

"Good horses, strong coaches and experienced drivers were needed on those terrible roads; for the traveller, if the weather was a little wet, would only get a mile from Melbourne before he had a taste of what was coming. It was here, where the haymarket now stands, that the road divided. One road led to the McIvor and Ovens diggings, along the Sydney Road, the other road leading through Flemington, and on to Mount Alexander. It was at the junction of these two roads that there was the first "glue-pot". Even when the bounding coaches had struggled through a quarter of a mile of clay, deep enough to cover the axles, they still faced a road ahead in formidable condition."

"In 1853 Governor Latrobe decided to spend £300,000 in setting the roads to the diggings in good order, and from mid 1854 they were as excellent as any that could be seen anywhere. But it was while the roads were still in their condition of alternate bogs, and bumpy miles of out-cropping boulders, that Cobb made himself a blessing to the colony. His line of coaches was admirably equipped for this rough work, but he received handsome fares, and in two years time had acquired a fortune, when he sold out his interest, and returned to America. His presence was therefore of short duration, but his name remained as a "house-hold" word. However, none should forget that in 1853 and 1854, Cobb was a name of power on all the goldfields, and every miner in Ballarat kept a "look-out" for the coach with the four galloping horses that dashed madly past the rows of wooden shops and dwellings on it's final spurt to deliver the mail in good time."

Finally, any account of Cobb & Co would be incomplete without making mention of the extraordinary Great Leviathan coach that was built for Cobb & Co in Ballarat in 1862. This *double-storey* coach was able to carry between *fifty-six, and a staggering eighty-nine people*, and was "a sight to behold". It was soon found to be impractical as the lead horses were out of reach of the whip — drivers had to carry a bag of stones to throw at the front horses when they wanted them to hurry up.

FINIS



THE "GREAT LEVIATHAN" COACH

ABOVE: "The Great Leviathan Coach was built in Ballarat in 1862, it was built to carry 72 passengers but has frequently carried 100 people."

Reference: Pg 343 Engraving from "Victoria and its Metropolis" 1888 Author Alexander Sutherland MA