

# UTILITIES – GAS/WATER



Kilsellagh Reservoir 2010



Gas light bracket

## Gas

### Sligo Gaslight and Coke Company

In May 1839 civil engineer James Colquhoun signed a contract with the Town and Harbour Commissioners for replacing the street oil lamps with gas under the following terms:

*The erection of eighty lamps at a distance of 45 to 50 yards apart.*

*From 15th September 1839 the lamps were to be supplied with good and pure gas for seven years at £3 15s per annum for each light to be payable on 15 April and 31 December.*

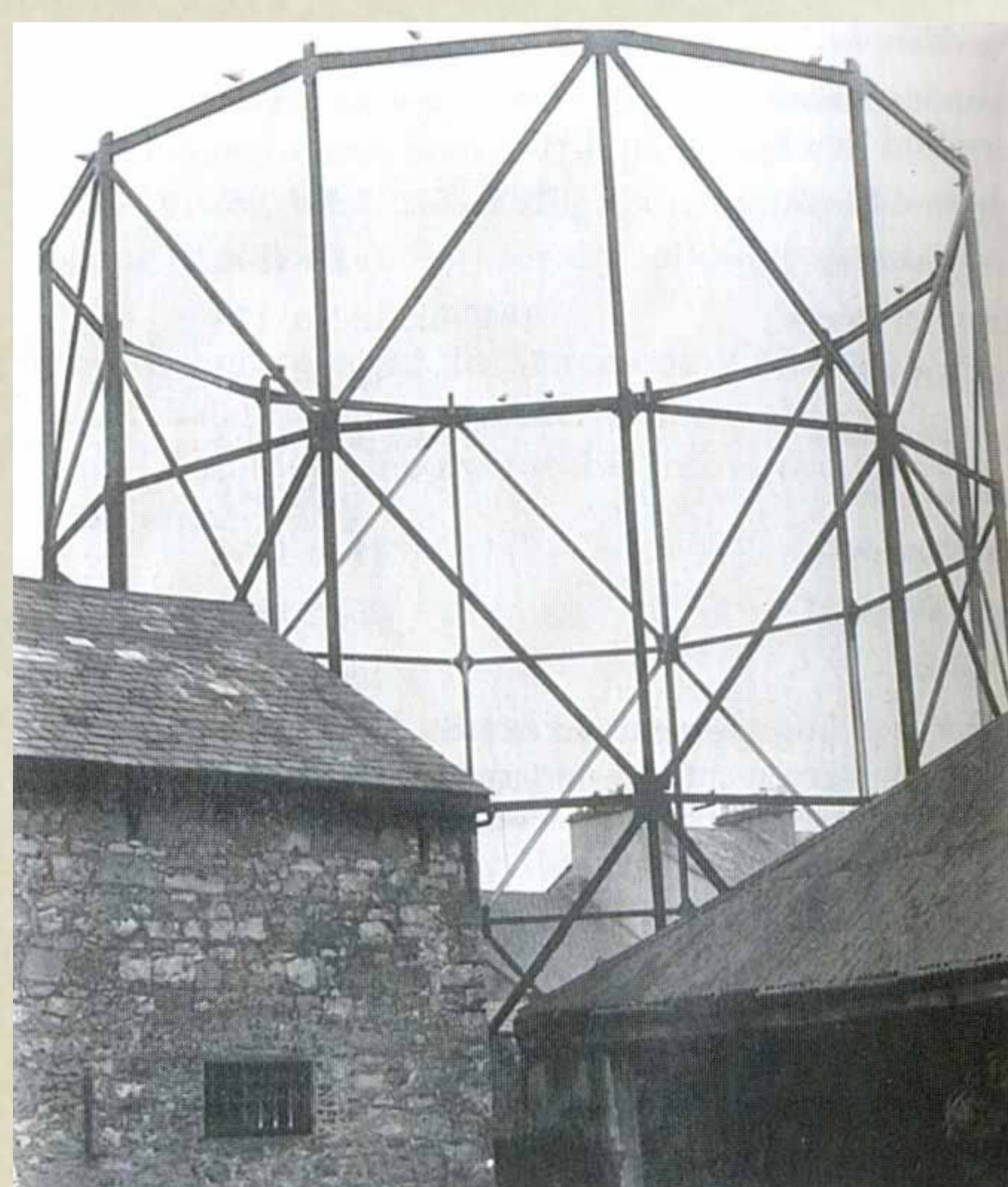
*Each burner to consume from 4 to 4.5 cubic feet per hour and the lights to be of equal luminance to street lamps in Derry and Dublin.*

*James Colquhoun to be responsible for the expense of erecting, repairing and lighting of the lamps.*

*Each light not to be liable to burn for a longer period than 2,000 hours each year.*

*Lamps to be lighted at sunset and to continue lit until half an hour before sunrise.*

Following financial difficulties in July 1855 the Sligo Gas Company's Act was passed empowering the company to manufacture and supply gas within the Parliamentary Boundary.



Sligo Gas Works

In March 1864 the company received £330 per year for lighting the town, the Harbour board contract netted the company £329, £1,412 was received from private consumers and £255 was gained from the sale of coke and tar. Extension to works and mains totalled £880, leaving a credit balance of £1,785.

In 1872 the price of gas was reduced to 5s 6d per cubic feet which compared well to the price of gas in other Irish towns, Waterford, 5s 6d, Galway, 7s. In 1869 the company had a credit balance of over £1,477. Some complaints were made over the quality of gas and that the company's profits should be diverted to the advantage of the users rather than into dividends for shareholders.

The 1890s witnessed much expansion of the Sligo Gas Company and increased domestic consumption of gas appeared to guarantee the future of the company.

Competition from the Electricity Supply Board led to a reduction in the demand for gas and in 1964 the Gas Works was closed down.

## Water

For most of the history of Sligo town the only water available for drinking and other purposes was from the Garavogue River and from a number of wells around the town. The water from the river was unfit for drinking as the refuse from the streets, slaughter houses and from industrial activities flowed into it. The terrible state of the water and the serious lack of any sewerage system in Sligo was largely responsible for the dreadful loss of life in Sligo during the Cholera Epidemic of 1832.

The Sligo borough Improvement Act of 1869 and the 1880 the Sligo Borough Improvement (Revival of Powers) Act contained important provisions empowering the corporation to take the necessary steps to provide a proper piped water supply to Sligo Town. In the early 1880s the corporation secured a loan of £1,570 for the construction of a system of proper sewerage in Sligo. The water supply for the town was taken from a catchment area on the border of the counties of Sligo and Leitrim. It was calculated that the reservoir could supply a population of 50,000 in Sligo town. On 13 November 1884 the waters were turned on for the first time by Miss Mary Rose Colleary, daughter of the Mayor, Mr. Bernard Colleary.

Sewer ventilation pipe, Maugheraboy



Water Pump

