



Heritage Happenings for June 2012

Tony's Tales

This edition may be a bit light as my brain is elsewhere this month. We head off to the USA for a 5 week rail journey shortly and right now thoughts are with Amtrak trains and with touring.

Megan's work on the "Napier collection"

"Over a year after first being presented with what came to be known as 'The Napier Collection', I have at last completed accessioning and storing the collection! The collection is now easy to access and research, and, is in a safe stable condition for future generations to enjoy.

"In order to complete the task of looking after this collection, I created a cataloguing and accessioning process to use. This involves examining each document and photograph, giving it an accession number and creating a catalogue file which contains as much key information about the item and its history as possible by looking at the item (sometimes, very little is known). Items were then scanned and entered into the GridHeritage database – Past Perfect. The items have had basic cleaning in some instances, and have then been placed inside conservation standard materials in accordance with current Museum practice. There is still much more to be 'uncovered' about the Napier Collection, and my work on it is only a starting point. The collection will eventually be placed in part on the GridHeritage virtual exhibit site where others can view and add further knowledge to the collection, building up a better picture of the Napier regions electrical history. My work has also introduced a possible collection management system for GridHeritage to use in other aspects of its future collection work."

Here are some sample photos from the Napier Collection that Megan has spent weeks scanning. They are quite a slice of our early history.



Where on earth are we?



Who are these good keen men?



Have you ever seen a device like this?

System Control History

A major effort for GridHeritage will be the production of a book covering the history of System Control, or System Operation in New Zealand.

Helen Reilly, the author of "Connecting the Country" will start work on this in the next few weeks and it is expected to take some 18 months to complete.

Some of the early research has already been done but Helen will be relentless



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in her endeavours to ensure the accuracy of the information.

If anyone has any old photos or memorabilia from System Control please contact Tony Silke.

Profile on Brian Howard

Brian graduated from Canterbury University, where he took a degree course in Electrical Engineering (at the Engineering School) and drama and partying studies (with the Uni Drama Society at the Ngaio Marsh Theatre and elsewhere). The Electrical Engineering course narrowly won, and he started work for NZED in the Christchurch District Office. His early work in that office was with Eddy Close, Harold Millard and Doug Dixon, on such things as early investigations into transmission line conductor vibration caused by wind, and design & construction work at Lake Coleridge Power Station. He spent some time in Dunedin District Office before moving to Head Office in Wellington in 1972.



Brian in front of GridHeritage display

Here he joined the Protection Group, working for Charles Clayton and Tom Rainforth, in the company of Ian Harrop and Fred Starkey. He was initially lured to Protection during an under-graduate summer holiday, when he read a Report to the President [of the

United States] on the Northeast Power Failure of November 9 & 10 1965 – the drama of the event (New York City blacked out completely for 13 hours) caught his imagination! So much so, that he has worked as a Protection Engineer for his entire career. He has worked on the protection aspects of many power system construction projects over the years, also development of standard designs. He has worked for NZED and the various entities it has morphed into, ending up in Transpower. He left Transpower in 1998 and spent 6 and a half years working in an engineering consultant company, before returning to Transpower. His first job as a consultant was with Richard Donaldson, as part of Transpower's Project Millennium Team (Y2K bug).

Brian has been closely involved in GridHeritage since 2006. He has been our Treasurer for several years: he has almost come to enjoy the annual audit of the financial records of the Society. His particular joy is the opportunity GridHeritage provides for him to hoard the protective relays of bygone ages (i.e., the days of his youth).

Ed note. Brian is now semi-retired and is currently working for Transpower for just 3 days a week. Mind you I'm told that working for Jackie is tougher than working for Transpower. Brian thought he was gaining a 4 day weekend.

Lunch with Jim McRoberts

Richard, Brian, Les and Tony, met up with Jim McRoberts (ex GridHeritage Executive member) at the Skipping Bull Bar & Steakhouse in Tawa for a "lunch hour" reunion. Many snippets of history were exchanged across the table and it was felt that we should be holding such events more regularly.