



Newsletter

April 1994

HINKLEY BLOCKADED IN THORP START-UP PROTEST

The main entrance to Hinkley Point nuclear power station was completely blocked for five hours on Saturday March 5th in protest at the final approval being given for the THORP reprocessing plant.

The day before, the High Court in London had decided that there was no need to have a full public inquiry into the justification for THORP, as Greenpeace had demanded.

About 35 protestors arrived at the gates at 10 am and secured them shut with chains and locks. Others were locked to the gates with steel bars round their necks. Security cameras were disabled. At about 2pm a stream of cars arrived for the next power station shift and were blocked from entry until police eventually removed the barriers.

No arrests were made, and the demonstration passed off peacefully.

The protest was organised by an ad hoc coalition, including members of Mid-Somerst CND, Mid-Somerset Earth First, Greenpeace and Stop

Hinkley Expansion. It was well covered by local radio and TV and even mentioned in the *Independent on Sunday*.

Similar demonstrations took place on the same day at other nuclear sites around the country, underlining public anger at the High Court decision.



Stephen Abrahall, who acted as spokesperson for the Hinkley action, said afterwards: "This is just the beginning of a serious campaign to halt the nuclear power programme, at least until some way is discovered to deal with the radioactive waste."

More details from Stephen Abrahall on 0749 830717.

Reminder: All SHE members are welcome on a visit to the



NEW ENERGY EFFICIENT HOUSE, YEOVIL followed
by the **SHE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** on
WEDNESDAY APRIL 13TH

Visit starts at 7pm (94, Stiby Road, Yeovil) followed by the AGM at 8.15pm in the nearby Somerset Inn (2, Preston Road). For detailed directions, phone Val Davey (0460 240241) or write to the SHE address (see back page).

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THORP JUDGEMENT COULD DELAY SIZEWELL B AND NUCLEAR REVIEW

The High Court judgement on the THORP court case could have a serious effect on both the start-up of Sizewell B power station and the government's nuclear review.

This is because although Greenpeace and Lancashire County Council, who jointly brought the court action, lost their fight to stop THORP opening, the Judge made important points about future nuclear plants.

Greenpeace had argued that any proposed nuclear power activity should not only be justified in health and safety terms but on whether it was more broadly acceptable as part of the country's energy mix. The Judge agreed, but said that these considerations had already been met over THORP.

The effect on Sizewell B, however, could be to extend the consultation process which the government needs to go through over the station's proposed radioactive discharges. As happened with THORP, the authorities could have to go through a second consultation period dealing with wider social and economic issues.

The initial consultation process over new discharges into the sea and air from Sizewell B ended last October. Stop Hinkley Expansion was among 559 organisations and individuals who sent in comments to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution. But there could now have to be a second process, perhaps lasting up to nine months.

Since the government's nuclear review was supposed to start just as Sizewell B was "nearing completion", this extended process could further delay the review's official start. The effect of the delay will also be to increase the cost of building Sizewell B, already over £3 billion, and one of the key factors to be considered in the review.

NUCLEAR NEWS

NUCLEAR ELECTRIC FINED

Nuclear Electric was fined a total of £34,000 by magistrates on Anglesea last month after being found guilty of deliberately leaking radioactive gas into the atmosphere.

The incident happened at the Wylfa power station after part of a refuelling grab got stuck in one of the fuel channels. The gas - radioactive sulphur - was "vented" in order for a search to begin for the broken piece.

Wylfa is the most modern of the Magnox series of stations. The prosecution was brought by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate under the 1960 Radioactive Substances Act.

CHERNOBYL EIGHT YEARS ON

This April 26th is the eighth anniversary of the accident at Chernobyl in the Ukraine. Although the government has decided to keep the surviving reactors operating for the time being, people in a vast surrounding area still suffer the consequences of the world's worst nuclear disaster.

Two recently published books are timely reminders of the daily problems they encounter and the continuing importance of Chernobyl to the struggle against nuclear expansion. "Chernobyl: The Forbidden Truth" is an account of what happened in the area after the accident, including the authorities' cover-up, by local reporter Alla Yaroshinskaya. "Beyond Chernobyl: Women Respond" is a collection of writings by women from all over the world about the accident itself and its implications. Both books are published by Jon Carpenter Publishing, PO Box 129, Oxford OX1 4PH (0865 790715).

SAFE ENERGY NEWS

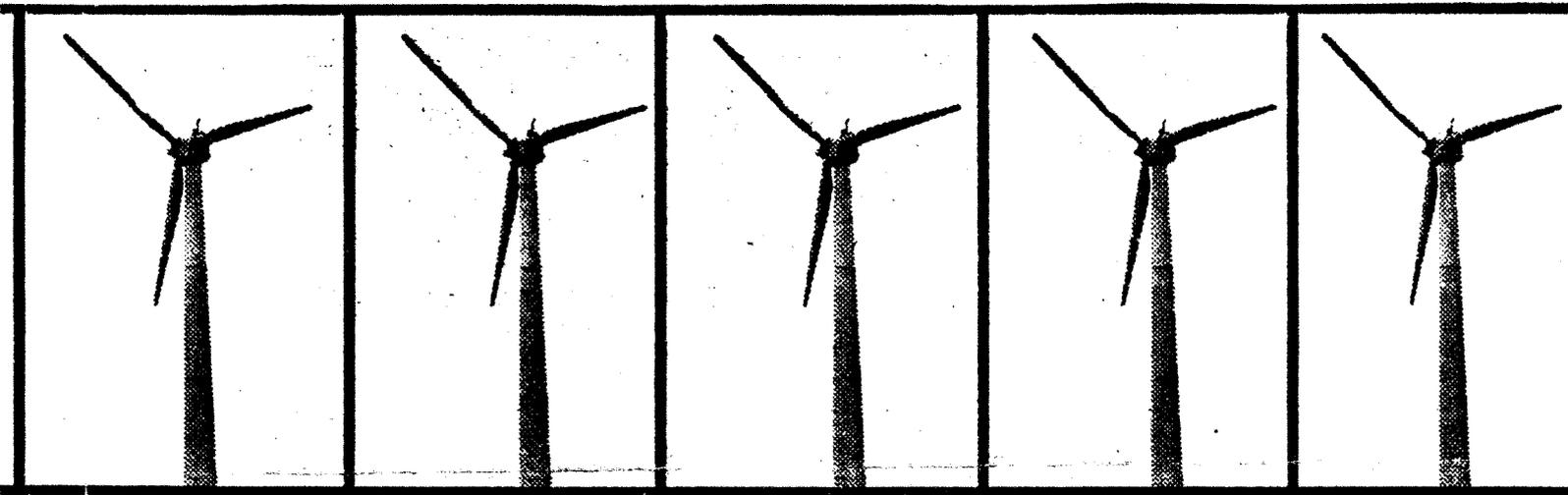
WIND ENERGY BACKLASH

The backlash against wind energy continues to gather steam, even reaching the pages of the generally pro-renewable *Guardian*. Much of the opposition comes from people campaigning against specific proposals in their neighbourhood, as opposed to those living near existing wind farms.

Most surveys of people round the 20 or so wind farms already operating show that they are generally popular. People's worst fears about the turbines totally blighting the view or making an unbearable noise have not been realised. A recent survey by the Countryside Council for Wales, for example, round a number of Welsh wind farms, showed that 70% of local residents were happy with their tall new neighbours.

Against this, the British Wind Energy Association has been distributing information to counter some of the myths being promoted, for example that wind power is totally unreliable or that the developers are lining their pockets with state subsidies. In fact, the amount of money available to wind projects from the government is minuscule compared with what has been pumped into nuclear power.

There is clearly a balance to be struck between the obvious environmental advantages of wind power - no carbon dioxide emitted, no other pollution, very little risk of accidents - and the intrusion the turbines make into the countryside. But the danger of the present campaign is that NIMBYism has taken over completely. In the process, the prospects for all types of renewable energy could be damaged. The Energy Minister Tim Eggar has already warned that wind



This has not stopped the continuing onslaught from organisations like Country Guardian, which was set up by a retired businessman from Cheshire. Country Guardian's Vice-President is Sir Bernard Ingham, former press secretary to Margaret Thatcher and a public relations adviser to both British Nuclear Fuels and Nuclear Electric. Ingham says that wind turbines are unsightly "bog brushes in the sky" and that nuclear power is the answer.

power will have to prove itself acceptable to local communities, or lose state support.

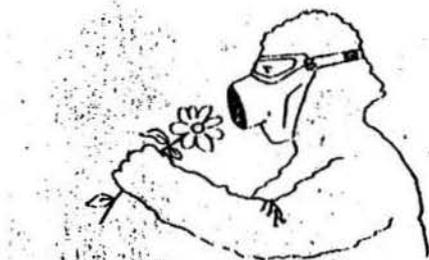
One way in which those in favour of wind power can help defend its benefits is by organising surveys or petitions in favour of specific proposals. This has been done for example by Friends of the Earth groups round Chichester and Shoreham in Sussex. If you hear of a wind farm proposal in your area, and want to support it, why not get in touch with national FoE (071 490 1555) for advice.

RENEWABLE TRAVEL TIP

If you happen to be travelling through Brittany in Northern France this summer, why not make a diversion to see one of Europe's largest renewable energy projects?

Stretching across the Rance estuary near St. Malo is an electricity-generating barrage using only the tides as its fuel source. You can't walk right through the 24 giant turbines, but you can look down into the turbine hall from a gallery where a video describes how the barrage works in both French and English.

The Rance barrage has been in operation since 1967 and has a capacity of 240 Megawatts. Unfortunately, its technology has never been developed in Britain.

**NUCLEAR NOTES**

BARRELS OF LAUGHS. Scientists monitoring radioactivity in the Gulf of Fallarones National Maritime Sanctuary off San Francisco are a little puzzled. A five square mile site at a depth of 3,000 feet is meant to be home for 3,500 barrels of radioactive waste, dumped there in the past – but there aren't any. Having checked the entire 50 square mile sanctuary, they have made just 100 'contacts', which may or may not be barrels of waste.

The scientists think that either the barrels have drifted outside the area or that they were dumped in an unauthorised site elsewhere.

Then again, maybe Neptune has got a reprocessing contract with Sellafield. Source: Safe Energy (UK), Dec. 1993 /Jan. 1994

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Membership 0460 240241 (Val Davey)

NUCLEAR REVIEW SUBMISSION

Jane Roberts of Cheltenham and Gloucester College is continuing to work on SHE's submission to the government's promised review of the prospects for nuclear power. However, we are still waiting for an announcement of the review's terms of reference before the final version is completed. As the report on page 2 indicates, this could still be some time away.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- April 9** Decommissioning Policy Meeting, Manchester. SHE will be represented. Further details: Hugh Richards (0982 570362).
- April 13** SHE Annual Meeting and visit to Energy Saving House, Yeovil, 7pm. See front page for details.
- May 21** Cannington College Open Day, Cannington. SHE will have a display: any offers of help?
- June 25-6** Radiation and Health Conference, Glasgow. Details from: Margaret Crankshaw, 3 North Neuk Barassie, Troon, Ayrshire KA10 6TT.



**NUCLEAR POWER
IS THE ISSUE**

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