



Newsletter

May 1999

Thank you for responding so positively to the questions asked in the last newsletter. It is good to know that you appreciate the information we are able to provide on the nuclear industry, locally and nationally, and moves to oppose it. There is agreement on the issues to be tackled:- pollution from nuclear sites, transport and disposal of waste and promotion of renewable energy sources.

We received no objections to the proposal that some of our funds could be used to assist others who can campaign more actively than we are able to, and there is a growing trend for organisations to work together with the result that the anti-nuclear movement would seem to be gaining in strength. The campaigns against nuclear transports, which are described below, have asked for financial support and we would like to give them a contribution. We have also been approached by Green Welly, a group based in Wellington who plan to run a series of workshops on building and installing solar panels. If successful they would like to follow these with a "solar club" and eventually an environment centre. A group setting up a Centre for Global Change in Bristol have also asked for support in setting up a resource for people to access information, join campaigns and work together on issues.

We must apologise for the confusion which resulted in some renewal forms going to the wrong people. The small group which organises Stop Hinkley

CONTACT: Hester Watson
Tavens, high Street, Carhampton
Minehead, Somerset
tel 01643 821768

Membership: Val Davey
tel 01460 240241

Next Meeting 16th Sept, 8pm
all welcome

has now sorted out the areas of responsibility, but more help would make things easier. There was a query about the amount spent on accountancy last year, which was actually the cost for two years.

14th Low Level Radiation and Health Conference - will be at Lancaster University
10th/11th July 1999

Contact CORE, 98 Church Street,
Barrow in Furness, Cumbria,

LA14 2HJ tel 01229 833851

NUCLEAR TRANSPORTS

In Germany the campaign against transportation of nuclear waste has mobilised a lot of opposition to nuclear power and to reprocessing. The British public is not given much information about where nuclear waste goes - along our roads, into our railway stations and past our homes. When people find out how near the spent nuclear fuel gets to them it tends to stimulate local opposition, and this is now growing into a national movement against the idea that anybody should

have radioactive waste anywhere near their back yard.

In London, what began as a refusal to let British Nuclear Fuels leave nuclear waste containers in railway sidings at Cricklewood has led to the formation of Communities Against Nuclear Trains - (CAN'T). This is a combined initiative involving local communities, CND, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace

The Cricklewood campaign has established a 'dialogue' between local campaigners and BNFL, facilitated by the Environment Council, and they are also setting up a community enquiry with Brent and Barnet Councils at which expert witnesses can put their case.

CAN'T aims to develop a national network of groups campaigning locally and nationally for an end to the transport of spent nuclear fuel through communities, and for recognition that reprocessing has no purpose so it should stop.

A Bristol group has been set up to raise awareness of transportations in the South West - in particular from Hinkley Point and Devonport in Plymouth, through Bristol to Sellafield. They will be publicising what the nuclear industries are doing and the dangers to the public.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Banks and similar organisations have the power to help the development of 'green energy'. Alan Debenham, recently elected as an independent Green councillor for Taunton, is able to stand for election to the Nationwide Building Society board, and is asking members to support him. TEL 01823 321304

All these groups would appreciate support - contact

CAN'T and Cricklewood Against Nuclear Trains -
Linda Hayes 0181 731 9468 or Friends of the Earth, London

Bristol transportations group meetings - Mondays at FOE, 6.30 pm.
Neil Angove, Friends of the Earth, Bristol 0117 942 0129

Bristol Centre for Global Change -
Jo or Helen 0117 939 3746

The Green Welly -
Iain Beath 01823 400877
Can anyone offer a roof where a solar panel can be installed?

For information on the Low Level Radiation Campaign - their website is WWW.LLRC.ORG/news.HTM

AT HINKLEY POINT

British Nuclear Fuels are also tackling the transportation issue. They report that an independent survey commissioned by the Government has found that there is no threat to public health from the transportation of radioactive materials including those between power stations and Sellafield. Tests showed that contamination on containers posed no danger to the public, but they do not seem to have considered the possibility of leaks or accidents.

Meanwhile, both the Magnox reactors have been shut down because faults were discovered in the welds on brackets supporting a web of tubing. This has remained undetected since they were built in 1964. The

investment in improvements to these support structures will, they hope, be repaid by another extension in the life of the reactors which will be 37 in 2002, to 45 or 50 years.

Both power stations at Hinkley Point must find ways to reduce their emissions as a result of the OSPAR agreement. Current authorisations are for ten times the amount they emit, so they could be greatly reduced without affecting the amount of pollution - contact Dave Willcock, the Environment Agency, 01234 277042 - to press for larger reductions than have been suggested so far.

One battle has been won - possibly influenced by the 1200 people who signed the petition against the shipping of waste from Trawsfynydd for incineration. Following the campaign, British Nuclear Fuels introduced a national policy not to transfer low level waste for incineration between power stations, and have demolished the second incinerator at Hinkley Point.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

SIZEWELL LEAK - NO DANGER

Hundreds of gallons of water contaminated with radioactivity escaped during routine tests on the reactor cooling circuit, and 26 workers had to be evacuated. They were not found to be radioactive, but the incident was classified as one with potential safety consequences.

IN WALES

The Secretary of State has said there will be a public inquiry into the plans to delay final dismantling of the Trawsfynydd reactors for 135 years. This will be the first inquiry into the

decommissioning of a nuclear reactor and the creation of a long-term waste store so it should take account of the principles of 'sustainable development'. Meanwhile the lake next to these reactors is to be used for pleasure boat trips despite the alpha emitting particles in the sediment.

RADIOACTIVE SHEEP

13 years after Chernobyl, and the cloud carrying nuclear fallout passed over Britain, some Welsh sheep are still classified as radioactive, and each year some give birth to deformed lambs. The caesium lingers on in the grass and the bill for testing and compensation has reached £13.5 million.

RADIOACTIVE WASTE

The House of Lords science and technology committee has reported its suggestions for long-term nuclear waste disposal - and prefer to bury it in deep holes rather than set up safe-stores on the surface. The nuclear industry were shocked to learn that the 50 ton Plutonium stockpile is also seen as dangerous waste. To oversee the waste management policy it is proposed that a Nuclear Waste Management Commission should be set up, which would be outside day-to-day government. A Government green paper should be produced this year to present the options, followed by public consultation, in order to resolve this increasing problem. The main difficulty will be to find suitable sites, so "compensation" was proposed as a way to encourage communities to allow a repository in their area. At present the waste is stored above ground, mostly at Sellafield, some at nuclear power stations and Ministry of Defence bases, and there is so much waste that at least two large sites will

be necessary even if Sellafield does stop producing it.

Luckily THORP has been shut for most of the past year due to radioactive leaks and accumulated sludge in pipe systems. The workforce in the reprocessing plants has been reduced in order to lessen British Nuclear Fuels' losses. If it is to start up again the issues raised by the OSPAR decision to stop nuclear discharges into the sea will have to be addressed.

LOST PLUTONIUM

Government scientists who have been tracing the movements of plutonium which is pumped into the Irish Sea are concerned the sediments only contain two thirds of the expected amount. They are anxious to explain where the missing 60 kg has gone.

Although they admit that cancer can be triggered by inhaling just one particle, they do not think that plutonium dust could be washed ashore and be a danger to health. This is despite the existence of birth defect clusters along the Irish Sea coastline and the increased incidence of cancer along the north Welsh coast. Movement of the plutonium carried in the currents can be traced south and north around Scotland to Norway and the Arctic.

The authorisation to pump contaminated water into the sea has been justified by the fact that the nuclear waste is very dilute, but the Medical Research Council has acknowledged that because plutonium and americium are dangerous in small particles, dilution just spreads the risk more widely.

EURATOM

One loophole in the Directive has been blocked by the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions. Disposal of radioactivity from exempt businesses will continue to be controlled by tight thresholds under the Radioactive Substances Act.

The campaign is still opposing clearance of contaminated materials which are slightly radioactive but will not be subject to regulatory control. This will include materials from nuclear sites when the reactors are scrapped which can still be sold for recycling.

The Low Level Radiation Campaign ask you to write to Mr Meacher, DETR, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1 5DU to say:-

You oppose Clearance of contaminated materials from nuclear sites.

You favour keeping the 400 Bq/Kg level in the Substances of Low Activity Order.

You want to receive a copy of the document on revision of the Radioactive Substances Act (due to be published this Autumn)

For information contact
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Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5EY
01597 824771

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www.laka.org
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