

Les Davys

Les joined the State Hydro-electric Department, Hamilton as a Draughting Cadet in 1947, just after the Horahora machines were submerged in Karapiro's waters. Two years there followed by two more as an Engineering Cadet in Head Office lead to Ardmore School of Engineering. A variety of "training" in Hamilton Test Lab, Communications, 220kV line construction on the northern section of the Desert Road area (not the bit where the towers restrict the view of Ruapehu), and Power Station Construction particularly at Whakamaru, led to registration under the ERB. He was involved in Hamilton District Power



Station operation and maintenance. He came to Head Office in 1972 to join Ted Schultz and Walter Strauss in the tin sheds behind Parliament (ex US Army hospital from the Solomons), then the big move into Rutherford House, in Hydro Power Station design. The Upper Waitaki scheme had already started and preliminary work had been done on Ohau A. The whole section later moved to Thorndon Quay to be ensconced in so-called Strauss House.

That was a great time with great people to work with, there, and in "Rut" House. He carried on with Ohau A and associated works like the Canal Inlet structures and dams, culminating in the commissioning of Ohau B & C. A highlight was a visit to Hitachi Works, Japan to observe the acceptance tests of a model turbine for the eight runners for Ohau B & C. This was done under IEC Standards and avoided the costly and involved full scale efficiency testing to prove acceptance, or otherwise, of machine design. He had been involved with that at Matahina and Aratiatia. Since retiring just after Electricorp was formed he had a variety of short term positions in the engineering field and joined GridHeritage in 2006.