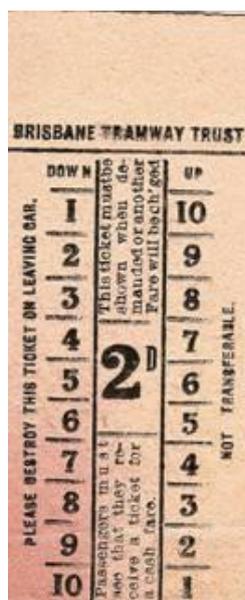


A Short History of Brisbane's Tram Tickets.

One neglected aspect of Brisbane's tramway history relates to the tickets used. Research into this aspect has found, unfortunately, a lack of information. However, sufficient has been found to make the presentation of this article worthwhile.



Tram tickets were introduced at the beginning of the Tramway system and in various forms remained in use for the 84 years that the trams served Brisbane. Those of us who are old enough to remember will recall the small slip of paper with the amount of fare paid and sections on the front of the ticket and the advertisement on the back. The ticket would have been validated by the conductor who would punch a hole in the appropriate section number where a passenger boarded using a hand held punch similar to what we use to this day at the Museum. The Brisbane Tramways Company and its successor the Brisbane Tramways Trust used private companies to print their tickets, one such company was Sapsford & Co.

Left is a Brisbane Tramway Trust ticket.

On 4 December 1925 at the first meeting of the Transit Committee of the newly created Brisbane City Council (BCC) which took over the tramway system on 1 December 1925 the matter was raised as to what would be the official name for the tramways. The Committee determined that the tramways be given the title of "Brisbane Tramways" and that name was used henceforth on the tickets.



Left is an example of an original 1d (one penny) Brisbane Tramways Company ticket. There is neither serial number nor any provision for section numbers. It is uncertain if the ticket would have been punched or simply torn by way of validation.



All Brisbane City Council tram tickets were printed at the Ticket Printing Office that was housed at Milton workshops with paper for the tickets being stored both at Milton and at Paddington Depot.

Left, Toowong Print Room

After the closure of the Milton workshops, the Ticket Printing Office was moved to modern offices at the new Toowong workshops. The Printing Office carried out a variety of printing services for the various departments of the Council. It was responsible for producing all Council tickets, timetables and brochures as well as internal stationery for a number of Council departments. In its binding section, restoration was carried out on old books and other publications.

An article appeared in The Courier (A Brisbane newspaper) of Wednesday the 12th of November 1927 from a person with the initials of J.B. from New Farm complaining "Why the Tramway authority persists in hanging on to an ancient red tape custom, is to say the least, hard to define. With the introduction of the new Brisbane Tramway tickets, the punching operation is still to continue". The person goes on to compare the "sensible idea" of Sydney, issuing section tickets and doing away with the punching. On 27 November, the General Manager replied in the same newspaper stating the system of punching tramway tickets had been retained because it provided a better check upon the revenue than the issue of tickets which are not punched. The position in Brisbane is different to Sydney, however, insomuch, as most of the Brisbane tram routes serve two suburbs, each on different sides of the city, that is the most economical method of working whereas in Sydney all tram routes terminate in the city. The method of punched tickets that has been in operation in Brisbane has for years been used similarly in Melbourne and Adelaide with excellent results. In London tickets are also punched.

In 1928 samples of Brisbane Tramway tickets were sent to several British Tramway systems to get their opinion as to whether they were the best type to be used. We do not know details of any response but as the BCC design of tram tickets remained virtually unaltered during the time of tramway operations, it can be presumed the overseas operators must have felt the design was more than adequate.

On 20 February 1928 concession tickets were introduced providing 12 rides for one shilling city section only and the maximum age for children entitled to travel for a one penny fare increased from under 12 to under 14. After 17 December 1934 concession tickets were available for all sections. Also, on 11 December 1933, weekly tickets were introduced offering a discount of 25% on all fares. To give some idea of the numbers of tickets required on the trams the following shows the quantity printed in the 1935 -36 financial year

Ticket Type	Quantity printed
Ordinary 1d	6,461,443
Concession (12 for 1/-)	12,627,192
Ordinary 2d	26,564,271
Ordinary 3d	17,053,789
Ordinary 4d	6,288,941
Ordinary 5d	433,327
Weekly Tickets 1/6	3,732,612

Weekly Tickets 2/3	5,537,472
Weekly Tickets 3/-	2,712,432
Weekly Tickets 4/-	71,868
Race and Excursions	125,745
Miscellaneous	973,640
Total	82,582,732
Average fare per mile	0.7709d
Average fare per passenger	2.18d

Amazingly there was no increase in fares between 1926 and 1948 One side effect was the saving in costs of not requiring further rotating printing plates in that period of time.

Originally, the colours of ticket paper included pink, grey, brown, green, blue, lilac, orange, yellow and just plain white. The printing was in black on the appropriate colour paper but later on white MF printing paper was used with an appropriate colour of printing ink for the specific value.



Left, Examples of Weekly and Concession Tickets

Weekly tickets were printed on a pulp-board. Advertisements often appeared on the reverse side of the ticket.

The colour paper for ticket printing came in rolls to the required dimensions from Norway through Edwards Dunlop & Co or Gordon & Gotch. During World War II and for at least 10 years afterwards colour paper was in very short

supply and because of this the BCC used white paper from the paper mills in Burnie, Tasmania ("Burnie") and colour dyed it in the printing office. This arrangement worked satisfactorily, but the colouring was not as distinct as the proper impregnated coloured paper, especially as the system provided for colouring on one side only and was an expensive exercise. The Cost of white Burnie paper in 1954 was 1s - 4 1/2d per pound. An order was placed in 1955 with Alexander & Moir and Co Pty Ltd for the import and supply of coloured paper for ticket printing. BCC received a very aggressive letter from Edwards Dunlop & Co about the order placed with Alexander & Moir and Co Pty Ltd.

During World War II there was a quota system for the supply of paper that limited the BCC to 15 tonnes a quarter from Burnie. This quota system saw the stock of paper dwindle but in 1946 BCC received a quantity coloured paper that helped with the shortage. This coloured paper was ordered before the war and was held up in Sweden for the duration of the war. Also because of the shortage of paper, the BCC looked at ways of stopping damage to the paper reels during transit and the solution found was to use flange steel rings and 3 ply ends.

In about 1948 the BCC looked at the ways to stop the counterfeiting of tram tickets. The method that was introduced was to deliberately misspell words on the tickets such as "Conucil" instead of "Council" and "trausferable" for "transferable" This worked well until 25 July 1958 when the Courier Mail newspaper printed an article advising the Council of the



misspelt words on the tickets. After this all tickets were printed with the correct spelling.

Left, Example of advertising on rear of tickets



In an internal memorandum to the General Manager of February 1952, a comparison between Brisbane and Melbourne tram

tickets was carried out. It was noted that the Melbourne tickets were printed on lighter weight paper and in one of the paragraphs of the internal memo it states "in general setup, the Melbourne ticket resembles Brisbane's, and as we have certainly not copied theirs, perhaps at some time they have followed our example. Our tickets show more details, and from a

composer's and machinist's angle, are a much superior job."



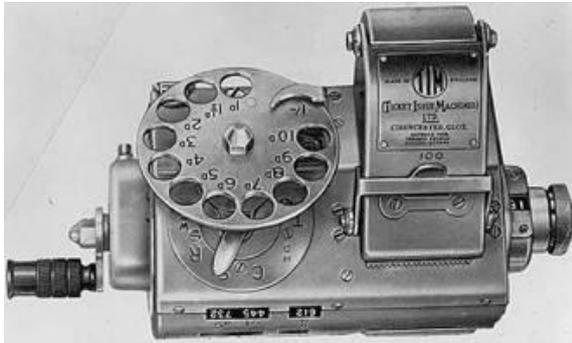
Left, Examples of tickets labelled "BCC Dept of Transport"

In a report from an overseas trip in 1949 to look at ticket issuing machines, it stated that ticket issuing machines were extensively used

in Great Britain, but not so much on the Continent, and very little in the United States where fare boxes were used. The most effective machines were the T.I.M. 12, which issues tickets from a white roll of paper in one colour and the Ultimate which issues coloured tickets. The T.I.M machine was initially chosen for use by the BCC

The T.I.M. machines were never used on the trams and only saw limited use on the buses, principally in the Western suburbs. Ultimate ticket machines were in fact also introduced and were used by conductors on the trolleybuses. When the trolleybuses changed over to driver only operation, the Ultimate machines were used by street seller conductors at safety zones and other stops in the city at peak hours. In the end both the T.I.M. and the Ultimate machines were phased out and the ever enduring paper tickets were universally used until the introduction of electronic ticketing procedures.

Also back in 1950 the BCC placed an order for 100 coin change giving machines from a Sporrønging & Co of Stockholm in Sweden.



Left, Photo of T.I.M. ticket issuing machines

The original TIMSON Press No. 2068 ticket printing press was supplied by Timson, Bullock & Barber Ltd of Kettering England and consisted of three letterpress printing units and a precision cutting unit and was shipped out from England in cases and assembled at Milton Workshops with the help of Edward Dunlop & Co. The printing press printed tram tickets in the following order

1. Print on the back of the tickets in a single colour, by means of a TIMSON letterpress-printing unit, using curved stereo plates.
2. Print on the face of the tickets in a single colour, from a second TIMSON letterpress-printing unit, with a separate shaft so that series letters may be printed in the same colour.
3. Print the numbers on the face of the tickets in a single colour, from a third TIMSON letterpress printing unit, by means of rotary numbering heads.
4. Cut the Web into sheets of tickets, each sheet being 16 1/2 inches long, by means of a TIMSON type precision cutting unit.
5. Discharge the sheets to a suitable delivery table, by means of tapes and beaters.

The printing unit maximum width of paper was 14 inches and the length of printing repeat is 16 1/2 inches and all tickets must be subdivisions of this measurement. Machine speed of the

printing unit was 8,000 to 10,000 cylinder revolutions per hour, depending on the class of work and the paper stock.



The same types of tickets in use on the tram and bus systems were continued on the buses for many years after the close of the tram system. Also after the closure of the tram system the practice of punching tickets was continued on the bus system. A large fixed punch was installed and the driver placed the ticket under the fixed punch and with a good downward motion punched the ticket.

Punch used on BCC buses Photo from BCC