

## **A collection of tram related articles from the Brisbane Courier**

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### 27-2-1886 NEW TRAMS FOR BRISBANE

In January Agnews of Nundah built two, and others have been delivered by Watts of Brisbane and Stephenson of the U. S. It will be remembered that Stephenson of New York sent out large paintings of their single and double deck models.

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### 22 -6- 1897 THE FIRST ELECTRIC TRAM

The first of the Brisbane Tramway Company's electric trams made a very successful trial run from the Logan road to the south end of the bridge yesterday afternoon. The Mayor and aldermen of South Brisbane were taken on board at the Municipal Council Chambers where the Volunteer Band also joined the car. The band struck up a lively tune and the car was then run down to the south end of the bridge where it crossed over on to the down line and ran back to the Logan road terminus. Some short trial trips were then made for the purpose of instructing the new motor men in their duties, Mr. Badger, the Company's electrical engineer, being in charge of the car. A final trip was then made to the Bridge and back to the terminus. The new car will run regularly today and other fresh cars will be added as the drivers get broken into their new work.

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### 22-6-1897 THE FIRST ELECTRIC CAR RUN IN STANLEY STREET YESTERDAY

#### A Successful Trial

Yesterday afternoon the Brisbane Tramways Company ran the first of their electric cars along Stanley street and the Logan road. Last Saturday night a short private trial trip was made with the car, which was found to run very successfully. At half past 2 yesterday afternoon Mr. Badger, the company's engineer, had the car on the rails at the Logan road terminus ready to start.

A considerable crowd had assembled, and many people seemed to be lost in wonderment as to how the thing was to move. However, Mr. Badger mounted the driving platform, and in very short order the car was travelling smoothly along the track. A run was made to the South Brisbane Municipal Council Chambers, where the Mayor and aldermen of South Brisbane, together with the Volunteer Band, were taken on board. The band immediately struck up a lively air and the car was sent along at a good pace to the Victoria Bridge. The footpaths in Stanley-street were lined with people, who took a very keen interest in the car which was most decidedly a novelty in Brisbane. On arrival at the south end of the Bridge, the car was run on to the other track, and the trip back to Woolloongabba was again made. Some short trips were then made for the purpose of instructing some of the drivers in the method of handling the car, Mr. Badger finally running it another trip to the Bridge and back.

Those who travelled on the new car yesterday expressed themselves fully convinced of its superiority to the horse cars. Certainly the electric cars are heavier, weighing about 9 tons, and are set on better springs than the horse cars, yet the difference in the motion is very noticeable. The electric car yesterday ran with wonderful smoothness and evenness, whilst the speed was twice that of the horse car. The starting was without that unpleasant jerk inseparable from horse traction, and the electric gear is so finely adjusted that the vehicle can be stopped almost instantaneously. Observing the car from the footpath, one is immediately struck with the smooth silent way it glides along, though a powerful bell gong is attached to give warning to other traffic. Drivers yesterday who had had no previous experience of electric cars were enabled after one or two trials to handle the new tram with perfect ease, whilst the weight of the cars and the new self-adjusting points which have recently been put down, render the chances of leaving the track exceedingly remote. With more than sixty passengers on board yesterday the tram ran at a speed of over sixteen miles an hour on clear stretches of the road.

The electric car itself is vastly different from the cars now in use. At either end is the driving platform, where the controller is placed, and the motor man stands. With his left hand he shuts the current off and on, whilst in his right hand is a powerful gear brake. The alarm gong is sounded with the foot, and there is above the motor man's head a switch for completely cutting the current out of the car in case of accident, or an examination of the motors being found necessary. The passenger portion of the car consists of an enclosed centre compartment and two open summer seats at either end. The body of the car rests on a powerful steel truck, and the motors are fixed on each axle, connecting directly with the current, which is taken from the overhead trolley wire by a flexible trolley arm. The car itself is fitted up with incandescent lamps and the seats are very comfortable.

The current is supplied direct from the power-house in Countess-street where there are three very powerful generators, each one working separately, and capable of taking up relief work. It was intended yesterday to run the new car over the bridge to the North Quay, but this was not considered advisable owing to the crowded state of the traffic, and it is not expected that any of the electric cars will be run across the bridge until tomorrow. Today the new car will run regularly from the Logan road to the south end of the bridge, and other new cars will be put on as fast as the motor men can be broken in to their work. The bonding of the track in Queen-street will be rapidly pushed on with, and it is expected that within a fortnight's time there will be nothing but electric trams running between the Logan-road and the Exhibition. The new cars will then run on the West End extension, which will be finished early next month, and the new system will gradually replace the horse traction. At the power-station everything is in readiness, even to the special sheds for the examination of the cars, which are being rapidly delivered by the contractors, Messrs G. Agnew & Co, of Nundah.

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24 -6- 97

The new cycle track at the 'Gabba cricket ground will be opened on Saturday; The electric trams will run from the bridge to the ground which in itself will be a novelty.

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10 -7- 97

Brushes are being fixed on the wheels of the new electric trams to prevent sparking and loss of contact due to dirt on the rails.

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15 -7- 97

The electric trams are interfering with telephones, causing a humming noise that rises to a siren effect as a tram passes near. It has been found that this is due to poor earthing and can be rectified only by putting the phone wiring underground.

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#### TRAMWAY MOTORMAN SHOT A QUEEN STREET SENSATION

Some excitement was caused in Queen Street in the early hours of last evening. Edward (----) a tram motorman, married, residing in Clive Street, South Brisbane, was driving a New Farm Wharf car, bound for New Farm Wharf, down Queen Street, and was about to pull up at the corner of Creek Street, when a woman walked from the inside of the car and went as if to touch him on the shoulder. It is alleged that she then fired a revolver, the bullet entering the motorman's back over the spine. He turned to grasp his assailant, and another shot was fired the bullet taking effect in his right shoulder. However, he held the woman until the police arrived, and was then given first aid by the Ambulance Brigade and conveyed to the Mater Misericordiae Public Hospital, where a medical examination showed that his condition was not serious. An Xray examination will probably be made today.

On inquiry from police headquarters at Roma Street at a late hour last evening the sub-inspector in charge professed that the only information he had was that a man had been shot and that a woman had been detained.

A précis of a following article on the 10th March mentions that the incident occurred about 9.20 pm on a dreadnought tram and the assailant was a single girl of 17. The police reported that she had met the motorman while travelling on tramcars the previous July and a relationship developed which resulted in her becoming pregnant. Attempts at "treatment" failed so she purchased a gun to take her own life and considered drowning but later decided to seek revenge on the motorman. She boarded his tram at North Quay and rode out to Ipswich Road. She intended to sit on the platform seat behind him on the return but it was occupied by the motorman's wife so she sat inside. The police watched the girl overnight and after her admissions she was charged and remanded until placed in the care of the Salvation Army. Bail was allowed set at one hundred pounds.

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## MECHANICAL SWEEPER FOR TRAM RAILS

One of the problems set the Brisbane Tramway Company has been the cleaning of the grooves in the rails. Various devices have been tried. Hitherto they have been fixed on the passenger cars, and manipulated by the motorman, but, as he could not always raise the lever when obstruction was met, the levers or brushes, or whatever were used, were snapped off, and moreover much dust was raised. The company had to fall back on the employment of a number of men, who did the work by hand. A new idea has, however, been tried. This is a small car, with two motors, and scrapers fixed between the wheels, so that it can run in either direction. A water-tank is placed on the car, from which water is sprinkled over a narrow strip in front of the scrapers. This prevents the dust from rising, and is therefore a great advantage over other devices. Two men are employed. One man works the car and the other, standing on the front platform, manipulates the scrapers by means of a lever. The car goes out with the other cars in the morning, and runs over all the lines all day, giving, of course, more time to those lines that require more cleaning. The car has been running all the week and the Manager (Mr. Badger) says the results have been very satisfactory. A number of the men previously employed in sweeping by hand will now no longer be required, but of course some will still be kept to look after the points and curves.

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## CABLE TRAMS FOR BRISBANE?

Information for this article has been derived from various items appearing in digitised copies of "The Brisbane Courier" from 1887 to 1892 available on the National Library of Australia's website. Additional information or corrections are welcome.

Reading articles under the selection of the Metropolitan Tramway and Investment Company one can only feel sorry for the many problems the company encountered during its existence. The horse trams commenced running on the 10th August 1885 and as early as 12th November 1887 the following excerpt appeared in a director's report to shareholders. "Permission has been obtained during the year from the local authorities to substitute electricity for horses as our motive power whenever we see the same to be practicable. It is the opinion of the company's engineers that this will soon be the case."

Then the fifth annual report to shareholders appearing on 28th November 1888 included statements that great improvements were being made in the USA with electric trams supported by a document from a Boston Company praising the overhead system over the storage battery type of tram. Despite the exciting prospects of the new form of propulsion the company could not afford the expense of conversion.

Then on 23rd January 1890 an item appeared that Mr. George Duncan, engineer of the Metropolitan Tramway Trust, had visited Brisbane to report on the prospects of the M.T. & I., including an application to cable or electric power. A telegram had been received claiming that as over fifty percent of shareholders were from Melbourne opinion was strong that the cable system would be the best substitute for horse traction. By this time almost all of Melbourne's expansive cable tram system had been constructed under the control of George Duncan.

It was reported on the 10th February 1890 that Mr. T.E. White, Chairman of the company, had written to the town clerk (knowing details of Duncan's report and that finance would be

available from Victoria), "According to the provisions of the Tramways Act of 1882, section 53, we hereby apply for the concurrence of the corporation with our intention to introduce the cable system upon our lines. As you are aware, we had intended to use electrical traction; but have decided to adopt the more expensive cable system, provided the very large capital required can be procured. Of this there is, I am glad to say, very little doubt, as the cable has proved such a great success elsewhere. The system will be identical in character with that used in Melbourne, and will be constructed by the same eminent engineer (Mr. G. Duncan) who carried out so successfully that great scheme - the best street tramway in the world." The letter went on to advise how the streets would be paved and requested council's assistance when the time came.

Probably the most interesting aspect of the cable system was the reading of an abridged version of Duncan's report to an adjourned extraordinary general meeting of shareholders reported on 5th March 1890. While somewhat long, readers will obtain a good idea of the proceedings of the time. "THE CHAIRMAN, after announcing the business, read an abridgement of Mr. Duncan's report, prepared by that gentleman, as follows:-

"The cities of North and South Brisbane, through which the tramways are now laid down, comprise an area of over eight square miles, and estimated population at present is 75,000. In the year 1881 it was 31,000 showing that within the last decade the population has more than doubled itself. The present system of tramways is operated by horses, and about thirty-eight cars are daily running on the various routes. The total mileage of tramways is about four and a half miles of double track and four miles of single tracks.

It is recommended to convert the present horse tramways into a cable system, making the lines double track throughout; and in addition, laying down a line of tramway in Boundary-street, and a short extension of the New Farm branch in Brunswick-street. The total estimated cost of the conversion and extension is £204,400. The capital investment in the present horse tramway as shown by the last balance sheet is £149,700 19s. 9d. This amount can be reduced by the sale of freehold properties, horses, harness and other assets that can be dispensed with, to about £116,000: and adding the cost of the cableways, a total capital of about £320,400 will be invested in the tramway.

The estimated annual revenue for the present tramway, when completed as a cable system, including the Boundary-street line and New Farm branch extension, is £63,200. The working expenditure is estimated at £31,300, leaving a net profit of £31,900, or equivalent to a return of about 10 percent on the capital invested. The profits in the future should increase with the population. The concession granted to the company by Act of Parliament is a favourable one, and the proposal of laying down a system of cable tramway commends itself as being sound and practicable throughout."

Mr. White added that the shareholders might congratulate themselves upon receiving such a favourable report, and he had no doubt whatever that they would agree to the increase of the capital of the company, and to the carrying out of Mr. Duncan's suggestions in their entirety. The only novel portion of the report was the proposal to run a line from Petrie's Bight up the Boundary-street to the Grammar School. That was a route which could not have been adopted with horse traction, but it presented no difficulties whatever to the cable system. By the construction of that line the company hoped to secure the Gregory-terrace and a portion of the Wickham-terrace traffic. The cars of course would not stop at Petrie's Bight, but run on to the Victoria Bridge or further as might be decided upon. He moved that the report be accepted.

In reply to Mr. Day the Chairman said it was not proposed in the meantime to continue the Exhibition line to the station there or to the hospital. There were many extensions and new lines in prospective, but with the exception of the ones mentioned in the report, it was not intended to carry these out until the company was in the way of paying dividends. Mr. Day thought it would be a mistake not to continue the line to the Exhibition station, which for many people was a more convenient station than either that at Ann-street or Roma-street.

The Chairman said that application would be made immediately to the Government for the necessary powers to lay down the tramway in Boundary-street. Mr. Duncan considered that a city line ought to be taken possession of without delay.

Mr. Brentnall considered that there was a great deal in what Mr. Day had said, and thought that when the line was taken to the Grammar School it might with advantage be extended to Normanby station. The Chairman said that there was a probability of the Normanby station being done away with. The Chief Railway Commissioner, he believed, had a strong feeling that the line through Victoria Park should be taken up altogether. Mr. Brentnall thought that the line should be continued to the hospital and the Acclimatisation Gardens. A great number of people visited the gardens on Sunday afternoons.

The Chairman said that it was principally a matter of money. The company hoped, after the present system was converted into the cable system, and the extensions recommended were carried out, to lay before the shareholders proposals including a number of new lines. He moved that Mr. Duncan's report be adopted. Mr. Porter seconded the motion, which was unanimously agreed to.

The Chairman then moved - "That the capital of the Company be increased to £500,000 by the creation and issue of 70,000 new shares of £5 each, ... (for the purpose as outlined above)." Mr. Clarke seconded the motion which was carried unanimously.

In an excerpt from the seventh ordinary general meeting on 2nd December 1890 the Chairman said, "The Company has been delayed in their intended conversion from horse to cable traction through the necessity for having an Amending Tramways Act passed before commencing the work. He explained the benefits to be derived from the cable, which, however, would necessitate additional capital. At the same time, he himself thought that an electrical terminal section (?) would be still more satisfactory, because it would be capable of earlier extension."

It seemed the writing was on the wall for an excerpt from a company report on 7th May 1891 noted, "Your directors are unable at present to place before the shareholders a definite proposal for reconstruction. Since the decision arrived at to substitute cable for horses, electrical traction has made wonderful strides, and has come into increased favour in America, where considerably over 300 companies are now using that power with good results, meeting every requirement as to speed, safety, and comfort for the travelling public, combined with economy of working to the company. Your directors therefore decided to request an expert who is visiting America to examine and report on the various systems in use there before taking final action."

That expert was none other than Mr. George Duncan! A very long article appeared on 18th October 1892 taking the form of a letter from the company chairman to the South Brisbane Municipal Council and Duncan's report. The report is far too long and detailed to reproduce but the letter contains some interesting segments, viz.

Sir, I have the honour to inform you that Mr. Duncan, the eminent city engineer of Melbourne and the contractor of the cable system of tramways in that city, has visited America on behalf of this company, and as a consequence of his careful investigation of the overhead electric system he has recommended us to adopt it. As you are aware we had intended to introduce the cable under his advice, but the reconsideration of the transit needs of your municipality compelled us to abandon the project.

We found that the district past the Fiveways could not be serviced by one main cable line, and that it was impossible to run the branches to the Orphanage, Norman Bridge, and Stanley Bridge by that mode of traction owing to the lightness of the traffic. It would be impossible to pay the expenses of the cable where a fifteen to twenty minutes service is adequate.

The result is that he recommends us to put in an electric overhead system of the most expensive description. He states that it must be first-class to give satisfaction to the shareholders and the public, and he estimates the expense at about £200,000. This includes the relaying of the existing lines in a superior manner, the wood paving of Stanley-street to the Dry Dock and new extensions to Hardgrave Hill, the Orphanage, Mount Pleasant, Stanley Bridge, and Norman Bridge."

The Orphanage was located in Ipswich Road on the site of the present Princess Alexandra Hospital. The Company's flirtation with cable tramways was over as was its aspirations to electrify its system. They did materialize of course but that is another story.

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## EXPERIMENT IN STREET WATERING

The watering of South Brisbane streets by the Brisbane Tramways Company is expected to commence almost immediately. In view of the interest attaching to this experiment, it is instructive to read the agreement as given in the last Mayoral report:-

"By an agreement which has been concluded with the Brisbane Tramways Company, the whole of the main thoroughfares through which the tram rails are laid will in future be watered, from kerb to kerb, by means of an electric motor. Although some time must necessarily elapse before the machinery and motor can be obtained, it has afforded me great satisfaction to be able to bring the negotiations to a successful issue. The cost to the council will be 1s. 3d. per mile of street for each sprinkling, and the company undertakes to supply all the labour, plant, machinery, and material required.

Provision has been made in the agreement for the town clerk to increase or decrease the number of sprinklings should the climatic conditions require a deviation from the schedule, so that should a westerly wind arise during the evening or night, it should be possible, by telephone communication, to have the whole of the main thoroughfares watered before business hours in the morning. The following is the schedule above referred to:-

Streets to be Sprinkled Three Times per Day - Stanley-street, from Melbourne-street to Ipswich-road; Melbourne-street, from Stanley-street to Boundary-street; Boundary-street, from Melbourne-street to Vulture-street; Vulture-street, from Boundary-street to Hardgrave-road; Ipswich-road, from Stanley-street to railway line; Logan-road, from Ipswich-road to Wellington-road.

Streets to be Sprinkled Twice per Day - Logan-road, from Wellington-road to O'Keefe-street; Stanley-street, from Ipswich-road to King-street; Hardgrave-road, from Vulture-street to Dornoch-terrace.

Streets to be Sprinkled Once per Day - Ipswich-road, from railway line to Cornwall-street; East Brisbane tramway, from Stanley-street to Norman Bridge; Gladstone-road tramway; from Boundary-street to Prospect-terrace."

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## AN ELECTRIC WATERING TRAM

From The Brisbane Courier Thursday 25th January 1906

The novelty of a ride on the new watering car built by the Brisbane Tramways Company was yesterday afternoon enjoyed by a small party, which included the Mayor of South Brisbane (Alderman J. Davies), Alderman D.B. McCullough, the town clerk (Mr. A. Leney), Mr. J. Bell, and Messrs. Badger (manager) and W.M. Nelson (assistant engineer), representing the company. Under arrangement with the South Brisbane Council this car will water a specified number of streets. It is massively built, and the water receptacle, which holds 2000 gallons, is set off by the neat hooded platforms at either end for the motorman and conductor. A pressure of about 15 lb. to the inch is developed by the pump, which is driven by an electric motor. The neat and effective Westinghouse brake resembles the air-brakes of the Sydney tram system, and is an improvement in many ways over the ordinary Brisbane brake. An ordinary tram brake would not be adequate for the driver when the big car attained momentum. In accordance with the company's plan, all cars are now built in Brisbane, the truck being imported. A pair of sprinklers are fixed at either end of the "water tram," and the force is governed entirely by two levers, each in charge of an attendant. The trial run along Melbourne Street afforded a striking illustration of force and efficiency, the powerful spray shooting on to the edge of the footpaths on either side, or narrowing in obedience to the touch of the levers. When a vehicle or a cyclist was encountered the water was instantly turned off. Once, however, the lever was turned the wrong way, and a horse standing by the kerb received a useful object lesson at a pressure of 15 lb. to the inch. Every opportunity was taken to explain the working of the water system, and the visitors were pleased with the exhibition. It was noted, however, that the road dried rapidly; perhaps owing to the car moving slightly too fast or to the fact that fresh water instead of salt water was used. It is interesting to note that the North Brisbane Council is also stated to have a contract with the Tramways Company for the carrying out of street watering and the City Council may at any time ask the company to put the contract into force and undertake a similar work to that carried out yesterday in Melbourne Street.

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NEW TRAM DEPOT IN IPSWICH-ROAD From The Courier, Friday June 26th 1924

NEW TRAM DEPOT IPSWICH-ROAD SCHEME ACCOMMODATING 200 CARS  
SAVING OPERATING COSTS

Resumption notices have been served to all the owners of property affected by the Tramway Trust's proposal to establish a new tramcar depot on Ipswich road, and the allotments and improvements are now being valued.

The present tram depots at Logan road and Lang street (near the Dutton Park terminus) are totally in-adequate for the cars at present in service, and several of them encroach on to the roadway regularly at the Lang street depot.

The Logan road depot is very old, having been built originally for the horse cars, and with the additional cars which the Trust anticipates putting into service very extensive alterations and additions would be necessary at both depots.

The Lang street depot, however, does not permit of the accommodation being extensively increased, and with the object of ultimately providing one large depot for all Southside cars the Trust decided upon a more central site on Ipswich road. An area of approximately four acres has been resumed, but the Trust will not require the whole of this immediately, and several of the cottages will not be disturbed for some years.

The complete scheme will provide for a shed of six bays, to eventually accommodate nearly 200 cars, only two bays will house all the Dutton Park, Ipswich road and East Brisbane cars (thereby relieving the pressure at Logan road) and will enable the unsuitable Lang street site to be disposed of.

A saving in operating costs will be effected, and this will be considerably augmented later on when the new depot is extended and the Logan road shed closed.

The building will be so designed that further sections can be added from time to time as circumstances warrant, but it will probably be several years before the whole of the six bays are required; the Trust feels, however, that it must look well ahead and there is bound to be a very large increase in traffic in years to come. The site selected is the only suitable spot available.