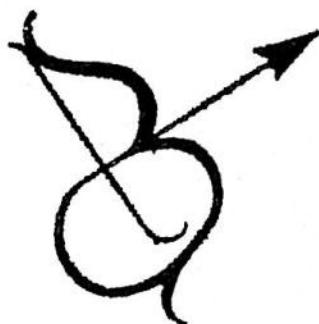


The Beaumont Centenary



F. E. Beaumont Ltd.

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The Beaumont Centenary

This year F. E. Beaumont Limited celebrate one hundred years as industrial chimney specialists.



William G. Beaumont (1900).

THE firm of F. E. Beaumont Limited, Industrial Chimney Specialists, was established one hundred years ago. In January 1876 William G. Beaumont founded a firm of industrial painters and steeplejacks. In due course of time he was joined by his second son, Percy and fifth son, Albert.

The industrial painting side of the business became very large; before the 1914 war it employed over 600 painters and carried out such work as gilding the Monument to the Fire of London and the figure of Justice at the Central Criminal Court, painting Tower Bridge and other Thames bridges, gas holders at Beckton and numerous other gas works, main line railway termini, the Regent Palace Hotel, etc. The steeplejack side of the business grew at a more modest pace, carrying out typical steeplejack skills on both church spires and industrial chimneys, especially on the "new" electricity power stations which were then being built.

As 'W. G.' became older, he divided the responsibility of the two sides of the business. Percy looked

after the industrial painting and Albert specialised in the steeplejack work. Albert served in the Royal Horse and Royal Field Artillery during the 1914-18 War and (perhaps not surprisingly) was awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field.

When W. G. died in 1924 Percy and Albert continued to run the business, but due to a number of reasons decided to operate as two separate firms, each specialising in its own field. Percy remained as owner of W. G. Beaumont and Son and Albert formed F. E. Beaumont in 1925. The firm of F. E. Beaumont prospered and carried out all types of ecclesiastical and commercial steeplejack work, but with a leaning towards the commercial side, especially steel chimneys.

In 1936 a cement company decided to reorganise one of its plants. This included the dismantling, moving approximately 137 m [150 yd] and re-erection of three 49 m [160 ft] high x 2.7 m [9 ft] diameter riveted steel chimneys. At that time this work would have involved a shutdown period of 7/8 weeks to de-rivet, transport and then re-erect each chimney. Albert moved all three chimneys in a total of three weeks. Each chimney was jacked up off its holding down bolts, placed on rollers, moved whilst vertical to its new position and then placed on its new holding down bolts. One was lowered 760 mm [30 in] to its new level and was traversed round a 90° corner.

Albert was joined by his son Max as an apprentice in 1937. The business continued to expand and in 1938 commenced building radar towers for the air defence of the United Kingdom. In 1940 the firm employed over 200 men on both traditional steeplejack work and the building of radar towers. In all some forty-five 75, 99 and 110 m [247, 325 and 360 ft] towers were built. At the end of 1940 Max joined the RAF and served as a pilot in Coastal Command.

By the middle of 1943 all the radar towers required had been built and Albert looked around for a way in which the firm's special and unique



Gilding figure of Justice — Albert Beaumont is sitting on the arm holding the scales (1926).

skills could be best employed to help the war effort. He decided that as well as the steeplejack work which was required to keep factory chimneys running at full power, the raising of ships which had been sunk in coastal waters would be of considerable use. As it was always his principle not to ask a man to do something which he could not do himself he took a course in marine diving and became the first "underwater steeplejack". A number of ships were successfully refloated.

During 1944 it became very difficult to obtain new or replacement steel chimneys, as the firms which fabricated steel chimneys were occupied on other war work. Albert then bought and installed machinery and welding plants to make steel chimneys, firstly for the replacement of existing chimneys and then entirely new chimneys.

During the salvage operations in 1943-44 Albert had acquired an expert knowledge of the use of high explosives and turned this ability to the demolition of derelict brick and steel chimneys, using explosives instead of the traditional cutting away method. One of the first explosive demolition contracts was the removal of the spire of a church which had been severely damaged by a flying bomb in 1944 and was in a dangerous condition. The spire was demolished without damage to the tower.

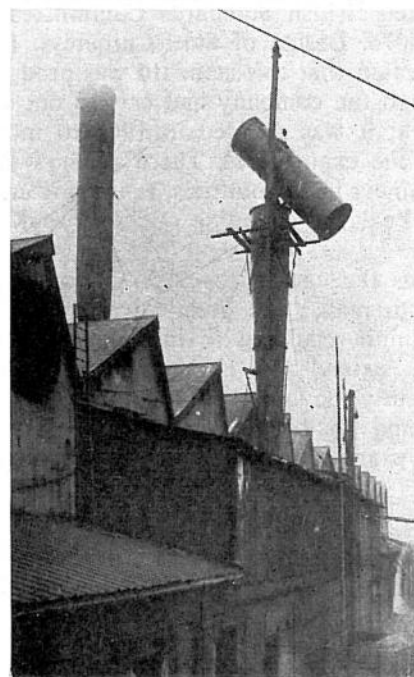
Max returned to the company from the Far East in March 1946 and commenced a year's refresher course as a steeplejack. In 1949 the firm was formed into a private limited liability company and continued to expand, especially in the field of steel chimneys. The traditional steeplejack crafts were not lost however, and amongst work carried out in the 1950s was the painting of concrete chimneys to power stations, church spire repairs, restoration of the Shot Tower for the Festival of Britain, painting of the flag pole in the Victoria Tower of the Palace of Westminster, as well as the design, fabrication and erection of large, self-supporting steel chimneys.

In 1952 Albert became a founder member of the London Building and Civil Engineering Accident Prevention Group (now the Construction Health & Safety Group) and from 1953 until the time of his death served on a number of British Standard Committees. In 1958 he flew out to the Northern Rhodesian (now Zambian) Copper Belt and personally inspected a 91 m [300 ft] high x 9.1 m [30 ft] diameter steel chimney. His examination resulted in a telephone call to the London office. Ten steeplejacks were hastily assembled from various sites throughout the U.K., passports obtained, inoculations and vaccinations administered, air passages arranged and the ten men were actually working on the chimney in Rhodesia within 72 hours of receipt of the 'phone call.

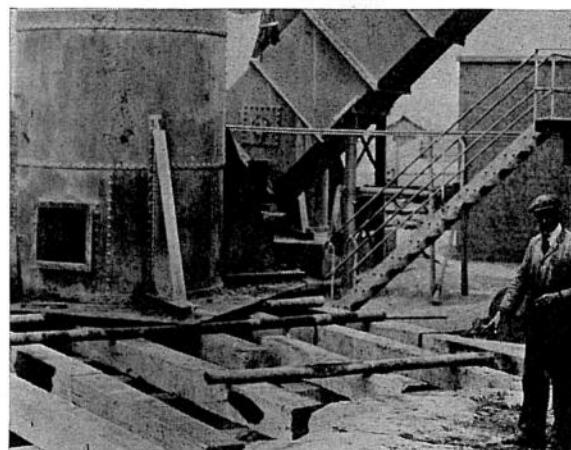
The design expertise of the company in respect of steel chimneys was greatly enhanced by the feedback of information from the steeplejack side of the business. Not only did the company inspect steel chimneys designed and erected by its own people, it also inspected steel chimneys designed and erected by others and could in consequence avoid mistakes and bad designs which were per-



Repairs to church spire (1927).



Renewing steel chimney (1932).



Moving 49 m [160 ft] high by 2.7 m [9 ft] diameter steel chimneys whilst still standing (1936).

petrated by other firms who did not have this facility.

In July 1960 Albert suffered a severe coronary thrombosis and spent some three months in hospital. He was advised medically that he should greatly reduce his work burden and after much persuasion finally agreed to take a six months' world cruise. His first port of call was Montevideo, which he had first visited in 1910 when he ran away from boarding school and shipped out of London Docks as a cabin boy on a square rigged sailing ship. Owing to various reasons his six months' trip actually took 11½ months, finally returning home for Christmas 1961. Upon his return to the United Kingdom he was still supposed to take things easy, but it was impossible to still his effervescent energy until he died from a further coronary in August 1962; he was actually working until minutes before he died.

Upon the death of his father, Max took over full control of the company and was joined by his elder son Nicholas in 1969 and his younger son Michael in 1973. Max replaced his father on various British Standard Committees and has served, or is serving on eighteen British Standards Committees, including B.S.4076, Design of Steel Chimneys. It was at his suggestion that this standard was produced.

Although the company had carried out some export work, it was decided in 1965 to increase its effort in the export field. There are now Beauvent steel chimneys in 38 countries, ranging from Austria to New Zealand, including one sold to Krupps in the Ruhr.

Towards the end of the 1950's Beaumonts were the first to realise the great advantage in the use of aluminium cladding to insulate steel chimneys and thus extend the chimney's operational life. Consequently they purchased a factory in 1958, designed and built special aluminium forming machinery and went into quantity production. At

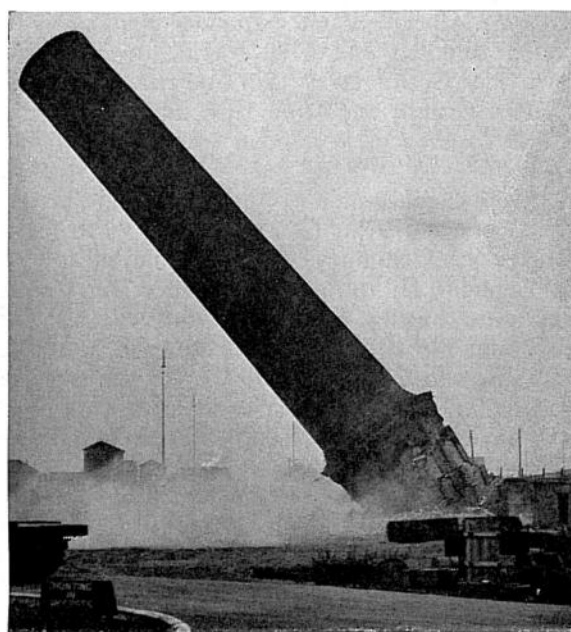
one time the production exceeded 15·3 t [15 tons] of 16 gauge aluminium cladding a month. The quantity of aluminium sheet used in a year would cover more than 4 ha [10 acres]. This quantity has now been reduced by Beaumont's introduction of the multi-flue chimney, but they still use some 1·2 ha [3 acre] of aluminium sheet each year.

The demand for the company's Beauvent steel chimneys and Beauval aluminium cladding became so great, that despite the purchase of an additional factory and utilisation of every possible space saving device in the factory they had occupied since 1931, more production space was required. After considering many locations it was decided in May 1966 to purchase 2 ha [5 acre] of land at Mere in Wiltshire.

Plans were drawn up for a 2790 m² [30,000 ft²] factory and in September 1966 the construction of the first purpose designed steel chimney factory in the world was commenced. Europe was scoured for the best possible machines to facilitate the mass production of individually designed steel chimneys and fortunately this search resulted in over 90% of the machinery being British.

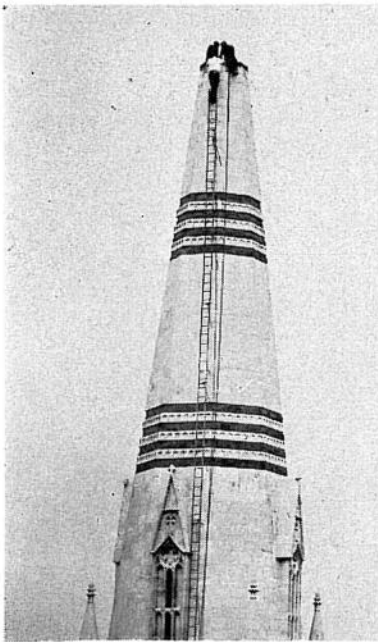
Pilot production was started in August 1967 and the factory was officially opened by The Lord Margadale of Islay on February 8th, 1968. The vast majority of the labour force was recruited locally and were trained by skilled operatives transferred from the London factory.

Production has been steadily increased, the factory has been extended and current production is approaching fifty tons of purpose designed steel chimney each working week. At present the company are awaiting planning consent for an extension of some 1950 m² [21,000 ft²] to their factory at Mere to increase production still further and 5·7 ha [14 acre] of additional land has been purchased to prepare for future expansion.

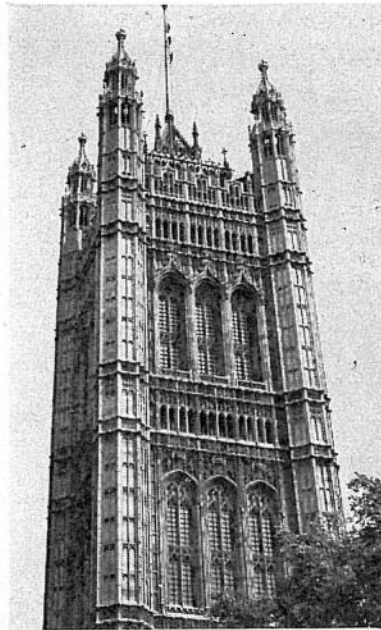


(Above) Use of explosives to demolish disused brick chimney (1949).

(Left) Demolition of church spire (1944).



Re-building church spire (1955).



Steeplejacks ascending flag staff at Victoria Tower, Palace of Westminster (1958).



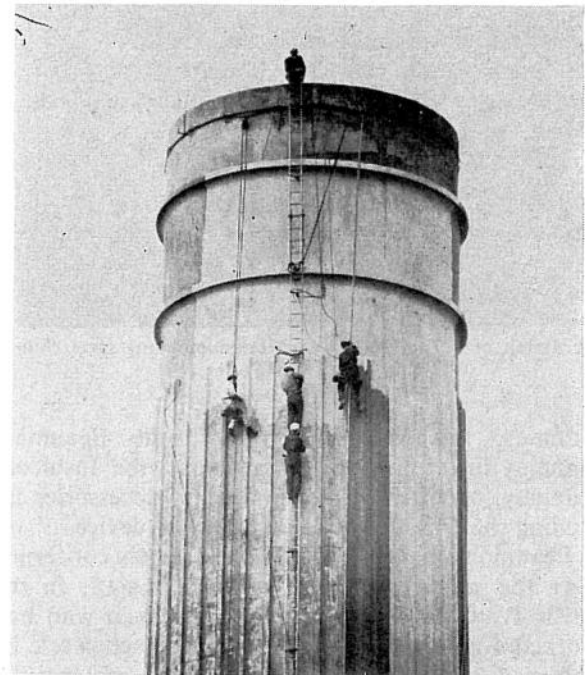
Albert Beaumont on top of flag staff of Victoria Tower (1958).

Although the design and fabrication of steel chimneys takes place at Mere, some ancillary work is still carried out at the London factory and it is from London that the steeplejack force is controlled. The majority of the steeplejack force is now engaged upon the erection of steel chimneys, but there are still a number engaged upon traditional steeplejack skills for which there will always be a demand as long as there are industrial chimneys.

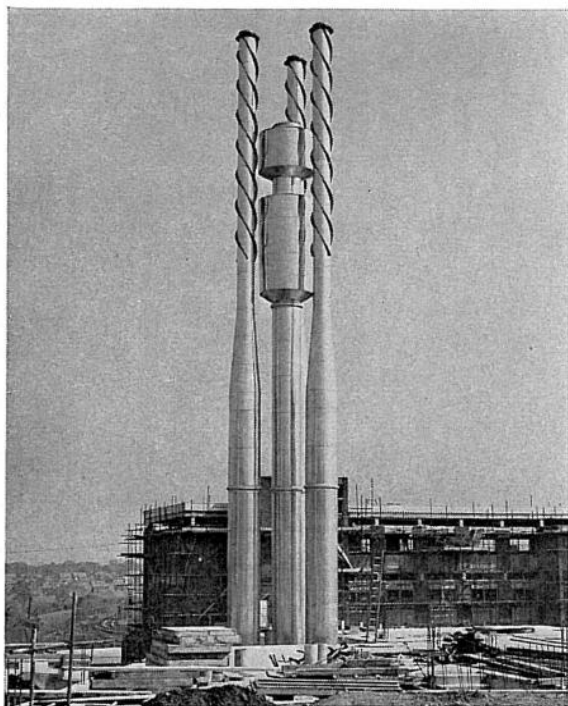
Since they started manufacture of steel chimneys in 1944 Beaumonts have always maintained a progressive research and development programme. One

example of this was the construction of a 24 m [80 ft] high self-supporting steel chimney, which was exposed to both dynamic and static loading and finally loaded to destruction at the Central Electricity Generating Board Tower Testing Centre at Cheddar. The result of this experimental work greatly increased the knowledge of chimney behaviour and resulted in far more reliable, stronger and economical designs.

The company have introduced the Econoflu multi-taper design self-supporting steel chimney, the Concentriflu chimney, the Insulflu double-skinned



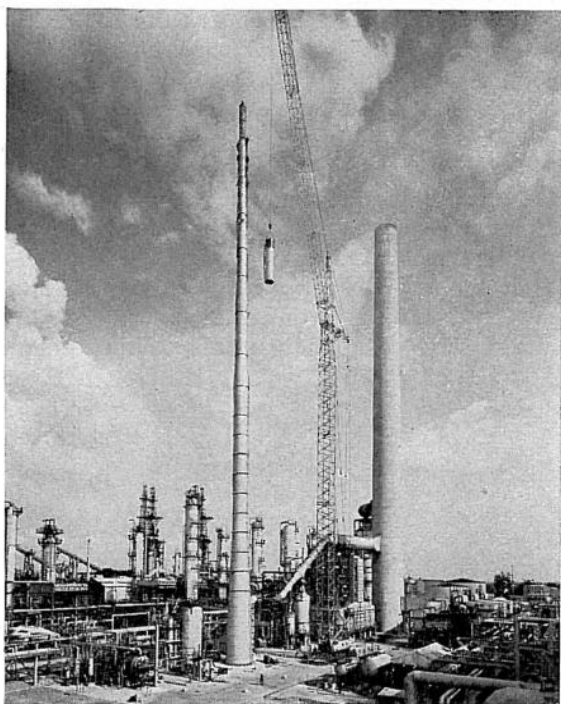
(Above) Steeplejacks painting power station chimney (1951).
(Left) 61m [200 ft] high architectural feature chimney at York University (1965).



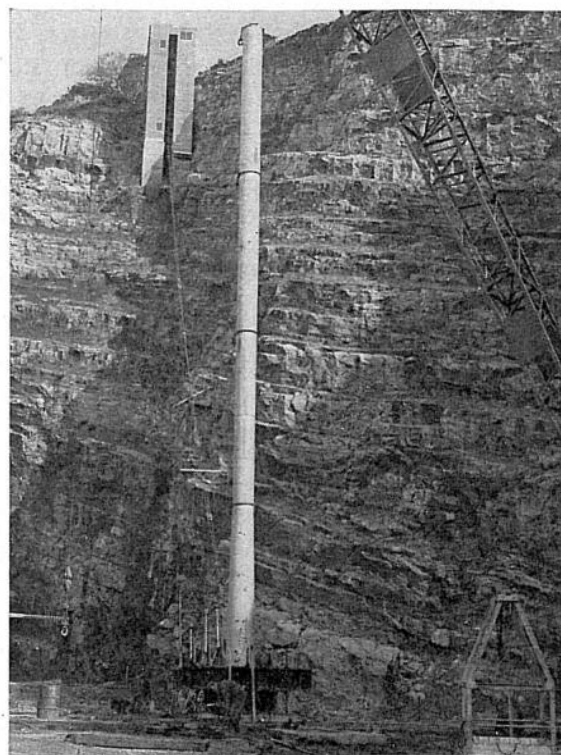
21 m [70 ft] high architectural feature steel chimneys and water tanks (1968).



Erection of steel liner inside 107 m [350 ft] high concrete chimney (1972).



Erection of 107 m [350 ft] high self-supporting steel chimney (1973).



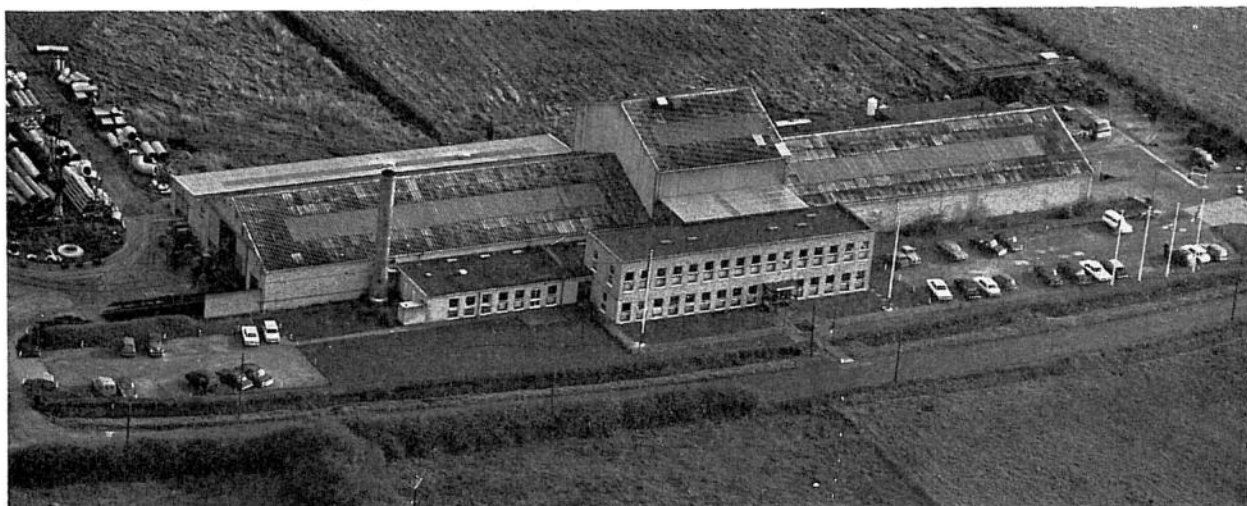
Testing 24 m [80 ft] high chimney at Cheddar (1966).

chimney, the Multiflu chimney, the Beaumere chimney incorporating storage tanks, the Insulcore chimney, together with a number of accessories including the G.S.C., gas solids collector device.

Beaumonts have always been extremely concerned over the safety and welfare of their staff. In the 1890s W. G. had his "pensioners", men who had worked for him until they retired. Each week he personally gave them 6d and an ounce of 'baccy'. Not much by modern standards of the welfare state but revolutionary at that time. Today the company

have sickness and welfare schemes which are unusual in the trade. Indicative of the staff/management relations is the fact that over twelve percent of the current employees have served 20 years or more within the firm.

To ensure that adequate, correct and safe training was given to their steeplejack trainees, the company founded a "Steeplejack's Training School" in 1963. Once again this was the first of its type in the world and was acclaimed by the Factory Inspectorate, the Construction Industry Training



(Above) The factory at Mere (1971).

(Left) Low-loading lorry with replica of firm's first vehicle (1975).

Board and the Construction Health & Safety Group. The numerous courses run at the school cater for new entrants into the trade as well as the more experienced employees and deal with every facet of the trade.

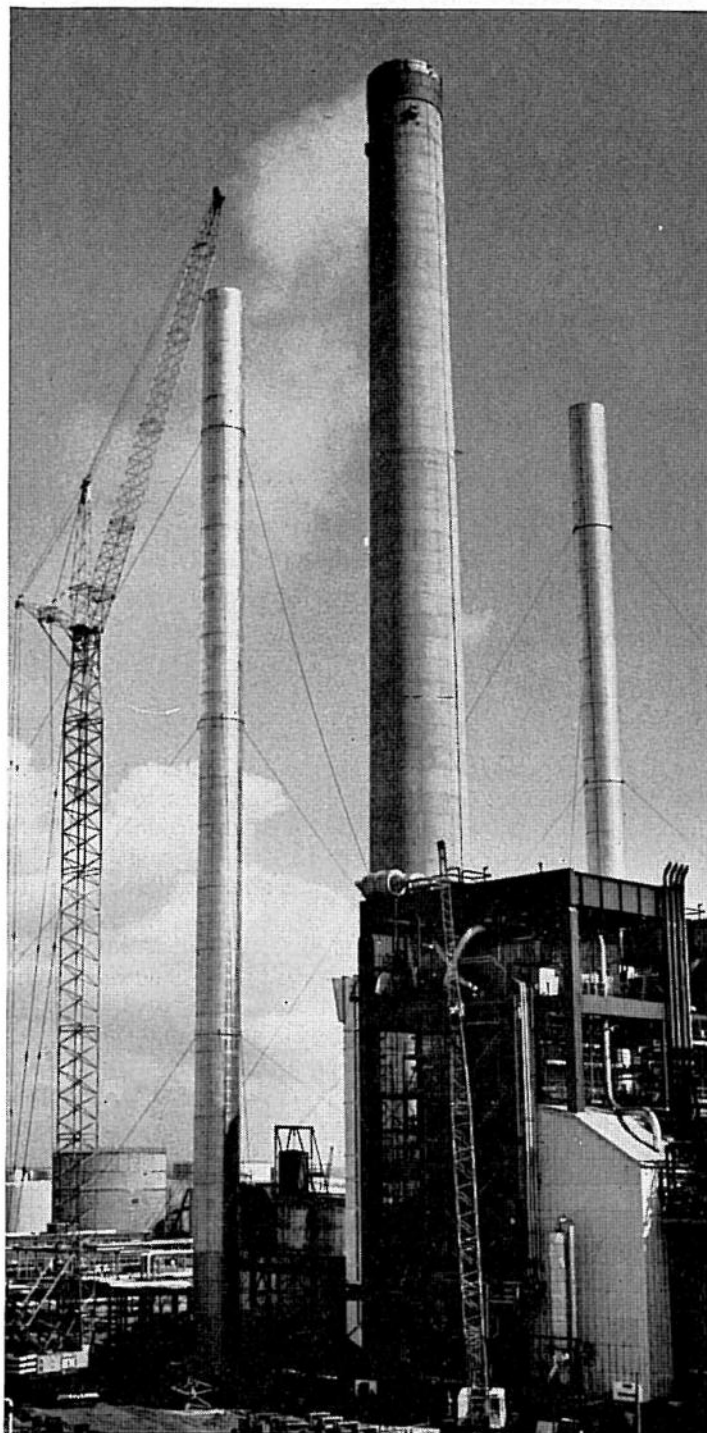
In 1973 Beaumonts designed, manufactured and erected a 107 m [350 ft] high self-supporting steel chimney which is believed to be the tallest chimney of its type in Europe. In 1975 they supplied and erected two 107 m [350 ft] high x 4.3 m [14 ft] diameter guyed steel chimneys, also believed to be the tallest in Europe. These chimneys were each erected in under twenty one hours working time.

The company bought their first lorry, a one ton Model T Ford, in 1925. They now own a fleet of

eight large lorries to transport chimneys from their factory to sites both in the U.K. and on the Continent of Europe. The latest addition to their fleet is a purpose made low loading articulated lorry which will carry a 7 m [23 ft] long x 4.3 m [14 ft 2 in] diameter chimney section weighing up to 18.4 t [18 tons].

Although Beaumonts are very widely known for their pure steeplejack crafts, their expertise in the design, manufacture and erection of steel chimneys has also received world wide acknowledgement. All of the 200 or so members of the company are very conscious of the firm's very high reputation which has been built up over one hundred years by four generations of the Beaumont family.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AND
FOUR GENERATIONS EXPERIENCE
HAVE MADE F. E. BEAUMONT LTD.,



THE LARGEST
MANUFACTURERS
OF INDUSTRIAL
STEEL CHIMNEYS
IN THE WORLD

The top section, of the second
of two 107m high x 4200mm
diameter guyed steel chimneys
which we recently
manufactured and erected,
being lifted into position.



We can offer competitive
quotations for all chimneys
upwards of 9m high x 300mm
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be designed to incorporate the
BEAUVENT GSC, a device for
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