

BRITISH NEW GUINEA and PAPUA (1885-1942)

Objective and Treatment

This is a study of letter, postcard and newspaper rates as published in the British New Guinea and Papuan Government Gazettes and Reports of 1885-1942, including Registration, airmail fees, late fees, surcharges concessions and multiple weight items that supplement the letter rates. The period of study is from the commencement of Civil Administration in 1885 until Military Administration was implemented in 1942 during World War II.

The six (6) Rates Periods in the study from 1885 until 1942, examines mail within the Colony/Territory, to Queensland (as the early Administration was from Brisbane), other Australian States, British Empire and Non British Empire destinations. The handling of inwards, censored and taxed mail in the Rates Periods is also treated. Development of airmail routes internally and to Australia was vital to the region and is given particular emphasis. Native post office staff was not proficient at calculating postal rates, particularly to overseas destinations, with significant occurrences of overpaid and underpaid (usually not taxed) mail. Outlying post office stamp shortages added to the use of incorrect rates.

Background

British New Guinea was a British Colony from 1888 until 1902, this period of administration being conducted from Brisbane. Queensland stamps were used until 30 June 1901, and thereafter stamps inscribed British New Guinea. After the Territory of Papua was proclaimed on 18 September 1906, British New Guinea stamps overprinted "Papua" were used until November 1907, when Papua commenced issuing its own stamps.

Importance and Rarity

In the 1922 Government Report Census, the Territory of Papua's European population had only reached 951 adults. This meant there was a very small volume of mail generated by the Colony, which was further restricted by the low survival rate. Poor literacy of the native population was evident, and this exhibit includes the only native letter recorded thus far.

The exhibit includes forty-five (45) covers with Origins, Destinations or Instructional markings where three (3) or fewer are recorded. Ten (10) other examples represent the earliest or latest dates of use. With the addition of the earliest recorded letter into British New Guinea, this exhibit is now the most comprehensive postal history study of British New Guinea and Papua, compiled over a collecting period of thirty years.

References

Papuan Philatelic Society Journal and Website Forum
Postal History of BNG and Papua 1885-1942 - R. Lee
Government Gazettes, Year Handbooks and Reports
BNG and Papua Postal Acts 1888-1945 - Bird, Collyer and Sparks
Australian Airmail Catalogue (2008) - T. Frommer

Personal Research and published articles

Musgrave Correspondence (Paper published) Royal Philatelic Society Victoria
Addressees and Addressors of Mail (Papers published, Papuan Philatelic Society Journal)
Censored Mail (Paper in preparation)

Certificates

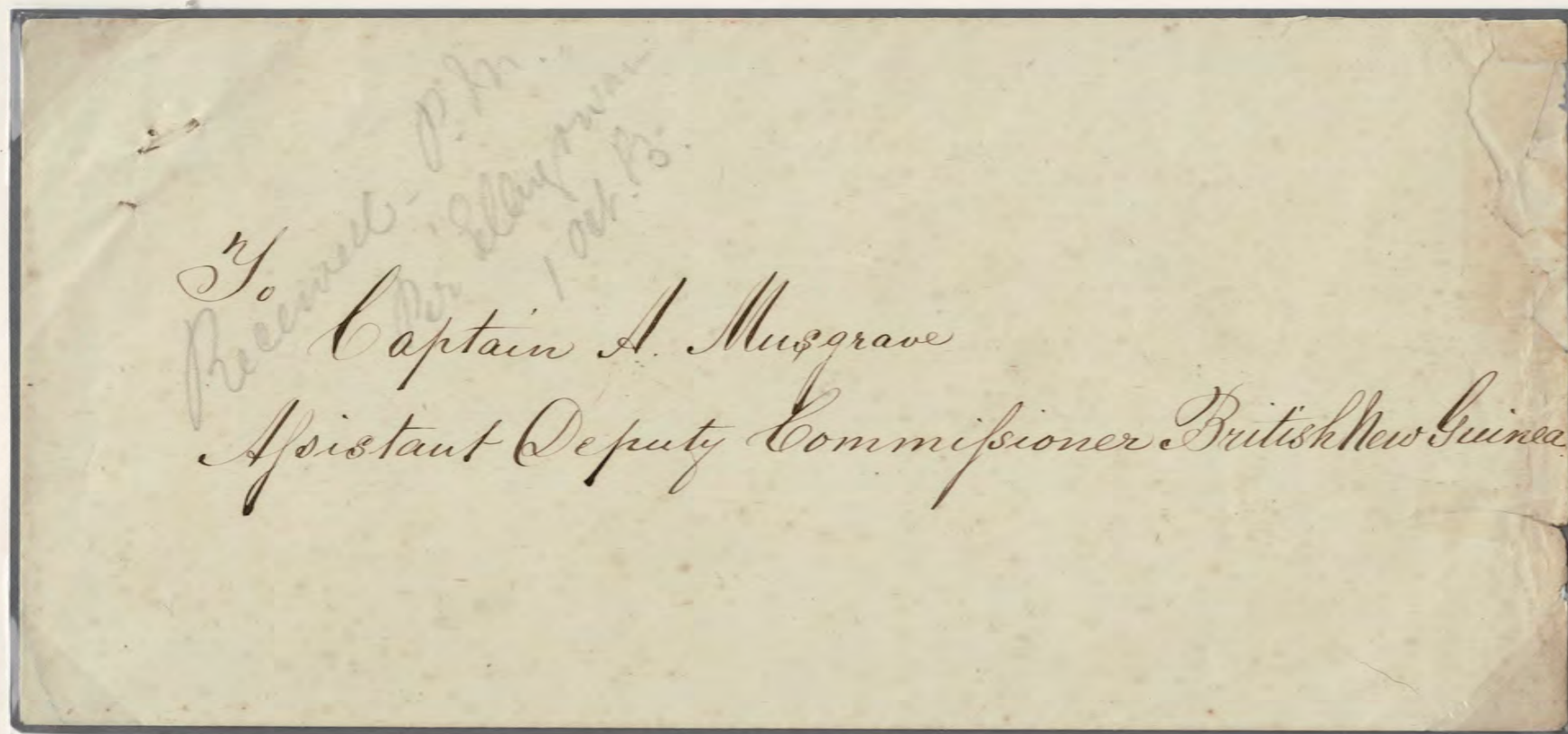
Expert Certificates of Genuineness are noted (E)

Exhibit Plan

Sheets

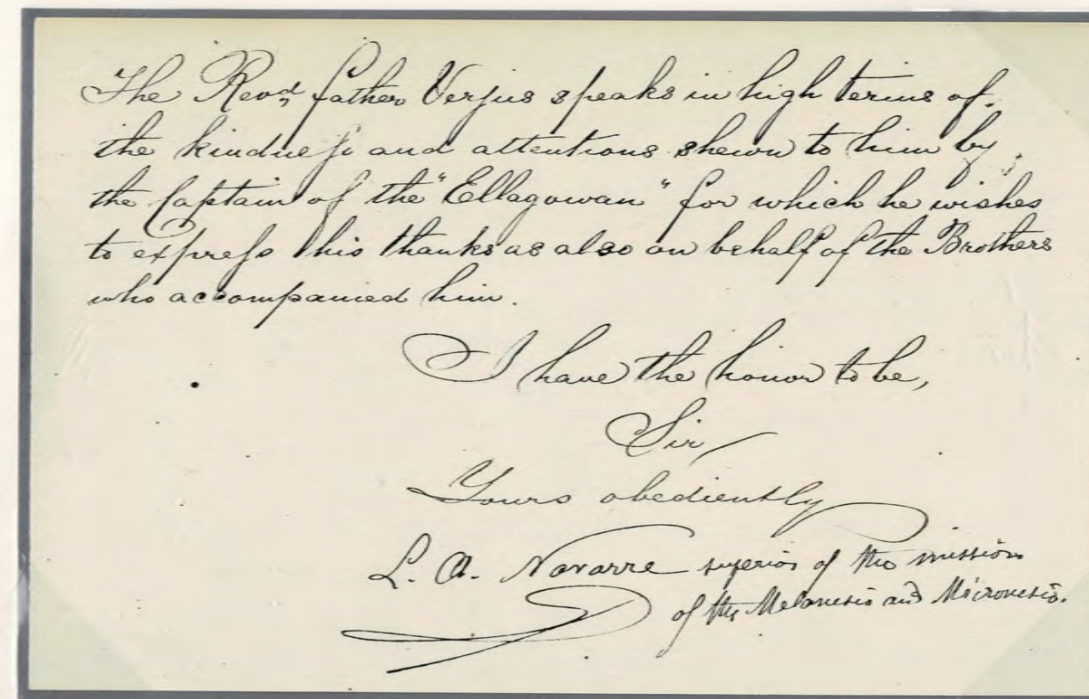
1 - 2
3 - 16
17 - 28
29 - 38
39 - 40
41 - 48
49 - 59
60 - 64

QUEENSLAND ADMINISTRATION - Unstamped Mail
QUEENSLAND ADMINISTRATION - Rates Period up to 1906
TERRITORY of PAPUA - First Rates Period 1906-1912
- Second Rates Period 1912-1921
- Third Rates Period 1921-1924
- Fourth Rates Period 1924-1931
- Fifth Rates Period 1931-1942
- Special Purpose Instructional Markings



September 1885 – Earliest letter recorded into British New Guinea that pre-dates the establishment of the Postal Service in British New Guinea

Sacred Heart Mission, Thursday Island to Port Moresby (arrival date of 1 October 1885). Endorsed 'Received P.M. per Ellengowan 1 Oct 85' (carried privately by London Mission Society vessel). Cancelled oval receiving handstamp **ASST.DEP.COMMR./NEW GUINEA RECEIVED 1.10.85**



Reduced photocopy of Father Navarre's gratitude for Captain Musgrave's assistance at the Yule Island Mission, on second page of the letter.

Page one of the letter is shown on the next page. →

Inwards Diplomatic Mail



No
 Captain Musgrave
 Assistant Deputy Commissioner of British New Guinea

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your Memorandum and Report of your visit to Reverend Father Verjus and return my most sincere thanks for the kindness shown to him and for the assistance so courteously afforded to him and his sick comrades.

I was aware of their probable want of provisions and immediately on arrival of the lugger which had conveyed them to New Guinea I attended to the shipping of the supplies I had received from Sydney and intended for their use. I unfortunately met with various obstacles at Thursday Island consequently causing delay. The first departure of the lugger was also un lucky as she was obliged to put back having lost her anchor. The second start was made on the 10th Sept. Father Verjus on the "Ellaugowan" met the boat near Guille Island and was enabled to near her sufficiently to speak and inform the captain that he should return to Thursday Island.



28th April 1898

Dear Sir William Macgregor,

I have to thank you for your letter of the 24th February expressing your private opinion with regard to the future of New

Guinea
 your su

Private

Sir William Macgregor K.C.M.G.

Government House

Port Moresby

British New Guinea

J. Chamberlain

1898, April 28
 England to Port Moresby
 with no postal markings

Carried by diplomatic bag via Brisbane,
 from Joseph Chamberlain,
 British Colonial Secretary, in London
 to Sir William MacGregor,
 Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony.

Chamberlain's letter inside
 dated 28 April 1898
 agrees with Sir William MacGregor,
 that George Ruthven Le Hunte
 would be a worthy replacement
 as next Lieutenant-Governor,
 the position which Le Hunte
 did assume in 1899.

Only recorded item of
 Diplomatic mail
 to or from British New Guinea.

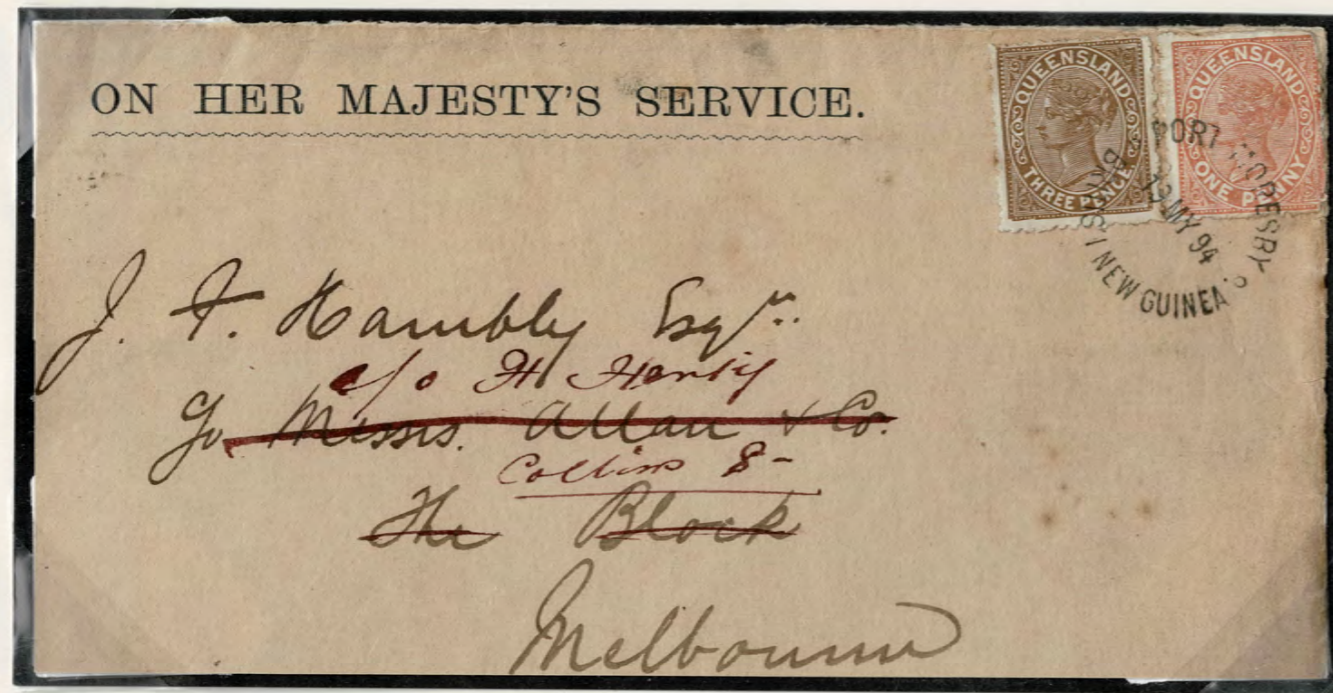
QUEENSLAND ADMINISTRATION – Rates Period up to 1906

Mail to Other Australian Colonies

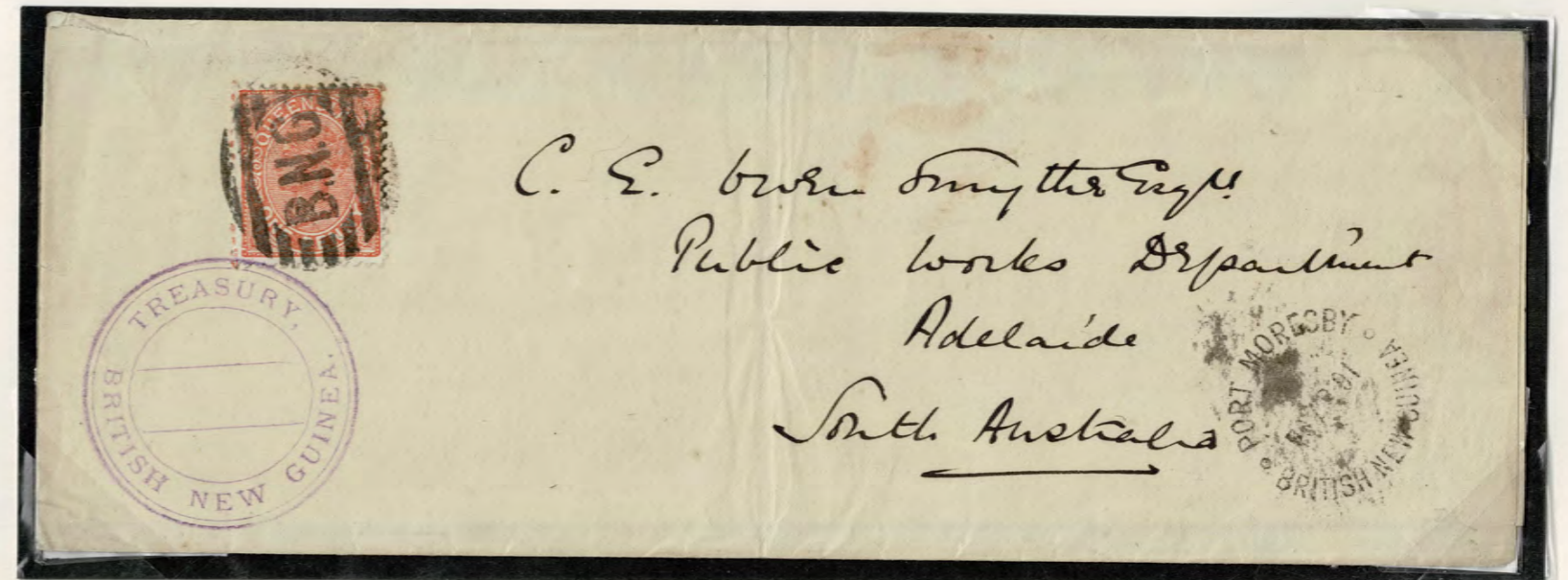


(E) 1900, April 10, Dogura, Bartle Bay, via Samarai to Hobart, Tasmania, 1d postcard rate. Backstamped Cooktown 20.4.00, with Hobart 2.5.00 arrival on the face.

Of the three recorded Queensland Postal Stationery cards from British New Guinea, this is the only 1d example recorded, and the only example to Australia.



1894, May 19, Port Moresby to Melbourne, Victoria, double 2d letter rate. (Cover reduced) Backstamped Cooktown 30.5.94, Brisbane 7.6.94 and Melbourne 11.6.94



1901, April 10, Port Moresby to Adelaide, South Australia, Printed Matter 1d wrapper rate.

Only recorded example of triple circle handstamp of TREASURY, BRITISH NEW GUINEA

Very few Printed Matter wrappers are recorded in the Queensland Period.



1900, August 20, Samarai to Port Melbourne, Victoria, single 2d letter rate. Backstamped Cooktown 24.8.00 and Melbourne 1.9.00

QUEENSLAND ADMINISTRATION – Rates Period up to 1906

Letter rate 2d within the Territory and to Australia, 2½d to all Other Places, with 3d Registration fee for all mail

Mail to Colony/State of Queensland



The handwriting of the Government Secretary, Anthony Musgrave.

(E) 1898, August 31, Port Moresby to Brisbane, single 2d letter rate + 3d Registration fee. Backstamped Thursday Island 8.9.98 and Brisbane 21.9.98 →

← 1891, August 28, Port Moresby to Brisbane, single 2d letter rate. Backstamped Cooktown 16.9.91 and Brisbane 20.9.91

Earliest recorded date for use of the cancellers.



This is the only cover recorded with the cancel REGISTERED/GRANVILLE BNG



1898, December 31, Samarai to Brisbane, single 2d letter rate + 3d Registration fee (not acknowledged) Backstamped Townsville 19.1.99 and Brisbane 25.1.99



(E) 1896, November 9, Port Moresby to Brisbane, single 2d letter rate + 3d Registration fee. Backstamped Thursday Island 23.11.96 and Brisbane 1.12.96

This cover is the earliest of only six Registered items recorded from Port Moresby in the Queensland period, and the only cover with the cancel REGISTERED/PORT MORESBY NG



1899, July 6, Port Moresby to Brisbane, single 2d letter rate. Backstamped Cooktown 13.7.99 and Brisbane 20.7.99

The writer, James Wood, Government Printer, Port Moresby is corresponding with the Government Printing Office in Brisbane, where all his printing supplies originated.

Mail to Colony/State of Queensland

1900, March 7, Samarai to Cooktown, single 2d letter rate.

Backstamped Cooktown 12.3.00

Typical soiled correspondence from James Dick to his wife.



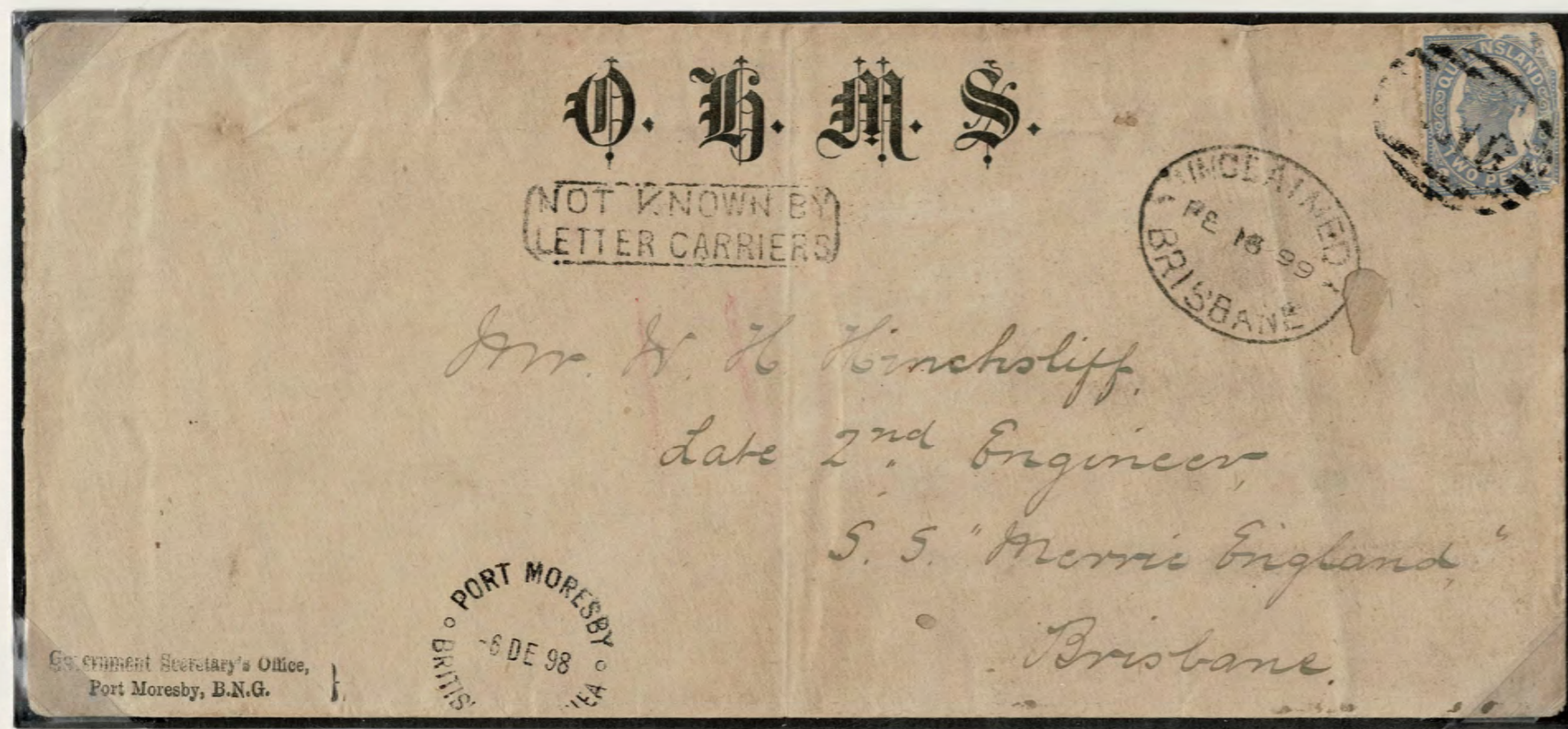
1899, October 10, Port Moresby to Brisbane, single 2d letter rate.
Backstamped Thursday Island 18.10.99 and Brisbane 26.10.99

Port Moresby Printing Office correspondence.



1893, September 7, Port Moresby to South Brisbane, single 2d letter rate.
Backstamped Cooktown 11.9.93

Sir William MacGregor, Lieutenant-Governor, writing to his wife Lady Agnes MacGregor, however all his letters were addressed by the Government Secretary, Anthony Musgrave.



1898, December 6, Port Moresby to Brisbane, Official mail at single 2d letter rate.
Backstamped Thursday Island 16.12.98, Brisbane 26.12.98 and DLO Brisbane 16.2.98.

For many years, the Government vessel S.S. Merrie England, was the only means to deliver and pick up mail around the coast.



1898, July 14, Port Moresby to Townsville, single 2d letter rate.
Backstamped Port Moresby 17.7.98, Thursday Island 22.7.98 and Townsville 26.7.98

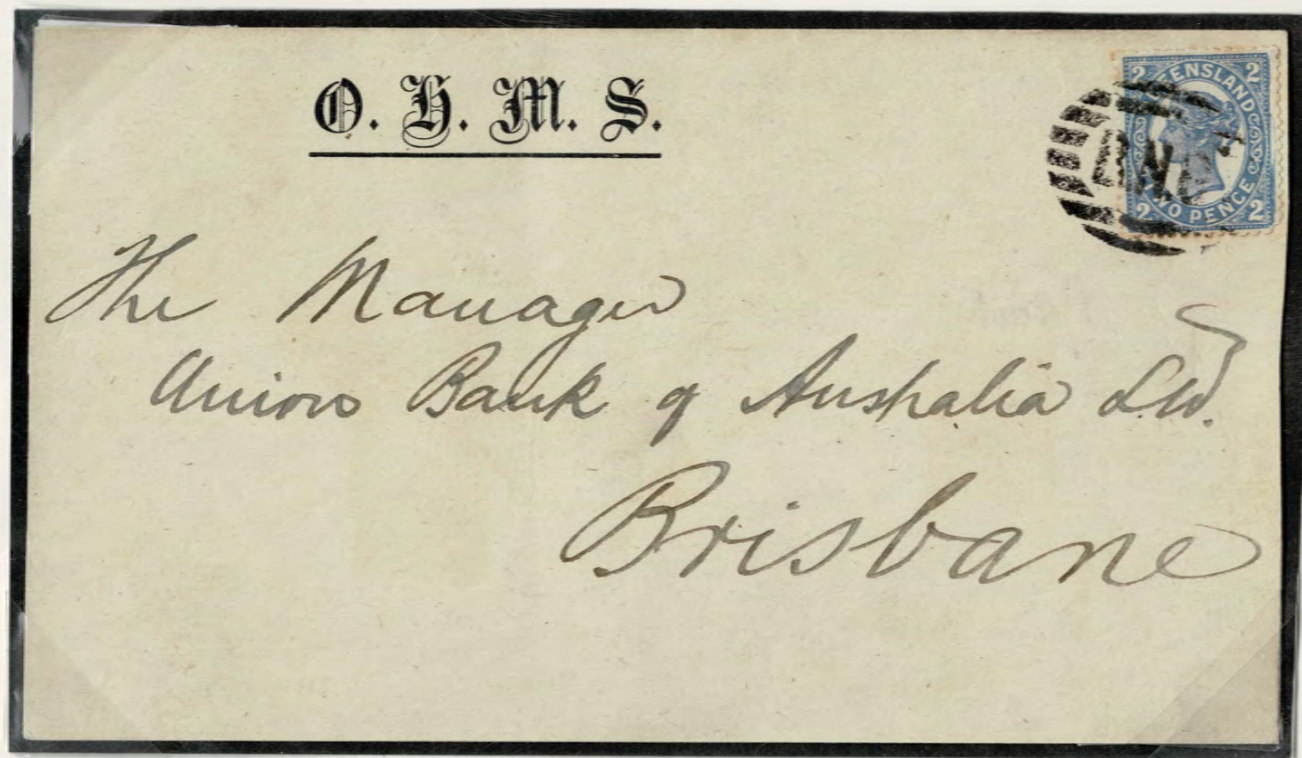
J.H. Rogers Ltd were Hardware Merchants in Townsville from 1897 onwards.



1895, October 5, Port Moresby to Brisbane, double 2d letter rate.
Backstamped Cooktown 17.10.95 and Brisbane 23.10.95



1896, September 14, Port Moresby to Brisbane, triple 2d letter rate.
Backstamped Thursday Island 19.9.96 and Brisbane 1.10.96



1897, September, Port Moresby to Brisbane, single 2d letter rate.
Backstamped Brisbane 16.9.97



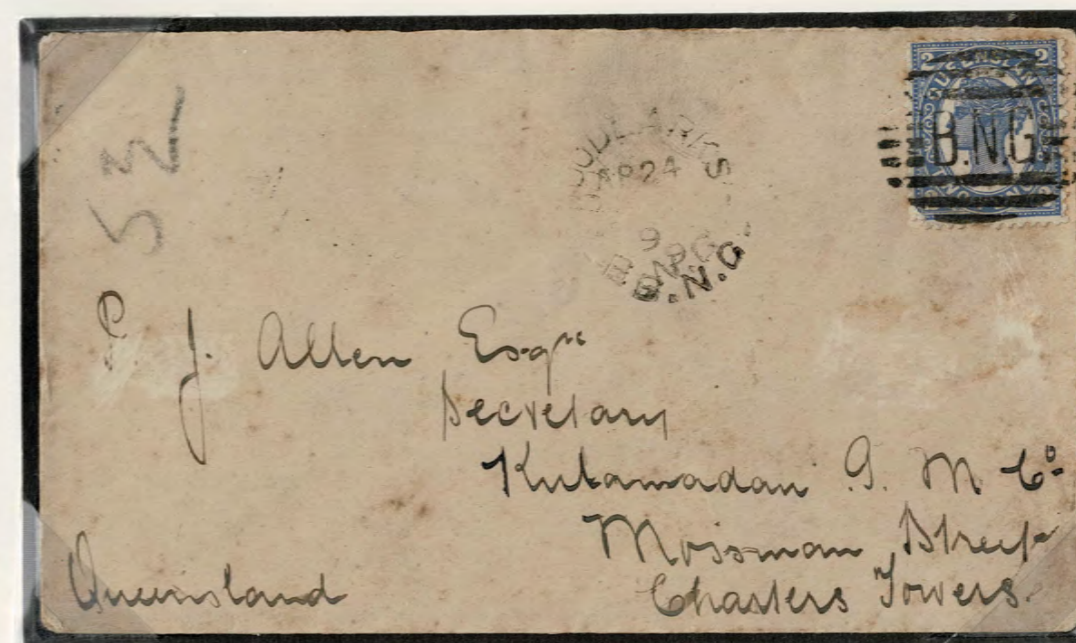
1896, March 8, Port Moresby to Brisbane, single 2d letter rate.
Backstamped Thursday Island 27.3.96 and Brisbane 5.4.96

Mail to Colony/State of Queensland



1898, Port Moresby to Townsville, single Printed Matter rate.
Backstamped Thursday Island 22.7.98 and Townsville 26.7.98

Very few "Printed Matter" letter rate covers are recorded in the Queensland Period.



(E) 1901, April 24, Woodlarks to Charters Towers, single 2d letter rate.
Backstamped Samarai 25.4.01, Cooktown 1.5.01,
Townsville 5.5.01 and Charters Towers 6.5.01

WOODLARKS BNG cancel was in use December 1899 to November 1903.



1895, October 12, Port Moresby to Brisbane, double 2d letter rate.
Backstamped Cooktown 17.10.95 and Brisbane 23.10.95



1899, September 5, Port Moresby to Brisbane, single 2d letter rate.
Backstamped Cooktown 8.9.99 and Brisbane 14.9.99



1898, April 25, Samarai to Townsville, double 2d letter rate.
Backstamped Cooktown 28.4.98



1900, January 8, Samarai to Cooktown, underpaid double 2d letter rate,
with "DEFICIENT POSTAGE("2")/FINE("2")" handstamp applied at Samarai, being double deficiency.
Backstamped Cooktown 20.1.00

Generic handstamps such as this, were supplied to all major Queensland post offices, including Port Moresby and Samarai. Correspondence from James Dick is always soiled, indicating his Ship's Engineer and gold mining activities.



1899, January 10, Port Moresby to Brisbane, Official mail at double 2d letter rate.
Backstamped Thursday Island 21.1.99 and Brisbane 9.2.99.



(E) 1900, December 5, Port Moresby to Brisbane,
parcel tag at double "Merchandise, Patterns and Samples" rate of 1d per 2 oz + 3d Registration.
Backstamped REGISTERED/PORT MORESBY NG, overstamped, straight line REGISTERED, and Brisbane 24.1
Thursday Island 17.12.00 circular datestamp applied in transit.

The only recorded Registered Parcel Tag from the "Queensland Period".



(Reduced scan of reverse)