

UKAEA-WINFRITH UPDATE

for staff and the local community

Issue 15 Spring 2008

A59 Decommissioning Reaches Final Phase

After some seven years of extensive decommissioning and demolition the A59 project is now in the final phase of site works.

Since the early 1960s the A59 building operated as a Post Irradiation Examination facility and included high activity cave lines, a pressurised suit operations area, as well as general workshops and operations areas. Decommissioning commenced in early 2001 with works being undertaken by NUKEM Limited through the Winfrith Operations Maintenance and Decommissioning (WOMAD) Contract and later supported by the Buckfield Group providing demolition and civil engineering support.

Using innovative operations, the demolition project has to date safely removed over 4000 tonnes of concrete rubble and has employed rigorous waste segregation techniques to ensure waste is discharged to the most appropriate route. The techniques have been subject to review and approval both by UKAEA and the Environment Agency. These techniques have allowed two high activity cavelines to be decommissioned and demolished, together with the removal of 93 storage tubes with lengths ranging from 2.5 to 4.5 metres. Steel has been recycled and over 1500 tonnes of

material has been disposed as SoLA Exempt waste. Site works are now in the final phase when both the remaining storage tubes are removed and the site is remediated to the Winfrith site end point.

This photograph shows the preparatory works being undertaken to remove the deep storage tubes which extend to nearly 7 metres below ground level. This excavation depth is challenging enough, but the task is complicated by the presence of poor geological conditions and groundwater which is encountered some 2 metres below ground level, necessitating the need for a large dewatering operation. The dewatering system itself is a major project involving coordinated support from the Winfrith site active effluent team who are now working 24 hour operations to keep pace with dewatering discharges.

During May, the storage tubes were removed, together with the final section of concrete floor slab. This will allow preparatory works on remediating the areas below the south east corner of the old building. At completion the A59 site will be backfilled with local soil (not demolition crushings) to ensure no harm is caused to the adjacent sites of Special Scientific Interest and the River Frome. The land will be contoured to blend in with the adjacent roads and land surfaces.



NDA Staff visit DRAGON



In April, Brian Burnett and Malcolm Barents from the NDA toured the DRAGON Reactor, including Room 115, formerly known as the Cathedral due to its cavernous design and vast quantity of pipework and very large fission product delay beds. Brian (left) and Malcolm Barents are pictured here in front of the purge gas pre-cooler.

UKAEA Silverware Auction raises £1448 for Local Charity

The auction of UKAEA silverware, a legacy of silver tableware engraved with the Winfrith logo from the former Director's Dining Room, took place in March at Winfrith Village hall. The auctioneer was Andy Staples, UKAEA-Winfrith Head of Site.

The auction proved very popular with UKAEA associated staff, both past and present and raised £1448 for local charity, Weldmar Hospicecare Trust (formerly Joseph Weld and Cancercare Dorset). This local charity was chosen to receive the profits from the auction by staff at UKAEA-Winfrith.



Emma Burwood from UKAEA-Winfrith hands over the cheque to staff at Weldmar Hospicecare Trust

Nuclear Safety Advisory Committee visits Winfrith

In April the Nuclear Safety Advisory Committee visited the Winfrith site and met with site representatives to discuss the current site situation, relationships with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, HSE and the Environment Agency.

During the morning discussions took place regarding the understanding of the decommissioning and waste management plans of the site. After lunch a visit was arranged for the party around the Steam Generating Heavy Water Reactor.

The last visit to the Winfrith site by this committee was 10 years ago and since this time major decommissioning work has taken place. The team went away happy and commented about what an instructive day they had.



Andy Staples, Winfrith Head of Site is pictured here with members of the Nuclear Advisory Safety Committee

Michael learns about the workplace at Winfrith

Michael Toman, a year 10 student at the Wey Valley School in Weymouth opted to do his work experience at UKAEA-Winfrith.

Steve Withers from UKAEA-Winfrith compiled a range of different activities for Michael to undertake over the two weeks he spent on site. Michael said, "I've been doing a range of activities and some of the areas I've been to are SGHWR, DRAGON and TRS. Within these areas I've learnt a lot about the site and working on it. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at Winfrith. It gave me the opportunity to experience various work environments. Thank-you for making my work experience very enjoyable. I have had a great time and without your time and effort I would not have enjoyed it like I have. It has been a pleasure."



Getting to Know Colleagues

Staff from Winfrith and Harwell sites which are due to combine and become RSRL are starting familiarisation tours. Staff from the newly combined Harwell and Winfrith Programme Office recently toured the major projects at their sister site; the aim being to improve awareness of the programme of work carried out at the various facilities which would in turn assist staff with performance, risk, change control work etc.

Andy Philps, the Performance reporting & PBI Manager, said "The Programme Office site tours at Harwell and Winfrith gave many their first opportunity to see what went on within buildings that had hitherto only been seen from the outside. The progress that had been made with the de-commissioning activities was extremely impressive and had not been appreciated prior to viewing it first hand. The tours were very informative and there was clearly plenty to learn from the work that had been carried out. It was impossible, however, not to notice the project teams' overriding sense of frustration that, for the most part, the national prioritisation of NDA funding would slow the momentum that had been built."



Directors' Secretaries meet up at Winfrith

In April the seven Directors' secretaries got together. The programme which was held at Winfrith included a familiarisation tour of SGHWR, WETP and DRAGON, plus a tour round the Conference facilities and location of offices. Lunchtime was used as a chance to network with secretaries and people at Winfrith who they regularly interact with. Heidi Johnson, NDA Interface Coordinator and PA to Paul Knight said, "This was a very worthwhile visit which put faces to names and will aid communications in the future."

Our photo shows the secretaries from Harwell, Eileen Bracken (Alan Neal & Ken Heider), Jayne Chinnock (Tom Cummings), Trudie Evans (John Almon), Wendy Freemantle (Kathleen Stevenson), Naomi Smith (Keith Gawthorn) with Dawn Heath (Andy Staples) and Heidi Johnson (Paul Knight) from Winfrith and Kim Gee and Thea Styles who joined them for lunch.



Open Invitation for Local Stakeholders to Visit the Site

It has been decided this year not to hold an annual summer reception; however we are planning to hold a formal reception when the Research Sites Restoration Ltd is formally launched.

We are proud of the successes we have achieved on the Winfrith site and would like to extend an open invitation to any local stakeholder who would like to visit some of the major decommissioning projects on a summer evening.

If you would like to be included in this visit please contact Emma Burwood 01305 203107, or email emma.burwood@ukaea.org.uk





Karl Schuler joins Debate at local 6th form **Café Scientifique**

In April Karl Schuler from UKAEA-Winfrith gave a presentation and took part in a debate entitled 'Power for the future: putting nuclear in its place!' with pupils and members of the public at Thomas Hardy School in Dorchester. This was organised as part of the Café Scientifique network whose voluntary partners arrange informal discussions about contemporary science. Karl shared the platform with another scientist from a local company, Infinergy to ensure a variety of viewpoints to stimulate open discussion.

Thomas Hardy is a specialist Science and Maths College and their Industry Co-ordinator, Judith Wardlaw is keen to encourage more debates like this in which both students and members of the public can participate and enjoy science. Previous debates have included a range of science based topics including 'Designer Babies', 'Biofuels - are they good news for the environment?', 'Spooks and Surveillance' and 'Does Science improve the world?' Café Scientifique is a loosely affiliated national network for further information please visit www.cafescientifique.org. There is also an offshoot junior network for schools at www.juniorcafesci.org.uk.



The next public science debate takes place on Friday 14th November at 7.30pm at the Arts Centre in Dorchester. This will be presented by Dr Jim Smith (ex CEH Winfrith), now of Portsmouth University and is entitled "Chernobyl, Science Myths & the Media."

For further information please e-mail: jwardlaw@thomas-hardye.dorset.sch.uk

I am pleased to report that I saw a duck and her eight ducklings crossing the Dragon road in late April. We may not like the chilly weather that we had this May, but ducklings do. The first two weeks of their lives is very dependant upon an abundant supply of insects to feed on and this year's weather has proved great for the insect supply.

All through the winter we only tend to see cock pheasants around the site. However in spring, as if by magic, hen pheasants appear. They normally sit on their eggs for 23 days, so I am hopeful we will have some pheasant chicks on site this spring.

Unfortunately the weather has not been hot enough to encourage our reptilian friends out in great numbers, though there was a sighting of a grass snake swimming in the pond in the B6 area and a sand lizard was spotted by the fire training area in the brief hot spell we had in May.

Chris Barratt

Anyone for Skittles?

The Atoms Skittles team plays in the Weymouth & Portland Skittles League and is looking for new players for its current squad.

Originally founded many years ago as a UKAEA Winfrith skittles team we still have one or two of the early members, all now well retired! Nowadays we play in the dizzy depths of Division 5 and are on the look out for new players who fancy a good night out in convivial company. Even if you've never played before you're more than welcome to come along - I'm sure it won't take you long to become knowledgeable about 'fronters', 'flopplers', 'stick-ups' and 'spares'. Who knows, you may even turn out to be a natural skittler!

Our standard isn't particularly high but we all enjoy the occasion and don't take things too seriously. That said, we do like to win occasionally and often find that a pint or two of real ale helps ensure that we're match fit and in top skittling fettle!

Our alley is at the Star Hotel in Park Street, Weymouth and home games happen on a Wednesday night (8.00 - 10.30 pm) from September through to April. If you are interested please give me, Graham Dale, a call on ext 3365 or e-mail: graham.dale@ukaea.org.uk

UKAEA Update... FEEDBACK

We hope you have enjoyed reading this issue of UKAEA Update. If you have any comments you would like to make or suggestions for future articles please e-mail: emma.burwood@ukaea.org.uk
THANK YOU - WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK

This newsletter is produced by UKAEA-Winfrith for staff and the local community.

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