

Recording of the week: Oldbury – a tour of a decommissioned nuclear power station

This week's selection comes from Tom Lean, Project Interviewer for An Oral History of British Science.

For nearly 60 years much of Britain's electricity was supplied by a fleet of eleven Magnox nuclear power stations, built between the 1950s and the 1970s. They were the first series of full-scale nuclear power stations in the world, each built with a pair of nuclear reactors supplying hot steam to a set of turbines to generate electricity for homes and workplaces. While they became the workhorses of the nuclear industry, gradually their numbers dwindled as they reached the end of their design lives and one by one they were decommissioned. North of Bristol, amongst the last to be built was Oldbury, which first went critical on the 18th of September 1967. Switched off in 2012, it now stands silent awaiting the start of a decades-long process that will gradually demolish the station and decontaminate the site. Yet today Oldbury remains much as it was when the station was operational, even if its control rooms and reactor halls seem eerily empty, as Peter Webster, station manager in the 1990s, explains in this video tour of Oldbury recorded last year for [An Oral History of the Electricity Supply Industry](#).

In-depth oral history interviews documenting the lives and careers of those who worked in the electricity industry can be found in the [Industry: water, steel and energy](#) collection on British Library Sounds.

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