

Chief Executive

We are pleased to hear of the success of the Bristol Channel fishery. We need a law to help our producers and our people. The industry in the Bristol Channel is still suffering from the effects of the 1980s. We need a law to help our producers and our people. The industry in the Bristol Channel is still suffering from the effects of the 1980s.

Richard and Judith Honeybunt, Dorset.

Nuclear hazards?

Whether or not we need a new Nuclear Power Station, we do need some clarity in discussion of the hazards it may present to the human population and to the environment in general.

In the 1980s an entrepreneurial ex-Army Officer set up a small business on land adjacent to the Power Station, rearing brine shrimps and accelerating the development of elvers for the German market, using the cooling water from Hinkley which is normally returned directly to the Bristol Channel at a higher temperature than that of the Channel water itself. His ambitions were dashed when an early incarnation of "Health and Safety" closed him down. I remember at the time questioning this policy because if there was the slightest danger of the cooling water picking up radioactive contamination from the reactor, I would have moved from here immediately. Also why is the capture and consumption of Bristol Channel fish not banned?

Now we are being treated to another implication of radioactive contamination, either of the atmosphere or of the water when we read the following statement in your article entitled *New nuke at Hinkley 'not needed'*:

"Burnham on Sea at five miles from Hinkley suffers a doubling of breast cancer mortality, according to Prof Chris Busby, and coastline communities from Hinkley to Burnham have a three-fold increase in infant mortality and a six-fold increase in neonatal deaths."

Breast cancer mortality in the UK is around 0.04% for women of all ages and changes markedly for different age group categories. If it doubles to 0.08% in Burnham on Sea (not a statistically significant increase) we need to know something of the age distribution of the female population. I guess it is higher than the average for the country because of all the retirees. We need to know the level of wealth in the community and the standards of health care. The same goes for neonatal mortality rates, around 0.27% in the south east, 0.3% in the south west and 0.5% in the West Midlands. Perhaps the prevailing wind blows from Hinkley to Birmingham? A six-fold increase in neonatal mortality from 0.3% to 1.8% and a three-fold increase in infant mor-

tality from 0.5% to 1.5% may be statistically significant but we would need to know how these figures vary around the country to be sure. Even then we would not be certain that a nuclear power station was responsible. Is it beyond our capabilities to sample the air upwind of a potential hazard and to identify it?

If nuclear power stations present health hazards or environmental hazards then there would be ample evidence, particularly from France and Japan.

So come on you anti-nuclear pressure groups get your facts straight before you start to try and fool the great British Public. And Prof Chris Busby, please tell us the truth and don't hide behind the half truths with which you present us.

Peter Langley

Nuclear hazards, the evidence

Pete Langley takes issue with our findings of excess breast cancer and infant mortality downwind of the Hinkley point nuclear site. His questions about the age breakdown of the population suffering the breast cancer increases are reasonable but in fact our studies always allow for age: it is carefully built into the method we employ as also is Social Class (an indicator of disadvantage). As far as standards of health care are concerned these do not really affect the issue of breast cancer incidence and mortality when we are comparing wards in Somerset where generally these are pretty much the same across the study area.

We have carried out several investigations of cancer near Hinkley Point since 2000 and whether we look at official data on deaths or incidence we always find the same increases; and indeed so do the official cancer registry when they follow up our studies. Cancer is caused by genetic damage, and we would therefore expect infant mortality also. When we looked we found it in the same place, downwind of the nuclear plant, where there was the cancer increase (which also included leukemias and kidney cancers). These reports are available on the internet if anyone wants them and the method is there for all to see.

As far as evidence from France and Japan is concerned, there is such evidence. For example, there have been reports of increases in child leukaemia near the La Hague reprocessing site, just like those found at the Sellafield site, the Dounreay site, Aldermaston and recently in Germany in the very large government funded study by the German Child Cancer Registry. Child leukemia increases around the Hinkley Point site were reported by Somerset Health authority workers in the 1980s. It remains difficult to carry out proper epidemiological studies of adult cancer in France and Japan because data is not made available for research; indeed, France has no national cancer registry, a circumstance which is rather suspicious in a nation so historically dedicated to nuclear energy.

Prof Chris Busby, Green Audit

Two giant nukes for Somerset?

Stop Hinkley has produced a leaflet encouraging people to respond (by January 11) to EDF's consultation re two proposed giant nuclear reactors in Somerset.

If you would like some of the printed leaflets, phone Jim on 0208 395 6191 or download the leaflet from www.stophinkley.org

If you can volunteer to distribute them locally, please also get in touch with Jim.

Val Davey, Stop Hinkley