

## More on Stroud Gas works - II

20 April 2020

To GSIA Members

Prompted by the Stroud Gasworks tip item, GSIA Member, Lionel Jones has kindly sent in some memories of attending Stroud Technical College soon after the war.

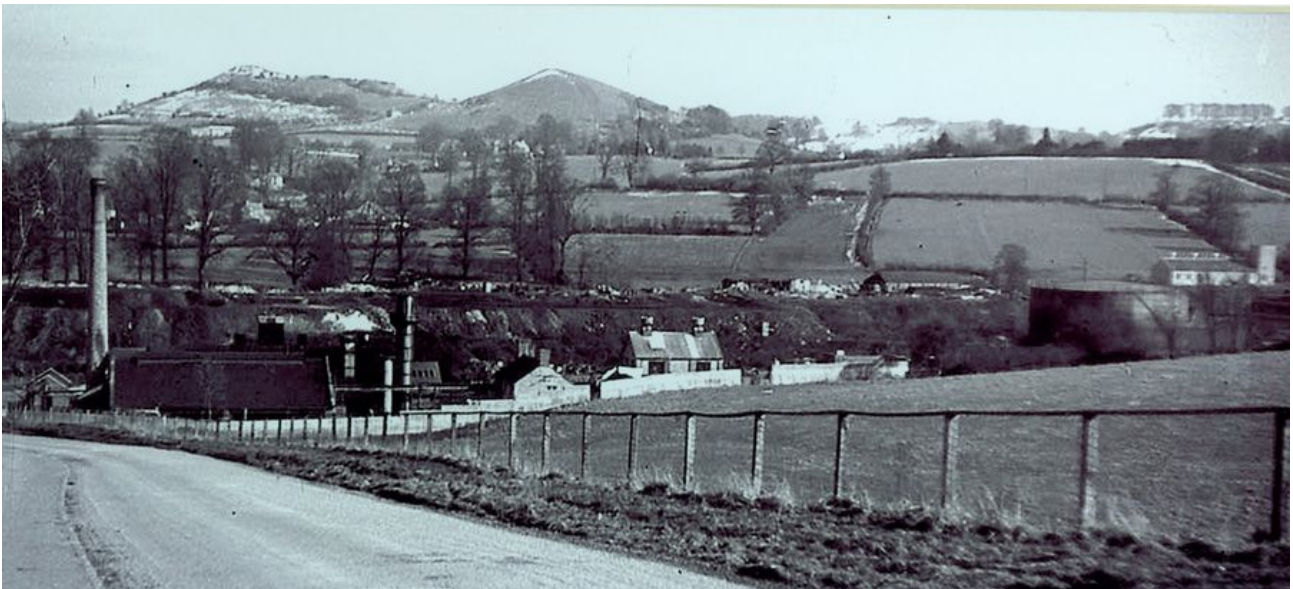
These very welcome reminiscences from Members are being added to the Society's archive. [Social history is such an important part of industrial history].

Ray Wilson

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Thanks for circulating the item about the Stroud Gas Works. Whilst I haven't any photos I remember going there at the time when I was studying for my Mech HNC at Stroud Tech College in the period 1947/49. The College had only been recognized to offer Mech HNC about a year or so earlier and had yet to have all the necessary apparatus for the practical experimental parts of the course. Consequently we had to go to the Stroud Gas Works to do the experiment to determine calorific value of Town Gas using their Boy's Gas Calorimeter. Similarly we 3 chaps from Dursley and 2 Stroud Locals who made up the Course went to Messrs Holloways of Stroud to do Steam Plant Test involving their Lancashire Boiler; Double acting Davey Paxman Engine and Crompton Parkinson DC generator. For the Hydraulics Course one such event involved a bus journey over the hills from Stroud to Cheltenham Tech College where they had the necessary equipment. In their effort to catch up the Stroud Head of Department got an old National Gas Hot Bulb Gas Engine from a scrap dump and we managed to get it to go using a blow lamp on the bulb and a team effort rotating the flywheel by its rim. As you can imagine none of these adventures went off without slight mishaps; all of which help as memory aids and their educational value.

I do have in my photo collection one of the Dursley Gas Works taken about 1956 not long after Kingshill Lane aka Gas Works Pitch had been widened. Town Gas was still been produced there and one can see the various buildings. At the rear is the Lister Foundry Tip some of their other features.



Another feature of how things were at the time was that in the period 1948/9 the Stroud College took over the old Bus Depot premises adjacent to the old college buildings but at the lower street level. In February 1949, when we first used it, the vast expanse was heated solely by an old tortoise stove; a type widely used at one time in schools, factories and even churches. Our experiment with Scholes Bomb Calorimeter involved filling the apparatus with oxygen at pressure and, as several of our attempts did not work and the oxygen had to be released it was suddenly realised that the old stove was beginning to glow cherry red through the oxygen enriched atmosphere.

In our Steam engine test at Messrs Holloways the stop cock on the high pressure cylinder broke as the pressure indicator instrument was being fitted. The superb steam vortex rings produced went from the engine shed through the large grilled window space to strike the wall on the other side of the street. Despite the best effort of the maintenance engineer to rectify the situation he had eventually to shut the system down and stop the whole factory. Probably we were not popular at the time but still, for me, a memorable event.