



Heritage Happenings for March 2011

Tony's Tales

Hi again. Don't you just hate the onset of winter when people seem to pass on. Unfortunately we have lost a couple of our keen GridHeritage supporters.

Obituary, Colin Burleigh

Sadly Colin passed away on Monday 11 April 2011. Colin will be remembered for his clear-cut management skills and, right up to his death he had a checklist to complete before embarking on his final journey. The list was ticked off and he died within days.

Colin had a wide experience in the electrical industry starting as an Electrical Fitter and rising to become one of the few experts on mercury-arc valve technology in New Zealand and internationally.



Colin Burleigh

Colin's other passion was model railways and he was active in the Kapiti Miniature Railway and Model Engineering Society. Colin and Adrienne's home contained collections of steam engines, model railways and many fine electrical instruments.

Colin was a regular supporter to GridHeritage and he will be missed.

Farewell to Shorty Spearpoint.

Colourful ex lineman Shorty Spearpoint died suddenly at his Bunnythorpe home on 23 April. At the service many of his mates spoke about what a character that he was and the many pranks the linemen got up to. I loved the story about Shorty and the team being out for

the day on a line inspection and somebody just happened to find the team comfortably enjoying the day in an out of town club. Some observant person also noted the work truck out the back with its wheels jacked up and the motor running to clock up a few miles on their 'line inspection'.

Micky Thomson's Medical condition.

Micky T recently had a stroke and while he was recuperating I enquired about his health. Those of you with an operating background will appreciate the following reply.

"The body, yep let me down, so it's coming to grips with what it means.

So the boys here came up with I'm running on N security. But we have to modify that a bit.

We have 4 blood supplies to our brain, the two big ones up the front side (let's call them the 220kv and two smaller ones at the rear (let's call them 66kv). So I had a major fault on one 220kv circuit, which isn't coming back into service any time soon. While the line crew was having a look at the faulted circuit they discovered the remaining 220kv was faulty as well so was on only capable 50% of its rating. System studies were carried out and if this circuit fails it's a brown out for the load as the 66kv won't manage it. Currently studies are inconclusive on losing one of the 66kv circuits.

*During the original event there was a loss to part of the load, which will remain removed from service from now on, fortunately this part of the load residential and the CBD and industries are not affected. I was f***ing lucky.*

So generally I'm fine, medication is the main thing, blood pressure down to an athlete's (ace inhibitors and diuretics), cholesterol now down (statins) and blood thinning drugs as well. Pick me up and I rattle".

Serious Conservation work

GridHeritage is now embarking on some serious professional conservation of our old photos and documents. Shown below are some of the ex-Napier files, many dating back to the 1920's being stored in proper conservation material.



Megan's conservation work

The special packaging is chemically inert, outrageously expensive, and hopefully will preserve these historic records for many years to come.



More of Megan's work

Our aim is also to make the files easily searchable in the future, especially for those searching for their ancestors.

Recent work at Bunnythorpe

As well as Megan's conservation work Les and Kent have done some great work on our ongoing photographing and adding asset photos and descriptions to our database. This has proved to be a long and painstaking process but we have now done a large percentage of the GridHeritage collection. Mind you a cold spell at Bunnythorpe may slow things down for our team.

Woodville T1

You will recall from earlier Newsletters that Transpower was removing from service its oldest transformer bank, Woodville T1. One unit of this 82 year bank was duly delivered to Bunnythorpe and will be added to the GridHeritage collection.



Woodville T1 being lifted

The future of the transformer is as yet undecided but we hope to reassemble the bushings into the tank, give it a coat of paint and put it on display in some prominent position.

Oral recording progress

David Young continues with our oral recording and has recently recorded Mike Bridger, Lindsay Duff and Bob Simpson. We are planning to record Predrag Milosevic, Bob Howlett and Les Davys in the near future.

That damn flowmeter

You will recall that we reconditioned a beautiful water flowmeter a while ago thinking that it was ex-Waitaki power station. Unfortunately the genuine Waitaki water meter was "rediscovered" still in its original place during a recent visit by Les Davys, and his wife Lis (who is an ex Waitaki resident having been born at Kurow).

We still have no idea where our meter came from.

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