

CONVEYANCE OF MAIL AND TELEGRAMS
BY BRISBANE TRAMS

BY

J. P. MEARA, A.R.N.P.

BRISBANE,
JANUARY, 1987

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1887-1987! It is not now generally known that for the first half of this centennial, Brisbane trams played an integral part in, and had an unenviable record for, the conveyance of mail between the General Post Office in Queen Street and suburban post offices; that they also carried posting receptacles for some 22 years; and had an important role in the delivery of telegrams during World War II, 1939-1945.

In this centennial year, it is pertinent to record details, regrettably incomplete, of the salient elements of this aspect of Postal History, which of necessity, touches upon relevantly associated tramway and postal development.

Basically, from 1824, early Brisbane expanded north-east towards Fortitude Valley, Breakfast Creek and beyond; and across the river in South Brisbane and Kangaroo Point both merging towards Woolloongabba (One Mile Swamp) and beyond.

A number of cross-river ferries, oared and steam, were introduced at convenient points, roads developed radially to expanding suburban areas and the country, the suburban railway system was becoming established in the 1870-80's, but perhaps most important was the construction of Victoria Bridge to link the City and north-side with South Brisbane across a river some 330 yards wide. The bridging at several points of both Norman and Breakfast Creeks also was integral to development.

With such fairly rapid expansion, the establishment of postal and electric telegraph facilities, the conveyance of mail, and transport of people, were natural corollaries in parallel development - all of which are historical miscellanea of some depth in their own right.

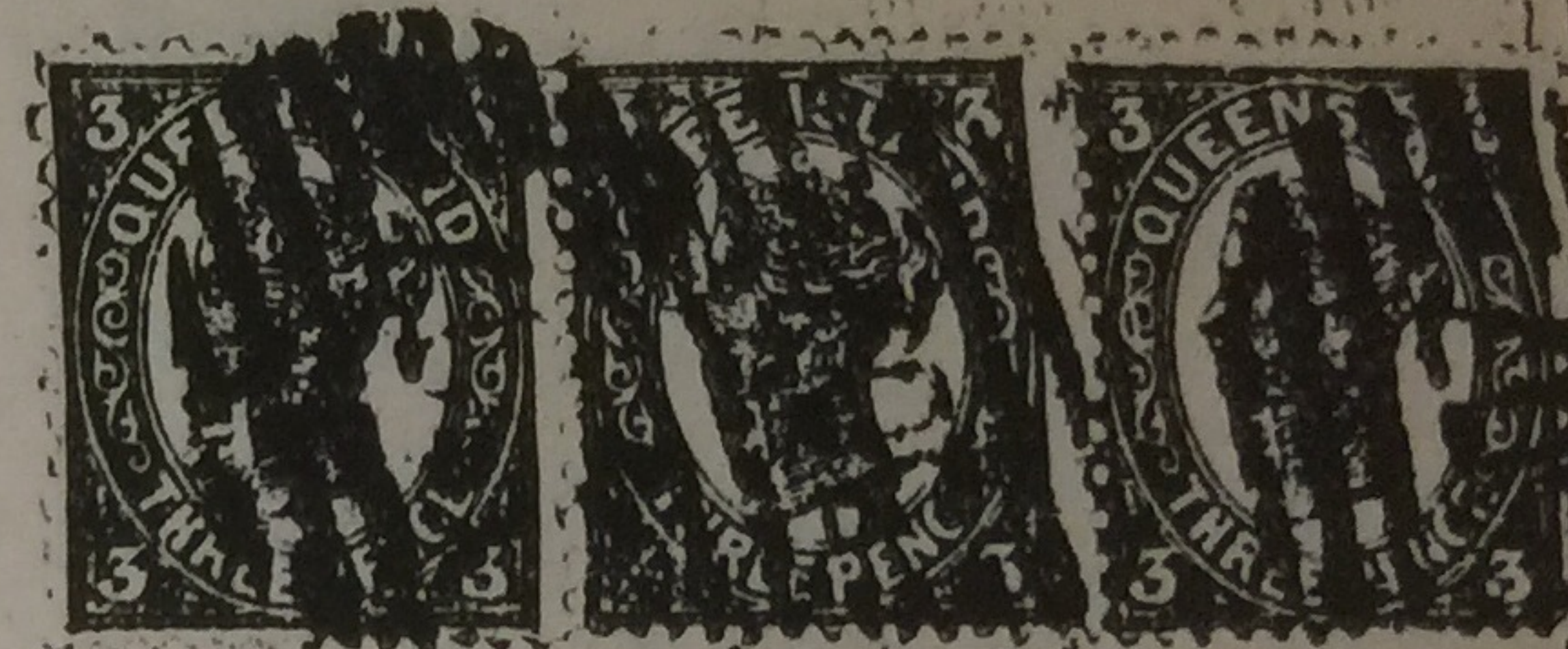
POSTAL DEVELOPMENT

Briefly, although post offices (P.O.) were established where considered warranted, in a number of instances, the first postal facilities were known as Receiving Offices (R.O.) conducted by storekeepers and others, but locations varied as businesses ceased, changed hands, or for other reasons. These performed limited postal business such as the sale of stamps and receipt and delivery of mail at the R.O. Where business warranted, and subject to Post and Telegraph Department criteria, a R.O. was elevated to post office status, unofficial or official, but all R.O. were subordinate to the nearest post office. Post offices were erected in the most convenient locality, but again there were also some changes of sites. As postal business fluctuated, a post office was reduced to a R.O., then subsequently closed, or re-instated as a P.O. The designation "R.O." was discontinued in 1927.

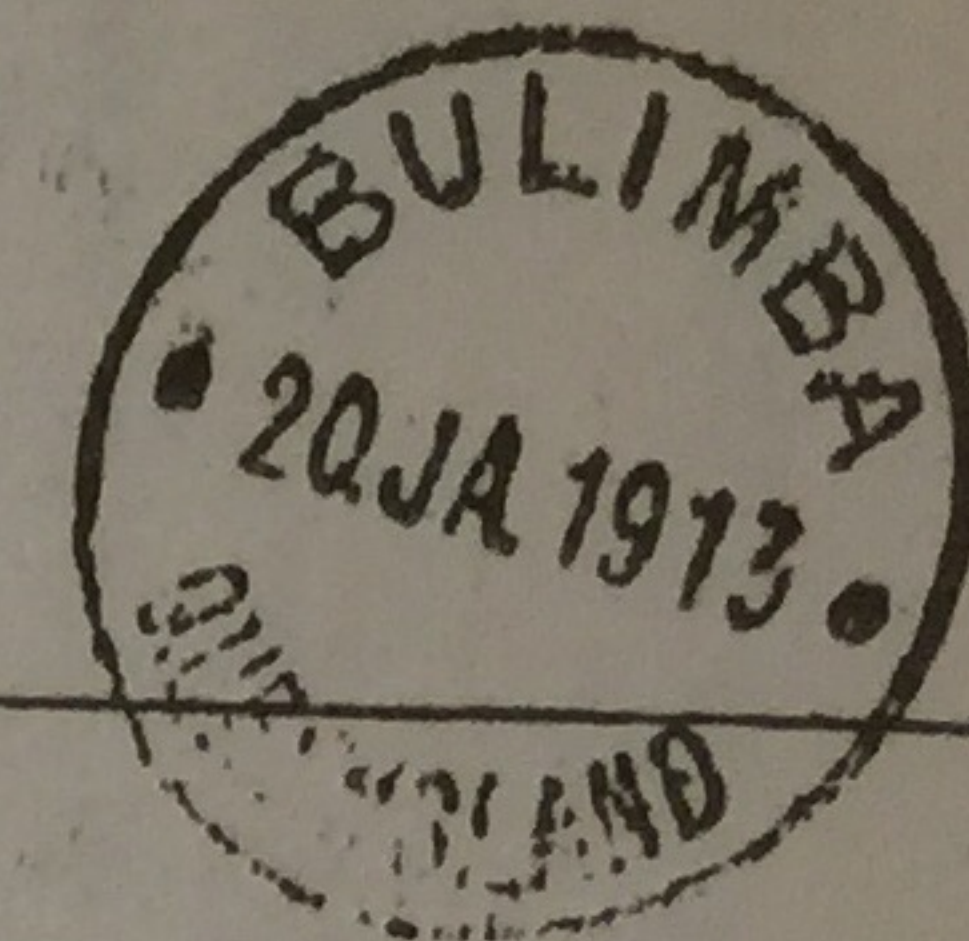
The first three R.O. in Queensland were opened in 1869 at South Brisbane, One Mile Swamp (Woolloongabba) and Bowen Bridge.

R BULIMBA.
No. 07

O. G. M. S.



THE MANAGER,



GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK,

BRISBANE.

THE GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK,

19

Registered Cover "tying" Numeral Obliterator 307 to BULIMBA "Commonwealth" datestamp 20 JA 1913, with Registration Label 07 (Red), the type introduced about 1910. This cover may have received transit by ferry from Oxford St to Bulimba Ferry terminus, thence by tram to G.P.O.

Receiving Offices were not issued cancelling implements, but for cancellation of postage stamps, Postmasters were provided with a Numeral Obliterator (N.O.) of horizontal oval ray pattern with the allocated post office number in the centre. This type was superceded about 1874 with No. 178 by a barred oval of nine, but usually ten bars with the P.O. number centrally within the interrupted inner bars. In Queensland some 747 N.O. were allocated until the end of 1912.

They were also issued, inter alia, a circular date-stamp (c.d.s) for use on mail articles as a record of where and when posted, also on postal notes. The Queensland or "State" type c.d.s. consisted of an unframed circle with the P.O. name at top, QUEENSLAND at base, and the date (day, month, year) in the centre, and were used until about July, 1903.

Consequent upon Federation in 1901, the "Commonwealth" type began to be issued after about October, 1903, and consisted of similar details within a framed circle. From about 1904, the c.d.s. began to supercede the N.O. for stamp cancellation, and from about 1912 machine cancellers were introduced at large offices.

Not in all instances is the number allocated to a P.O. known, particularly for some short-lived early post offices, and those opened in 1903 and later, as much depends upon survival covers "tying" the N.O. to a c.d.s. Even at this time, odd "tie" covers are coming to light.

Articles of mail were conveyed, under contract, by horse, and the horse-drawn vehicles of the day, mail coaches (e.g. Cobb & Co) and by omnibus in larger centres. Security of mail was of paramount importance.

THE HORSE TRAM ERA - 1885-1897

By the early 1880's it was considered there was a need for the increasing populace of Brisbane to be conveyed by a better mode than horse-drawn buses and wagonettes (cabs), and two tramway proposals were advanced.

One was a steam tramway of 3 ft 6 ins (1 067 mm) guage along Ann (Anne) Street to be operated by a Tramway Department of Queensland Railways, but after importing three Kitson 0-6-0 tramway motors in June, 1883, and six trailer cars from Hudson Bros of Sydney, the venture was aborted. The rollingstock was subsequently modified and utilized by the railways, the motors for shunting purposes, and the cars for conveyance of miners on the Bundamba area coal lines.

The other proposal, which eventuated, derived from a Tramways Act of 1882, which enabled the METROPOLITAN TRAMWAYS & INVESTMENT COY LTD, formed on 29 November, 1883, being authorised to construct and operate tramways in Brisbane.

Construction of standard guage (4 ft 8½ ins - 1 435 mm) steel railed duplicate track commenced in Queen Street, City, in 1884, and 18 trams - Nos 1 to 9 double deck, 10 to 18 single deck - and possibly two open cars of six cross-benches, were imported from John Stephenson of New York, each to be drawn by two horses. Sometimes a third "tip" horse was used to assist on hills.

Inauguration of the horse tramways, and extensions were:

- 10. 8.1885 - North Quay-Queen Street-Petrie's Bight-Wickham St through Fortitude Valley to junction of Wickham St and Breakfast Creek Road.
- 24. 8.1885 - Extension from above junction to Breakfast Creek.
- 16.11.1885 - From Wickham St, Fortitude Valley along Brunswick St East to Ella St, New Farm, thence 2.12.1885 to Langshaw St, New Farm; West to Exhibition (Anderson St) near Museum corner.
- 1. 5.1886 - Over Victoria Bridge (2nd) to Woolloongabba Fiveways via Stanley Street. Customs House neck Petrie's Bight.
- 13. 6.1886 - Brunswick Street via Light St, Ann St, and Commercial Rd to Bulimba Ferry.
- 3.1887 - Woolloongabba via Logan Road to junction with Taylor St (Depot).
- 13. 6.1887 - Brunswick St via Ann St to junction with Wickham St.
- 24.12.1887 - Victoria Bridge along Melbourne St to Boundary St junction, West End.
- 3.1888 - Boundary St to Davies Corner, Thomas/Vulture St junction, West End.
- 1889 - Breakfast Creek across bridge (2nd) to Albion Park Racecourse Gates.

Until mid-1897, this was the limit of the horse-tram system, operated at peak with some 51 cars between the six termini - Breakfast Creek, Bulimba Ferry, Exhibition, New Farm on the north-side; West End and Logan Road on the southside. (The Logan Rd. Depot was towards Logan Road railway station, renamed Buranda in 1917).

Irrespective of the fixed route corridors, all horsetrams passed the G.P.O. in Queen Street, but beyond several of the termini, M.T. & I. Coy vehicles worked horse-bus and wagonette services several being between,

Breakfast Creek Bridge and Hamilton;
South Brisbane and Mount Gravatt;
City and Jubilee;
Fortitude Valley and Bulimba Ferry.

INTRODUCTION OF TRAM MAIL SERVICES

With a probable view to more efficient and quicker transport of mail - and no doubt mutual advantage - The Director, Posts & Telegraphs, Queensland, in 1887, contracted with the M.T. & I. Coy to provide for the carriage by horse-tram (and omnibus) of Royal Mail between three suburban post offices and the G.P.O. on agreed frequencies and charges.

The three initial Mail Services (M.S.) were:

- M.S. 1 - 1887 - G.P.O. and BREAKFAST CREEK P.O. 2½ miles, 12 times per week (previously by omnibus). Post-mistress Mrs. A. Smith.
- 9.6.1866 - P.O. opened on northside of creek.
- 1.3.1893 - Reduced to R.O.
- 1.7.1894 - Re-instated as P.O.
- Between Sept. 1911 and May, 1912 - P.O. closed.
- Allocated N.O. 115.

M.S.173 - 1887 - G.P.O. and SOUTH BRISBANE P.O. 24 times weekly.
27.3.1876 - P.O. opened in Stanley St, thought to be opposite Brisbane Milling Co.
In 1880's located between Sidon and Dock Sts, next to Dry Dock (opened 22.9.1881), adjoining Stanley St Railway station (opened 2.6.1884, closed 21.12.1891 when South Brisbane opened).
Late 1889 - Moved three blocks to Melbourne St.
Early 1890 - Official MELBOURNE ST P.O. opened Corner Russell and Merivale Streets.
1911 - Transferred from Melbourne St back to Stanley and Russell Streets.
Allocated N.O. 215.

1889 - Extended to WOOLLOONGABBA P.O. Distance 2 miles, once daily, or as often as required.
23.9.1889 - Official P.O. opened, located Logan Rd on outbound right side some four buildings past Fiveways, abutting Jurgens (Victoria) St.
1889-90 - Once daily.
1891 - 30 times per week.
31.12.1899 - The Contract for M.S. 173 expired, but a note of 23.6.1899, "Ser. 173 Tender to be made out for Mails and Parcels" indicated renewal.
Nov. 1905 - New P.O. opened corner Stanley/Hubert Streets.
Mr. P. J. McDonald, a Travelling Mail Officer on the Southern & Western Railway 1.5.1881 to 31.10.1886, was postmaster South Brisbane from 1.11.1886, and Woolloongabba from 1.10.1889.
Allocated N.O. 472.

M.S.181 - 1887 - SOUTH BRISBANE P.O. and MOUNT GRAVATT. 6 miles.
By tram to Woolloongabba, thence by horse-drawn omnibus.
1888 - 12 times per week.
1889 - All omnibus, but frequency unchanged (due to re-siting of South Brisbane P.O. in Melbourne St).
1890 - Operated as M.S. 181 between WOOLLOONGABBA and Mt Gravatt, mail by tram G.P.O. and Woolloongabba.
14.3.1877 - P.O. Mt. Gravatt opened, location on Logan Road not specified.
Allocated N.O. not yet known.

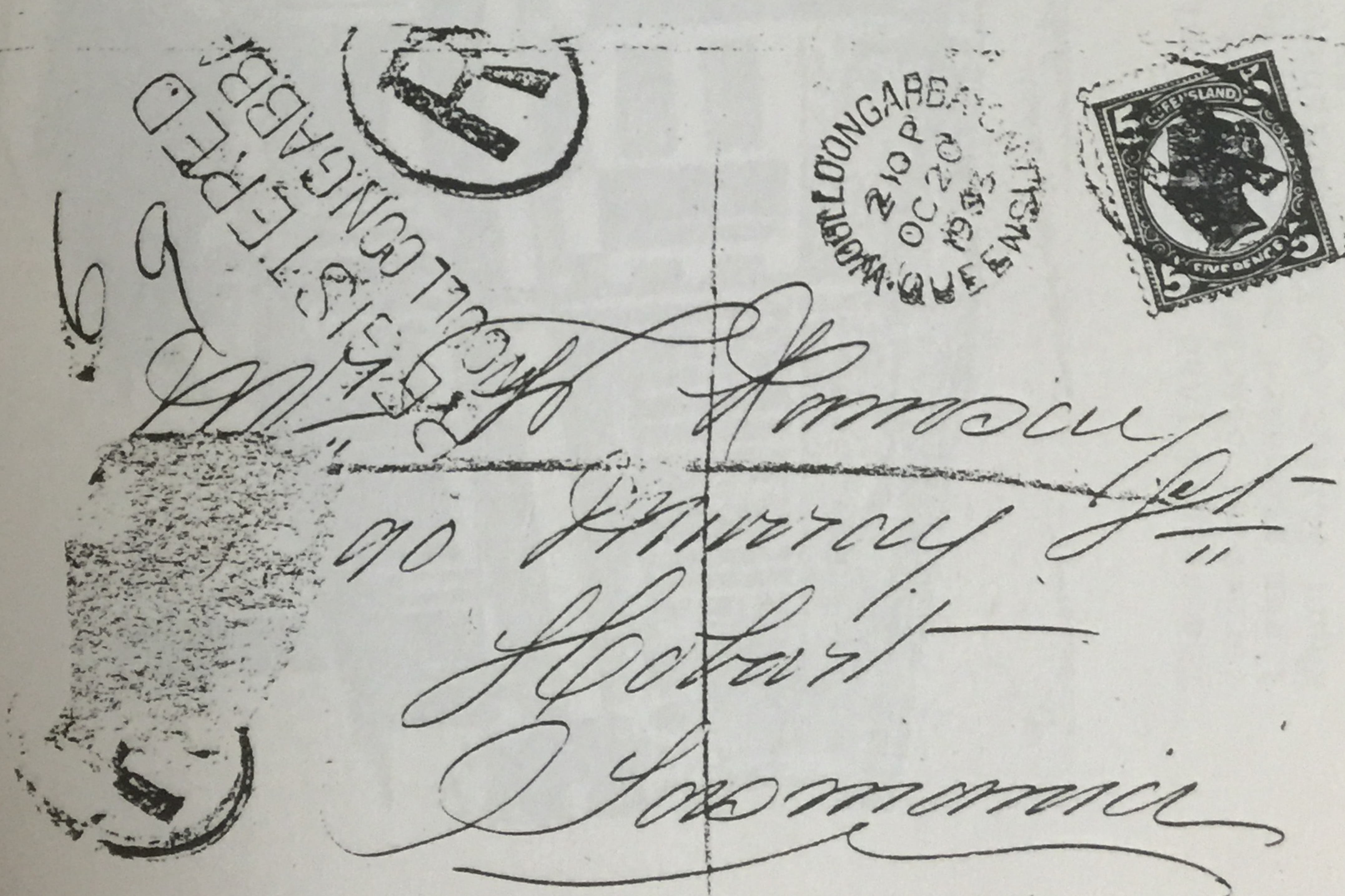
Other Mail services were called by tender from time to time:

M.S.128 - 17.9.1888 - G.P.O. and BULIMBA FERRY, 3 miles then shortened to FORTITUDE VALLEY by tram 24 times per week to 1891, thereafter by omnibus. There was no post office at Bulimba Ferry, but it is assumed mail was transferred to a cross-river ferry for BULIMBA P.O. opened 1.9.1870 then situated in Davies Store, Corner Oxford and Birkalla (Church) Sts, a block from the ferry landing in Oxford St.
1.2.1864 Fortitude Valley P.O. opened in Ann St, closed 1865 due lack of business. Allocated N.O.258.
20.8.1877 - re-opened Ann St, allocated N.O. 643 as a replacement, re-allocated Cape York March, 1910. Bulimba allocated N.O. 143 but by January, 1913 at least used N.O. 307 as a replacement or reallocation.

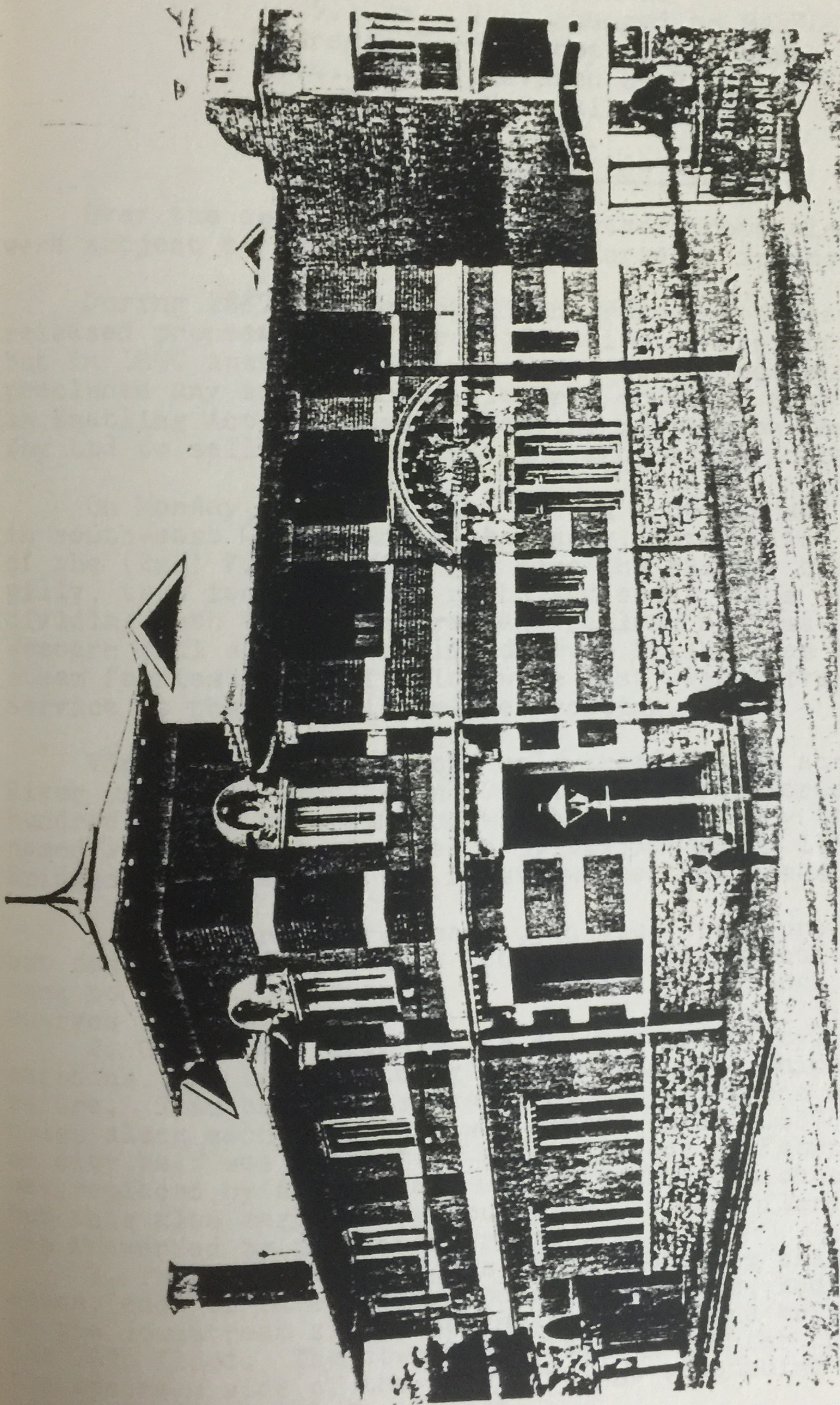


The first Woolloongabba Post and Telegraph Office in Logan Road (figurines on top) opened 23.9.1889, with electric tram No. 92 Logan Rd - New Farm outbound.

Photo. "Queenslander" 8 December, 1900, by courtesy Courier Mail



This cover with "State" REGISTERED/WOOLLOONGABBA, and c.d.s. 2.10 P/ OC 20 / 1903 was processed at the Logan Road site, and probably conveyed by tram to the G.P.O.



The second (and present) Woolloongabba Post and Telegraph Office on the corner of Stanley and Hubert Streets opened November, 1905 - with gas-light standard on corner. The Motorman of the outbound electric tram Wharf Street to East Brisbane watches his Conductor deliver a heavy bag of mail. Photo. Courtesy of Oxley Library.

M.S.307 - 1.7.1892 - G.P.O. and JUBILEE 3¼ miles by horse omnibus, 12 times weekly. The area between Ithaca Creek and Jubilee Terrace was sub-divided in 1887 and named Jubilee Estate - the Jubilee Year of Queen Victoria's reign.

1.11.1889 - R.O. opened.

5.1926 - Name changed to BARDON, site at Store, McGregor Terrace opposite present P.O.

19.4.1927 - Elevated to P.O.

As a R.O. no N.O. allocated.

ELECTRIC TRAMS 1897-1969

Over the decade from 1887, further proposals were mooted, but were subject to intervention by unforeseen circumstances.

During 1887 the Metropolitan Tramway & Investment Coy Ltd released proposals for electrification of the horse-tram system, but in 1890 Australia experienced a severe economic depression which precluded any action on an electric or cable tram system. However, an Enabling Act was passed granting permission for the M. T. & I. Coy Ltd to sell their undertaking and/or introduce electric traction.

On Monday, 6.2.1893, the record abnormal and devastating floods in south-east Queensland washed away, inter alia, some seven spans of the (2nd) Victoria Bridge, also the railway bridge at Indooroopilly, thus isolating the north and south sides of Brisbane, and dividing both the horse tram and railway systems. Southern and Western rail services utilized South Brisbane as a terminal, and steam ferries, none of which were lost, were diverted to regular service at the Victoria Bridge crossing.

Victoria Bridge was the sole traffic link across the Brisbane River until the opening on 30.3.1932 of Grey Street Bridge several hundred metres upstream and which did not carry trams. It was re-named William Jolly Bridge on 5.7.1955. As of 1987 four Victoria Bridges were erected, the first two meeting disaster:

1. A temporary iron-bark open deck structure opened 24.6.1865, but destroyed by floods in 1867, had a lift-section near the south bank to permit of movement of small ships between the down-stream wharves and Ipswich.

2. Open deck, side-railed on 12 pairs of cylindrical steel caissons, and incorporating a swing span for shipping movement as before. This bridge also carried many telephone wires on very high poles along each side, and was opened on 15.6.1874. The northern or city half was swept away by the floods of February, 1893, and was replaced by a temporary wooden decking which opened on 7.9.1893, but this also sagged dangerously in the 1896 flood. This bridge was traversed by the horse trams.

3. Three southside spans of the imposing third bridge of six spans, each of three arches on iron caissons, had been constructed on the downstream side adjacent to the second bridge at the time of the 1896 flood. The downstream half opened for traffic on 1.10.1897, the upstream side of the second bridge continuing to serve in-bound traffic until June, 1898.

This bridge in the 1950-60's had the pedestrian walkways on each side narrowed somewhat, and trams were restricted to one per span. It was closed at 1.07 p.m. Saturday, 30.8.1969, and demolished by T.C. Carr Pty Ltd of Sydney, by the end of August, 1970.

4. The present box concrete, two-span structure erected parallel on the upstream side, opened without formality immediately upon closure of the third bridge.

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THE BRISBANE TRAMWAYS COMPANY of 30.9.1895 was formed in England for the proposed conversion of the horse tram system to electric powered, and in February, 1896, purchased the horse tramways for £105.200 (\$210.400). The first electric tram was landed in Brisbane on 6.8.1896, and on 21.6.1897 the first service with Car No. 1, ran from Logan Road Depot to the southern end of Victoria Bridge (Victoria Place). Running in Queen Street commenced on 3.7.1897.

Presumably Victoria Bridge No. 3 was traversed upon opening in October of that year, and by May, 1898, the last regular horse tram service had ceased, there being some 15 miles of electric track. A number of horse trams were also converted for electric traction.

The Brisbane Tramways Coy embarked on an aggressive expansion program, one extension being,

- 1897 - Queen Street along George Street to Roma Street Railway Gates.
- 1898 - Extended via Roma and Countess Streets to Normanby Fiveways, thence via Musgrave Road and Enoggera Terrace to Red Hill not far from Ithaca Fire Station.

On 24.4.1899, the Under Secretary, Posts & Telegraphs Department, requested Brisbane Tramways Coy to submit a tender for the carriage of mails by tram six times per day or more frequently if required, between George Street Post Office and G.P.O., and the sum of £26 per annum was offered. A contract was drawn up and signed on 14.6.1899 for three years until 31.12.1902, for,

M.S.239 - 27.4.1899 - G.P.O. and GEORGE STREET P.O. six (?five) times daily, £26 per annum on a timetable,

Daily except Sundays

G.P.O.	depart	8.45 a.m.	1.30 p.m.	4.00 p.m.
George St	arrive	9.00 a.m.	1.45 p.m.	4.15 p.m.

Mondays to Fridays

Saturdays

		a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.
George St	dep.	7.45	11.00	1.00	4.00	5.45	7.45	11.30	5.30
G.P.O.	arr.	7.55	11.10	1.10	4.10	6.00	7.55	11.45	5.45

ca May, 1899 - GEORGE STREET P.O. opened as official in temporary premises of Mr S. Davis, Land Agent, George Street West.

Jul-Aug, 1899 - Moved to new building, 413 George St.

17.12.1927 - Closed when MARKETS P.O. opened in Roma St (opposite the Markets).

ca 1932 - GEORGE STREET P.O. re-opened in McDonnell & East Store, corner George and Tank Streets, with Tank St. entrance.

Allocated N.O. 580.

In 1900 tenders were called for the conveyance of tram mail,

M.S. 183 - 1.1.1901 - RED HILL P.O. and G.P.O. Five services per week.

M.S. 239 - (George St and G.P.O.) at £5 per annum to cease from 31.12.1900.

1.1.1879 RED HILL P.O. opened, W. Park and Gibson, Store-keepers, Corner Musgrave and Windsor Roads. Allocated N.O. 304.

15.5.1891 - Reduced to R.O. W. Park. N.O. 304 re-allocated to Kuranda.

1.10.1895 - Re-instated as P.O. Allocated N.O. 526.

During 1908, the Posts & Telegraphs Dept introduced motor vehicles for the carriage of mail, but this does not appear to have affected the tram mail between the G.P.O. and near city post offices.

In February, 1912, Porterage Service No. 730 operated by tram between G.P.O. and GEORGE STREET P.O., which suggests a further contract was implemented early in the 1900's.

Concurrent with the tram extension to Red Hill, there was another in an almost parallel direction,

1898 - Roma/Countess Street junction via Roma St, Petrie Tce, Caxton St, Given Tce and Latrobe Tce to near Warmingtton St (site of Paddington Tram Depot transferred from Countess St abutting Roma St Railway Yards in 1915), and not far "around the right corner" from Red Hill terminus in Enoggera Terrace, which also was extended to Paddington (Depot) in 1898.

7.9.1899 - McClurg records the tram was extended from Caxton Street to Guthrie Street, and the next extension was

1909 - along Latrobe Street to Bernhardt Street.

7.5.1916 - Thence along Latrobe and McGregor Tces to corner Cooper's Camp Road and Jubilee Terrace, Paddington.

1.5.1878 - PADDINGTON P.O. opened in Given Terrace near Latrobe Street.

31.7.1879 - Closed.

11.7.1892 - Official ITHACA P.O. opened.

28.2.1898 - Name changed to PADDINGTON.

Allocated N.O. 502.

Due to incomplete record between 1901 and 1924, the commencing date of tram mail services to PADDINGTON P.O. is not noted (the early 1900's is suggested), but by March, 1914, tram mail operated between the G.P.O. and six suburban post offices, the Saturday timetables being advanced one hour on 31.3.1914 to,

G.P.O. dep.

Suburban P.O. arr.

3.05 p.m.

George Street 3.10 p.m.
Paddington 3.35 p.m.
Jubilee 3.45 p.m.

3.10 p.m.

Fortitude Valley 3.25 p.m.

3.10 p.m.

South Brisbane 3.25 p.m.
Woolloongabba 3.40 p.m.

Later in 1914, tenders were called for the conveyance of mail by tram on M.S. routes Nos 726 to 732 inclusive, but unfortunately details of these seven services are not recorded on the file per-used. It might be assumed they related to existing runs.

POSTING BAGS ON TRAMS - 1894-1916

At this point it is expedient to interpose the reference to this arrangement, Queensland being the first of the Australian Colonies to adopt the system of attaching posting bags to trams, and to a limited degree, in omnibuses. It was introduced on 1st June, 1894, and ceased on 1st February, 1916.

The letter receivers or posting bags were made of galvanized plate at the top, painted red, with good quality stiff canvas below as the letter repository, and cost (1912) about 17s. (\$1.70) each, complete with lock.

On two loose pages, 9 and 10, detached from what apparently was a Manual for Guidance of Tramway Motormen and Conductors about 1912, two paragraphs read,

"41. Particular attention must be paid to the mails, which are to be carefully carried and promptly delivered at the post office for which they are intended.

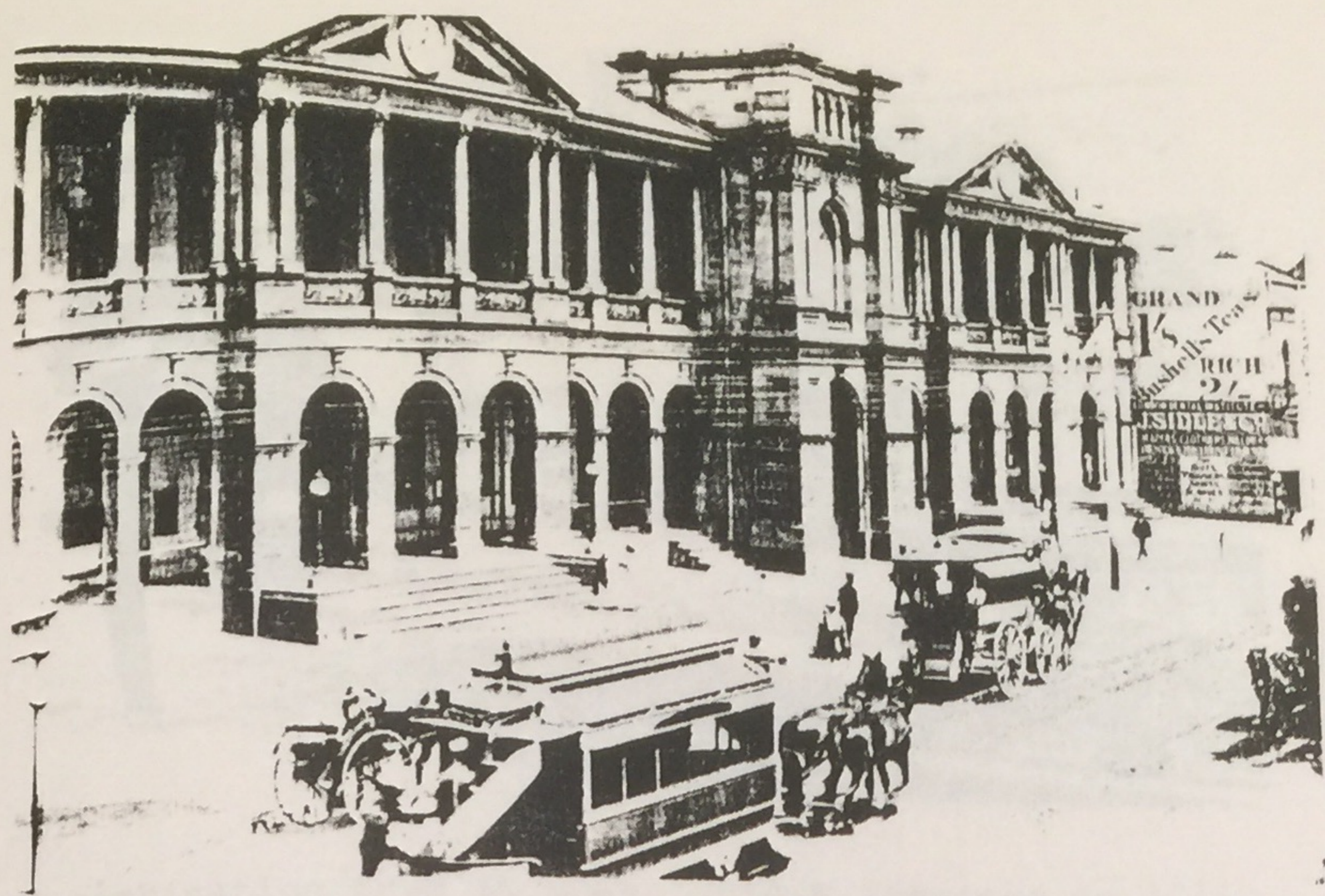
"42. Posting bags are to be carried on the inside of the rear dashboard. Any person, whether passenger or not, may deposit letters in the posting bags, but cars are not to be stopped to allow persons (not passengers) to post. It is a serious violation of the postal regulations for anyone to remove mail which has once been deposited in a posting bag, and employees are forbidden to do this or to allow it to be done."

The under-scored words (by author) conflict with the positional reference in the booklet, "An Australia Post History of the Brisbane General Post Office" which states the posting bags were hung on the left hand front of the tram near the motorman (author's under-score) for convenient deposit of letters as passengers joined or left the tram.

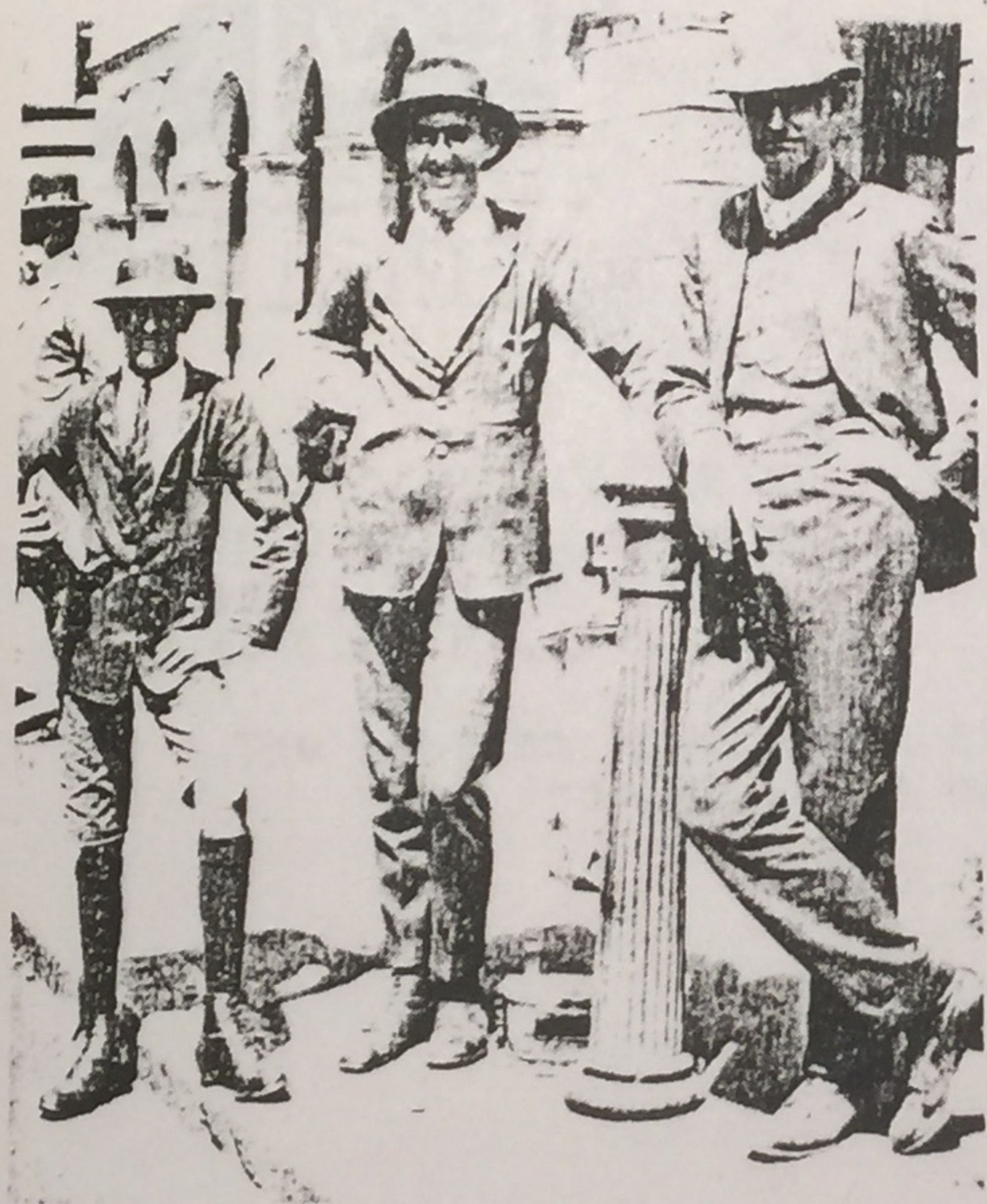
It cannot be stated whether the bag position was changed, but the latter would seem more logical as the bag would be under supervision of the motorman at all times.

A Statement submitted by H. B. Templeton, Deputy Postmaster-General, in a Report to the Victorian Parliament, 1912, outlined the system in vogue in Brisbane, and considered it would be advisable to have it tried in Melbourne. It was understood the tram-bag system was tried in Sydney, but was not a success owing to many of the cars not passing the G.P.O.

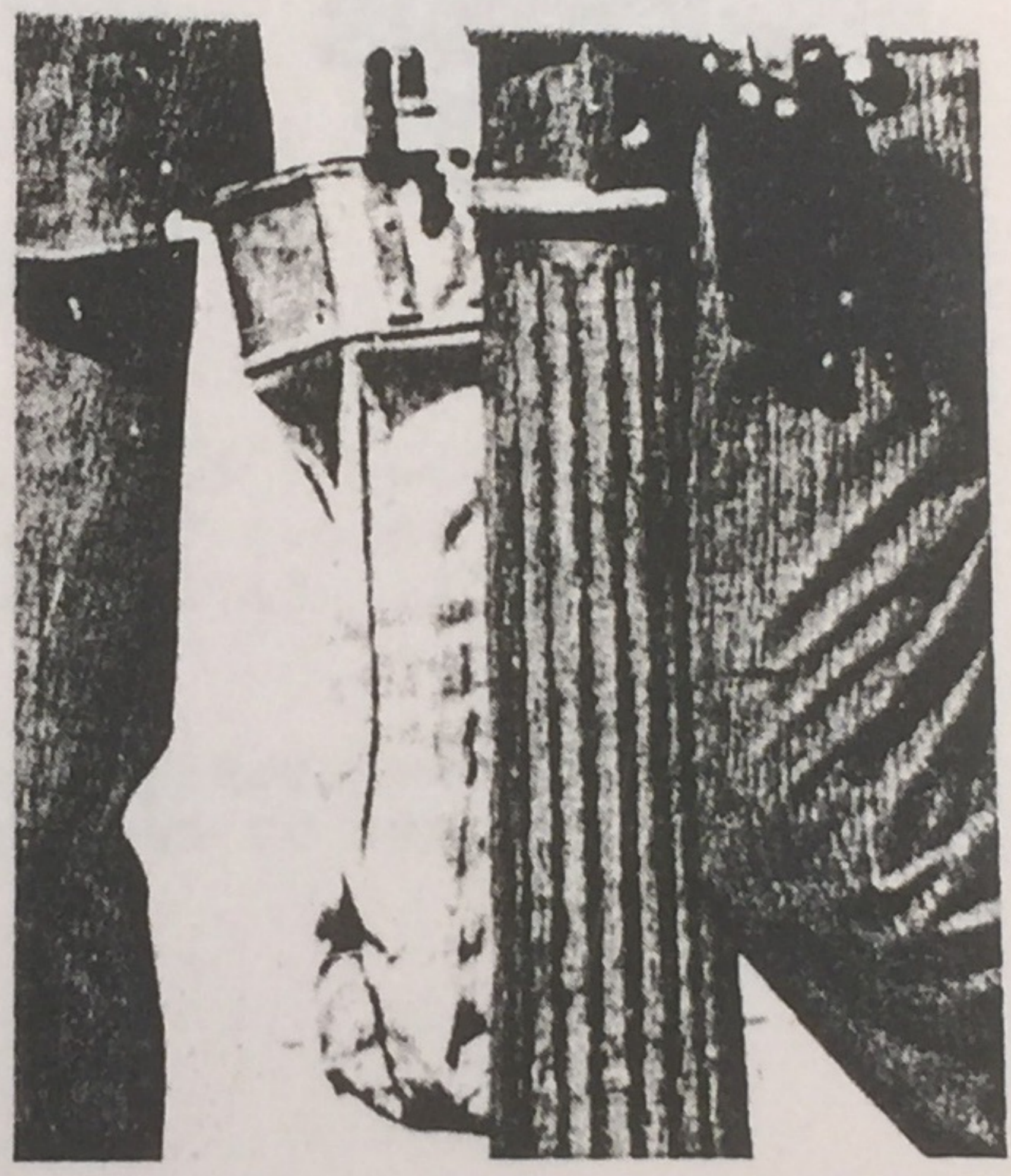
Placing of bags commenced between 8.00 a.m. and 8.30 a.m. on all cars used in the service, the bag was changed each time a car passed the G.P.O., and removal of all bags was completed between 4.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. Two messengers were employed to perform the bag placing, exchange and removal, also to collect the mailbags which had been placed beside the motorman at the various post offices such as Woolloongabba and Fortitude Valley, &c. It is recorded motormen occasionally "gonged" as an approach warning to the lad mail assistants outside the G.P.O.



Horse-drawn omnibus and tram in front of G.P.O., Queen Street in 1897 with messenger waiting to load mailbag to tram (left).
 (Photo. Courtesy Australia Post)

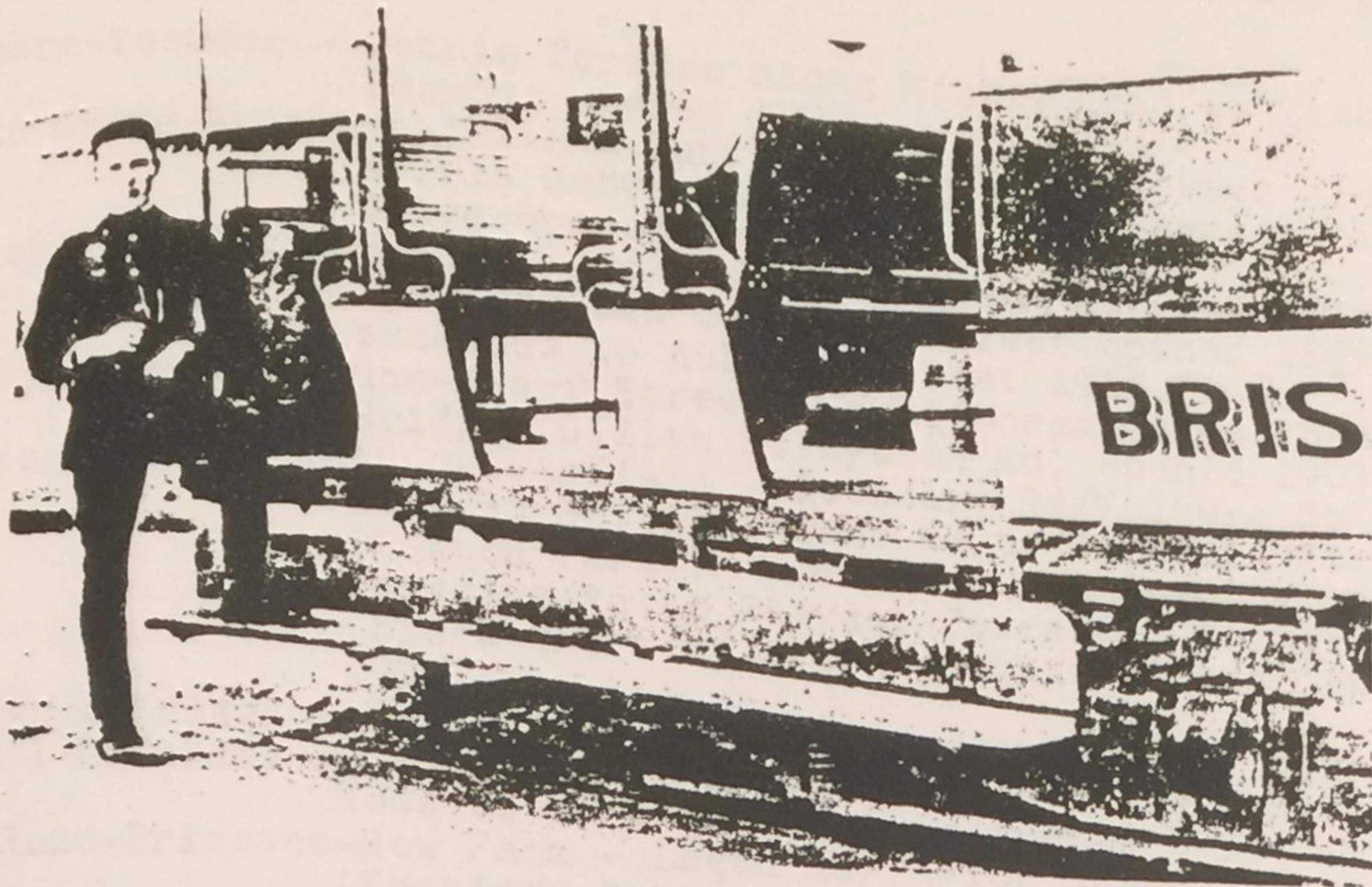


G.P.O. Messengers Vic. Tobst and Jim Burke with posting bags await tram, 1915. The country chap at right intended enlist-
 in W.W.I.

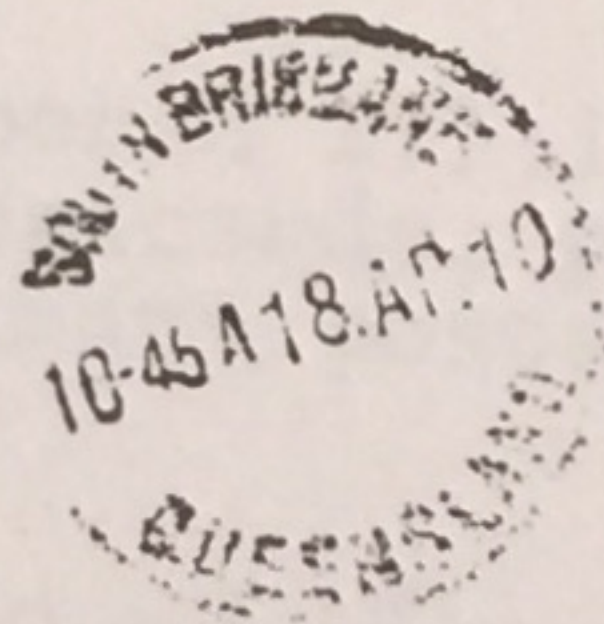


Close-up of posting bag on hitching post outside G.P.O.

(Photos. Courtesy Australia Post)



A combination tram at Bowen Bridge Terminus in 1913, showing POSTING BAG hung on dashboard behind the Conductor Len Sparkes. Photo. courtesy of B.T.M.S.



REGISTERED/GEORGE STREET
with N.O. 580 used as canceller "tied" to "State"
c.d.s. 6.P/SP 28/99.

N.O. 215 "tied" to "Commonwealth" c.d.s. SOUTH BRISBANE 10.45A 18 AP.10.

The letters from which these pieces were excised probably were conveyed by tram.

In 1912, 68 trams carried posting bags on routes all passing the G.P.O., viz:

- Brisbane-Toowong - Petrie Terrace along Milton Road to Miskin St, Toowong opened 1904.
- Kelvin Grove-Brisbane-Bulimba Ferry - Normanby Fiveways along Kelvin Grove Road to Prospect Terrace, Kelvin Grove opened 1901.
- Ipswich Road-Brisbane-New Farm - Woolloongabba Fiveways along Ipswich Road to Olive Street opened 1899, and extended to Aubigny Street 1915.
- East Brisbane-Brisbane-Wharf Street - Woolloongabba to Norman Bridge (Gillan St/Lytton Rd) opened 1903.
- Gladstone Road-Brisbane-Clayfield - Boundary Rd/Vulture St along Vulture St, Gladstone Rd to Cornwall Street (Dutton Park); and Breakfast Creek along Sandgate Rd to Bayview Terrace, Clayfield (block short of railway station) both opened 1901.
- Paddington-Brisbane-Bulimba Ferry - Refer previous for openings.
- Red Hill-Brisbane-Bowen Bridge - Museum Corner along Bowen Bridge Road to Horace St corner opened 1899.
- Logan Road-Brisbane-New Farm - Logan Rd/Taylor St to Stones Corner (Keatings Bakery) opened 1897.
- West End-Brisbane-Ascot - Thomas St, Vulture St, Hardgrave Rd to Dornoch Terrace, West End, opened 1897; Breakfast Creek (Amy St) along Hamilton Road (Kingsford Smith Drive), Racecourse Road to Ascot (Eagle Farm) Racecourse Gates opened 1899.

Statistics quoted, probably year ended 1911, or to 30.6.1912 show that for twelve months,

- ... Letters posted on trams numbered 173,106;
- ... Postal Articles (letters, postcards, packets, newspapers) numbered 215,502, of approximate postage value of £1,000 (\$2,000).

The Tramways Company was paid £2 (\$4) per annum for each car used in the service.

The tramcar posting service was supplementary to the posting (pillar) boxes, but it was unable to be stated how many extra pillar boxes would be required if the tram mail service was abolished. Since introduction in 1894, the number of tramcars utilized in the service had increased 100%, and there had been an increase in the number of receiving pillars, clearance of which had become more frequent, the city and adjacent suburban pillars being cleared five times per day.

From the nine through tram routes listed, it is obvious the posting service operated on all horse tram routes, and extended to practically all electric tram routes as they opened.

The reason for cessation of this service in 1916 is unable to be stated - it may have been associated with introduction of extra pillar boxes, circumstances arising during World War I 1914-18, economics, or the projected opening of Adelaide Street to trams. Whatever, the direction may have come from the Postmaster-General in Melbourne.

TRAM MAIL CONTINUED

To relieve the now heavy tram traffic in the City, all of which ran from George St corner along Queen and Wickham Streets to Fortitude Valley (Brunswick St), duplicate tram tracks were laid from George St along Adelaide and Ann Streets to Brunswick Street, and tram services commenced running along Adelaide St on 15.2.1917. The ensuing adjustment to through corridors resulted, inter alia, in western suburbs services being routed from George Street along Adelaide Street to the northern suburbs, so that trams which served Paddington and Red Hill post offices were stopped at the corner of Edward and Adelaide Streets, where the mail bags were placed by motormen in a large security box on the footpath near the fence of the then Normal State School (later the State Government Insurance Office building). The bags were collected later by two officers from the G.P.O. mailroom.

It was in 1916 too, that Stanley Street from Victoria Place (southside of the bridge) to Vulture Street was converted from a two-way tram route to one way outbound, and inbound trams were routed on new track one way from Vulture Street via Grey St and Melbourne St over Victoria Bridge to Queen Street. This traffic variation seemingly did not affect tram mail to South Brisbane P.O. which since 1911 had been located in Stanley Street.

After the 1914-18 War, the tramway system was becoming badly run down, also the initial Brisbane Tramway Company franchise was due for renewal in September, 1920, after which date the Government through the Commissioner for Railways, would have the right to purchase the tramways at any time.

In 1922, the BRISBANE TRAMWAY TRUST Act was passed which enabled the eight-member Trust to take over the undertaking on 1.1.1923. The "Trust" immediately extended routes, constructed new tramcars, a depot at Ipswich Road, and Workshops at Milton. In May, 1924, an agreed price of £1,400,000 (\$2,800,000) was made to the Brisbane Tramway Company for the purchase of tramway assets including 196 tramcars and 42 route miles of track.

Although the Trust assumed control on 1.1.1923, the status quo apparently was preserved so far as tram mail was concerned. It would appear though, the Postal Department questioned some charges, as in a letter dated 7.11.1924, the Trust considered that proposed charges compared favourably with those already existing, and listed details which included two additional post offices, Albion and Auchenflower, viz:

<u>Between G.P.O. and P.O.</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Charge p.a.</u>
<u>Existing charges:</u>		
Albion	3 times daily	£ 18
George Street	6 times daily	26
Red Hill	Twice daily	30
Paddington	3 times daily	35
Woolloongabba	Daily as often as required	39
Between Bulimba Ferry and Fortitude Valley	Twice daily	18
<u>Proposed charges:</u>		
George Street	six times daily	26
Auchenflower	Once per day	9
Fortitude Valley & G.P.O.	Four times daily	26

N.O. 415 ca 1901. In 1924 was located on Sandgate Road near the railway station. ALBION P.O. opened 1.11.1876, allocated N.O. 226, also used station, and was raised to a P.O. on 20.6.1924 when in Upper Milton Road, near Munro Street on the Toowong tram route.

In 1924 also, the timetable for mail despatches was altered to improve security arrangements in handling of REGISTERED mails on George Street, South Brisbane and Woolloongabba routes, which involved later despatches and for a mailman to be on duty at 6.15 p.m. at the G.P.O.

The Brisbane Tramway Trust was regarded as an interim measure as there were proposals for the incorporation of the several shires and municipalities into the Greater Brisbane Area of 385 square miles, and the establishment of the overall BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL. This became effective from 1.12.1925, on which date, the Council's DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT took control of the tramway system from the Trust together with 50.25 route miles of track, and 225 trams including the original electric fleet of 1897.

The program of extensions continued, the new Ipswich Rd Depot (Dutton Park), and with the tram fleet stabilized at the three Depots - Ipswich Road, Paddington and Light Street - mid-1927 probably was the logical time for the re-organization of tram routes commensurate with advantageous feeding from each Depot, of services which in the interim had been extended in some suburbs.

Tram mail services continued in the late 1920's with an increasing number of articles being carried due to route extensions passing more distant suburban post offices.

During this decade the P.M.G. Department began to build up its fleet of motor vehicles, and it was considered in some administrative quarters that these could satisfactorily replace trams for the conveyance of mails. Brisbane's traffic was increasing, and there were internal complaints that trams which required to maintain their schedules, sometimes overcarried mail, not altogether the fault of the tram motormen. In addition, the stop at the corner of Edward and Adelaide Streets was not quite satisfactory, as there was concern for the security of mail, also there was the spectacle of mailmen dodging traffic when carrying mailbags, some heavy, between tramstops and the G.P.O.

In 1928-29 the economics of tram versus P.M.G. motor vehicles were assessed, but one school of thought still seemed to favour continuance by tram.

On 11.12.1929, it was decided to discontinue Porterage Service 1033 between G.P.O. and George St (then Markets P.O. from 17.12.1927 vide page) from 14.12.1929, and from 16.12.1929 P.M.G. transport collected mails.

Although there appears to be no record, it was thought 1929 was the year all CONTRACTS ceased for the conveyance of mail by tram, although carriage of such continued.

On 20.12.1929, the Superintendent of Mails intimated the cost of ten tram mail services was £226 (\$452), but the probable route suggested by the author may be incorrect:

M.S.	£ p.a.	Probable Route	M.S.	£ p.a.	Probable Route
1029	18	Albion	1034	35	Paddington
1030	18	Bulimba Ferry- Fortitude Valley	1037	9	Auchenflower
1031	39	Woolloongabba	1039	26	Fortitude Valley
1032	30	Red Hill	1040	15	?
1033	26	George Street	1044	10	?

As of 24.1.1930, it was the practice to forward the first mail to ALBION P.O. by TRAIN, subsequent despatches by tram.

It is also recorded that as at 27.8.1930 tram mail was conveyed between G.P.O. and fourteen post offices, compared with ten listed in December, 1929, one of those not previously listed being the newly opened Camp Hill P.O., viz:

via Queen Street and South Brisbane, Woolloongabba, Camp Hill, Albion, Ashgrove and Lutwyche (the latter two actually were served by trams via Adelaide Street);
via Adelaide St and Petrie Terrace, Red Hill, Paddington, Bardon, Auchenflower, Kedron; Fortitude Valley and Bulimba (Ferry).

27.2.1915 - Tram extension Stones Corner along Old Cleveland Road to Cavendish Road, Coorparoo (junction), opened with Tram No. 100.

10.1.1925 - Extension thence along Old Cleveland Road to Bruce St, Camp Hill.
1.7.1929 - CAMP HILL P.O. opened, Taff's Newsagency, Old Cleveland Road.

1.3.1890 PETRIE TERRACE Official P.O. opened between Mountjoy and East Sts, near Normanby Fiveways. Allocated N.O. 486. Late 1920's was located in Petrie Terrace opposite Victoria Barracks, a block from Caxton Street corner on the Paddington route.

2.8.1924 - Route extension Musgrave Rd/Enoggera Tce (junction) Red Hill along Waterworks Road to Ashgrove.
1.1.1877 ASHGROVE P.O. (1) opened Ashgrove Road (then beyond Enoggera Tce junction), later Waterworks Rd. ? N.O. ca 10.1.1907 closed.
ca 26.4.1899 GROVE R.O. opened, Mrs McMullen, Storekeeper, Waterworks Rd, Ashgrove.
Sep 1911-Mar 1912 - closed.
20.5.1929 - ASHGROVE P.O. (2) opened, near tram terminus, Waterworks Road.

1901 - Route extension Horace St corner (just across Breakfast Creek past Royal Brisbane Hospital) along Lutwyche Road to Chalk (George) St, Kedron.

1914 - George Street to Kedron Brook (Park).
2.5.1925 - Kedron Park along Gympie Road to Lutwyche Cemetery (near junction Edinburgh Castle Road (Kedron)).

1892 - R.O. opened John King, Storekeeper, east side Gympie Road just north of Lutwyche Rd.

1897 - Raised to P.O. KEDRON. Allocated N.O. 550.

- 1.4.1874 - LUTWYCHE P.O. opened. Allocated N.O. 186.
 1.5.1888 - Reduced to R.O. (N.O.186 re-allocated Lakes
 Creek)
 1901 - R.O. closed.
 24.5.1918 - P.O. re-opened.

Next year on 13.2.1931, the B.C.C. Tramways Dept informed the Deputy P.M.G. they were prepared to reduce charges by 15% from 1.3.1931 to the following eleven post offices (Petrie Terrace, Lutwyche, South Brisbane, Bardon not included, but Belmont added),

<u>G.P.O. and P.O.</u>	<u>£ p.a.</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Albion	15	Three daily
Woolloongabba	33	Daily, or as often as required
Red Hill	25	Twice daily
Paddington	30	Three daily
Auchenflower	8	? Once daily
Bulimba	15	Via Balmoral from 12.9.1932, leave terminus 11.14 a.m. and 4.34 p.m. (? date 1932).
Fortitude Valley	22	
Belmont	8	
Kedron	8	
Ashgrove	8	
Camp Hill	8	Once daily between Woolloongabba P.O. and Camp Hill.

TOTAL - £180 per annum

- 18.5.1925 - Route extended Norman Bridge along Lytton Rd, Wynnum Rd to Barton Road.
 20.8.1930 - One chain extension.
 16.11.1935 - Extension to Balmoral terminus Oxford St (School of Arts at Fiveways).

- 1.2.1877 - BELMONT P.O. opened. Allocated N.O. ?238.
 ca 7.1909 - Reduced to R.O.
 Late 1927 - Designated P.O.

The Belmont post office was located several miles past Camp Hill tram terminus, opposite Belmont State School next Scrub Rd, and mail would require to be conveyed by vehicle from Camp Hill.

In respect to BULIMBA P.O., it is interesting to note the "change of direction" from via Bulimba Ferry to tram from Balmoral which would necessitate mail being carried up Oxford Street to the new tram terminus. It is suggested the date "1932" given above might more correctly be 1930 when extension to Barton Road was opened.

If correctly assumed that mail was ferried across from Bulimba Ferry tram terminus, more than likely the last ferry to carry mail on this run was the steamer "Hetherington", which was acquired by the "old" Brisbane City Council in 1913 for the conveyance of horse-drawn vehicles between Creek Street, City, and Kangaroo Point, but which was transferred to the Bulimba service in 1925. The "Hetherington" service was discontinued from the evening of Friday, 30.1.1953, due to heavy operational costs, and the ferry has since been operated by motor launches.

No. 3354

Certificate No. 3354

To the ~~Masters of Vessels~~

GENERAL MANAGER, BRISBANE TRAMWAYS.

This is to certify that the bearer

of POST OFFICE SOUTH BRISBANE

whose signature appears in the margin, and who is employed by the Postmaster-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, is authorized to receive mails ~~and loose letters~~ from

G.P.O. to - conveyed by Tram,

from 29th day of September, 19 30

to 31st day of December, 19 30.

DATED at Brisbane this second day of October 19 30.

J.W. Arnold.

for Deputy Director, Posts and Telegraphs.

* Here insert name of vessel and date or "all vessels" and period

*Cover to be
left in
post basket*

Specimen Signature of Bearer

Issued to

Position

By Authority: H. J. Gann, Government Printer, Melbourne.

No. 3358

Certificate No. 3358

To the ~~Masters of Vessels~~

GENERAL MANAGER, BRISBANE TRAMWAYS.

This is to certify that the bearer

of POST OFFICE RED HILL

whose signature appears in the margin, and who is employed by the Postmaster-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, is authorized to receive mails ~~and loose letters~~ from

G.P.O. to - conveyed by Tram

from 29th day of September, 19 30

to 31st day of December, 19 30.

DATED at Brisbane this second day of October 19 30.

J.W. Arnold.

for Deputy Director, Posts and Telegraphs.

* Here insert name of vessel and date or "all vessels" and period

Specimen Signature of Bearer

Issued to

Position

By Authority: H. J. Gann, Government Printer, Melbourne.

The "Hetherington" was of steel construction, 50 tones register, length 76.5 feet at water line, beam 33.25 feet, draught unloaded of 6 feet, and was propelled by side paddles with diagonal compound condensing 24 h.p. engine steamed by a Scottish marine boiler. It was authorised to carry 200 passengers including crew, 36 horses, 14 horses and drays or motor vehicles. The concrete ramp and bollards still may be seen at the ferry terminal in Oxford Street.

SECURITY OF MAIL

In raising the matter of security of mails, it was recorded at this time (1930) that in the entire 45 years of carriage of mail by tram, only one bag was tempered with, and that by an ex-official of the P.M.G. Dept, yet no receipts for mailbags were given, either by motormen or mailmen.

The P.M.G. Dept as a means of identification, provided Certificates (on which type-written "General Manager, Brisbane Tramways" was substituted for printed "the Masters of Vessels arriving at") dated 2.10.1930 through the Postmaster concerned, authorising mail officers to receive mail from tram motormen. These were effective from 29.9.1930 to 31.12.1930, and numbered:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 3352 Fortitude Valley | 3357 Bardon |
| 3353 Albion | 3358 Red Hill |
| 3354 South Brisbane | 3359 Camp Hill |
| 3355 Woolloongabba | 3360 Kedron |
| 3356 Paddington | |

They were probably renewed from 1.1.1931, but were superceded by decision of 27.2.1931 to utilize Forms P.M.4 and P.M.8 as receipts from 2.3.1931 to Post Offices, thirteen in all, at:

- | | | | |
|----------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|
| Albion | Kedron | Bulimba | Fortitude Valley |
| Petrie Terrace | Paddington | Bardon | Red Hill |
| Ashgrove | Auchenflower | South Brisbane | Woolloongabba |
| Camp Hill | | | |

TERMINATION OF TRAM MAIL

While these arrangements continued, the Deputy-Director, Posts & Telegraphs, Brisbane, had made submissions to the Postmaster-General, Melbourne, in respect to the use of departmental vehicles in lieu of trams, and discussion was held between the Deputy-Director and the then Minister, the Hon. A. Parkhill, on a visit to Brisbane, about 1933. Perhaps the effects of the severe economic depression of 1929-1932 also was a consideration, among others.

Finally, the case for P.M.G. transport prevailed, and on 19.7.1934, the Deputy Director informed the Manager, Tramway Dept, that due entirely to the growth of the city, and development of the P.M.G's own transport, the arrangements by which mails were carried by tram over the past 49 years, would be discontinued after 31.8.1934.

Copy of this letter was directed to be placed on 13 relevant P.O. files, which would suggest that for the last three years at least, mail was carried to and from the above-listed post offices.

Mr. G. R. Steer, General Manager, B.C.C. Tramways acknowledged this on 23.7.1934, and whilst regretting the loss of the business, cordially reciprocated the sentiments of the happy relationship.

TELEGRAM DELIVERY BY TRAM - W.W.II - 1939-45

Before the advent of the teleprinter, telegrams were transmitted by morse lines from Central Telegraph Office, Elizabeth Street, City, to a number of Brisbane suburban post offices, but during the latter part of World War II, the influx of thousands of servicemen, and heavy demands of the Pacific War, caused morse lines to become heavily loaded.

To alleviate the congestion, delivery of telegrams was expedited by a half-hourly shuttle service between G.P.O. and suburban post offices. Some twelve female telegraph messengers were recruited, called "Transport Girls", who were dressed in the navy blue uniform of the Post Office with white peak cap, blouse and serge skirt (with serge jacket for winter), and who carried a small leather bag over the shoulder for telegrams.

They were issued a tram pass and carried telegrams by tram from G.P.O. Delivery Section during the period from about 1943 to 1946 to post offices at

WOOLLOONGABBA RED HILL PADDINGTON ALBION

Delivery from these latter offices was made by telegram boys on bicycles to local areas, or to further distant post offices.

Blackout Deliveries: Another service provided during blackouts when use of bicycles was precluded, was the travel by tram of male junior postal officers to various post office delivery areas, deliver telegrams on foot through darkened suburban streets and return by tram to the G.P.O.

LAST DAY TRAM MAIL - 1969

After 31.8.1934, the further tramway expansion, and subsequent events leading up to the abolition of the efficient, profitable, pollution-free and popular trams in favour of a consistently unprofitable, but admittedly more flexible, bus system - an extremely controversial public issue - are not relevant to the Conveyance of Mail.

Suffice to state the Brisbane trams last traversed their routes on Sunday, 13.4.1969.

With the approach of the inevitable, the BRISBANE TRAMWAY MUSEUM SOCIETY was formed in June, 1968, for the restoration and preservation of trams, trolley-buses and mechanically-driven buses, and set up their Museum at Ferny Grove.

By way of commemorating the 48 years during which the trams carried mails, the B.T.M.S. arranged with the Brisbane City Council, Department of Transport, and the Director, Posts & Telegraphs, Queensland, for a tram to carry a mailbag, and a posting box from WOOLLOONGABBA P.O. to G.P.O. on the last day. A four-motor (F.M.) "Phoenix" car No. 547 which entered traffic on 24.9.1963 was selected. This was the first of the eight "Phoenix" cars built after the disastrous fire at Paddington Depot on Friday night 28.9.1962, when about one third of the tram fleet was destroyed.

On its run from Balmoral to Ascot (Oriel Park), tram 547 arrived at Woolloongabba P.O. 3.15 p.m. when the red-painted posting box (in lieu of the posting bag of yester-year) was hooked on the near side window of the motorman's compartment, and the author handed the navy-blue mailbag to the motorman. The large jostling crowd still posting mail, ensured this was a vastly different occasion from the days when tram conductors and mailboys performed such tasks.

On arrival at the G.P.O. - a ten minute run delayed to 25 minutes - the mailbag was carried to the mailroom by Mr Harold Hinckfuss, a prominent member of the Post Office Historical Section (and since deceased), and the Posting Box was handed to the Postmaster, for the processing of the "mail."

An appropriate "Last Day Tram Mail" cachet was applied to 3,000 specially designed covers, and an additional 1,570 ordinary envelopes were posted. As there was no specifically appropriate postage stamp, the B.T.M.S. utilized the then best transport theme - the 5c. Commemorative issued on 26.2.1969 for the Sixth Biennial Conference of the International Association of Ports and Harbours. Many used the normal definitive postage stamps. As no staff was booked on at Woolloongabba P.O. registered mail was not carried.

Nine days later on 22.4.1969, tram 547 was conveyed from Ipswich Road Depot to the Callide Valley Lions Club, Biloela, and placed on blocks in the Apex Park, but with the efflux of time, it (and practically all others) rusted away and became derelict.

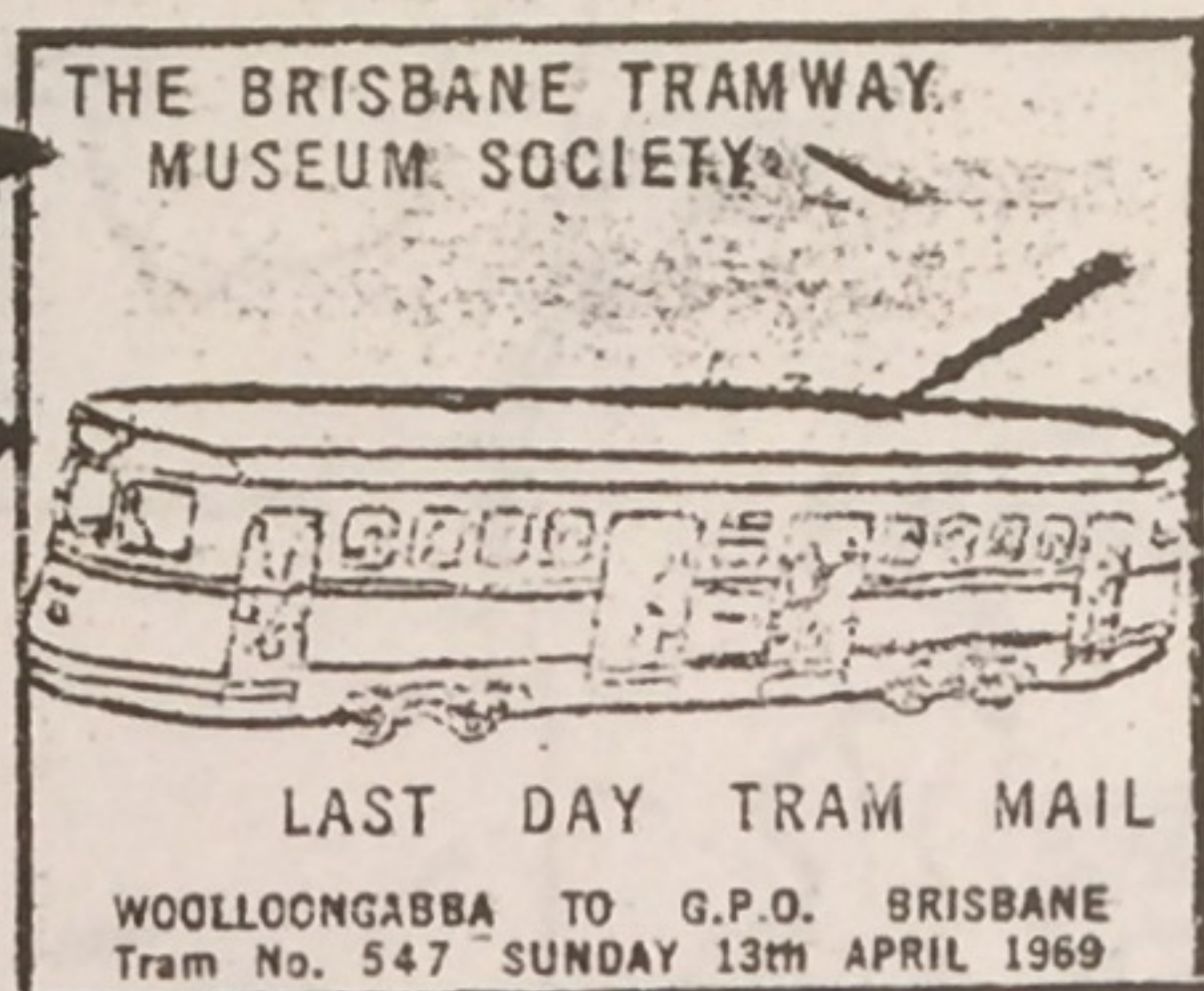
EPILOGUE

It seems ironic that although there were Post Office cancellers and implements impressing "PACQUEBOT", "LOOSE SHIP LETTER", "SHIP MAIL ROOM", "POSTED ON TRAIN", "T.P.O. No. " (Travelling Post Offices attached to trains), "BRISBANE AIRPORT", mail articles bearing stamps of the Colony of Queensland, and from 1.1.1913, stamps of the Commonwealth of Australia, were posted on trams for the 22 years 1894-1916, and cancelled by the normal Numeral Obliterators, circular date-stamps or machine cancellers.

In Melbourne at least, "The Age" newspapers for a time were conveyed by tram from the City to suburban newsagents, for which a tram "stamp" or label was used.

Admittedly, there may have been justifiable reasons for non-provision, but Queensland and Brisbane's Postal History would have been so much the richer had there been a c.d.s. impressing, "POSTED ON TRAM", or "TRAM MAIL."

LAST DAY COVER



Mr. J. P. Meara,
20 Overend Street,
EAST BRISBANE.

4169

Last Mail Posted On and Carried By Tram
in Brisbane. Special Commemorative
Run arranged by the Brisbane Tramway
Museum Society on Last Day of Operation,
Sunday, 13 April, 1969.

This LAST DAY COVER depicts "Dreadnought" and "Drop Centre" trams which actually carried mail, and the Cachet features the "F.M." type car which carried the last day mail. The author chose the 25c "Cooktown Orchid" stamp issued 10 July, 1968 - Queensland's Floral Emblem.

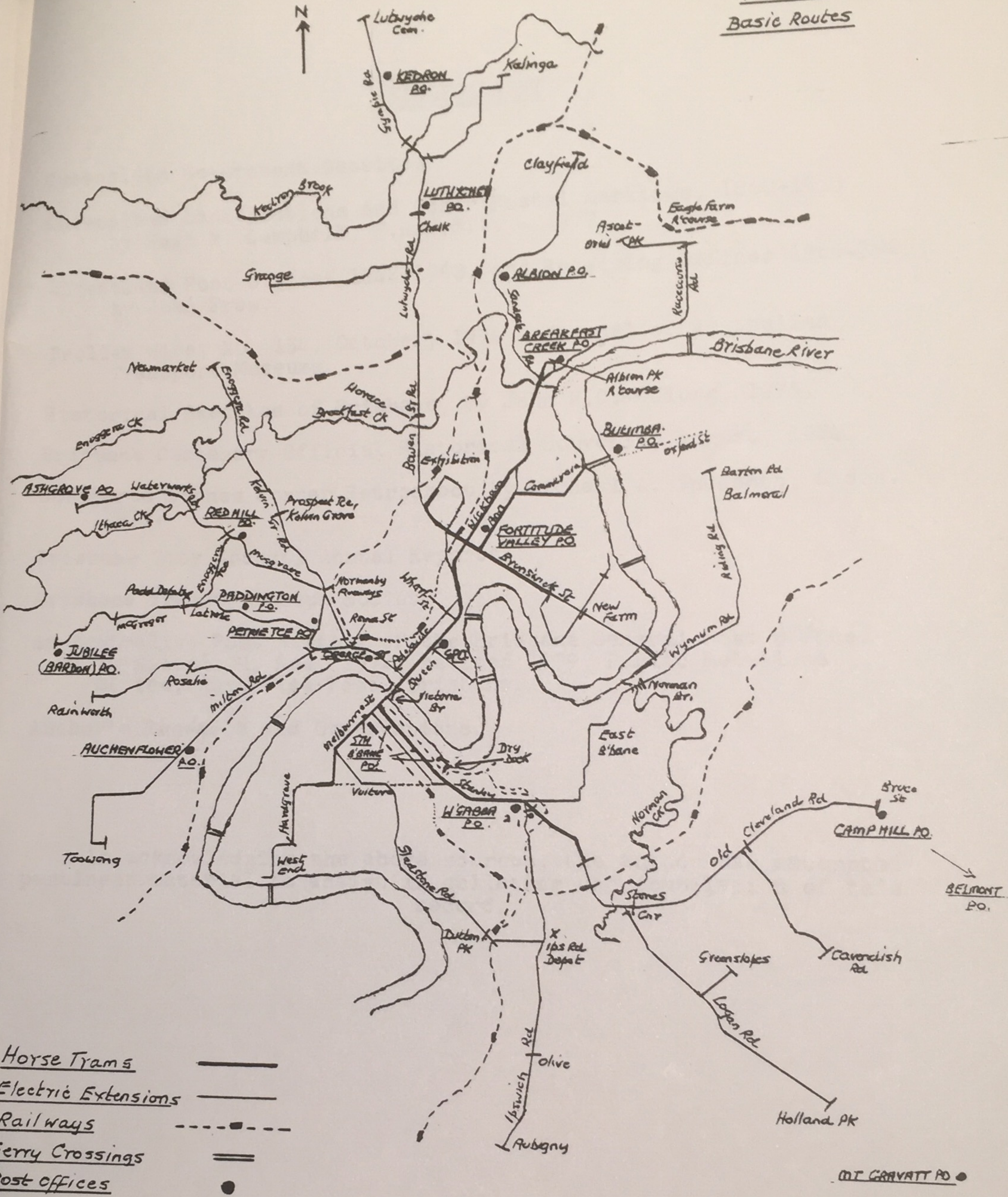


"Phoenix" tram 547 stops Woolloongabba P.O. to receive Posting Box (S.Tyrrell) and mail-bag (P.Meara). (Photo. Author's collection)

BRISBANE TRAMWAYS

1885-1934

Basic Routes



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record.