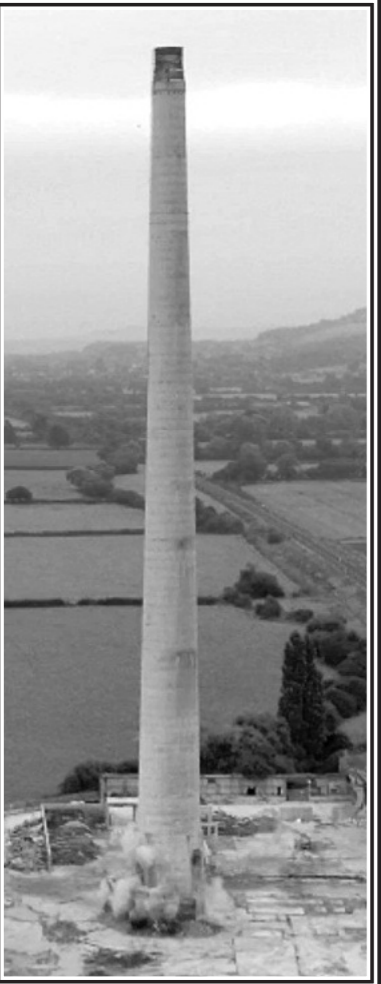
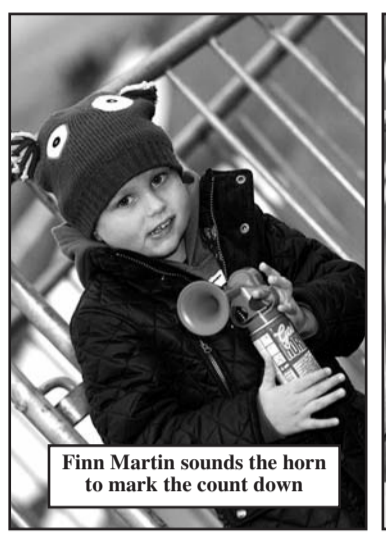


# GOING, GOING, GONE! THOUSANDS WATCH END OF AN ERA AS ICONIC CHIMNEY IS TOPPLED



# Excitement tinged with sadness as chimney is demolished

Photos for our 4-page picture special by Skynamite, Martyn Payne, Sam Blanchard and Jo Hilderley Photography



Finn Martin sounds the horn to mark the count down



Lily Sargent pushes the all important button

THOUSANDS of people gathered in Westbury last Sunday to watch history in the making as the town's cement works chimney went crashing to the ground after 53 years as a local landmark.

The 400ft chimney was demolished at 7am on Sunday 18th September after being put out of use in 2009. At dawn, crowds gathered on top of the White Horse, in the fields and roads around it and at the White Horse Country Park to watch the once in a lifetime spectacle.

A controlled explosion shattered the base of the chimney and it fell to the ground in a matter of seconds. There were mixed emotions at seeing the landmark disappear forever.

Mayor of Westbury, councillor Stephen Andrews said, "I was amazed that thousands of people turned up; it was a spectacular event. I and I think many others, felt a mixture of excitement and sadness at seeing the chimney go down."

"It's been around a long time so a lot of local people have strong associations with it, but also realise it was time for it to go. I remember it from my days in the air force; we used to fly around it and it was a good marker because you could see it from miles around."

"I was half expecting there to be a petition to save it!"

The cement works was first opened on 29th April 1963 by the local MP, Sir Robert Grimston, after being built by Blue Circle

Group at a cost of £3million; now equivalent to around £52million.

Chairman of Westbury Lions club, Phil Harris, said on demolition day, "It was sad but it was definitely time for it to go; it had become a bit of a relic, like a lot of us from the 60s!"

"I'll be interested to see what happens on the site now. I'd like to see whatever is built there bring some employment to the town in the air force; we used to fly around it and it was a good marker because you could see it from miles around."

The cement works began to be dismantled earlier in the year, and the kiln is still yet to be taken down. The silos and some of the storage will remain and continue to be used for distribution by Farmac, which now owns the site.

The company's director of land and natural resources, Stuart Wykes, said the demolition was a total success.

Stuart said, "Our guys on the ground said everything went exactly as expected, so we're very happy with that."

"It was a big day for the company but it was clearly an even bigger day for the crowds of people on the hill. I was surprised, but pleased, to see so many turn out for the demolition, and to see a number of generations of people who have worked there."

"It was something of an iconic landmark, being next to the White Horse, and we were thrilled there was so much interest. It was a lovely morning for it as well."

So many people travelled to watch the event that traffic built up in the town and not everyone made it in time.

Westbury's MP, Andrew Murrison, said he was left relying on local radio and his imagination after getting stuck in traffic.

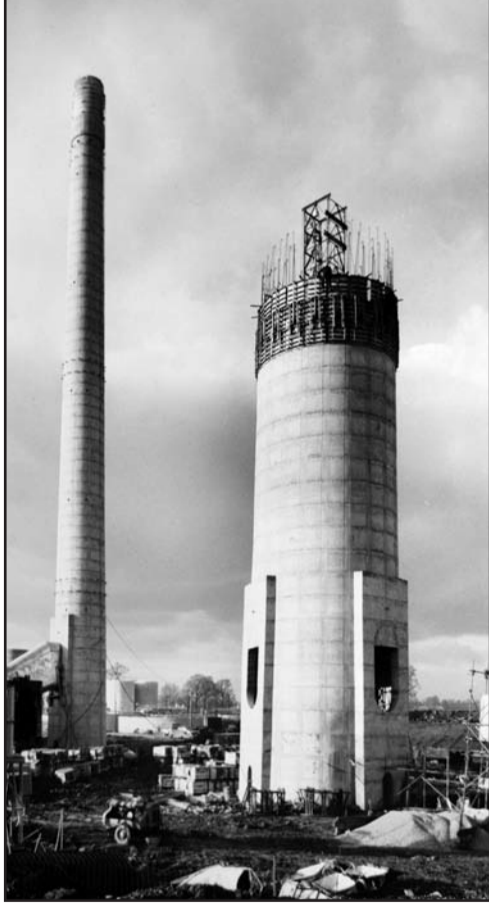
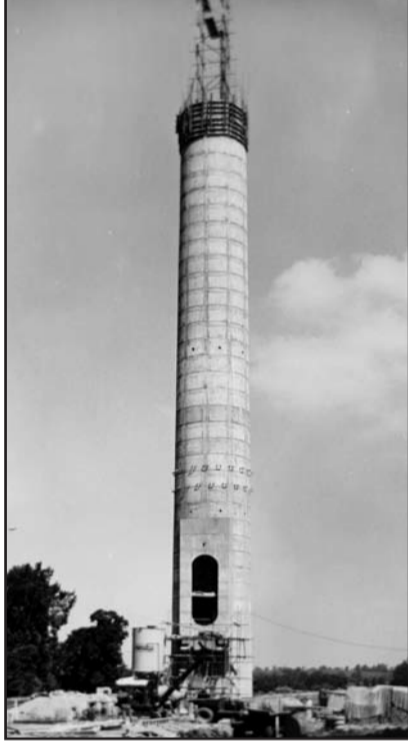
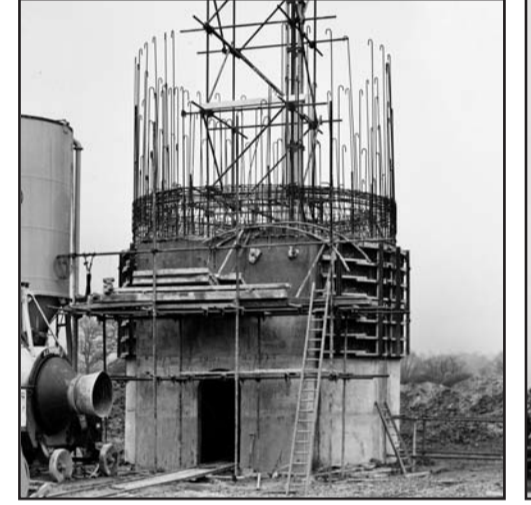
Andrew said, "I was stuck in the traffic gridlock in the middle of the town so missed the big moment at seven on Sunday morning."

"However, I'm pleased half of Wiltshire turned out to watch. A big well done to all involved for a safe and effective operation. The occasion was bitter-sweet of course; the cement works brought generations of work to Westbury, but nobody could say the chimney enhanced the landscape."

## Take a trip down memory lane to when Westbury's landmark was first built

There were originally two chimneys at Westbury Cement Works. The first was opened in 1963 but was demolished soon after in 1965 and replaced by the iconic 53 year-old chimney which was knocked down on Sunday.

Here is selection of photos from the archives of Westbury Heritage Society who rescued them from the cement works earlier this year.



The base of the iconic chimney in 1965



Going...



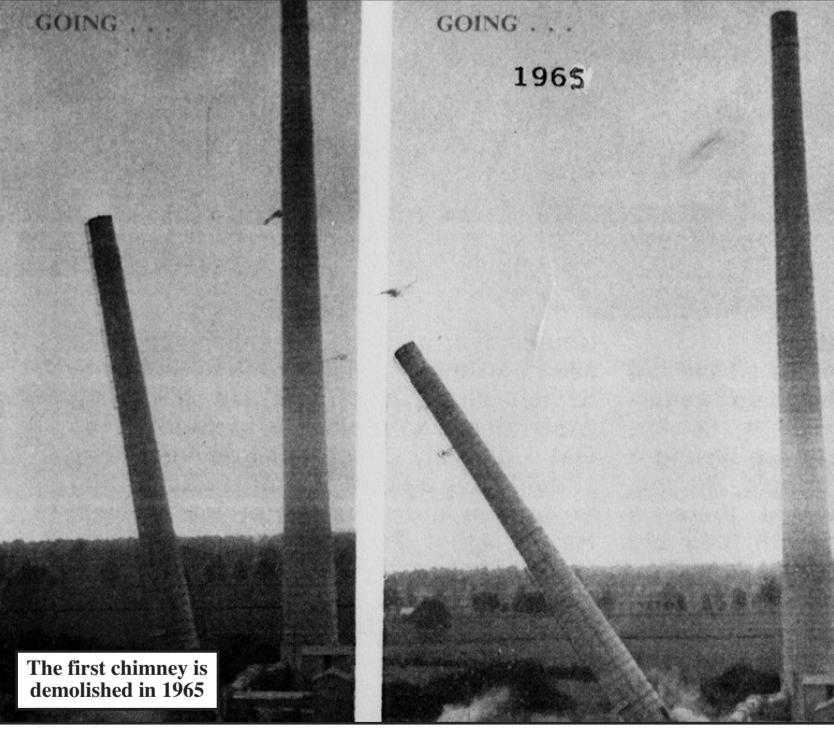
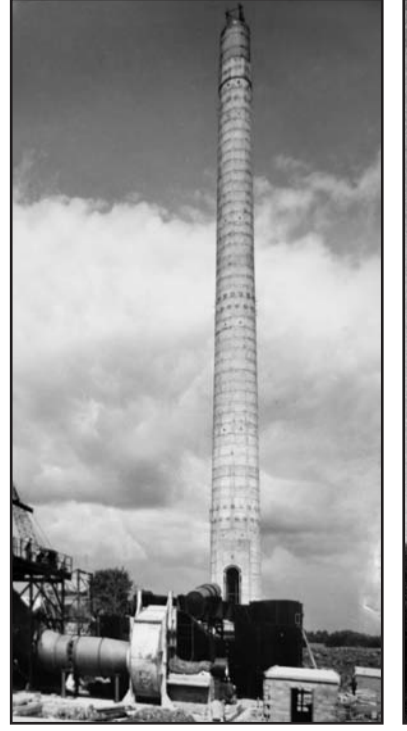
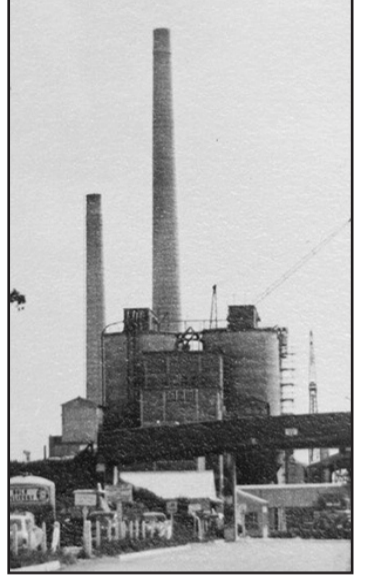
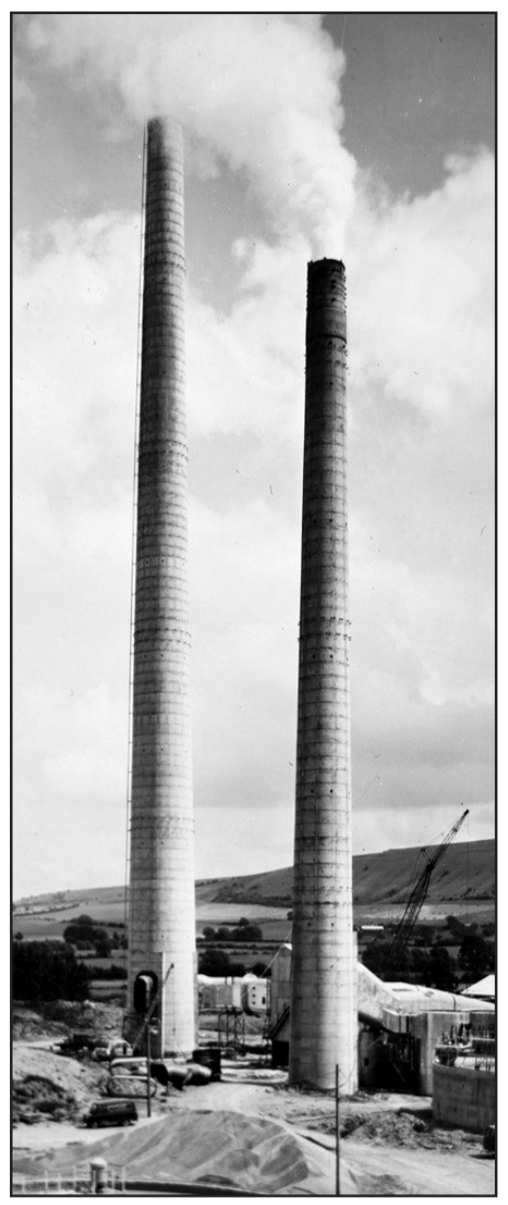
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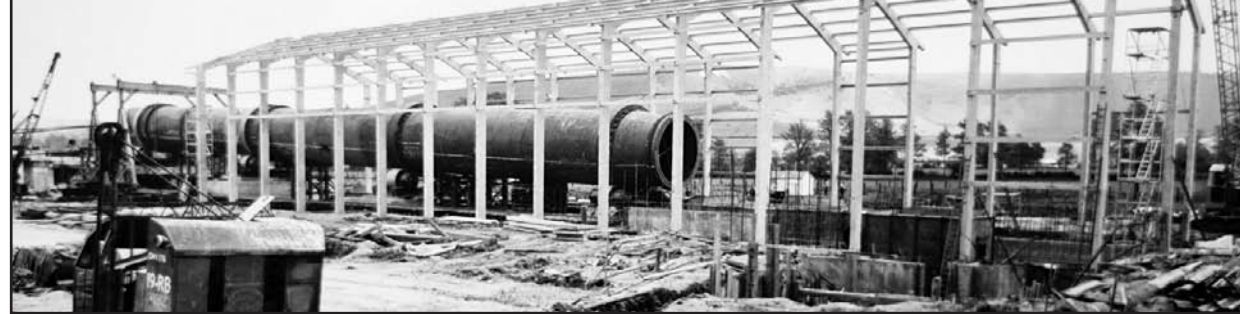
Gone!



Westbury Lions who helped to marshall the spectators



The first chimney is demolished in 1965



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