

Pole One finally shutdown forever

At 10.00am, on 1 August 2012, Robbie Cristillo, Transpower's Duty Energy Co-ordinator in Wellington, issued the fateful words:

"It is with a heavy heart I issue this final instruction, 'STOP POLE ONE'."

The old girl ramped down gracefully!!

After 47 years of faithful service, Pole 1 was finally shutdown and decommissioned in a small ceremony at Haywards and Benmore on Wednesday 1 August.



Mike O'Brien reminisces over the early HVDC

Pole 1, which was previously the original Poles 1 and 2 mercury-arc equipment, has given sterling service despite many years of teething troubles in the early days of its operation. Mike O'Brien reminded us of the early arc-backs and arc-throughs that caused serious problems on the system and led to a lot of additional work. Staff worked day and night to correct the problems and make Pole 1 into a reliable and long-lasting device.

An HVDC coincidence

Just prior to the Pole 1 decommissioning I received a call from Mrs. Fraser, wife of the well known Ian Fraser. She told me that she had this little red box that may be of interest to GridHeritage.

It turns out that this little non-descript box contained what must be the most unusual addition to our collection.

It contains a light bulb and clip leads which were apparently used to indicate the first power ever to flow between the South and North Island. On the back of a photo it reads "First power from Benmore Power Station S.I. to Haywards Substation DC Supply". Signed J. O'Donnell, who was the Haywards Superintendent at the time.



Written inside the lid of the box was "Lamp used to indicate the first DC supply across Cook Strait HVDC cables 1964 DC yard Haywards".

Interestingly neither Mike O'Brien nor Taffy Bayliss knew of any tests made prior to the connecting of the HVDC equipment. We assume that someone may have setup the lamp to prove that the Benmore – Haywards circuit was all connected.

We would welcome any information on this early DC experience.



Heritage Happenings for August 2012

Wellington ex-ECNZ staff meeting

A small group of old hands, some going back as far as the State Hydro-electric Dept., meet regularly at Feathers pub for a lunch and a chat on the last Tuesday each month.

It is always a great place for us “not so youngs” to get together. Come along and join us sometime!



Tony Silke, Bogdan Manastyrski, Toby Wilkinson, Sandy Anderson, Rob Perry and Les Davys, dining at Feathers

Lost workmates and friends

Sadly Fred Starkey passed away unexpectedly on Friday 13 July 2012. His death was followed three weeks later by his wife Aileen. Regrettably Lindsay Duff also passed away on 14 July.

Megan Kerstens has moved on

Our Museum expert has finally left GridHeritage to become a Mum, and a great Mum she will be.



Megan at work on our PastPerfect database.

Megan has worked for GridHeritage for around 18 months in which time she has scanned, stored and protected the Napier District and the E.B. McKenzie Collections and generally brought our team of volunteers up to speed with modern museum practices.



Megan's send-off from Group Energy Purchase

Megan has been an inspiration to us and has managed to lead us old codgers through new processes that are up with the best museum practices.

We will miss Megan but suppose that her interest in baby Arabelle, born 13th August is a pretty good excuse to leave us.

Recent trip to Bunnythorpe

It has been some months since we visited our collection at Bunnythorpe and this time we had heaps of work to catch up on. We have stored the HVDC model tower, dumped lots of unwanted gear and started sorting Earle Nunn's collection from Islington. Earle has amassed 4 filing cabinets of papers and photos that will be put into our collection. In the meantime papers and photos were selected for Helen Reilly for her upcoming history of System Control book.



While at Bunnythorpe we invited Wal Samson's wife Val and Shorty Spearpoint's wife Marion out for dinner to say thanks for what their families have done for GridHeritage. It was a great night.

Tony...

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Te Mana Hiko Tuku Iho

www.gridheritage.org.nz Phone: 04 590 7474 Email: gridheritage@transpower.co.nz