

Gas Engines in Victorian Industry

... Presented by Mathew Churchward

The 2009 Engineering Heritage Victoria Guest Speakers Series



Thursday, 20 August 2009
5:30pm for 6:00pm to 7:00pm

John Connell Auditorium,
Engineering House, 21 Bedford Street North Melbourne

Engineering Heritage, Victoria would like to invite you to a special presentation.

In 1866 the German engineer, Nikolaus August Otto patented his 'free piston atmospheric gas engine,' This was the world's first practical internal combustion engine design. Manufacture started in Germany and Britain by 1869 and within five years they were being sold in Victoria. By 1880, 5% of all mechanically powered factories in Victoria were using gas engines instead of steam engines.

Improvements in the design of gas engines and the introduction of the suction gas producer during the 1890s enabled gas engines to be used by an increasing number of industries, particularly in rural districts where there was no reticulated town gas to power the engines.

Their use peaked around 1900 with almost a third of all manufacturing works using gas engines. The introduction of electric motors and oil engines gradually reduced their use but gas engines remained an important form of motive power in Victorian industry until the middle of the 20th century.

This talk will look at the impact of gas engines in industry, their extent of use, the types of design, local manufacture and some of the specific industries in which they were used.

About the Guest Speaker:

Mathew Churchward originally trained as a mechanical engineer, since 1994, he has been employed as a curator with Museum Victoria. He has been a long-standing active member of both the National Trust's Industrial History Committee and the committee of Engineering Heritage Victoria.

Registration is NOT required for attendance at this event.

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