

Emsworth's Gasholders

1853 - 2016

History

- In 1852 there was a community meeting to raise taxes to pay for gas street lights
- The Emsworth Gas and Coke Company set up business in 1853 on the site between Seagull Lane and Palmers Road.
- Its purpose was to create and distribute town (coal) gas to the inhabitants of Emsworth, for lighting , cooking and heating.
- Originally there was a single gasholder
- In 1922 the site was expanded and a new 2-lift gasholder was built.

The Gasworks

- Large quantities of coal are needed to create the gas.
- Brought from Portsmouth by rail – the site of the gasholder by the station is not accidental
- Coal was also stored and distributed at the site of the Coal Exchange pub

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- By the 1920s it became more economic to make the gas in central areas and distribute it to each village, so many small gasworks were closed.
- In 1927 Portsmouth Gas Co acquired Emsworth Gas Co and laid a 12" gas main to bring in the gas from Portsmouth.
- The 2 gasholders were dismantled and sold
- In 1934 the current gasholder was built with 2 spirally guided lifts.
- In 1946 a third spirally guided lift was added
- In the 1960s North Sea gas at higher pressures obviates the need for a gasholder as high pressure gas is stored in the pipe network

Building the gasholder

- It was built and assembled in West Yorkshire, by a company specialising in spirally guided gasholder. It was also near the steel works and coal mines
- It was originally bolted together to check it all fitted before disassembling for transportation
- It was then dismantled and brought to Emsworth by train (and horse and cart)
- It was reassembled using rivets rather than bolts

Dimensions

- The gasholder was very big
 - Diameter of the base was 47 metres
 - A tank and 3 lifts, each 10 meters in height
 - When fully extended it was 45 metres high
 - Outer wall of the tank was 30mm thick

The end

- Last used in 2010
- The holder was purged back in 2013 and hasn't held any gas since then. In addition the interior has been hosed down to remove and settle the dry dust which has formed over the years and which would be potentially explosive if left undisturbed during demolition.

Emsworth's Last Gas Holder



- Sunset on the gasholder, photo taken by Eve Wood