

# update



UKAEA Harwell News

Harwell Decommissioning Update brings you information on the site restoration programme.

## Significant changes take place



Welcome to the winter edition of Harwell Decommissioning Update.

Since our last issue, work in preparation for UKAEA's Harwell and Winfrith sites to become one company, to be known as Research Sites Restoration Limited – or RSRL – has continued. Harwell and Winfrith are now operating as an RSRL shadow organisation in anticipation of licensing as RSRL on 2 February 2009.

The significant amount of work required to get ready for this major change hasn't distracted us from our main mission, the clean-up of the site, as is evidenced by the projects described in these pages.

Waste retrieval and recovery projects continue, while redundant buildings are being removed and new ones constructed, all paving the way for a visionary new Science

and Innovation Campus. At the same time, our focus on safety remains undimmed. At the end of November, we completed a year without any recordable or reportable injuries to our staff and contractors.

While our important operational work advances, we still take time out to remember our commitment to the local community, with a number of sponsorship initiatives coming to fruition.

As 2008 draws to its close, I'd like to thank our staff and contractors for their contributions to a year full of achievement and progress, and our stakeholders for their continued support. May I wish you all the best for a very happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

**Alan Neal, MD Harwell/Winfrith**

## Pioneers celebrate with BEPO



*The first BEPO reactor manager, Bob Jackson, with Cllr Alison Rooke, Chairman of the Vale of the White Horse District Council and Ed Abel, Harwell Reactors Manager*

One of Harwell's most distinguished 'residents' turned sixty this year. The research reactor BEPO – the British Experimental Pile – started up its first nuclear chain reaction in 1948 and was operational until 1968.

BEPO was the first large reactor in Europe and the UK's second reactor. At one time, it was one of Europe's main suppliers of medical isotopes.

To celebrate BEPO attaining OAP status, a reunion of more than 150 former reactor staff and local stakeholders, as well as an exhibition and presentation, was held on 12 December.

"I'm really pleased that so many people who worked with BEPO could come today. BEPO was not just important as a research reactor, it was the start of reactor development for the UK," said Harwell Reactors Manager Ed Abel.

"Talking to these nuclear pioneers, some who were here from the beginning, has given us new material to help plan the decommissioning more safely and efficiently, and improve our knowledge management of BEPO."

## WEP nears completion

A major facility, which will play a central part in Harwell's waste management strategy, is nearing completion.

The final phase of Harwell's Waste Encapsulation Plant project – inactive commissioning – began during the autumn and is expected to be completed by March 2009. The plant – where Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) is to be recovered, checked and cemented into 500 litre stainless steel drums ready for long-term storage – is scheduled to be operational by mid-2010.

"WEP is an innovative and complex £6.5million project, requiring high levels of skill and co-operation," commented Project Manager Rob Squires. "We're pleased to have successfully overcome various obstacles encountered during the installation and set-to-work phase, and look forward to completing inactive commissioning to schedule."



Issue 7 / Winter 2008

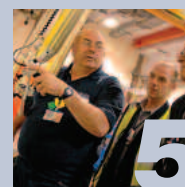
## IN THIS ISSUE



**3**  
FIRST CAN RECOVERY CELEBRATED



**4**  
PROMOTING GREEN TRAVEL



**5**  
INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION



**6**  
NEW FACE IN COMMUNICATIONS



# Harwell to become world-leading campus

During the summer months, Harwell Science and Innovation campus made good progress towards its goal of becoming one of the world's principal locations for scientific, academic and business collaboration.

As part of the work, the eastern part of the site – that is, the area from the Main Gate to the North Gate and down to the Library Gate – is undergoing a complete transformation. The project includes the eventual release of 17 hectares of land for development as part of the Campus, and

the construction of a new police station and emergency response team facility.

The decommissioning and demolition of a building constructed in the 1930s as a barrack block and later used for inorganic and chemical tracer work was a significant part of this work. Final demolition of the building was completed in September.

In August, a joint venture agreement was announced between UKAEA, the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) and the private sector developer Goodman International to develop the campus as a world-class centre.

A minimum of 100,000 sq m of laboratory, hi-tech industrial and office accommodation will be developed in the first 20 year phase of the project, and a number of jobs created.

Summing up, UKAEA CEO Norman Harrison said, "This joint venture will help to unlock Harwell's full potential over the coming years, putting it at the very forefront of global science and innovation."



## Drum store dismantling

The major programme to clean up Harwell's radiochemistry facility continues. The latest phase, to dismantle a store formerly used to house drums of intermediate level waste recovered from Harwell's Liquid Effluent Treatment plant, is due to be completed by the end of the year.

"As we take apart the LETP drum store, we are taking care to separate out any materials that can be safely reused or recycled, as part of our ongoing commitment to sustainable working practices," explained Alec Inns, Facility Manager at the radiochemistry facility.





# Trio are a shining example

A windscreen chip repair service was the inspiration behind the ingenious solution to a challenge faced by a team in the Harwell waste handling complex.

Using the same concept, combined with technology adapted from the racetrack, three members of the team saved a key project a considerable amount of time and money.

The problem was that, after 12 years of use, the window of one of the complex's retrieval machines – known as RM1 – had become badly scratched and worn.

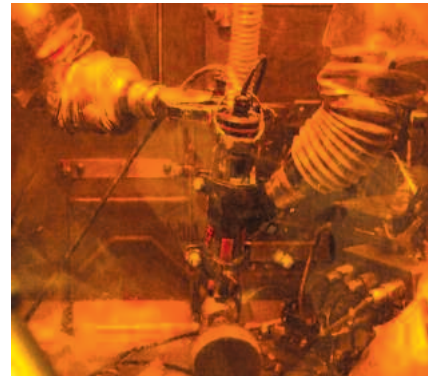
RM1 is used to recover remote handled waste from the site's stores, ready to be safely repackaged and encapsulated.

"Replacing the window would have meant at least two months' downtime and been expensive," explained Operations Manager Stuart Watson. "That's when Mick Rea, Joe Makrell and Geoff Marshall came up with their alternative idea."

Mick discovered a firm who specialised in removing scratches from the Perspex windscreens of F1 racing cars, Joe worked with the polishing company on procuring equipment that would enable the technique to transfer to the special polycarbonate glass in RM1 and Geoff set about adapting the equipment, attaching a long pole and fitting a

cordless power tool so operators could carry out the polishing remotely and safely.

"The job was completed in just two weeks, the window looks almost as good as new, and we were able to fit the work in within the scheduled shutdown," commented a delighted Stuart. "The team used innovation and ingenuity to create an impressively simple solution to a complicated problem – the results were outstanding,"



RM1 window showing polished area at the top.



Ideas men: Geoff Marshall, Mick Rea and Joe Mackrell

Harwell's second waste retrieval machine – known as RM2 – recovered its first waste can from the tube store on 20 August.



The machine is designed to retrieve some 6,600 cans over the next 10 years, so they can be repackaged and held in the vault store, ready for final disposal. The extraction of this first can was part of a programme to test that the shielding between the machine and the floor is adequate.

The extraction of the first can formed part of the testing programme to demonstrate the adequacy of the shielding between the machine and the floor. RM2 passed with flying colours and has since gone on to extract all the cans for that particular tube.

John Almon, Director of Waste & Technical Services, commented: "This accomplishment is the result of many years of hard work from many different people, particularly UKAEA projects and operations teams, as well as the design and build contractor, Assystem UK Ltd.

"All those who have contributed should be proud of what they have achieved."

# Promoting GREEN travel

Bus and cycling facilities have been improved to encourage greener modes of travel to and from the Harwell site.

Bus services to Didcot Parkway have been expanded and non-stop services to Oxford added. New bus-stop signs have been installed, giving real-time information to passengers.

At the same time, cycling facilities have been given a boost. A new stretch of cycleway has been opened along the main



A4185, linking the north and south of the campus with the shops, Chilton School, the village and the National Cycle Network, which goes to Didcot and Wantage.

# Photographer honoured



Harwell Image Resource Manager Eric Jenkins has been made an Honorary Fellow of the British Institute of Professional Photographers (BIPP) in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the work of the Institute and to the photographic industry. The last recipient of this award, which has not been made for many years, was Lord Lichfield.

# Tribute to founder employee

One of the first three people to be recruited to the Ministry of Supply at Harwell died recently.

George Clare joined the site in 1946 and never lost his interest in its activities.

In later years, he contributed his memories to a valuable store of knowledge, which current project managers can use in their decommissioning and restoration work.

# New look uniforms

The traditional white shirts and black ties worn by officers of the Civil Nuclear Constabulary, who police the Harwell site, have been replaced. Made of a lightweight breathable material, the new uniforms have been designed to be practical, keeping officers warmer in winter and cooler in summer.





## News from the NDA

UKAEA manages the programme to clean up the Harwell site under contract to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). During the year, the NDA made a series of important announcements.

- On 8 December, the NDA announced its plans for the future competition of the management and operation contracts for the RSRL (Harwell/Winfrith) sites, as well as those for Dounreay Site Restoration Limited (DSRL) and Magnox.
- The RSRL contract will be competed as part of a bundle with the Magnox sites. The competition will be initiated in 2011 with a completion date of 31 March 2013.

- The NDA draft Business Plan, 2009-2012 was published for consultation.
- In July the NDA's safety report for 2007/08 was published, highlighting its high standard of performance in health, safety, security and environmental areas.
- In the same month, the NDA's CEO Ian Roxburgh stepped down. Richard Waite is now acting CEO.
- Earlier in the year, Stephen Henwood was appointed the new chair of the NDA, with effect from March 2008, replacing Sir Anthony Cleaver, who retired. The new chair visited our sister site at Winfrith in September.

Further details of the NDA's activities are available on the NDA website at [www.nda.gov.uk](http://www.nda.gov.uk)

## International collaboration



**Delegates from the nuclear industries in Ukraine and Brazil were welcomed on site during November.**

Sixteen visitors from Ukraine's RADON Enterprises for Radioactive Waste Storage, the Ministries of Emergencies and Health, and the State Nuclear Regulatory Committee were given first-hand experience of how radioactive waste is handled in the UK and an opportunity to exchange views with British experts.

In the same month, the President of the Brazilian National Commission for Nuclear Energy, Professor Odair Gonçalves and the General Coordinator for International Affairs for the Brazilian National Commission for Nuclear Energy, Dr Maria Lourenco, visited Harwell, as well as representatives of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and the Office of Nuclear Development. The purpose of the visit was to find out more about UK nuclear decommissioning and waste disposal.



## Sponsorships and charities

Harwell's community involvement has been particularly active in the run-up to the festive season.

### Abingdon Scout Group

A donation of high visibility vests was made to the 6th Abingdon Scout Group, prompting a comment from the scout leader that the vests were "really helpful in a recent outing where we had to walk along minor roads and cross major roads."

### Great Balls of Fun Day



A fundraising event organised by Ann Whitby and Karen Blick held on 4 December aimed at raising awareness of male cancers. Staff were encouraged to wear blue for the day and a raffle, quiz and various sales resulted in £477 being shared between the Orchid Cancer Appeal and the Movember Prostate Cancer charity.

Inspired by the charity Movember, six firemen from the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus joined in the fun, raising funds by cultivating impressive moustaches.

### Children in Need

More than £180 was raised for the annual Children in Need fund by holding cake sale and a 'Not so Strictly Come Dancing' event. Organiser Mark Harbor said, "Everyone seemed to enjoy learning the VFM (Value for Money) cha cha and there were a couple of unplanned salsa demonstrations."

### Operation Christmas Child

Harwell's Sam Cox collected a total of 67 gift-filled shoeboxes in aid of the Operation Christmas Child appeal. The boxes are now on their way to children in Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.



## LSG elections

The results of the Harwell-Chilton Local Stakeholder Group (LSG) elections were announced in June. Terry Joslin was voted in as the new chairman with Terry Fraser as deputy. Terry Fraser, the previous chair, thanked everyone present for their support over the last three years.

## Staff focus: New face in Comms

Lesley Cox joined Harwell Communications in October, as Communications Assistant. Lesley is far from new to the site, however, having been team secretary in the radiochemistry facility for the past three years. Why the switch to communications?

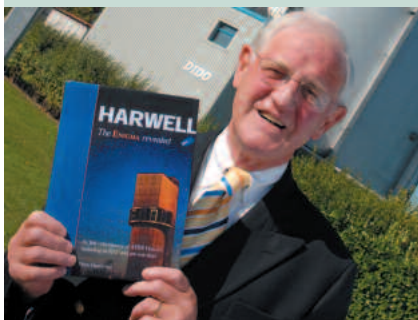
"For the past two years I've been studying for a BA in Culture, Media and Communications," Lesley explained. "Plus I was involved in organising various charity fundraising events in my previous job and really enjoyed getting people involved. So I naturally gravitated towards communications."

Lesley's new responsibilities include running Harwell's busy sponsorship programme, managing the content of the website, and helping with events and site visits. One of the first events she was involved in was the 60th anniversary party for BEPO (see fully story on page 1).

"It's great to have someone with Lesley's experience and enthusiasm on board," said Angela Vincent, Harwell Communications Manager.



### Christmas stocking filler?



Read all about Harwell's fascinating history in a book by a former employee. The book, *Harwell: The Enigma Revealed*, was written by Nick Hance, who knew it well, having worked on the site for 47 years.

On sale at local bookshops at a cost of £20, it can also be ordered from the author. Contact [nicksmale@talk21.com](mailto:nicksmale@talk21.com) for more information.

## Charities benefit from survey

UKAEA found a novel way to encourage its staff to complete an employee survey while also helping local charities. For every form completed, the company pledged to make a £1 donation to charity.

A total of 1,204 forms were returned, so cheques for £301 were sent to the four charities, chosen by each of UKAEA's sites. Harwell opted to help Against Breast Cancer, a charity which has been based on the site for many years.

CEO Norman Harrison commented: "I was delighted with the staff response in completing the survey. The fact that this has enabled donations to be made to these charities is a real bonus."

## Diary dates

### LSG meetings

Local Stakeholder Group (LSG) meetings, all of them open to the public, are held in the lecture theatre at the Health Protection Agency, Chilton, Didcot. The 2009 LSG meetings will be on:

- 13 March at 10:00
- 16 July at 18:00
- 4 December at 10:00.

### Site exercises

The annual site security exercise was successfully held on 8 October 2008. In 2009, the following exercises are planned:

- May – Level 2 three-yearly exercise
- June – Annual counter-terrorism exercise
- October – Level 1 annual exercise

## Safety summary

Between January and September 2008, there were no reportable events.

In addition, changes have been introduced to improve the safety of pedestrians and drivers on site:

- the general speed limit has been reduced to 20mph
- all UKAEA staff and contractors are now required to wear high visibility jackets or waistcoats when out on site.
- And as from 2 January 2009, tenants will also be required to wear hi viz jackets.

