvor Creek, Campaspe district.
By His Excellency's Command,
W. LONSDALE.

To the best of my knowledge Richard Banks was the first official Postmaster at the Mclvor diggings. When the post office opened, Mr. Banks had the company of the

"St. Louis Store", the "St. Louis Restaurant", the "St. Louis Auction Mart", and a butcher; as well as the police camp, which saw its fair share of mayhem.

In his book, "Gold Rushes of the Fifties", William Adcock left us a charming description of the area;

"The colony at the period when Mclvor was rushed, swarmed with desperadoes... but nowhere were ruffians and outrages so numerous as at Mclvor, daring robberies often with violence and murder were committed within a stone throw of the police camp."

Less than three weeks after Richard Banks started work, on 20th July 1853, the private gold escort from the diggings to Melbourne was robbed of about 2,000 oz. of gold, and cash. George Elston, George Melville, George Wilson, William Atkins, Edward McEvoy, and Robert Harding were charged and convicted; Wilson, Melville, and Atkins were executed 3rd October 1853.

In November 1853 the township of Heathcote had been surveyed and the first allotments were up for sale less than a month later. Over the next couple of years the population ebbed and flowed with the gold, but by the end of 1855 most of the alluvial gold had disappeared and the hard work of the reef mining started.

At one stage the authorities considered closing the Heathcote Post Office and merging it with Dunolly – over 40 miles away to the west! The fact that the cost of operating the separate post office, along with the cost of the contract to get the mails there, came to over £800 for the first 12 months may have had something to do with it.

The population began to stabilize as the mining companies stepped in, and ex-miners became farmers, or timber-getters. By the time the telegraph arrived in November 1859, Heathcote had been proclaimed a Borough with an estimated population of 6,000, including a number of Chinese gold-field workers and market-gardeners, and German winemakers. Heathcote's first newspaper, The Mclvor News, started in July 1858, and money-orders had been available from the Post Office since March 1859.



(Thanks to Traralgon3844 for this image.)

The coming of the telegraph spelled the end for Richard Banks. He was sent to Melbourne to learn the intricacies of telegraphy, and moved on to Sandy Creek in 1860 where his life ended tragically.

Lachlan McInnes had been appointed Telegraph Station Master in September 1859, and was acting postmaster after Richard Banks left. He was appointed postmaster 1st January 1861, when the post office was moved into the telegraph station, and held the position until 1865.

Mr. H. Tymms became acting postmaster after McInnes left, until 25 year-old Alfred Lanfear Sutton took charge in February 1866. Mr. Tymms took over again after Alfred Sutton's untimely death in September 1875 until September 1881 when Mr. P. R. Challen was appointed postmaster.

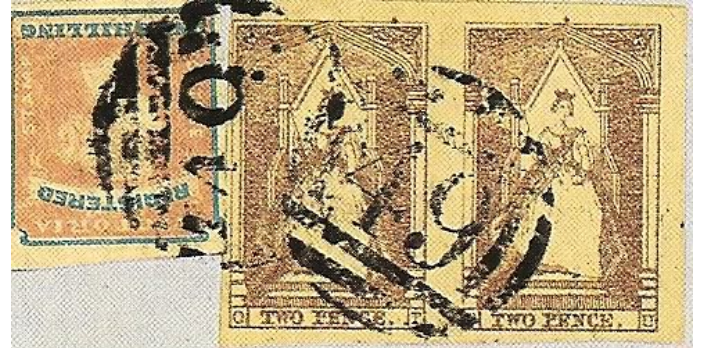
When Mr. Challen came to the job the township of Heathcote had a population of around 1,500. The town could boast a circulating library of over 2,000 volumes, and a 25-bed District Hospital. As well as the gold-mines, 3 flour mills and 2 breweries offered employment; there were 5 churches, a theatre, a racecourse, 11 pubs, schools and a police camp. The Court House hosted general and petty sessions, and was on the County Court circuit. The Mclvor News had been replaced by the Mclvor Times.

Mr. Challen was postmaster until his transfer in October 1886, when Mr. M. Glenton took over for 3 years. Mr. H. Halliday took the job in February 1890, but moved on in March 1891 when John Sandy got the position.

When Mr. Sandy became postmaster, Heathcote was supplying huge amounts of timber to Bendigo, to line mine shafts and feed the steam engines. Heathcote was also a major supplier of fruit and vegetables to the city. The railway link to Bendigo, which had opened in 1888, continued until 1958.

If I'm correct, Richard Banks was sent Mclvor's first obliterator – Barred Oval 64, which has an R-rating – and he would have been responsible for this strike;

He was definitely postmaster when the Barred Numerals were allocated. Heathcote got number 49, and there were 4 issues. The first (A2) has an R-rating;



The other 3 issues are unrated.

The second issue was sent during Alfred Sutton's time, about 1872. It is a non-duplex with large numerals and no side bars.

The first duplex was also received by Sutton, about 1874.

The second duplex, issued sometime between 1889 and 1891, differs from the first by having the numerals more widely spaced and the head of the '9' is smaller than in the first duplex. Known in blue ink, it is common on Kangaroo and KGV stamps.

I haven't got a date on the construction of the Heathcote Post and Telegraph Office, but I believe this image comes from about 1890;



the titles which held the (unfinished) flour mill, naming it Mill Park; and the grazing land was purchased by James (John) Millar Brock about June 1847. Brock called his property "Janefield", which I believe was named after an area in Scotland near Inverness. The population in the area was predominantly Scottish, and the first school in the area was operated by the Free Church of Scotland from 1849.

George Coulstock's idea of an Inn had been realized not long after his death. The 'Plough Inn' had been established on the land Brock bought, on the Plenty road (ok, track) which led north, through Morang Parish and following the Plenty River before winding back to the west and picking up the Sydney road.

The Plough Inn became the entertainment centre for the district. In September 1848, subscriptions were opened for pigeon shooting-matches, and there were also ploughing competitions for both horses and bullocks, and Mr. Butler, the lessee of the Plough Inn, put on a free lunch. Over the next 30-40 years, the Janefield Farm would have to have been the most ploughed farm around Melbourne, because what started as a friendly local competition went on to become serious business, with the site being the venue for competition for various agricultural shows.

As you can imagine, a blacksmith's forge didn't take long to join the fun. In 1853 a 10-year lease on the "Wheelwright and Blacksmith's Shop, with stock tools and goodwill, situated on the River Plenty..." was offered by the then-lessee of the Plough Inn; Mr. Moses Kavanagh, who was the first postmaster of the Janefield Post Office.

All the mails for the area around Darebin Creek and the Plenty River went through Mr. Kavanagh's little office in his pub, but don't get too excited; that isn't saying much, as the total population of the area was small, and continued to remain so for the life of the Janefield post office.

The Plenty road saw lots of traffic from the end of 1853 when Melbourne's first water storage dam, the Yan Yean Reservoir, began construction. Within a couple of years, James Brock had donated a couple of acres for a church and a proper school, to replace the slab hut with earthen floor which had been used for the past few years. Not long after this he relocated to his station 'Bullanda Vale' near Gisborne (which he had held since the mid-1840s), and a relative, Henry Brock, took over Janefield Farm.

In 1857 John Peacock, teacher at the Janefield denominational school, was in charge of the post office. At that time the post office was across the road from the Plough Inn. I have been unable to source a contemporary picture of the village, and I'm unsure if the office was housed in the school or in Mr. Peacock's private residence, on a small holding he leased on

Janefield farm.

During the next 10 years, the Plenty Road was improved, and a toll-gate and residence was placed in Janefield. The area was still predominantly rural, with dairying and market gardens the main businesses.

Janefield remained a backwater. Bypassed by the railways and largely ignored by the politicians, the small community enjoyed a peaceful lifestyle. John Peacock's brother-in-law, William Perkins, took charge of the Plough Inn in 1872, and in 1875, after the death of Henry Brock, the government purchased a few acres from his estate for the establishment of a State School – Janefield No. 1915 – which had an average attendance of 34 students after it opened in July 1877.

The 1057 acre farm known as Janefield was sold to developers on 30th June 1888. It may be coincidence, but that was the day the Janefield Post Office closed.

Janefield was allocated Barred Oval 66. As you have probably gathered it didn't get a lot of use, and has a 4R-rating.

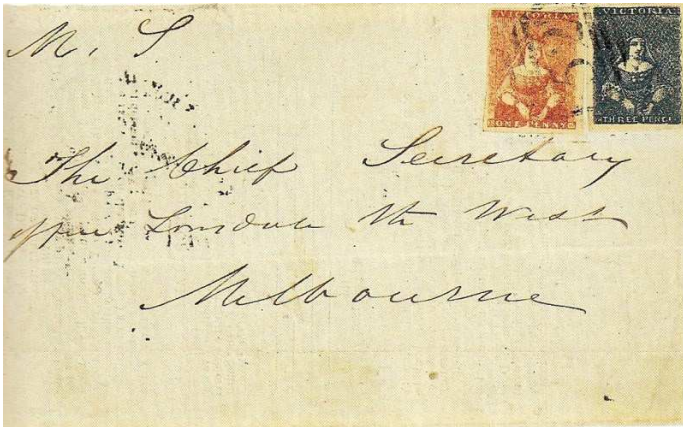
Below is an image of Janefield's 'Crowned Oval';



Janefield's single issue of its Barred Numeral 52 was used sparingly (it also has a 4R-rating).



Below is an image of what is believed to be the only intact cover from the Janefield post office;



The name Janefield lived on. In 1920 a farm for tuberculosis patients – the ‘Janefield Sanatorium’ – opened, operated by the Red Cross, and continued until 1933. Four years later the establishment reopened. Labeled with the charming name of “Janefield Colony for Mental Defectives (children)” and in 1962 relabeled as the Janefield Training Centre, the Government-run “Mental Health” institution operated until 1996.

PLENTY (Whittlesea)

Post Office opened 1st September 1853

Name changed to **WHITTLESEA** January 1864

The area around Whittlesea was under European occupation from at least 1837, when George Sherwin took up a squatting run in the vicinity. Within the next couple of years the district was surveyed and a town reserve was set aside under the name of ‘Whittlesea’, a corruption of Whittlesey – the township in Cambridgeshire, England.

The surveyor, Mr. Mason, also set out the line for the original Plenty Road. In the early days of the track the conditions left a bit to be desired, as documented by one of the early Victorian pioneers in 1843. Alexander McLean Hunter had been visiting his brother John who had a run on the Upper Plenty, and, in a letter to his mother, back in Scotland, dated 24th August 1843, described his return to Melbourne;

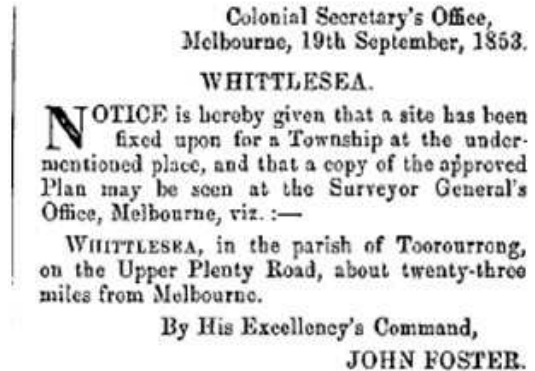
“Rode into town this morning, up to my hocks all the way....never saw such a road”.

Less than 10 years later, our friend William Howitt had this to say about one portion of the track (between Janefield and Morang) of about 5 miles, which took him and his companions all day to cover. This entry in his diary is dated 28th October, 1852;

“This day’s journey was the most terrible that we had yet had. No sooner out of a bog than we were bouncing over these round great stones, which, hard as iron, protruded from the earth thick as plums in a pudding. Mile after mile we bumped along over these horrible stones, two of us holding each a horse and the third driving.”

Within 3 months of Howitt’s experience with the track, the district had been targeted as one of the three possible locations for a reservoir for the water supply for

Melbourne. There was debate over which of the three sites would be most suitable, but by August 1853 it was all over bar the shouting. The Yan Yean site had been chosen and the sensible thing to do was to put a town on the ground.



Three days after the above notice appeared in the Government Gazette, land sales were available in the township. The “Plenty” (or, “Upper Plenty”, as opposed to the Janefield) Post Office had been opened at the beginning of the month.

I have been unable to conclusively locate the first location of the Plenty Post Office. My gut-feeling is that it could have been at the ‘Bridge Inn’, south of the site of the reservoir, but I have no evidence to support this theory.

The descriptions, above, of the Plenty Road give some indication of the difficulties experienced by early travellers on the track. There are accounts of travelers going cross-country to avoid the road altogether!

Roadworks had commenced by the end of the year (it had to be presentable enough for Joe LaTrobe to come up for the official opening of the construction), but for the first couple of years it was a 5 hour trip for the mails to, and from, the Melbourne G.P.O. (And that was “twice weekly, on horse-back”!)

Apparently for a short time in 1854 there were no mail

deliveries to the area. In August a notice appeared in the Argus advising that all mails to the 'Plenty' "*will be forwarded to the Post Office.....being the nearest and most convenient for the accomodation of the residents....*", i.e. Janefield.

In October 1854 the Post Office was definitely in the township. Mr. David Johnston, in a 'Wanted' advertisement in the Argus dated 26th October, called for "**a Shingler by the Square or the Day. Apply to David Johnston, Upper Plenty, near the post office, Whittlesea.**"

At this time the township, such as it was, was on Plenty Road. George Forbes was granted his license for the original Whittlesea Hotel in April 1855, and later in the year a Church of England school for the local kids was built. It cost about £1,000, most of which had been raised by local contribution (£250 had been granted by the Denominational School Board in June 1855), and was quite a step up from the original (often open-air) arrangements.

By the time the school had opened, a blacksmith was operating in town. I found it somewhat amusing to discover that a Service Station now occupies the site. Other shops and hotels were starting to make their appearance, and within a decade Mr. William Henry Lockwood had turned up as well. By then, the amount of mail for the area had increased, and a two-horse cart was being used.

Mr. Lockwood built a general store in Church Street, Whittlesea; and, from January 1864 until about 1920, members of the Lockwood family operated the **Whittlesea** Post Office, first in the general store, and then, from 1908, in a building on the corner of Church and Walnut streets.

The building which now houses the post office was built in 1920 by John (Jack) Gibbs, who was postmaster for many years. This image comes from about 1990;



A strike of the crowned oval datestamp for the 'Plenty' post office. At the time this was struck, the post office was somewhere on Plenty Road;



Originally issued with Barred Oval 65, the post office would not have seen a lot of mail. It has a 4R-rating.

The Misses Martha and Wilhelmina Lockwood operated the post office which their father built. Many of the strikes of the Barred Numeral 68, which has an SS rating, would have come from their hands.



WARRINGAL (Heidleberg)

Post Office opened 19th October 1853

Renamed **HEIDELBERG** 12th August 1865

Although the township was originally named Warringal, when it was surveyed in late 1839 and gazetted on 1st February 1840, the area was already being referred to as Heidelberg. In 1837, a relative of one of the earliest settlers, Captain Sylvester John Brown (father of Tom, who adopted the pseudonym "Rolf Boldrewood"), made a comment about the likeness to the countryside around Heidelberg in Germany.

Another early resident (a bloke we've met before), Joe Hawdon, set up camp in 1839. Six years after moving into the area, he commissioned architect John Gill to come up with a nice design for a house, and Joe and his family lived in "Banyule Homestead" until he sold up in 1863 and migrated to New Zealand.

Apart from his grazing activities Joe was on the original Heidelberg Road Trust; a Trustee of the Port Phillip Savings Bank; involved with the establishment of St John's Anglican Church, and the Heidelberg Primary School; and he was also a Magistrate. In July 1849 Joe was on the District Licensing Bench which was supposed to hold a re-hearing of 3 Public House license applications, and a few transfers; but, because not all the Magistrates turned up, no business was done.

One of those three, Heidelberg's 'Old England Hotel' was originally built in 1848, but the owner, Henry Baker, encountered some stiff opposition to his first application for a license from the "Heidelberg Aristocracy", which came in for some fierce criticism over its double standards. He was operating his establishment as a General Store in September 1849 when a petition with over 70 signatures was submitted to the Bench, asking for a review of Henry's case. Henry had some powerful friends on that list, and at a special sitting in December 1849, he got his license.

The village of Warringal (Heidelberg) was about 6 miles from the Melbourne G.P.O., and the road, by 1842, had had over £500 of local money spent on it – courtesy of the original Heidelberg Road Trust, established in 1841 – and then the Government paid wages to unemployed labourers for the removal of stumps and stones, in the latter part of 1842.

The problem was, there was no regular maintenance so within a few years the track had deteriorated so badly that levies were imposed on the land-owners, and a road toll was established. By then the first Church had been built; which was used by both the Presbyterian and Anglican communities until 1851 when St. John's Anglican Church was completed, and a private cemetery was established. Land had been set aside for a school in

1850, but it took a few years to get up and running.

This is a section of Thomas Ham's 1853 map of Melbourne and surrounding suburbs, showing what, at that time, was the toll-road past Warringal Village;



I have reason to believe Henry Baker was the first Warringal postmaster, although I can't prove it. His hotel was a newsagency outlet in 1853, and in October, when the post office opened, Henry was advertising for extra staff for the hotel.

In August 1854, at the age of 46, Henry Baker died and the 'Old England Hotel' passed into other hands. The post office was under the charge of Edward Morey by then, and Morey was a baker on Heidelberg Road. (He'd been charged, but acquitted, of selling underweight bread the year before.)

Morey held the office of postmaster until 1860, during which time he was active in local politics, and in 1859 he was appointed as Heidelberg's Registrar for Marriages.

Next cab off the rank was Robert Fuge, who took over from Morey as postmaster. Robert was a Chemist, and operated the Post Office from his weatherboard shop and home on the corner of Burgundy and Cape streets. It was during his tenure that the name of the office was changed from Warringal to Heidelberg. He was on the Board of Education, and a poultry fancier. After his death in May 1867, his wife, Emma, took over as Postmistress of Heidelberg, but she resigned in May 1868, and spent the next few months trying to get her salary from the Government.

George Williams became postmaster after Emma Fuge, and he took on some of her other duties as well, becoming Deputy Registrar of Births and Deaths, and later taking on the role of Electoral Registrar.

Heidelberg was proclaimed a shire in 1871, and by 1878 telegraph facilities were available to the 300-odd residents. Still predominantly a rural area, there were enough dairy farms to support a cheese and condensed milk factory, and the few grain farmers had their own flour mill. There was also a number of market gardens, orchards, and vineyards, and even tobacco growers in the district.

Into this idyllic rural setting came a handful of painters; and 'Heidelberg' is now synonymous with the likes of McCubbin, Roberts, Streeton, and Conder. Another institution synonymous with the area is the Austin Hospital.

Originally established as a hospital for "Incurable Invalids", more than six acres was set aside in October 1881 by the Government as part of a deal with Elizabeth Austin, widow of Tom (of Winchelsea rabbit fame), who had pledged £6,000 to set up an establishment for "incurable cancer, tuberculosis or paralysis patients", who were often excluded from other public hospitals. The Hospital opened in 1882.

In 1883, Heidelberg was described as a "pretty municipal and postal village with a population of 457", and it was a recommended destination for wedding parties. The township was still rural enough for fox-hunting clubs to enjoy their 'stirrup' from outside the "Old England" before setting off for the day; it wasn't until May 1888 that the railway came to town to frighten the horses.

This image of the Heidelberg Post Office comes from about this time;



By then, Annie Watts was postmistress, and (to the best of my knowledge) she remained in charge until 1910,

when Miss Catherine Maguire took charge. Meet Miss Maguire,



When the Warringal Post Office was first established, it received Barred Oval 69, which has a 4R-rating.

Still as Warringal, Edward Morey received Barred Numeral 83, which is unrated. There was only the one A2 issue, which was in use right through.



Miss Maguire wouldn't have used the barred numeral stamp, as by 1899 the Heidelberg c.d.s. was in use.

I'm sure this is the LAST post office for 1853 🙄🙄🙄

By the end of 1853...

By the end of 1853, according to the official reports, there were 54 post offices operating throughout Victoria, and the department employed 97 staff in the official offices which, by my reckoning, accounted for about 16. The rest of the (non-departmental) post offices were housed in general stores, pubs, other business premises, as well as schools and private homes.

Between all of them, they had moved over 2 million letters and more than 1 ½ million newspapers throughout the colony; generating a revenue of £25,733.12.11. On paper that looked rather good, but the amount of funding for expenses for the department, which came out of consolidated revenue, was a staggering £73,040.14.4.

The expenses included building works for several post offices, a much-needed increase in wages for the postal staff, and covered the rising costs of delivering the mails by the mail contractors. There was also Victoria's contribution to the contract with the shipping company – "Peninsular and Oriental Company" – for a branch mail service between Singapore and Sydney, via Batavia, King George's Sound, Adelaide and Melbourne, which connected Melbourne with "the monthly mail service between England and India and China." (More on that later. 😊)

The population of the Colony was officially recorded as 198,496 by the end of the year, but there are varying estimates which put the figure as high as 226,000. The immigration records show over 92,000 people arrived in Port Phillip during 1853, and while the majority stayed in Victoria, it's interesting to learn that several thousand used Victoria as an entry point, and then moved on to South Australia and N.S.W.

There had been over 2,600 vessels arrive in Port Phillip during the year, and at the end of 1853 there were nearly 470 vessels lying in port; the majority in Hobson's Bay and on the Yarra, and over 50 down at Geelong. This number doesn't include those hulks being used as Penal Hulks, Immigration Depots, and storage hulks – including one for gunpowder! 😲

While the majority of migrants were still coming from Great Britain; Americans, Germans, Chinese, Indians, and New Zealanders were also arriving. Here is probably a good time to mention four young men from America who turned up in Melbourne between May and June 1853.

John Peck, James Swanton, and John Lamber arrived in June aboard the 'Eagle', which had left New York in February, and soon caught up with a mate of theirs

named Freeman Cobb, who had arrived in early May (possibly on the 'Glance', which had left New York on 29th December 1852).

"The Boys" started a cartage venture between Sandridge and Melbourne in July 1853, but (to quote John Peck), "The first winter was so wet, and the roads so boggy the wagons sank continually to the hubs, and had to be dragged through on their floors", so they decided to turn to coaching. From 1854 on, Cobb & Co figure constantly in the history of the colony's mail delivery service.

On 8th January 1853, the Victorian Police Force was born. William Henry Fancourt Mitchell was appointed as the first Chief Commissioner of Police on 1st January 1853, and his first orders, from LaTrobe, were to stamp out bush-ranging.

To help with that little job, Mitchell managed to build up the force from 875 men at the start of the year to over 2000 by the end of 1853, with the help of his assistant Charles McMahon. Between them, they also organized all the various police groups in the colony - no easy task. Before 1853 there were; the City Police in Melbourne, the Geelong Police, the Water Police, the Mounted Police, the Rural Bench Constabulary, and in the last couple of years the Gold Fields Police, and the Gold Escort had been established. And all these groups had worked independently.

Mitchell and McMahon had to make them all part of one cohesive unit. All of this work was done from the newly-proclaimed Police Depot in Richmond. The depot was the recruiting office, and also housed a Police Prison, and Police Hospital.

Also in January 1853, the Bank of Victoria opened its doors for the first time, and Australia's first Free Lending Library opened in Melbourne July. (Thanks, Mr. Redmond Barry!)

And, lastly, a couple of other events I think worth mentioning. In May, the "SS *Monumental City*", which was the first screw-powered Steamer to cross the Pacific, left Sydney on the 5th with 155 passengers. 10 days later she was wrecked near Gabo Island with a loss of 33 lives.

In August, the 1,000 ton "*Madagascar*" left Melbourne on her return voyage to London, carrying about 100 passengers and 70,000 oz. of gold. She was never seen again.

And finally, overseas; in October Russian forces occupied the Turkish States of Moldavia and Walachia. This set off a chain of conflicts which culminated in the Crimean War, and had a direct impact on communications to and from this colony

Concerning International Mails Arriving in the Colony of Victoria

Prior to 1839, the Port Phillip district's ship mails from and to England went via Sydney and Van Diemen's Land, i.e. Hobart and Launceston. During these early days, the majority of the vessels were coming from Launceston, and one in particular – "**Henry**" – appears in the shipping lists for Melbourne on over 60 separate visits to Port Phillip between May 1836 and December 1839.

In contrast, during the same period, the number of visits direct from Sydney was less than 80 in total (not counting the 3 Government vessels – "*Rattlesnake*", "*Prince George*", and "*Ranger*" – and ignoring the "**Beagle**" on her survey trips), and the most visits made by one vessel was the schooner "**Kate**", who made 8 trips.

In his book "**The Postal History of the Port Phillip District, 1835-1851**", Bill Purves devotes an entire chapter to the names of the vessels which carried the mail between Port Phillip district and Great Britain, and especially between the other colonies. He emphasises that the list of names is "*only made of ships....which actually appear on covers in (his) collection*", and is by no means complete.

In that list "*Henry*" is mentioned, on an outward cover to Launceston dated 20th April 1839. Bill also mentions a cover dated 27th March 1839 as 'per "*Taurus*", also outward to Launceston; but in **Marten A. Syme's** excellent work – "**Shipping Arrivals and Departures, Victorian Ports**" – a 2-volume compendium of shipping traffic in Victorian waters from 1798 to 1855, I can find no mention of "*Taurus*". (Perhaps someone can enlighten me on this particular vessel?)

Now, here's the thing. Given that the average length of time for a vessel to come directly from the U.K. was somewhere between 4 and 5 months (during 1839 there were 13 such vessels to call into Melbourne; 7 from Scotland, 4 from London, and one each from Liverpool and Plymouth), you can imagine how stale your news from home was going to be! Particularly if it had to go via Sydney and V.D.L. first!!

In the "**Report on the Post Office Department, Victoria**" dated 30th September 1862 there is a reference on page 6 to the fact that **ship mails direct from the United Kingdom** were first received in 1839.

Of the 13 vessels from the U.K. into Port Phillip in 1839, only 8 came direct; 3 from Leith (near Edinburgh, Scotland), "*Midlothian*", "*Caledonia*", and "*St. Mungo*"; 2 from Greenock (near Glasgow, Scotland), "*Ariadne*", and "*David Clark(e)*"; 2 from London, "*Magnet*", and "*Westminster*"; and the "*William Metcalfe*" from Plymouth

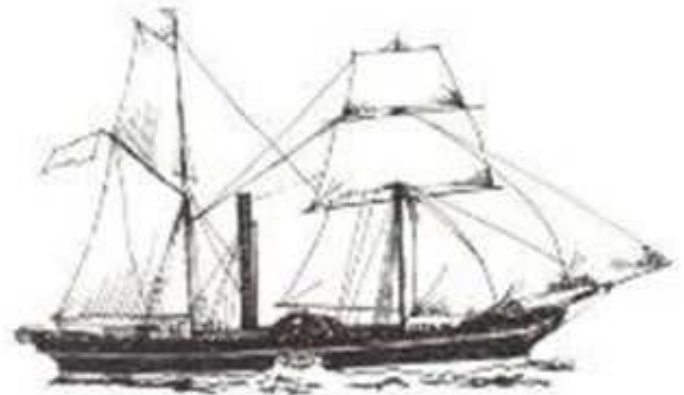
(papa Liardet [see **Sandridge**] brought his family out on this one).

All carried passengers, and the tonnage of these vessels (particularly those from Leith) beggar belief that they got here at all!

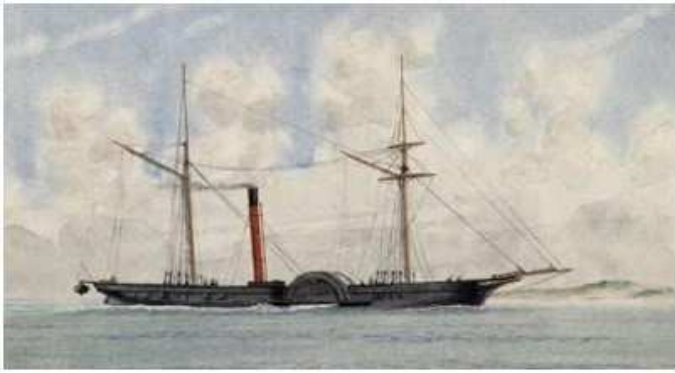
Into the picture, let's enter a gentleman called **Thomas Fletcher Waghorn**. He figured out there was a quicker route between England and India in the late 1830's, by developing a route for mail (and passengers) which went overland from Cairo to Suez, at the top of the Red Sea.

Waghorn's 'overland' route took a little while to gain currency, but, given that it shaved a mere 10,000 nautical miles (over 2 months) off the trip to India alone, it's easy to understand that by 1837 the "Suez 'Overland' route" was beginning to be looked on quite favourably.

During the early 1840s, as in the '30s, most, but not all, of the mails and newspapers bound for Port Phillip arrived from the U.K. courtesy of merchant ships, or transports, to Sydney – or Hobart. Steam power had been developing for several years, and the first paddle-steamer to work in Australian waters, the "**Clonmel**", entered service in December 1840 – on what was supposed to be the beginning of a regular mail-run between Sydney, Melbourne, and Launceston. She managed the first round, but came to grief at Port Albert in January 1841;



In June 1841, the paddle-steamer "**Aphrasia**" came down from Sydney, and started a twice-weekly mail service to Geelong in July. The "**Aphrasia**" continued to work in Port Phillip bay until the early 1860s, when she was sent to New Zealand. She was known for getting into trouble; in the course of her career, she was damaged by fire while tied up in Melbourne in 1848; ran ashore near Point Henry in 1850; grounded at Geelong 8 months later; involved with a collision with another steamer on the Yarra in 1852; and stranded at Geelong less than a fortnight after that. She also assisted at least two other vessels in trouble over the years, before being laid on the N.Z.-Sydney run. She was totally wrecked in September 1864 after being run ashore because she sprang a leak;



After the little problem with the "Clonmel", reliable packet services between the colonies had to wait for several months until the "**Corsair**" turned up. She operated mainly between Launceston and Melbourne, but wasn't really a viable proposition as she spent more time under repairs than in work for the first few months of her contract.

In 1842 a new packet service was contracted to Benjamin Boyd, which, I understand, was worth £200 for every trip, between Sydney and Melbourne, which carried mail. His vessel, the "**Sea Horse**", had originally come out to Hobart from London in April 1841. She was fitted out as a steamer and made the trip to Sydney in 5 days, arriving on 1st June 1841. The "**Sea Horse**" went into her first service in late July, but that only lasted until April 1842 because of lack of patronage.



Boyd's mail contract began in August 1842, and continued until June 1843 when the "**Sea Horse**" suffered damage after running aground near George Town in Tasmania. She made the run to Sydney in 73 hours after being refloated, but the damage to her hull and engines were severe. She ended up being sold as a "wharf hulk" in 1849, and Benjamin Boyd shot through after all his other ventures failed as well.

About the same time the "**Sea Horse**" was in operation, another paddle steamer was also starting work along the eastern sea-board. Three iron ships – the "Rose", the "Thistle" and the "**Shamrock**" – had been built on the Thames, England, in 1840 specifically for the Australian

coastal trade. The 'Hunter River Steam Navigation Co.'" had started running the "**Shamrock**" on the Hunter River before operating her between Sydney and Moreton Bay.

By September 1842 she was providing serious competition for the "**Sea Horse**" on the southern run, and after the demise of the latter, the "**Shamrock**" acquired the mail contract between Sydney, Melbourne, and Van Diemen's Land.



The "**Shamrock**" was a welcome and much-loved vessel in Port Phillip Bay. In January 1852 she completed her one hundredth round voyage between Sydney and Melbourne, by which time she had set the standard for reliability and regularity. In late 1857 the "**Shamrock**" was sent to Shanghai and sold. She was lost in the China Sea in March 1860.

In 1844 the firm of H. & C. Toulmin secured a contract with the British Admiralty for a monthly sailing packet, from Gravesend to Sydney, via the Cape of Good Hope. These took, on average, between 4 to 5 months to reach Sydney, so Port Phillip was no better off than before. In fact, worse off because the vessels sailed right past our front door on their way through to Sydney.

While this contract was in force, the 'Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company' was consolidating its position on the stage. Originally established in 1837 to carry the Royal Mails from England to the Peninsular ports of Vigo, Oporto, Lisbon, Cadiz and Gibraltar, within several years P & O won the contract to carry the mails from Egypt to Madras, Ceylon, Calcutta, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Shanghai. This later contract required the mails to be delivered from Suez to Hong Kong within 35 days.

Thomas Waghorn's dream was becoming reality, but he never benefitted from it. The three years of hard work he had put in to arrange the 'overland' route bore fruit, but he died in 1850.

Throughout the mid-1840s Port Phillip residents had been agitating for a direct mail to and from England. The

papers of the day were scathing of the times taken for the mails, and were quick to pounce on instances of mailbags being forgotten (in Sydney, the “**Medusa**” was a regular culprit), and a petition was got up for the English Mails to be dropped off at Queenscliff as the vessels went past.

LaTrobe worked hard for Port Phillip throughout 1846 in his attempts to get some official recognition of the problem. But Governor Gipps, by then, was a very sick man and wasn't in the mood. Below is the complete transcript of one reply to LaTrobe's representations;

TO; His Honor the Superintendent of Port Phillip

**Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, July 1, 1846.**

**Sir – I am directed by the Governor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th ult., on the subject of the Port Phillip mails to and from London, and to state to your Honor that his Excellency is not aware of any thing to prevent the transmission of mails from Melbourne to England by private ships, should parties prefer that conveyance to one by the Sydney packets. Neither does his Excellency imagine that the Post-office authorities in England will object to send mails by private ships from England to Port Phillip direct, on a sufficient representation being made to her Majesty's Government that such is the deliberate wish of the inhabitants of the District, or of a majority of them. But it seems to his Excellency that some more formal manner of ascertaining the wishes of the inhabitants should, if possible, be adopted than any that appears to have been as yet resorted to. I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
(For the Colonial Secretary,)
W. ELYARD, JUN.**

In November 1847, Melbourne got the news that the Postmaster General in England had given an official sanction to the carriage of mails from the U.K. to Port Adelaide and Port Phillip (and return) by private ship (unless specially addressed to go by the Sydney packets). The postage chargeable was 8d for each letter not exceeding half an ounce in weight, and 1d for each newspaper.

The official packet service of H & C Toulmin continued through to 1852, when P & O's “**Chusan**” arrived in Sydney with the first mails by the overland route. A month before, in June 1852, the British government had signed a contract with the Australian Royal Mail Steam Navigation Company (at a cost of £26,000 p/a) to transport the mails from Southampton to Sydney, via St. Vincent, the Cape, King George's Sound, Adelaide, and Melbourne. This was a bi-monthly contract, but went belly-up when A.R.M. couldn't keep to schedule.

The “**Australian**” arrived in September after 92 days;

then the “**Sydney**” turned up in November after 97 days; the “**Melbourne**” took 113 days, getting here in February 1853; and the “**Adelaide**” got here in May and was still here a month later.

For a few glorious months everyone thought their Christmases had come at once. Instead of waiting months for news from 'home', they were now getting news almost weekly.

The Crimean War put a stop to the “**Chusan**”, as the overland route was unsafe, and she was needed elsewhere. A.R.M. had folded, and it took a few months before another contractor could be found. Finally, in late 1853, or early '54, the General Screw Steam Shipping Company began a bi-monthly mail service between Southampton and Australia.

“**Croesus**” – 89 days, “**Bosphorus**” – 86 days, “**Queen of the South**” – 78 days, “**Lady Jocelyn**” – 67 days, “**Calcutta**” – 72 days, “**Argo**” – 63 days.

Only the “**Argo**” made the trip within the stipulated 65 days, and the G.S.S.S.C. was shown the door.

In the latter stages of 1854 the mail service between Great Britain and Victoria was handed to two firms; the 'Black Ball' and 'White Star' lines. The era of the Clipper Ships had begun.

Just as an addendum to the above post, below is an image of the **Chusan**, apparently set in Sydney just after she arrived. The tag reads "anchored opposite Campbells stores".



The 'Yankee' Clippers took their name from the fact they could sail “at a clipping pace”; where the traditional British shipping fleet – which was “notoriously inefficient” – took between 130-140 days (on average) to reach Australia, the Clippers consistently halved that time.

Another reason for their speed was a tendency on the Master's part to take risks. When the Black Ball Line first used “Marco Polo” on an Australian run in 1852, her

captain – James Nicol “Bully” Forbes – was the first to make the round trip in under 6 months. The minor details of how he did that, which included 51 deaths (not to mention the incredible discomfort of the surviving passengers), can be seen in the chart below. Forbes took advantage of the winds down in the ‘Furious Fifties’ – the ice zone.



Where the “Marco Polo” went,



others soon followed, and even without going as far south as Forbes had done, the Clippers could make a faster passage than the old route. Way back in this thread, on the first page (I think), Glen posted a cover ‘per “Marco Polo” that sold at a New York auction for A\$20,000. The description is as follows: “Marco Polo, two Victoria 1850 3d Light blue, Ty. II (#3a, S.G. #7), tied to J. Valentine allover Ocean Penny Postage propaganda cover to London endorsed “By Ship Marco Polo,” “red oval “Ship Letter Melbourne/Oc 9, 1852” backstamp and red London 7 December, 1852 arrival backstamp, 80 days in transit, small bit of cover edge missing at top right not noted on the certificate, otherwise very fine; 1974 BPA certificate; ex-Knapp and Risvold.”



(credit: admin)

The “Clipper Route” became established, and very soon it became normal to expect a voyage of less than 90 days from England to Victoria for the mails.

The White Star Line chartered “Red Jacket”, which made her first run from Liverpool, on 4th May 1854, to Melbourne in 67 days and 13 hours. James Baines of the Black Ball Line fired back immediately with “Lightning”, which left Liverpool on 14th May 1854, and took 77 days. Her return trip to Liverpool took less than 65 days – nearly a fortnight faster than “Red Jacket”. Coincidentally, “Bully” Forbes captained “Lightning” on this run.

These two ladies set the tone for the competition between the two companies for years to come.



RED JACKET in the ice off Cape Horn



LIGHTNING

“Blue Jacket”, “White Star”, “Red Jacket”, “Ellen”, “Ben Nevis”, “Emma”, “Mermaid” and “Iowa” were some of the ladies in the White Star stable, while the Black Ball Line operated ships such as “Marco Polo” and “Lightning”, already mentioned, and “Hero”, “Ocean Chief”, “El Dorado” “James Baines”, “Sirocco”, and the ill-fated “Shomberg”.

The ‘Packet Mails’ could be quite large – up to 100 tons in weight, although the average appears to have been around 40-50 tons. The London mails were held in boxes about 2 feet long by 18 inches wide by 8 inches tall, “securely nailed and covered in canvas, having a strong card board tacked upon it containing the address”. Inside were the letters tied up in bundles of 50, and each box contained a list showing the number of letters, which had to be checked and counted against the list.

Apart from the boxes there were also the leather and/or canvas bags which used the same system; and then there were the “loose bags”, which had no manifest and were a right-royal pain in the butt (the official term was “a great inconvenience”).

And then you had the Newspaper Bags.

Although these two shipping lines held the ‘mail packet’ contracts for approximately 5 years, they were not the only ships on the seas. There was also a contract with the European and Australian Royal Mail Company, which started in January 1857, for mails between Southampton and Sydney. For £185,000 per year, all the company had to do was ensure the mails were delivered within 1296 hours of departure. Yeah, right.

During the year of 1857;

“Columbian” - 14 days overdue in January, on time in May, 7 days overdue in September.

“Simla” – 34 days overdue in February, 6 days overdue in March, on time in July, 33 days overdue in October, 2 days overdue in November.

“European” – 1 day overdue in April, 7 days overdue in

August.

“Emeu” – 8 days overdue in June.

“Victoria” – 15 days overdue in December.

Surprise, surprise. The company folded.

In February 1859, P & O came back under a new mail contract and (with a few tweaks to the system) remained the major player in the Ship Mails after that date.

There is one other lady I would like to briefly talk about. SS “Great Britain” arrived in Melbourne for the first time in November 1852. At the time she was the largest ship afloat and about 4,000 people paid one shilling each to go on board and take a look around. For nearly 30 years she maintained her reputation as a reliable and safe emigrant ship on the England-Australia route.



For many years her Master was John Gray, a well-liked and well-respected commander.

“In 1854 she entered The Heads carrying many passengers suffering from smallpox. Among the victims was Captain Gray’s brother. After more than a month’s detention at the Quarantine Station [at Point Nepean] she was released and coming up the Bay she fired her guns to celebrate the release from quarantine. The Russian scare was high, and a rumour spread like wildfire that Russian ships were in the Bay. Men, women and children were soon flying over Prince’s Bridge spreading the news as the city prepared to do battle with the enemy. For years after, this warlike incident was known as ‘The Battle of Sandridge’.

Captain Gray and the pilot were cautioned to be more careful in future.”

(from “An Era at Port Phillip Heads, 1830-1900”, by Jack Loney)

With all the talk of the ships themselves, I can’t leave this little aside on the ‘Ship Mails’ without recognizing the work done by the pilots in getting these ladies into Port Phillip Bay. Although the Bay itself has a surface area of nearly 2,000 square kilometres, the navigable entrance is only 1,200 METERS wide. Throughout Victoria’s European history, the pilots who assist the vessels through The Heads have played a vital role.

For anyone interested in investigating this topic further,

I'm including a couple of links;

<http://www.eraoftheclipperships.com/page44web7.html>
<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/...ter-7.html>
http://www.titanic-whitestarships.com/History_WSL.htm
<http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/lines/blackball.htm>

And here's one for anybody who has a cover 'per "White Star" 😊

<http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/ar...white+star>

Official Post Office List as of October 1853

Before I start on the post offices which opened in 1854, let's have a look at what officialdom had to say about postal services in the Colony back in October 1853;

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 25th October, 1853.

HIS Excellency the Lieutenant Governor is pleased to direct the publication of the following notice, for general information.

By His Excellency's Command,
JOHN FOSTER.

General Post Office,
Melbourne, 25th October, 1853.

Notice is hereby given, that in order to obviate the great difficulty felt both by the public in directing, and in this Office in distributing, letters for the country districts, in consequence of the altered nomenclature of the positions of many of the Post Offices in Victoria, it is proposed from the 1st January next, to adopt the most recent names for each. A list of the present Offices, with their intended future names, is therefore published below, and it is requested that letters be in future addressed accordingly.

POST OFFICES.

<i>Present Names.</i>	<i>Future Names.</i>
Alberton	Alberton
Broken River	Benalla
Bacchus Marsh	Bacchus Marsh
Barwon	Winchelsea
Bendigo	Sandhurst
Buninyong	Buninyong
Ballaarat	Ballaarat
Burnbank	Lexton
Border Post	Lindsay
Broadford	Broadford
Brighton	Brighton
Bulla Bulla	Bulla
Carisbrook	Carisbrook
Campaspe	Campaspe
Colac	Colac
Collingwood	Collingwood
Chepstow	Chepstow
Crowlands	Crowlands
Cavendish	Cavendish
Dandenong	Dandenong
Elephant Bridge	Elephant Bridge
Forest Creek	Castlemaine
Flooding Creek	Sale
Fiery Creek	Streatham
Gisborne	Gisborne
Grange	Hamilton
Glenelg, Upper	Harrow
Glenelg	Casterton
Heathcote, McIvor	Heathcote

<i>Present Names.</i>	<i>Future Names.</i>
Horsham	Horsham
Hardy's Inn	Hardy's Inn
Kinlochewe	Donnybrook
Kilmore	Kilmore
Leigh	Shelford
Lake Wallace	Apsley
Longwood	Longwood
Maiden's Punt	Maiden's Punt
Mount Alexander	Lockwood
Mount Macedon	Kyneton
Mount Sturgeon	Dunkeld
Muston's Creek	Caramut
Ovens	Wangaratta
Port Fairy	Belfast
Portland	Portland
Pentridge	Pentridge
Prahran	Prahran
Richmond	Richmond
Spring Creek, Ovens	} Beechworth
Diggings	
Seymour	Seymour
Swan Hill	Swan Hill
Sandridge	Sandridge
St. Kilda	St. Kilda
Shortland's Bluff	Queenscliff
Timboon	Camperdown
Violet Town	Violet Town
Warrnambool	Warrnambool
Wimmera	Glenorely
	A. McCRAE, Chief Postmaster.

Yeah, I know. This probably has to be one of the best known post office lists from the 1850s. But, bear with me, folks, there's method in my madness.

Count the post offices. There are 57 on this list. And, that DOES NOT INCLUDE - Melbourne, Geelong, or the three which opened after 1st August; Janefield, Plenty, or Warringal. That makes 62 post offices. Now go back and have a look at the names.

We know some of these offices DID close on or before 1st January 1854, even if only briefly (think of Hardy's Inn). Now, let's have a look at a newspaper list published on 16th January 1854;

Suburban – daily; 9.30 am: Richmond, Hawthorne, Prahran, St. Kilda, Brighton. (5)

South Eastern Road – Tuesday, 1.30 pm: Dandenong, Sale, Alberton. (3)

Tuesday and Friday, 12 noon: Upper Plenty, Janefield.

(2)

Sydney Road – Tuesday and Friday, 1.30 pm:
Pentridge, Somerton, Kilmore, Heathcote. (4)
Tuesday, 1.30 pm: Campaspe, Maiden's Punt. (2)
Tuesday and Friday, 1.30 pm: Broadford, Seymour,
Longwood, Benalla, Wangaratta, Beechworth, Albury. (6
+ Albury)

Northern Road – Monday and Thursday, 6 pm: Bulla,
Gisborne, Kyneton. (3)
Monday, 6 pm: Carisbrook. (1)
Mondays and Thursdays, 6 pm: Elphinstone,
Castlemaine. (2)
Monday, 6 pm: Swan Hill, Hardy's Inn. (2)
Monday and Thursday, 5 pm: Mount Alexander,
Sandhurst. (2)

North Western Road – Tuesday and Friday, 1.30 pm:
Bacchus Marsh, Ballan, Ballaarat, Burn Bank or Lexton.
(4)
Tuesday, 1.30 pm: Crowlands, Glenorchy, Horsham. (3)
Daily, 3 pm: Geelong. (1)
Tuesday and Thursday, 3 pm: Buninyong. (1)

Western Road – Tuesday and Friday, 3 pm: Shelford. (1)
Friday, 3 pm: Chepstowe. (1)
Tuesday and Friday, 3 pm: Streatham, Wickliffe. (2)
Tuesday, 3 pm: Caramut. (1)
Tuesday and Friday, 3 pm: Dunkeld, Hamilton. (2)
Tuesday, 3 pm: Cavendish, Harrow, Apsley. (3)
Friday, 3 pm: Casterton, Lindsay. (2)
Tuesday and Friday, 3 pm: Portland, Elephant Bridge,
Belfast, Warrnambool, Winchelsea, Colac, Timboon. (7)

Queenscliff – same as Geelong.
Williamstown – daily per steamers.
Sandridge – daily as opportunities offer.

I count 64 post offices in this list (again, not including Melbourne). Of these, there are four offices we haven't met yet - Hawthorne, Somerton, Wickliffe, and Elphinstone.

I'm not showing the image of page 4 of the Melbourne Argus on 16th January, because the scan transfer of that page is very hard on the eyes. The above list is the transcript, but if you want to have a look at the page;

[http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/ar ... =Hawthorne](http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/ar...=Hawthorne)

The Post Office records state that there were 54 offices open on New Year's Eve 1853/New Year's Day 1854.

(Sometimes I wonder 🤔)

This is where things start to warm up a bit.

There were 33 new post offices opened in 1854.

And, just for fun, below is the names of those offices which officially opened on 1st January 1854. Note that some of them don't even show up on the "Argus" list more than a fortnight later 🙄

EUROA
HAWTHORNE
HEPBURN
SOMERTON/CAMPBELLFIELD
WOODFORD
YOWEN HILL

Let's have a look at these to begin with.

Bibliography

To date I've covered about 75-80 offices (who's counting 😊), and this is my last post for 2010.

I was intending to leave the bibliography of this thread until I had finished, but it is assuming rather alarming proportions now, so I'm going to start including some of the (terrifyingly) long list before it gets out of hand.

First, as many will already suspect, the volume "Numerical Cancellations of Victoria", and its author Hugh Freeman, who continues to supply most of the images of the cancellations here. His generosity to this thread is very much appreciated by me.

John Waghorn and Richard Breckon also deserve a big vote of thanks for their assistance.

The very helpful people at the Victorian State Library, Geelong Heritage Centre, and the Ballarat Library, have made my work easier, and continue to do so.

I have also drawn extensively on the following works;

James Bonwick –
"Port Phillip Settlement"
"Western Victoria: it's Geography, Geology, and Social Conditions: the Narrative of an Educational Tour in 1857"

William Howitt –
"Land, Labour and Gold" (2 volumes, and I note there is a digitized version on Google books, but I'm not sure if it is complete)

Marten Syme –
"Shipping Arrivals and Departures, Victorian Ports", in three volumes, beginning in 1798

Robyn Annears –
"Nothing but Gold" (an excellent and caustic view of the very early beginnings of Victoria's Gold Rushes)

Jack Loney –
Various of his published works, including "An Era at Port Phillip Heads", "The Schomberg Incident", Early Shipping in the Port of Geelong", "Warrnambool the Graveyard of Ships"

Plus many, many, more histories dealing with towns and districts throughout Victoria.

And, of course, the internet. Below are some of my favourite sites;

Government Gazettes, including N.S.W. and Port Phillip
<http://gazette.slv.vic.gov.au/>

digitized newspapers

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/home>

images
<http://www.pictureaustralia.org/apps/pictureaustralia/>

Thomas Ham's 1847 map "Australia Felix"
<http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview?pi=nla.map-rm949>

Bailliere's 1871-1872 guide to Postal Routes
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.map-rm3977>

Sands and McDougall 1884 map
<http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview?pi=nla.map-rm3865-sd&width=1200>

Maps of the Geological Surveys of Victoria 1862-1917
<http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview?pi=nla.map-rm2335>

Baker's Australian County atlas 1843-1846
<http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview?pi=nla.map-raa8>

W. S. Urquhart 1853 map
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.map-nk2456-134>

Australian Dictionary of Biography
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/>

To anyone who comes across this thread, I wish you all a safe and enjoyable silly season, and I'll be back in 2011.

Before I start on the post offices which opened in March 1854 (all 3 of them), I'd just like to respond to a couple of queries I've had.

Yes, most of the information is out there - all I have to do is: a) find it, b) collate it, and c) put it in some kind of order. 😊

Since I started this thread, both Hugh Freeman and John Waghorn, in particular, have come on board and been extremely generous with both their time and expertise in their respective fields. You have witnessed Hugh's generosity in almost every post; below is an example of what John has been helping me with - behind the scenes

CHARLTON (BN 86)		
originally opened 10.3.1854 as		
YOWEN HILL	Robert Hill Kinnear	1854-1861
	James Morrish (1st Nov. 1854 - 31st Mar.1856)	1854-1856
	Henry Davies (<i>or</i> Davis)	1861-1864/8
renamed 21.2.1876 TO	Mr. Armstrong	1868-1869
CHARLTON EAST	John Flug	1869-1871
renamed 1.9.1879 TO	William Hay	1871-1872
CHARLTON	Mr. Armstrong	1872-1874
	Ellen Johnson	1874-1876
	Christopher Luth	1876-1877
	Henry Wittenbach	1877-1878
	Thomas Holderness	1878-1881
	Henry Jacob Thomas Tymms	1881-1883
	Henry Edwin Cheshire	1883-1891
	Edward Mirams	1890-1891
	Richard Evans	Nov. 1890
	John Gavan Reilly	1891-1894
	James Augustine Barry	1894-1895
	Charles John Wild	1896-1900+

And he is in the process of gifting me similar information for every post office which opened through the barred numeral era - no mean task.

In less than 12 months, John will be relinquishing all his files to a new home (not mine 😊) and they may no longer be accessible, so there is a lot of work to be done.

So please bear with me folks, I'm paddling as hard as I can 😊