

NEW ZEALAND  
FOLK \* SONG

(New Zealand Folk Song, 2008)

1973

Songlist - Home

John wrote this song as a radio commercial to promote Pink Batts house insulation.  
The Save Manapouri campaign later used it to stop the level of Lake Manapouri from being raised.

**G** Leaf falls to **Em** kiss the **Bm** image of a **Em**  
mountain  
the **G** early morning **Em** mist has ceased to **Am** play  
**C+**  
**C** Birds dancing **D** lightly on the **G** branches by a **Em**  
fountain  
Of a **C** waterfall which **D** dazzles with its **G** spray

**G** Tall and strong and **Em** aged, con-**Bm**-tented and **Em**  
serene  
The **G** kauri tree sur-**Em**-veys this grand do-**Am**-main  
**C+**  
For **C** miles and miles **D** around him, a **G** sea of rolling  
**Em** green  
To-**C**-morrow all this **D** beauty won't re-**G**-main

Damn the **C** dam cried the **D** fantail,  
As he **G** flew into as he **B7** flew into the **E** sky,  
To give **F** power to the **G** people  
All this **C** beauty **C/B** has to **Am** die

Rain falls from above and splashes on the ground  
Goes running down the mountain to the sea  
And leaping over pebbles makes such a joyful sound  
Such as Mother Nature's meant to be

I have grave reflection, reflection of a grave  
Trees that once lived green now dead and brown  
The homes of tiny animals and little birds as well  
For the sake of man's progression have been drowned

Damn the dam cried the fantail,  
As he flew into as he flew into the sky,  
To give power to the people  
All this beauty has to die

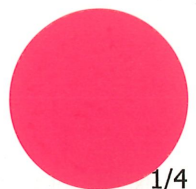
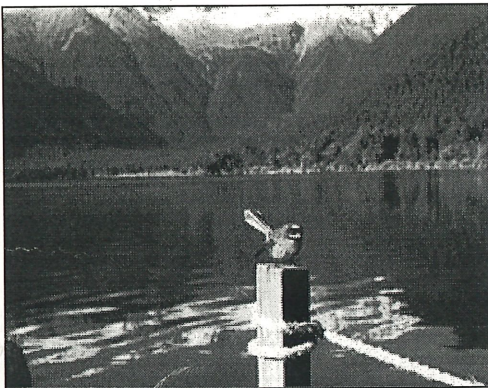
#### Instrumental

Damn the dam cried the fantail,  
As he flew into as he flew into the sky,

Damn the dam cried the fantail,  
As he flew into as he flew into the sky,  
To give power to the people  
All this beauty has to die...

Thanks to Judith McNeil for help with these lyrics and chords

A full-length high quality MP3 of Damn the Dam is [HERE](#)



## Pink Batts

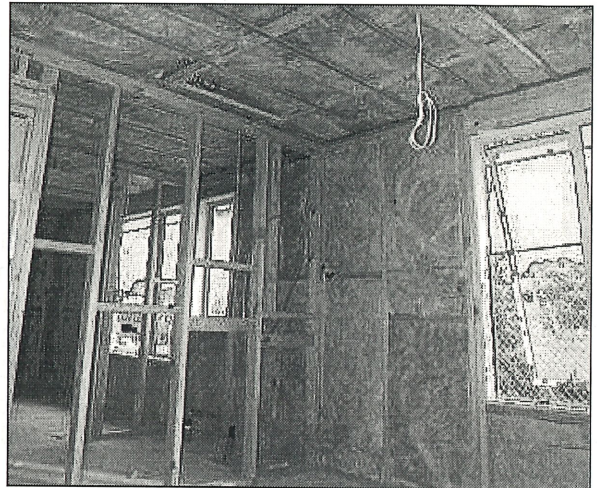
### Radio Commercial

Damn the Dam was born as a 2 minute radio commercial for New Zealand Fibreglass. John Hanlon had a day job as an advertising copywriter and art director at the time. The commercial was part of a campaign designed to lobby the government of the day to make insulation compulsory in new homes.

While this was an environmentally responsible thing to do, clearly New Zealand Fibreglass, as the manufacturer of Pink Batts, would benefit from this legislation. They did. Nonetheless, said John, it took a brave and visionary client to approve a 2 min radio commercial with only 10 secs of soft sell commercial message in the body of it.

As a result of advertising airtime bought by the client, the song/commercial became very popular and John was pressured into releasing it as a single. He agreed to do so as long as the profits were donated to environmental bodies.

Eventually the song was adopted by the opponents of the Lake Manapouri dam and the real origin of the song was lost in the mists of time.



## Lake Manapouri

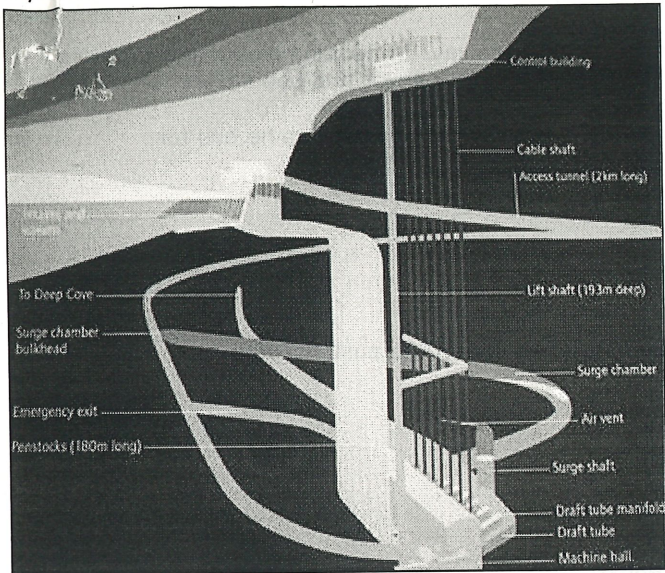
Lake Manapouri is often described as the loveliest of all Fiordland's lakes with its array of 33 small islands, backdrop of the Cathedral Mountain range, and native bush-clad edges with a variety of sandy beaches and coves. Originally called Roto-au (the rainy lake) by early Maori and then Moturau (many islands), it has a very rainy catchment of 1400 sqkm, a shoreline of 170 km and a surface area of 142 sqkm.



### Manapouri Power Station

The largest hydro electric power plant in New Zealand, it is housed underground in the Fiordland National Park in a cavern carved from rock almost 200 metres below the West Arm of Lake Manapouri. Unlike other hydro power stations, Manapouri does not have a high dam. It uses the natural 183 metre height difference between Lake Manapouri and the sea at Deep Cove in Doubtful Sound to generate electricity.

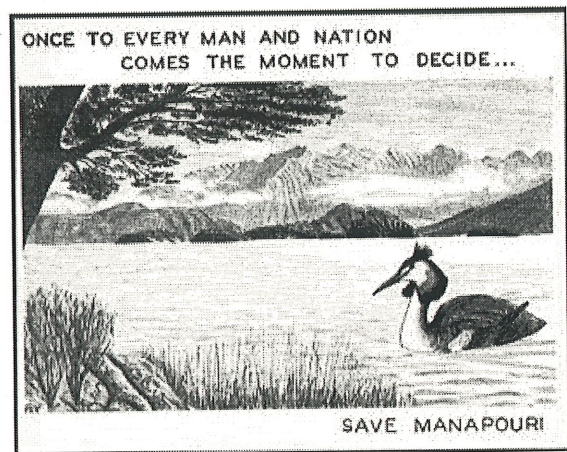
In 1963 the project to build the underground power station to supply electricity to the Comalco aluminium smelter at Bluff got started. It took 1800 men 8 years to build, working 24 hours



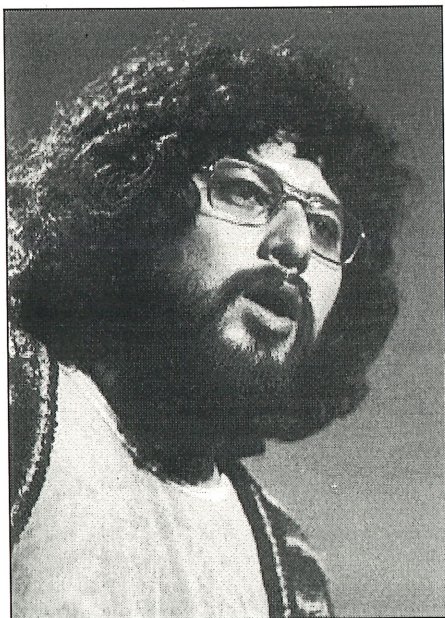
## The Save Manapouri campaign

The Public Works Department wanted to dam the 'outlet of the lake' so it could raise the water-level of the lake by 30 metres to join it with Lake Te Anau 2.5 km to the north. This would have produced much more power. It would have also destroyed all the coves and islands and thousands of hectares of pristine World Heritage rainforest.

A strong nationwide protest lasting over a decade prevented the raising of the lake from taking place. That campaign, the Save Manapouri campaign, is regarded as a major milestone in the history of New Zealand's environmental protection. The lake levels are now carefully controlled to be close to natural fluctuations.



## John Hanlon



John Hanlon was born in Malaya in 1949 to Chinese-European parents. He was raised in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, before going to boarding school in Australia, and eventually settling in Auckland with his parents in the early sixties.

John was self-taught at playing the guitar and, by the age of twenty, had developed an enormous collection of lyrics and tunes. On night in 1971 he opened his songbook and played some of his tunes to a few enthusiastic supporters at a party. Bruce Barton, of Mascot Studios, heard him and was impressed enough to record a large number of items from his songbook.

Bruce then took these songs and managed to get John a recording contract on the Family Label. He was teamed up with arranger and keyboard player, Mike Harvey. The first single was released in late 1972 called "Old Fashioned Music"/"Mickey Mouse House". This was closely followed in 1973 with his first album called "Floating".

In 1973, along with Mike Harvey, John wrote a song called "Knowing". The song was entered into the Studio One Television contest, and, sung by Steve Gilpin, it took third place.

John was always ecology conscious and wrote "Damn The Dam" for the conservation movement during the Manapouri Hydro Dam controversy. After being broadcast on radio and television, it was considered popular enough to be released commercially and reached number 5 on the National charts. Later that year, John was awarded with a RATA award for Single of the Year, with "Damn The Dam."

John has lived in Australia since the late 70s working in advertising agencies. In addition to being a creative director for agencies ranging from Mojo to McHarmon's, John has been a cartoonist and pop singer.

And in the 2000s he is still a prolific composer, winning as many awards for songwriting as he has for advertising. For more on John Hanlon and his music you can visit [Blue Pie Productions](#)

## **Damn the Dam on Record**

1973, **Damn the Dam**, Family Label, 45

John's original 1973 recording has been included in several compilation CDs in the past decade.

- 1996, Kiwi Gold Disc. 2, 1970-1975, NZ On Air
- 1996, Kiwi Classics. Volume two, EMI
- 1997, New Zealand : Our Land, Our Music, Vol 2 EMI
- 1999, Very Best of the Guys, EMI
- 2003, Very Best of John Hanlon, EMI

[Songlist - Home](#)

Draft webpage put on Folksong website October 2008