

## THE GREAT BARRIER ISLAND

## PIGEON POST CONSPIRACY

Isabel Rust

PAGE 13 » It took the loss of 121 lives in the Wairarapa shipwrecking, along with the lure of gold and silver for a speedier means of communication to be established. So began the rise of two rather unique postal services, a bitter rivalry, and a deep paranoia.

PAGE 14 » Acting as agent for the service, Smales was quick to exploit his control, moving the newly established 'Fricker's Great Barrier Pigeon Agency' (curiously making no claim to the words 'post' or 'mail') headquarters from Okupu to Orville – the heart of mining territory.

PAGE 27 » The New Zealand Herald soon bore what looked to be the innocent announcement of Parkin's Great Barrier Postal Pigeon Service, but for four words which spilled from the text: 'security and secrecy guaranteed'. And yet it was not these words which caused controversy, but rather the placid and unsuspecting term 'post'.

PAGE 28 » The Department's reply called for the removal of the word 'post' from all matters concerning pigeon post. Perhaps this event and the constant refusal of subsidy from the Postal Department culminated in Smales' and Gould's withdrawal. Similarly apprehensive that the service was not likely to be a paying proposition, Parkin soon followed suit, the service landing in the young hands of Mr S. Holden Howie, who adopted the business as a hobby, unaware of the obstacles lying in wait.

PAGE 41 » The transition of mail from pigeon to proprietor was quickly undertaken, incoming pigeons

landing in an 'electric trap', which shut on arrival and struck a bell, immediately alerting the proprietor of the mail's arrival.

PAGE 42 » Kept in the dark, the New Zealand Post Department knew nothing of the existence of such a stamp. Curiously however one such 'special post' stamp strayed somewhat from New Zealand waters to arrive neatly in the unsuspecting hands of Messrs Whitfield and Co., stamp dealers of England. Sent with the intention of placing these rather unique and rare stamps on the market in England, such a move might also have threatened to undermine Her Majesty's own network throughout the Commonwealth. Paranoia did indeed accompany the stamps' return to New Zealand, the English fearful that a private mail system, delivering 'secret' messages was in operation.

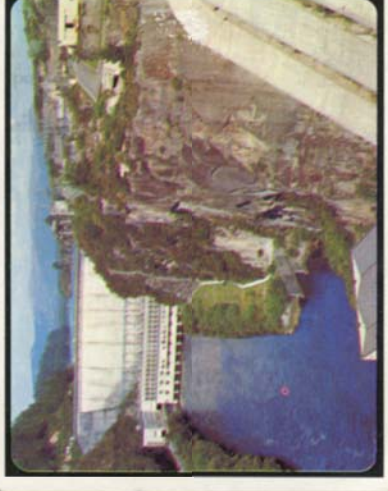
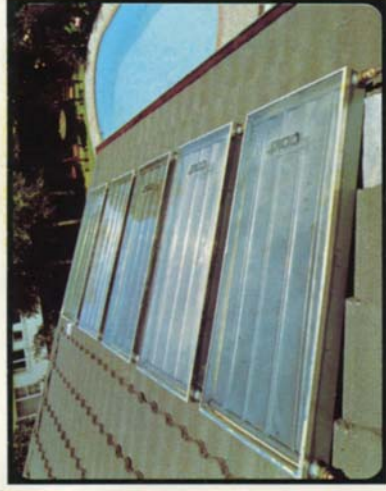
PAGE 51 » What ensued was an unpleasant battle between Mr Howie and the Post Department, concluding only at Howie's threat of legal action. Though Howie was authorized to continually use stamps for his service, these were no longer permitted to bear the words 'SPECIAL POST', enduring only with the carefully overprinted 'Pigeongram'.

PAGE 52 » Fricker's own bid did not stop there. Endeavouring to strike an additional blow, his new stamps coincided with the release of a newly trained fleet of pigeons who bettered Howie's one-way service by flying both ways.

PAGE 65 » THE END

In 1976 Sanitarium released a set of 20 cards in their cereal boxes showing images of notable 'New Zealand Energy Resources'. A complete collection of these cards was found in a bric-a-brac shop off the main road into Keri Keri, eighteen of the 20 cards are shown here. In New Zealand in the mid 1970s, the country was still suffering from the 1973 energy crisis. With high inflation rates and the loss of our biggest export market Britain to the E.E.C., the economy was in dire straits.

The Robert Muldoon-led National government began to try to remedy this situation with the interventionist state economic strategy nicknamed 'Think Big'. These cards can be seen as a domestic manifestation of the country's — or at least this government's — preoccupation with the salvation narrative of achieving independent national energy production. Amy Yalland.



One of a set of 20 cards  
**N.Z. ENERGY RESOURCES**  
No. 7

**MARAETAI STATION**

(courtesy National Publicity Studios)

In 1925 work commenced on the North Island Hydro Development Scheme. Maraetai Power Station, the third station of the scheme, started operation in 1952. By the mid-sixties, eight stations, Arapuni, Atiamuri, Karapiro, Ohakuri, Waipapa, Whakamaru and Maraetai were in operation. Maraetai Power Station has a capacity of 360MW.

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One of a set of 20 cards  
**N.Z. ENERGY RESOURCES**  
No. 15

**DRILLING FOR GAS AT KAPUNI**

(courtesy Robin Smith Photography Limited)

In 1959 when Kapuni natural gas and condensate (light crude oil) was discovered, a new chapter in the story of energy in New Zealand was opened up. In 1967 a Corporation was set up to process and distribute the fuel. Natural gas is used for cooking and heating, to replace oil in thermal power stations and in industry.

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No. 17

**WAIRAKEI STEAM FIELD**

(courtesy National Publicity Studios)

Wairakei lies on an active volcanic zone extending north-east from Mount Ruapehu to the Bay of Plenty. When Wairakei started operating in 1958 it was the world's second geothermal power station. Pipelines take steam from the steamfield, about 2.47 kilometres distant from the power station where it is converted into electricity.

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No. 19

**DOMESTIC SOLAR PANELS**

(courtesy Robin Smith Photography Limited)

As the sun is the basic source of energy, efforts are being made to use solar radiation directly. One method is to place panels on to the roofs of houses. These panels are painted black to absorb the heat. Above this black surface is a water filled coil. The water in the coil heats and is fed into the hot water system.

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No. 9

**BENMORE POWER STATION DAM**

(courtesy Robin Smith Photography Limited)

Benmore is New Zealand's second largest power station. Built on the Waitaki River it has a 77.7 square kilometres lake and a shoreline of 116 kilometres. The dam is 110 metres high and the spillway can discharge up to 3,400 cubic metres of water per second. Benmore's dam is the largest earth dam in New Zealand and it has the largest man-made lake.

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**N.Z. ENERGY RESOURCES**  
No. 1

**ELECTRICAL STORM OVER  
MT JOHN**

(courtesy Robin Smith Photography Limited)

Energy as such cannot be seen, but its effects can be. We cannot see wind, but we can see trees bending under its force. In an electrical storm the effects of energy are seen as lightning and heard as thunder. As light travels faster than sound, lightning is seen before thunder is heard.

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No. 16

**KAPUNI GAS PIPELINE**

(courtesy Ministry of Works and Development)

The Kapuni Gas Pipeline was laid in 1970/71 to take natural gas to customers in Auckland, Hamilton, New Plymouth, Hawera, Palmerston North, Wanganui, Levin, Lower Hutt and Wellington. To ensure complete safety every inch of the pipeline is wrapped in a protective coating. Every weld is inspected and tested and the lines are protected electronically.

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No. 14

**COASTAL OIL TANKER  
UNLOADING**

The KUAKA is one of four coastal tankers that sail from Marsden Point delivering premium and regular petrol, diesel and sometimes kerosene to New Zealand ports. The KUAKA was built in Sweden and arrived here in January 1976. Its overall length is 171.45 metres and depth 12.57 metres, and a dead weight of 23,500 tonnes.

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No. 18

**POWER HOUSE AT WAIRAKEI**

(courtesy New Zealand Electricity Department)

There are two power houses at Wairakei. Because of the low load-bearing capacity of the ground a special raft foundation containing 16,830 tonnes of concrete had to be built. Power is produced from 13 generators in these two powerhouses. There are two 6.5 MW generators, eight of 11.2 MW and three of 30 MW installed capacity.

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No. 20

**NUCLEAR-POWERED ICE  
BREAKER**

(Courtesy U.S.S.R. Information Service)

The world's first atomic surface ship was launched in Russia in 1957. The main advantage of nuclear energy in ships is that the large amount of power produced enables them to stay at sea without refuelling for extremely long periods. This is particularly important to ice-breakers like the *LENINGRAD*.

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**N.Z. ENERGY RESOURCES**  
No. 5

**COAL MINERS AT WORK**

(courtesy Robin Smith Photography Limited)

Coal is an energy resource that is natural to New Zealand and in plentiful supply. About 70 per cent of our coal is taken from opencast mines which are cheaper to operate and more productive than underground seams. Coal is becoming increasingly important in meeting our energy demands.

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No. 13

**MARSDEN POINT OIL REFINERY**

(courtesy Robin Smith Photography Limited)

Because fully-refined products cost more to import than crude oil, New Zealand opened its own refinery at Marsden Point, near Whangarei, in 1964. Crude oil, called "Feedstock", is shipped here and after refining, is delivered to outlets throughout the country for sale as petrol, diesel, fuel oil and bitumen.

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No. 10

**BENMORE POWER STATION**

(courtesy Robin Smith Photography Limited)

Work on Benmore power station began in 1958 and the first power was produced in January 1965. The machinery comprises six 125,000 h.p. turbines and six 90,000 kilowatt generators. Benmore Power Station supplies power to the South Island and helps meet North Island requirements over the Cook Strait cable.

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No. 4

**MEREMERE POWER STATION**

(courtesy Robin Smith Photography Limited)

The Meremere Power Station, which commenced operation in 1958, is a coal fired power station about 64km south of Auckland. Two thirds of the 600,000 to 800,000 tonnes of coal it uses each year come by overhead cable from the Maramara coalfields. The rest comes by road and rail from Huntly.

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No. 6

**HAYWARDS SUBSTATION**

(courtesy National Publicity Studios)

In May 1965 the Cook Strait cable was opened enabling all generating stations to feed into a giant network covering New Zealand. Electricity from the South Island comes to the North Island by cable and transmission line to Haywards substation, near Wellington. From there it is transmitted through the North Island grid system.

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No. 8

**MANAPOURI POWER STATION  
TURBINES**

(courtesy New Zealand Electricity Department)

The turbines for Manapouri are in a powerhouse 213 metres underground. The seven turbines, coupled to seven generators are controlled from above ground. Manapouri is the largest power station in New Zealand with a capacity for 590 MW. It became operative in 1969-71 and uses water from Lakes Manapouri and Te Anau.

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No. 12

**OHAU (A) POWER STATION**

(courtesy Ministry of Works and Development)

Still under construction, Ohau (A) Power Station is due to come into operation in 1977. It is part of the Upper Waitaki Power Development Scheme. When Ohau (A) is operating it will have a capacity of 264 MW. The other stations in this scheme are Tekapo (A) operating since 1951; Tekapo (B) opening this year; Ohau (B) opening in 1979 and Ohau (C) in the 1980's.

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No. 11

**CONTROL PANEL  
TOKAANU POWER STATION**

(courtesy New Zealand Electricity Department)

The 200 MW Tokaanu power station is part of the Tongariro Power Development Scheme. Tokaanu produced its first electricity in July of 1973. The control room provides remote control and indication of hydraulic gates and valves and the telemetering of water flows and levels from various sites.

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