



## Heritage Happenings for June 2007

### Tony's Tales

Hi again everyone. Gosh, are we really into June already? I'm sure that the passage of years accelerates as we get older. Our current focus is in getting the ECNZ collection sorted and protected, plus getting the GridHeritage website up and running. As you will see we are now making good progress.

### The Damaged ECNZ Collection

You will recall the ex-Wellington ECNZ collection of historic documents and artefacts that we now have spread-out to dry at Bunnythorpe. Unfortunately the collection is in a sorry state and we have decided to employ a professional conservator to ensure that we do what is best for this unique collection.

We had a trip to Bunnythorpe to undertake the first stage of the preparatory work for the conservator. This meant an initial sorting of the equipment and then raising it off the floor to prevent any further ingress of moisture from the concrete. This is now completed ready for the condition assessment.



Damaged ECNZ collection now sitting on pallets

Our aim is to protect and restore whatever can be salvaged and perhaps use some of the parts for spares for other items in our collection. It is a very time-consuming and tedious task.

The worst of the damage appears to have been done to the documents and photographs, some of which are totally useless. This is a real shame as some of them are historically significant and contain some of the earliest documentation on the development of

New Zealand electricity generation and transmission.



Water damaged ECNZ documents

### Bunnythorpe Collection

We continue to do the seemingly endless task of photographing and cataloguing the ordinary GridHeritage collection. Thanks to Transpower the collection continues to grow with new items being added. As new material is added we photograph each item and then put the photo and a description of the equipment onto our PastPerfect database. Bunnythorpe in the winter is not the place for this sort of work but we press on slowly. Many of the photos and simplified descriptions will soon be available on our GridHeritage website which has a link to the collection database.

### Stoke C1 condenser decommissioning

Tony recently travelled to Nelson to inspect the old Stoke synchronous condenser which will be decommissioned later this year. GridHeritage has been offered any items of interest that it would like from the condenser for the collection.

It was a nostalgic trip for Tony as the condenser was commissioned in 1955, when he was a second year Nelson District Hydro-Electric apprentice. In those days the condenser was a wonderful modern device but, as the photos now show, it is well past its best-by date.

The condenser has what is possibly the last operational ASEA voltage regulator of its type in the country and GridHeritage is hoping to add this and the associated control panels to the Bunnythorpe collection.

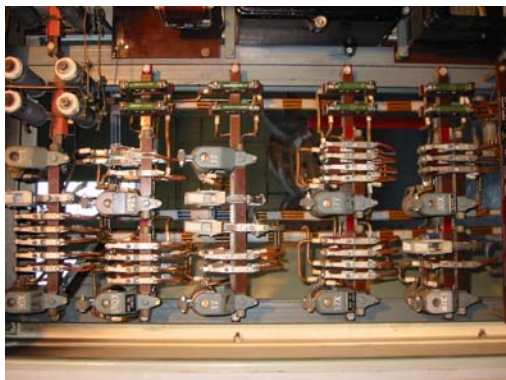
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Another unusual feature of the equipment was the complex control system for starting the machine.



Stoke Condenser nameplate

The equipment was rather primitive as the following picture clearly shows. These were the days of electro-mechanical contactors which were wonderful while they were going but a nightmare when they failed.



Stoke condenser contactor panel

Of course GridHeritage would have loved to have taken the whole condenser and associated equipment but what we are retaining will give a good insight into some of the equipment that was used in "the good old days".

### Website

Finally our website is up and running in test mode. We need to do a few minor changes and then we will release it on the unsuspecting public. We previously had to delay the public launching of it due to the heavy workload on the kind folk in Transpower who do this work for our Society. Trust us; it is worth the long wait. Special thanks to Jo Saint for her wonderful efforts on this project.

### Christchurch Film Show

Following on from the successful lunchtime film show that GridHeritage presented in conjunction with the NZ Film Archives, we are presenting a similar show in Christchurch at lunchtime on Monday, 6 August. Please speak to Judy Donald if you would like to attend.

### PSC Historic Display

Power System Consultants and GridHeritage have worked together to commission an historic display of items from the electricity industry in the reception area of PSC's new building in Tawa, Wellington.



The PSC display at Tawa

The display contains instruments and documents from the GridHeritage collection.

### Connecting the Country

Helen Reilly is making great progress on her book on the history of the NZ electricity transmission system. Many of the chapters are completed and now comes the challenge of finding suitable photographs for the book. Please contact us if you have any interesting ones stored away. Much research has been done. It is planned for the book to go to the publisher in September and be released early in 2008.

### We want your feedback

We need to know what members want from us and welcome your feedback. Please telephone or email us with any ideas that you have, or photos and memorabilia that you can give us.