

## The Gallery

The National Gas Gallery shows how gas has been used in Britain over the last two hundred years. It explains how gas is produced and supplied, how appliances have developed and the impact that the availability of gas has had on people's lives.

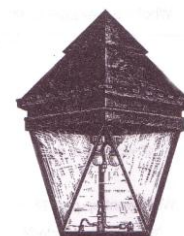
## Using the gallery

The Gas Gallery occupies three railway arches between the Station Building and the 1830 Warehouse. The entrance area includes a gas lighter at work, a 'road' lined with gas streetlights and a display explaining that gas is made by baking coal. Visitors then descend (by stairs or lift) to basement level and follow a broadly chronological route through the gallery. The smells of the burning gas, music, sound and lighting levels contribute to the ambience. The gallery is organised into several small sections making it advisable to split a class into smaller groups. While many of the exhibits are stimulating prompts for discussion and would make suitable subjects for observation drawing, children below the age of twelve years will find the text on the display panels challenging.

## National Curriculum

History – Industrialisation

Science - Changing Materials, Energy



## What's in the gallery

The gallery consists of the following sections.

- **Early History**  
A display case contains working examples of the variety of early gas burners used for illumination before the invention of the gas mantle in the 1880s. Text and images describe the discovery and first commercial use of gas in the early years of the nineteenth century and the subsequent development of the gas industry
- **Technology and Working Conditions**  
Interactive exhibits explain the process of making gas in a gas works and show how a gasholder works. Text and images explain how coal was formed and describe working conditions for gasworkers. A short video presents extracts from a 1981 film explaining working procedures inside a retort house. The section concludes with a stoker and a reconstruction of a section of a retort house.
- **Promoting Gas Appliances**  
Exhibits include early twentieth century gas appliances including cookers, fires, irons and a hairdryer. A variety of gas meters are on display. A reconstructed 1930s gas showroom shows the choice and cost of appliances that were available in the mid-twentieth century
- **Expansion and Exploration**  
A display of post-war gas appliances leads onto a section on the modern gas industry describing the discovery and exploitation of natural gas from the North Sea. Exhibits include model oil rigs and the intelligent pig, a remote-controlled device for checking pipelines. Visitors can view a selection of three-minute long videos on the following topics: *How gas was formed*, *Searching for gas*, *Exploratory drilling*, *Chemical mud*, *Pipeline inspection*, *Nationalisation*, *Importing natural gas* and *Distributing natural gas*.
- **Towards the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**  
The concluding section of the gallery features display panels on the environment, gas safety and British Gas in 1991.