

## **Gas Stripping Tower – Davies Park**

The only one of its type in Australia, the Gas Stripping Tower is not quite in its original location. In fact, it is about 150 m from where it was first constructed. The latest in gas production technology at the time, the demountable cast iron tower was erected in 1912 at the South Brisbane Gas & Light Company (SBGLC) works site in Montague Road, West End.

Navigational hint: after leaving the Regatta ferry terminal, look across the river to see the attractively detailed Gas Stripping Tower within the parklands.

The SBGLC gas supplier was established in 1885 as direct competition to the local Brisbane Gas Corporation (BGC). Initially the companies competed for customers on both sides of the Brisbane River but eventually, in 1889, reached an agreement to only supply to one side each. The BGC supplied northside customers, and the SBGLC supplied those on the southside.

In 1911, with technology advancing and demand for gas increasing, SBGLC sent its principal engineer to Britain to investigate gas production technology and return with the latest solutions. In 1912, Robert Hempster & Sons Ltd, Yorkshire, developed a demountable cast iron stripping tower for the company and transported in sections to the Brisbane site.

The tower was used to produce ammonia liquor. Raw coal gas piped into the base of the tower was stripped of coal tar and ammonia as it rose through a series of internal baffles sprayed with water from a header tank at the top of the tower. The liquid was drained via a water seal at the bottom and sold as ammonia liquor.

As gas production improved with new methods and technology, the old stripping technique became redundant and by 1949 the Gas Stripping Tower was no longer used. In the 1970s, natural gas became available to Brisbane customers and in 1975 the SBGLC gas works were closed and demolished.

Around this time, the National Trust of Queensland acquired the tower, dismantling and storing it until 1979 when it was reassembled near to where it used to stand. In 1988, Allgas Energy Ltd (formerly SBGLC) refurbished the tower and landscaped the surrounding area as a bicentennial gift to Brisbane.