



Lincolnshire & Nottinghamshire
Against Nuclear Dumping

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE No.10

EDITORIAL

The last issue contained an article written especially for the Newsletter by Arthur Scargill, President of the National Union of Mineworkers. We hoped that it would arouse discussion and debate; it did, to our delight. A criticism made was that it was political. We, the Newsletter Committee, do not think so and would remind readers that contributions from Conservative politicians have been printed. Articles from people of all political persuasions are welcomed for consideration for printing as long as the articles are not overtly political in content.

One of the newsletter's functions is to act as a forum for comment and discussion. We are grateful to Arthur Scargill and others for their contributions. Over to you!

Colin Hancock

1st Anniversary of the Announcement to Drill at Fulbeck Airfield

To mark the first anniversary of the government's announcement of Nirex's intention to drill on Fulbeck Airfield, a mock funeral will be held at the site. Doubts and frustrations will be buried and a firm resolve to fight on made. Please make your way to the site, suitably attired, by 3.00p.m. on Wednesday, 25th February.

WESTMINSTER SEMINAR

Lincolnshire, South Humberside and Bedfordshire have arranged a seminar at Westminster on 22nd January to publicise the report of their visit to European Nuclear Waste Disposal facilities. All M.P.'s and the media have been invited to attend.

It is hoped to highlight how out of step Britain is with the hi-tech European solutions to the problem. L.A.N.D. will be represented by Julian Fane and John Aram.

Third Standing Conference of Health Risks of Low Level Radiation at the Grantham Leisure Centre - 11th and 12th April. Please note this date. Come to the conference. Offer help if you can. Make suggestions re: possible sponsors. Any person or organisation wishing to be sent information please contact Robin Marrow on Loveden 72328.

URGENT

HELP needed with Caravan Duties. Please phone or call at the caravan to put your name on the rota for the following week.

Caravan phone number - 0636 84730

Area representatives Edward and Yvonne Wregglesworth helped by Sue Mason, organised a very successful supper. It was attended by 41 members of LAND and supporters from Welbourne. £150.00. was raised for LAND and they hope to hold similar events in the future for other villages in their area.

Councillor Wyrill, deputy leader of Lincolnshire C.C. attended the last scientific committee meeting to discuss the future technical programme. Austin Mitchell, M.P. for Grimsby has been asked to attend their next meeting.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF LAND

This will be held at Fulbeck Village Hall on 16th March, 1987 at 8.00p.m. Members who wish to nominate officials should send the nomination, together with the name of the seconder, to Mrs. B. Robinson, Orchard Cottage, Washdyke Lane, Fulbeck, Grantham, by 9th March at the latest.

CORRECTION to contact list. Robin Marrow's telephone number is Loveden 72328.

Angela Rippon has said that she is prepared to visit the Fulbeck area in her role as an Independent director of NIREX.

Another contribution from Mr. M. Davies - Thank You.



PLEASE KEEP THE NEWSLETTER INFORMED

Dates/Events - Mavice Cooper, The Stables, Fulbeck.
TEL: Loveden 73210.

Reports/Articles - Jenny Horwood, 6, Chapel Lane,
Caythorpe. TEL: Loveden 72042.

Remember, this is YOUR newsletter - please contribute.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 9 Feb 87 General Purposes Meeting - Fulbeck Village Hall at 8pm. LAND members only (bring membership cards).
- 14 Feb 87 Tractor Rally to Lincoln. Leaving Brant Broughton at 10am.
- 14 Feb 87 Sponsored CRESTA RUN for LAND. Do support this event. See list in Fulbeck Post Office if you have not already been approached.
- 18 Feb 87 Jonathan Porritt - Director of Friends of the Earth - will be speaking in Long Bennington Village Hall at 8.15pm.
- 25 Feb 87 1st Anniversary - Mock Funeral at 3pm at the Airfield.
- 16 Mar 87 LAND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Fulbeck Village Hall at 8pm.
- 11/12
- Apr 87 Conference on Health Risks of low level radiation at the Grantham Leisure Centre.

European Solutions to Nuclear Waste Disposal

West Germany

At the present time West Germany relies on nuclear power for approximately 35% of its electricity supply. Only a small quantity of reprocessing (at the Karlsruhe Research Centre) is performed at the time of writing, but there are controversial plans for a major facility at Wackersdorf. The major government opposition party, the SDP, has a non-nuclear policy, with plans to phase out nuclear power stations within 10 years.

Following the 1976 amendment to the German Atomic Energy Act, the PTB (Physikalisch Technische Bundesanstalt) added responsibility as federal agent for the construction and operation of national facilities for the long-term storage and disposal of radio-active waste to its former roles. It estimates that 30% of the waste would arise from the reprocessing at Wackersdorf, whilst 43% would come from nuclear power stations and 2% from industry, research and medicine combined. A fundamental principle of German legislation is 'the polluter pays'; hence waste producers are already paying to PTB an annual sum in excess of £50 million to finance research into waste disposal, and will pay a further fee when they deliver waste to the facilities. Using these funds, research is currently focussed at Gorleben, where a salt-dome is being considered for all types of radio-active waste; and at Konrad, where an abandoned iron-ore mine is being investigated as a site for waste 'whose thermal influence on the host rock is negligible'. The latter equates with the intermediate short-lived and low-level wastes of Nirex.

The Konrad Mine was visited in the company of Dr. Steven Brown, Technical Attache to the British Embassy in Bonn, and on a secondment from the Radioactive Waste Division of the Department of the Environment. The former iron-ore mine lies 50 km. to the S.E. of Hanover and close to Brunswick. The deposit had been found by accident during a search for oil and gas, when a borehole had been drilled to a depth of over 1000 metres. The sedimentary ore was deep-mined from 1960 when the grade of the ore became uneconomic and mining ceased. PTB then rented the mine to carry out investigations into its suitability as a nuclear waste disposal site, with an option to purchase if the site proved to be suitable and was licensed. The beds of ore are a few metres thick and separated by beds of clays and shale, dipping at angles of up to 20 degrees from horizontal in a lens-shaped structure at a depth of between 800 & 1300 metres below the ground surface and stretching for several tens of kilometres along its axis. This structure is sealed from the surface everywhere by several hundred metres of 'claystone' lying unconformably above it. These properties provide a warm (rock temperatures of 53 C were measured by the Rossi Committee during their visit) and an absolutely dry environment thus making it potentially suitable as a waste store. Between 1976 & 1982 GSF carried out a major hydrological and environmental survey of an extensive area at the surface around the two existing shafts and prepared a development plan for PTB.

On the basis of this a phase of detailed underground exploration was started in 1983, continuing until 1985 since which time further roadways and ventilation works have been completed and the worked-out areas of the former mine have been either back-filled or sealed from new works.

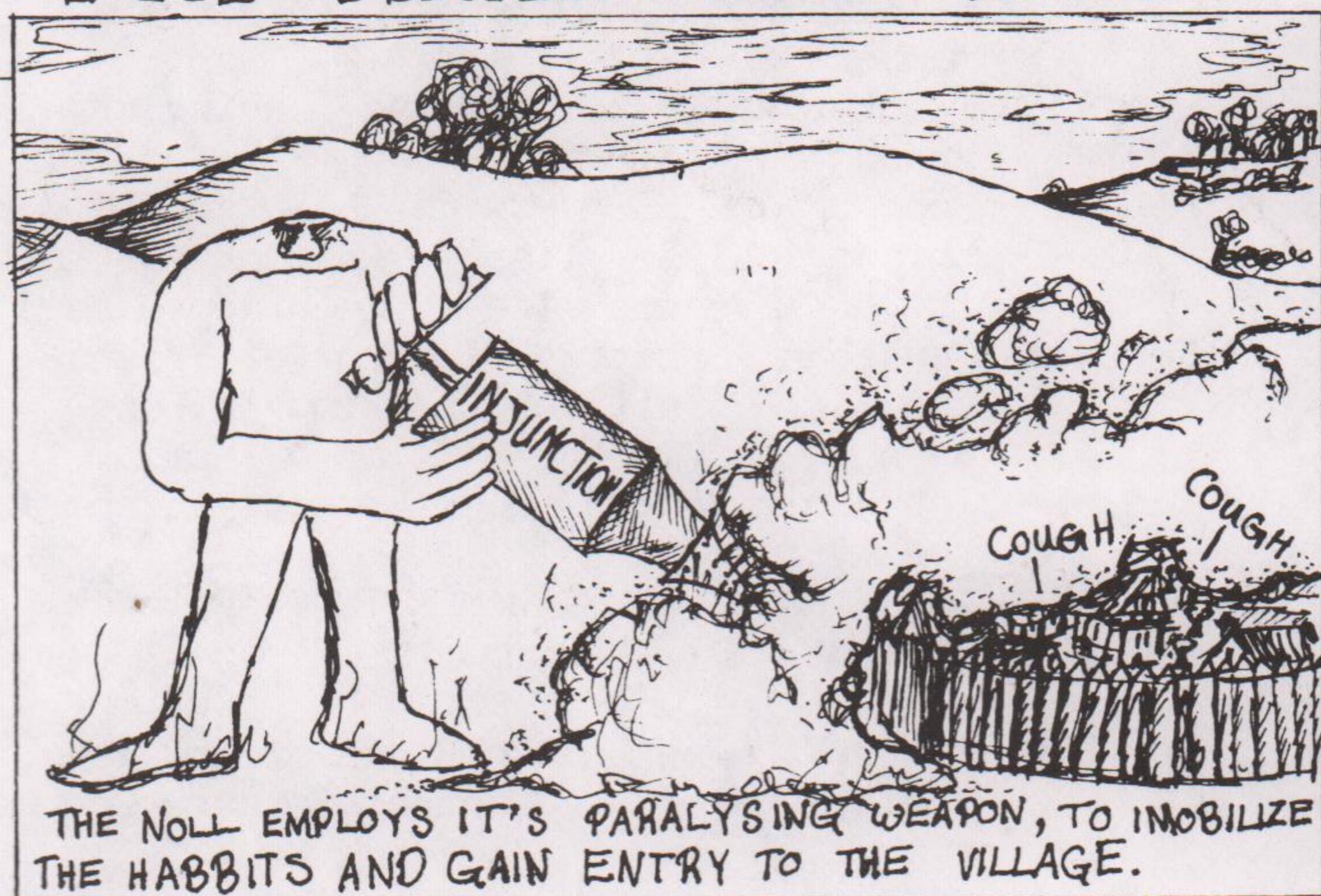
The proposal is to store prepackaged waste in 'disposal rooms', up to 800 metres long and 40 sq. metres cross-section, with back-fill of crushed and graded iron-ore around containers and as plugs every 9 metres. The last 35 metres of each room adjacent to the haulage roadway would be dammed with a plug of compacted ore waste to obtain properties similar to those of the surrounding solid rocks.

Experiments with dummy waste drums of 200 and 400 litre sizes revealed difficulties in packing and handling, resulting in the decision to use rectangular containers containing such drums or smaller containers but not exceeding 20 tonnes weight. Handling below ground is to be by trackway and shielded fork-lift trucks. Employment is likely to be of the order of 300 men and they, like the rest of the mine, will be subject to the legislation and standards of the Mines Inspectorate, as well as the Nuclear Inspectorate. The horizontal, parallel rooms will be concentrated in rooms not previously mined for iron-ore; those at between 800 and 1000 metres being reached via the No. 2 shaft whilst those below this depth and down to 1300 metres are reached via the No. 1 shaft. Costs are difficult to equate for this site, but figures of around £300 per cubic metre for work to date suggest that a figure of perhaps treble that would be a likely final cost including operating and 'closure' costs.

Public concern in this case is not as great as one might have expected in Germany where nuclear matters are a major political arena. Currently documents including the full specification of the waste and the safety analysis are with the local Lower Saxony authority since they will issue the licence to proceed. To aid them in this decision they have access to all the data they need, expert reports and independent specialists. Their decision is expected in 1987, having had more than two years to consider the application by PTB. If they, and the Mines Inspectorate, both approve the plans, construction is likely to take a further two years, followed by further checks before usage probably in the early 1990s. If the application is not accepted, then it is considered unlikely that central government would over-rule the decision, although they do technically have the power to do so. Alternative methods or sites would have to be found, whilst further waste was added to that already kept in secure surface stores. Perhaps the open access to data and all intermediate results of site investigations being published with 'special emphasis being given to a high scientific standard of representation' is at least part of the reason why the local public are not too worried. Similarly it was the honesty and the thoroughness of the investigations that most impressed Dr. Brown and the members of the Coalition during our visit.

A quotation from the most recent issue of PTB's information leaflets states - 'Experts all over the world consider the disposal in rock strata of the deep geological sub-soil to be the safest method for the disposal of radio-active waste'.

THE THREATENED LAND



BY B. HULL

