

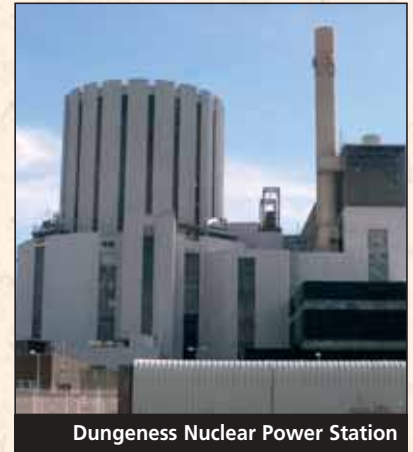
Nuclear industry seminar

Senior shop stewards within the nuclear industry from across the country came together to address some of the concerns and develop strategic campaigns to take forward the issues that the nuclear industry are facing.

History of Nuclear

Nuclear fission was discovered in the 1930s. Starting in the 1950s, considerable research took place, particularly in the United States, the UK, France, Canada and the former Soviet Union, into the design and construction of commercial nuclear power stations.

In the UK, construction began at Calder Hall in Cumbria in 1953 on the UK's first commercial nuclear power station. Calder Hall was connected to the national grid in 1956, thus becoming the first nuclear power station in the world to provide electricity commercially



Privatisation of UK nuclear generation

In its 1988 White Paper "Privatising Electricity" the previous Government announced its intention to privatise the electricity supply industry. However, it was recognised that the overall cost of electricity from existing nuclear power stations was more expensive than electricity generated from new coal, oil or gas fired stations - largely due to the high capital costs of nuclear power stations coupled with the costs of the decommissioning of nuclear

The then government acknowledged that nuclear power contributed to diversity of supply and to protection of the environment - i.e. nuclear power stations emit practically no sulphur dioxide or nitrogen oxides (the principal ingredients of acid rain) and virtually no carbon dioxide (the principle gas responsible for global warming). It also took the view that providing public sector support for a new nuclear power station would constitute a significant intervention in the electricity market and that circumstances did not warrant such an intervention.

The 1994 review also concluded that moving as much of the nuclear generating industry, with its associated liabilities, as is practicable into the private sector would bring benefits for the industry, electricity consumers and the taxpayer

UK's civil nuclear power stations

The UK currently has 31 operating reactors at 14 power stations, which provide approximately 25% of the electricity in the UK. Nuclear power plays an important role in helping the UK to meet its climate change targets. In the absence of nuclear generation, emissions of carbon dioxide in 1999 would have been 12-24 million tonnes higher, depending on the mix of generation used to replace it. Looking at it another way, nuclear generation currently reduces national carbon emissions by between 7 and 14%. The table and chart below give the nuclear stations operating in the UK and their locations.

BNFL Magnox	Capacity MW	Published Lifetime
Calder Hall	194	2003
Chapelcross	196	2005
Sizewell A	420	2006
Dungeness A	450	2006
Oldbury	434	2008
Wylfa	980	2010

British Energy	Capacity MW	Published lifetime
Dungeness B	1110	2008
Hartlepool	1210	2014
Heysham 1	1150	2014
Heysham 2	1250	2023
Hinkley Point B	1220	2011
Hunterston B	1190	2011
Sizewell B	1188	2035
Torness	1250	2023

In addition three of the older magnox stations (Berkeley, Hunterston A and Trawsfynydd) have been closed and are undergoing decommissioning. A further two magnox stations (Bradwell and Hinkley Point A) are being de-fuelled. The Prototype Fast Reactor at Dounreay is also being decommissioned.

Current Energy Policy review and nuclear power

The Prime Minister announced a major review of UK energy policy on June 21 2001. The Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU) was charged with the task of undertaking a review of the longer term, strategic issues surrounding energy policy for Great Britain, within the context of meeting the challenge of global warming, while ensuring reliable and competitive energy supplies. The aim of the review was to set out the objectives of energy policy and develop a strategy that ensures current policy commitments are consistent with longer-term goals. It covered all energy sources including nuclear.

The PIU reported to Government on 14 February 2002. The report argued that keeping options open would require support and encouragement for innovation in a broad range of energy technologies. The PIU suggested that the focus of UK policy should be to establish new sources of energy that are, or can be, low cost and low carbon. The report argued that a step change in energy efficiency is needed and that an expanded role for renewables should be a key plank of future strategy. It also argued that there are good grounds for keeping the nuclear option open.

On 14 May 2002 a major consultation on energy policy was launched taking into account the PIU report. Following the public consultation, on 24 February 2003, the Government published its Energy White Paper "Our energy future – creating a low carbon economy"

The White Paper makes clear that developing energy efficiency and renewable energy is the Government's priority. The Government is therefore not making specific proposals to support new nuclear build now. It notes that 'while nuclear is currently an important source of carbon free electricity, the current economics of nuclear power make it an unattractive option for new generating capacity and there are also important issues for nuclear waste to be resolved.' But the possibility that new nuclear build might be needed in the future to meet carbon reduction objectives is not being ruled out. Before any decision to proceed with the building of new nuclear power stations, there would be the fullest public consultation and the publication of a White Paper setting out the Government's proposals.

In common with all generation options, the initiative for bringing forward proposals to construct new nuclear plant lies with the market and the generating companies.

The Government is radically altering existing arrangements for managing nuclear clean up in the UK, funded by the taxpayer. It is creating a new public body, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), to take responsibility from April 2005 for sites currently owned by BNFL and UKAEA and to provide strategic direction for their safe, secure, cost effective and environmentally responsible decommissioning and clean up. The Government's proposals are set out in the White Paper "Managing the Nuclear Legacy" and in the Energy Bill, introduced to Parliament on 27 November 2003

Amicus put forward representations on every review and consultation. Amicus's position has always been to support a balanced energy policy, which includes the nuclear element, thus ensuring energy diversity and security of supply. The government is pursuing a balanced energy policy and they must ensure that nuclear remains an integral part of that as nuclear energy produces no greenhouse gases.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Agency (NDA)

In November 2001, the Government announced radical changes to current arrangements for the clean up of Britain's nuclear legacy. The taxpayer will fund these arrangements.

A White Paper, "Managing the Nuclear Legacy - a strategy for action", was published in July 2002. It set out the Government's proposals, with a commitment to better management of the clean up process.

A key proposal of the White Paper is the establishment of a new public body, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). This body will provide the strategic direction for cleaning up Britain's civil public sector nuclear sites. It will have due regard for safety, security, the environment and value for money. Openness, transparency and ensuring public confidence will be key principles of the NDA.

The Government set out its detailed proposals for the NDA in its Energy Bill, with Explanatory Notes, introduced into the House of Lords on 27 November and published on 28 November.

The primary purpose of the NDA will be to ensure a strategic and consistent approach to decommissioning across the public sector nuclear industry. The NDA will take strategic responsibility for cleaning-up sites currently owned by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) and British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL). It will have cross-border status and will be required to have full regard to environmental protection, safety, security, value for money and the promotion of public confidence through openness and transparency.

Next Steps

The seminars aim was to bring together shop stewards from all areas of the Nuclear Industry. Serious problems need tackling and this was the point of the seminar. Outlined below are a few of the challenges ahead

- **The Nations performance in terms of decommissioning power stations, and the desire for this to improve**
- **Decisions for the government to take with regard to storage of nuclear waste**
- **The Nations possible dependency on oil and gas from politically unstable areas like the Middle East and the possible impacts this might have.**
- **The problems associated with the nation meeting its Kyoto target in terms of emission of greenhouse gases without building new nuclear power stations.**
- **Any new build of nuclear power stations must give a benefit to the manufacturing sector.**

Amicus were lucky to have several senior figures who are associated with the nuclear industry give briefings on their area of expertise in the nuclear industry. Sandy McWhirter, Programme Manager from UKAEA gave a briefing on the role of the NDA. Richard Griffin, Senior policy Manager from the DTI gave a presentation about how the DTI viewed the workings of the NDA and the key stakeholders, which are involved in this.

In the evening there was an after dinner talk from Malcolm Grimston Senior Research fellow at the Royal Institute of International affairs on the future of the nuclear industry within a balanced energy policy.

In moving forward and addressing some of the fundamental concerns of the industry, the final and most important part of the seminar focused on a discussion around trade unions concerns and the issues that are affecting the industry.

The main areas identified were: -

- **The importance of the union working with euro MPs and European trade unions to use all of our political influence when tackling important areas such as energy policy.**
- **Concern was expressed surrounding the issue and message that Amicus sends out when it has affiliated to CND nationally.**
- **What is happening with Military and NHS radioactive waste? This is where the issue should be in relation to nuclear waste and concerns and not in relation to the production of electricity.**
- **To write to the General Secretary and the Executive about the possibility of hosting a conference to look at the issues facing the energy industry particularly in relation to our balanced energy policy and keeping " the lights on."**
- **To continue to work with external organisations such as TUSNE, and to work within these organisations to ensure that they look to promote the issues surrounding safe civil nuclear energy within the wider community.**



**What can you do to stand up
for your industry's interests?**

Join Amicus today

Amicus has already made a difference for many energy industry workers and continues to lobby government to advance the interests of the sector.

The more members we have, the stronger our voice and the more influence and negotiating strength we have.

**Not a member of Amicus? You can join online
at www.amicustheunion.org or call free 0800 587 1222.**

**If you are already a member, pass this briefing to
colleagues and persuade them to join Amicus.**

Remember that membership of Amicus gives you access to strong representation and expert legal back-up in the workplace. There are many other benefits such as legal help on non-work matters and discounts on consumer services that altogether make Amicus membership a great deal. Call 0800 587 1222 or visit www.amicustheunion.org for more information.

Why not become an Amicus Rep?
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