

Second rebuilt 50kV tower

Barry McKey, the co-writer of 'The Horahora Power Station' sent us this photo of rebuilt tower No. 180 from the first major New Zealand transmission line. This 50kV line went from Horahora on the Waikato River to supply the gold fields at Waikino.

The Matamata Historical Society had the steel tower transported to the J Swap Contractors Ltd workshop in Matamata for repairs.

Later they had an offer by engineer Colin Dray who planned to refurbish the only 3 existing pylons for Matamata, Waihi and the Victoria Battery at Waikino. The work was funded by Transpower and Mighty River Power. The pylons had parts painted and replaced and were then were rebuilt by local volunteers.



The rebuilt tower at the Firth Tower Museum, Matamata

The Bunnythorpe Transpower team

The GridHeritage collection which is using Bunnythorpe as a holding site wouldn't be possible without the helpful 'Team' at the Bunnythorpe store.

The GridHeritage Executive wishes to express their thanks to the 'Team' for their continued effort.

Tony's 40 years with System Control

It has just occurred to me that I have completed 40 years in or around System Control, now System Operations. It is all rather sad.

I started in System Control at Islington on 10th November 1971 as a rather raw young System Operator, as we were then called. In those days the staff were all aged 50 and well above and coming in as a 34 year old this was quite a revelation. System Operation in those days was a very conservative place with little or no technology and the operating was mostly undocumented. You generally did today what was done yesterday. The theory was if it worked before it will work again.

There were no computer models of the AC system and certainly no hydraulic models of the rivers, lakes and stations that we then operated.



Islington at about the time Tony started in System Control. Morrie Winter and Paul Ferguson in the Control Room.

It has all been a great experience growing up with the development of computer based tools that took a lot of the guess work out of operating. We went from being in fire-fighting mode to planning ahead and operating with some certainty. Don't let anyone tell you about the 'good old days' in the industry. In my early days there was a huge amount of luck in our decisions.

The observant among you may notice the simple HVDC on the Islington photo and the lack of any Upper Waitaki stations. There was almost no telemetering and all information from the field was brought in on telephones from manned stations and substations.

In the days before SCADA any system incidents were felt on the system long before the operators in the field phoned in to report any trippings or abnormal events. The large Mimic Diagram or Wallboard was 'dressed' manually to indicate changes that occurred in the field and it could be many minutes before the System Operator actually knew the full impact of a system incident.

Overnight it was even worse as only the major power stations and substations were continuously manned and at smaller stations the operator would have to respond to an alarm, get out of bed, put on his pyjamas and go to the station to assess what had happened. Only then could he phone System Control with this vital information.

Today any event would be known almost immediately in System Control and restoration could be well underway long before the old low-tech operation even understood the event.

Visitors to our collection

During our last Bunnythorpe visit we had a visit from Bill Bennett and the Sub Station Maintainers Trainees from the latest 'circuit breaker' course held at the Bunnythorpe utilities training facility.



The group of five trainees from Transfield, Northpower and ABB had no idea that the Grid Heritage collection existed and were fascinated with much

of what is on display. Bill writes "On my part it was good to see the range of equipment displayed, much of which I was familiar with having worked 'with and on' during my 55 years in the industry. Of great interest is the photo collection held there, personally I was able to recognise many work colleagues. The collection is a testament to the technical advancements made in the transmission industry since the early days of the NZED.

GridHeritage video collection.

Richard Donaldson and Tony spent yet another morning sorting through our large video collection. You may remember that we had a big effort a few years back to copy our videos and films onto DVDs and onto digital storage. This was to be followed by us handing the originals to the NZ Film Archives. This work was never completed so we are back into viewing and cataloguing videos which is a time consuming ordeal. It is difficult to remember just how slow and laborious videos were, but trust us, it is a time consuming job although very interesting to be able to look through our history.

GridHeritage 2012 AGM

As an Incorporated Society we are required to hold an AGM each year and to produce audited financial reports.

Our AGMs have been a great opportunity to gain some direction from our members and friends and to show them what we have been up to in the past year.

This year's AGM will be held in Transpower House, 96 The Terrace Wellington, starting at 12.00 on Tuesday 13th November. Members and friends are all welcome. Further information will be sent out closer to the date.

Tony...