

Tony's Tales

Hi again everyone. 2009 has been a frantic time for GridHeritage. Since the recent launch of 'Connecting the Country' we have had a lot of interest shown in our activities and have received many generous donations to our collection. The collection is growing at a fast rate and we are again overdue for a trip to Bunnythorpe to put the items into permanent storage. Of course all of this requires photographing each item and putting into our PastPerfect database. Les Davys is the master of the PastPerfect database and he does a wonderful job for us.

Visit to Islington

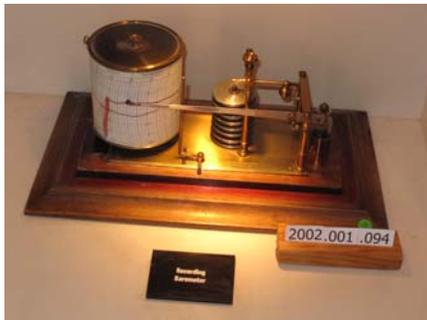
Part of the original GridHeritage collection was put on display at Islington more than ten years ago and it was never properly catalogued and photographed.

Richard Donaldson, Les Davys and Tony had three days at Islington ably assisted by Earle Nunn and Rod Burbery. It was wonderful to go over the treasures held there and finally get them properly documented.



Addington master clock

The Islington collection is safely stored and is an asset to the centre. Many thanks to Earle Nunn for looking after the display and for the wonderful document and photograph collection that is stored elsewhere in the building.



Recording barometer at Islington

The Islington collection covers a wide range of items, mostly from the old Christchurch District Office and especially from the Test Room.



Cobb Pelton wheel turbine at Islington

Pride of place at Islington must go to the ex-Cobb Pelton wheel that stands proudly in the foyer.

Another real treasure is an original 1925 log-sheet from Horahora power station.



Weston voltmeter

Life History Recordings

GridHeritage has specialised in recording the lives of significant people from the industry. The recordings done so far

cover people from all parts of our industry; rather than just focusing on the top management as is often done. We have also managed to record the lives of partners of the workers and their recordings give a rich insight into the lives of families, many living in remote areas. A recent experiment has been to do a trial video recording session. The recording was made of Mike Turner who proved to be an outstanding subject. David Young, an experienced historian does our interviews and the tapes are stored in the National Library Oral History Centre. We are now comparing the results of video recording versus straight sound recording.

Unusual Cable sample

We were lucky enough to be given a sample of the very first underground power cable that was in service from 1890 to 1933. The 10kV cable was run from Deptford to London. Deptford power station was the first in the world to operate HVAC systems on a large scale and was a model on which all future power stations were built.



Cable sample from Deptford – London cable

You may wish to read more about the Deptford project and about a very young Ferranti who was the strength behind the project.

<http://www.swehs.co.uk/docs/news25su.html>

The 20 foot lengths cable were later removed and cut up into the samples. The cables were paper insulated and saturated with rosin based oil. The insulated cables were forced into a pipe and were directly buried in the ground. Interestingly the Board of Trade demanded a safety test on the live cable and this involved driving a chisel into the cable. Fortunately the test was successful. The 1888 picture shows the

'test' being carried out by some unsuspecting labourer.



State Hydro Ledger

Among the water-damaged treasures from the old ECNZ collection was this ledger which records expenditure as far back as 1925. While the book had suffered some damage we felt that it was sufficiently unusual to restore. Triptych Conservation Services worked on it and it is now readable and the cover and paper is stable and will last another 80 years or more.



Old ECNZ ledger

The ledger shows purchases for early transmission lines and substation equipment, all done in beautiful copperplate handwriting that is a far cry from today's scribbles.

Recent additions to our collection.

Rod Burbery continues to dig out treasures, one that got me was an early photo of Upper Takaka substation. This brought back a flood of memories. Maybe there are more old photos out there that we should have in our collection.

GridHeritage activities

This week will see 4 of us braving Bunnythorpe and working on additions to the collection before it is too cold to do so. Next week we will be in Hamilton doing an oral recording of retired System Control staff.