



Newsletter

Jan/Feb 1991

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SHE NEWS

CHERNOBYL: 5TH ANNIVERSARY, 26 APRIL 1986

Environmental groups all over the world are gearing up to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. In the United States, a major conference is planned in Washington by a number of organisations, including Greenpeace.

SHE is hoping to invite a speaker from the Chernobyl area in April for a tour of the South West which will include an exhibition of children's art. Watch this space!

IDEAL ENERGY EXHIBITION

The exhibition has just received a £1,000 grant from Avon County Council towards the production of a teaching pack for schools. This will help teachers put the ideas on energy saving in the mobile display into practical use in the classroom.

Bristol Energy Centre will be preparing the teaching pack, which will cost about £3,500 altogether. SHE is still looking for further funding towards this venture.

If you would like to book the Ideal Energy Exhibition for a school or event, please contact Claire Dorling on 0454 418596.

GREEN ENERGY IN THE SOUTH WEST



An illustrated talk by CHARMIAN LARKE from the CORNWALL ENERGY PROJECT about exciting plans for energy conservation and renewable energy in the South West. Includes video of wind generators in Denmark and Cornwall.

MARCH 13

BRIDGWATER ARTS CENTRE

7.45PM

CASTLE STREET, BRIDGWATER

Preceded by ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Stop Hinkley Expansion

Election of Officers - Annual Reports - Strategy for 1991

7.00PM

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ANNUAL MEETING

The SHE Annual General Meeting will be held this year on March 13th at Bridgwater Arts Centre (7pm). After the business, Charmian Larke from Cornwall Energy Centre will talk about progress being made by energy saving and renewable energy ideas in the South West peninsula, and how they could happen in Somerset. See front page for details.

NEWS FROM RUMANIA

Following Danielle Grunberg's visit to Riga in Latvia (see last newsletter), SHE has received a letter from MER, the Rumanian Ecology movement. Here is a brief extract:

"To fight against pollution of all kinds in a country where living standards are almost generally high is completely different from the situation in a poor country such as ours. Our population has been shielded from any information and manipulated by the government in such a way

that everyone believed that noone in the world lived a better life than they, and that life in the West was nothing but strikes, exploitation, pollution and bandits everywhere killing, stealing and raping."

The group is also very keen to make contact with Greens in Britain. Ever thought of visiting Rumanina? Now could be the time!

MER would be happy to organise visits to Rumania (a very beautiful country) and would be able to find cheap accommodation. Anyone interested should contact Danielle on 0278 422632 as soon as possible.

DON'T GIVE UP GIVING!

With Nuclear Electric preparing busily for the 1994 government review of nuclear power (see below), we must be ready for a revival of the Hinkley C plan. If you've taken out a standing order to SHE, please don't give it up. We must keep the campaign strong and active.

Nuclear cost cutting

CANCELLATION by the Government late last year of three PWRs does not mean that the nuclear industry is dead. The UK moratorium on new reactor construction has forced the industry to examine its costs, and prepare a case for the 1994 review, in an attempt to get the nuclear construction programme underway again.

On-site dry storage of spent fuel, followed by direct disposal could halve costs compared with reprocessing. Continuing to dispose of low-level waste at a life-extended Drigg, rather than at Nirex's proposed deep disposal site would also save money, and billions of pounds could be saved by encasing old reactors in concrete and covering them with a mound of earth, rather than attempting to return the areas to green field sites.

In the short-term Nuclear Electric (NE) hopes to be able to convince the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate that for a relatively modest extra investment of between £10m and £15m each, the life of the old Magnox stations can be extended from 30 to 35 years. This would be worth

an extra £1bn in revenue. On the AGRs, which are generating little more than half the electricity they should be capable of, NE's chair, John Collier says "I'm determined to get them good - even Dungeness B" - which only managed a 9% average load factor in 1989.

NE proposes to offer the Government a range of options for the 1994 review to allow them to start building more reactors. It has so far identified three alternatives.

The short-term option would be to use the Sizewell B design, with only minimum modifications, (for example to allow the use of longer fuel rods), to build a new power station at Hinkley Point in Somerset. This would clearly be the quickest way to restart construction, because planning consent has already been granted, but it is also likely to be the most expensive option.

The medium-term choice would be to go for an American, French or Japanese

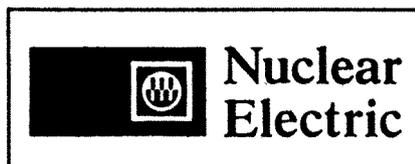
PWR design, which would allow bigger stations, potentially capable of generating cheaper electricity, to be built. NE is looking at the French N4 reactor under construction at Chooz, the Mitsubishi reactor, and the US Combustion Engineering System 80+. None of these designs has yet been licensed in Britain so NE wouldn't expect to be able to begin construction before 1996-8.

Longer-term alternatives include the "inherently safe" reactors, such as the Westinghouse AP-600 and the UK-US Safe Integral Reactor (SCRAM 74). These systems will first require a demonstration reactor, ruling out commercial construction this century.

SCRAM 80

December '90/January '91

NUCLEAR NEWS



HINKLEY POINT NEWS

LIFE EXTENSION FOR HINKLEY A?

Nuclear Electric is pressing for the operating life of Hinkley A Magnox power station to be extended to 36 years. This means it would close in the year 2001, instead of current plans for 1994.

The "Long Term Safety Review" for Hinkley A - a detailed analysis by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate - has now been completed and is due to be published within a few months. On the basis of this, Nuclear Electric will have to decide whether any improvements demanded by the NII can be justified economically. After the LTSR report on Berkeley power station in Gloucestershire in 1989, it was shut down permanently.

from the Western Daily Press
December 21, 1990

HINKLEY INCIDENTS

The last few months have seen a series of small incidents at Hinkley Point, some of them involving radioactivity (see the press report). The station is now operating a scheme called INES (International Nuclear Event Scale), through which every incident is given a number on a rising scale from 0-8. Chernobyl is allocated number 7. This is supposed to help public understanding. It seems clear, however, that its aim is to minimise the significance of everyday mishaps or accidents by pushing most of them to the bottom of the scale.

WRITE ON

We welcome contributions on anything from home energy saving tips to your ideas on how best to fight the revival of nuclear power. Why not put pen to paper or finger to keyboard for the next issue?

WORKMEN TRACE FAULT IN HINKLEY POINT COOLING SYSTEM

Radioactive gas leak at N-plant

WORKMEN had to use breathing apparatus to deal with a leak of radioactive carbon dioxide gas at a power station, Nuclear Electric said.

The incident happened on Monday last week at Hinkley Point B, near Bridgwater, when higher than normal levels of the gas were detected in a drying plant.

Carbon dioxide is pumped

around the reactor as a coolant, but has to go through a drying process to cut down the risk of corrosion.

The source was traced to a leaking valve, which was quickly shut down.

The event did not register on the new International Nuclear Event Scale, now adopted by all British nuclear installations.

A Nuclear Electric spokesman said yesterday: "Although the amount of gas in the room increased, its radioactivity had not.

By Chris Rundle

"The real risk was from the gas levels reaching such a point where people would have asphyxiated.

"You run the same risk when CO2 is given off in a brewery."

It was escaping CO2 gas which caused the most serious incident to date on the site, in 1985.

Last night anti-nuclear campaigner Crispin Aubrey said: "Whether there was a small amount of radioactivity involved or not, this was still a fault.

"There do seem to be more of these small incidents at the moment. Our concern is that one of them could develop into something far more serious."

In the last two months there have been two other incidents at the station which have both registered on the INES scale — which does for nuclear safety what the Beaufort scale does for wind speed.

In the first, one of the reactors automatically shut itself down because of a power surge.

In the second a fuel rod from the B station was dropped down a chute leading to a cooling pond, blocking the entrance for five days.

CAMPAIGNS

SEA PROTEST AT SIZEWELL

Greenpeace campaigners chained themselves to the deck of a ship delivering the "reactor pressure vessel" for Sizewell B nuclear station in Suffolk just before Christmas. It was a brave attempt to disrupt the installation of this vital £10million part, which had been brought by sea from the factory in France. As protest dinghies continued to harrass the ship, one woman was arrested.

This dramatic confrontation followed days of waiting during which the nuclear ship was docked at Lowestoft harbour, hampered by bad weather. The cargo first arrived in the area over the weekend of December 16th, when a protest was held by local groups on the beach in front of the construction site. There were fireworks set off from a mock "pressure vessel" and a good attendance in the chill winter

winds and rain. Stop Hinkley Expansion was represented by Danielle Grunberg and Crispin Aubrey (see photo). Hopefully, we will never have to face this situation in Somerset.

ENERGY SAVING

ENERGY EFFICIENT LIGHT BULB CAMPAIGN

Why not buy your light bulbs by mail order? Order them for friends, birthdays etc, but remember to allow time for delivery. And send an SAE when requesting a catalogue. All the suppliers we have written to have been most helpful. This is the latest list:

The Green Business Company, Studio 1, 114 Walcot Street, Bath. Catalogue includes energy efficient bulbs, solar powered lights, recycled paper. Discounts on large orders.

First Light, 28 Eastwood Road, Birmingham B12 9NB. Trade priced bulbs, plus discounts for orders over 6. Carriage included in prices.

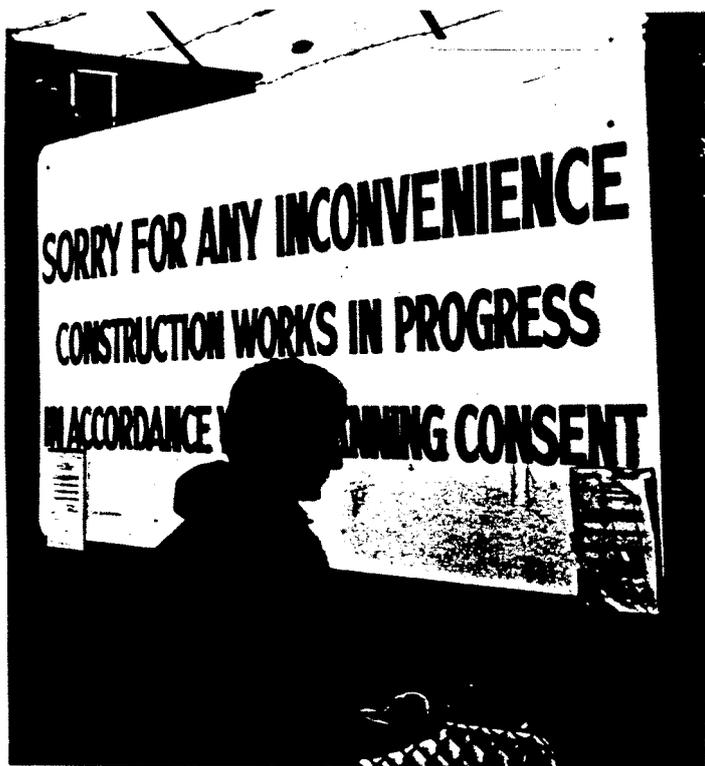
The Whole Thing, Millmead Business Centre, Millmead Road, London N17 9QU has a mail order catalogue with various bulbs.

Mazda also advertises a low energy bulb (with a re-usable bayonet adaptor) at Safeway's branches for about £10.

INSULATION GRANTS

A SHE member writes:
"Did you know you could get help from your local council towards the cost of thermally insulating your home?"

On April 1st, 1990 a new system of Minor Works Grants came into force. To be eligible, you must be an owner occupier or a private



Sign on Sizewell B security fence

tenant, and in receipt of either community charge benefit, family credit, income support or housing benefit.

Grant aid may then be given for the provision of loft insulation and draught proofing. In special circumstances, grants may also be available for cavity wall insulation and double glazing. All grants are discretionary, with a maximum limit of £1,000.

For further details, contact the grants section of your local council."

INTERNATIONAL

In the United States, despite President Bush's lukewarm stance on global warming, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is increasingly supporting the renewables and energy conservation. California's Pacific Gas and Electric, one of the largest US power companies, has plans to treble its output from renewable sources, at present less than 25%. (SCRAM Safe Energy Journal Dec 90/Jan 91)

In Japan, a group of Tokyo citizens are protesting against nuclear power by generating their own home-made solar-powered electricity at a member's home.

Eighteen banks of solar cells produce between 3 and 4 kilowatts. (World Information Service on Energy Dec 90)

In Spain, about 300 environmental groups from all over the country, supported by political parties and trade unions, have started a campaign to close down all Spanish nuclear power plants by using a special legal mechanism. (WISE Dec 90)

In the USSR, the construction of four nearly completed nuclear power plants (at Nishi, Novgorod, Rostov and Zaporozhe) has been abandoned and a search for new sites stopped. The reason is growing public pressure after the Chernobyl disaster. (WISE Dec 90)



PUBLIC SPEAKERS

There is a steady demand to SHE for people to talk to small groups about the arguments against nuclear power and in favour of other energy options. School pupils are the most common audience. Would you like to get involved in this vital activity? If so, please contact SHE. If demand is sufficient, we may arrange a day training session.

SIGN OF THE TIMES?

A project manager has been appointed at the Dounreay nuclear research site in Scotland to develop ideas for renewable sources of energy. Threatened with closure because of a withdrawal of government funds, the site could undergo a dramatic transformation.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Feb. 11 SHE Committee Meeting, Manor Farmhouse, Wembdon, Bridgwater, 7.00pm (all members welcome, 0278 422632 for directions)
- March 13 SHE Annual General Meeting, Arts Centre, Castle St, Bridgwater, 7.00pm.

TAKE THE HEAT OFF SOMERSET

The next time you get an electricity bill, take a moment to ponder just how much carbon dioxide has been produced by your own energy consumption... Let's see, my latest (estimated) account was 490 units. Multiply that by 0.83, and it comes to 406 kilograms of CO₂! That's 893 pounds of the main gas that contributes to global warming. From just one house; for just three months.

According to Friends of the Earth, we could each save about 190 units of electricity, and 158kg of CO₂, and £13.59 on our electricity bills every year, just by replacing the three most often used lights bulbs in our houses with energy efficient models. The electricity savings alone would cover the cost of one bulb, so in three years the initial investment is covered.

There will also be savings from the fact that you don't need to replace energy efficient bulbs nearly as often as incandescent ones - a single low energy bulb

lasts 8 times as long as a normal "cheap" bulb.

As you can see from the figures above, even one household makes a difference. But if every house in the South West installed just one energy efficient light bulb, the impact could be tremendous.

You can make a start on "doing your bit" by switching off those wasteful incandescent bulbs and switching on energy efficiency. Buy an energy efficient light bulb this week.

WHAT A BRIGHT IDEA!

SHE wants to discover how determined its members are to reduce their electricity consumption. We would also like to know how members feel about switching to energy efficient bulbs so we can judge what extra information to provide. Could you please give us some feedback by cutting out the form below and sending it back to SHE.

"TAKE THE HEAT OFF SOMERSET" Declaration

I intend to reduce my electricity consumption (and help combat the greenhouse effect) by installing at least one energy efficient light bulb in my home.

- [] I have already begun installing energy efficient light bulbs in my house, and intend to continue. (Please tick box)
- [] I want to install energy efficient light bulbs in my house, and would like more information on suppliers. (Please tick)

COMMENTS:

SIGNED:

NAME & ADDRESS

DATE:

Please return to Lynn Collins, SHE, Hockpitt Farm, Bridgwater, TA5 1EX with your subscription renewal

