



Roy's Roundup of Recent News

July – September 2020

10 July - The Times: EDF boss suppressed report calling Hinkley Point 'risky'. Work on Hinkley Point C power station began last year after EDF's board approved the project in 2016. The chief executive of the French company building Britain's new nuclear reactors won boardroom approval for the project after suppressing an internal review labelling it as risk-laden, according to France's public accounts court. <http://stophinkley.org/NewsPages/news200710Times.htm>

13 July - Construction News: France's Court of Audit, the national public auditor, has cast doubt on the future of the Sizewell C and Bradwell B nuclear energy projects in the UK in a critical report of EDF's projects in the sector. <https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/civils/edfs-uk-nuclear-projects-in-doubt-after-court-of-audit-report-13-07-2020/>

16 July – Western Daily Press: Hinkley C for the Chinese Chop? Letter from Alan Debenham <http://stophinkley.org/NewsPages/news200716WDPletter.htm>

20 July – The Times: Tory backbenchers are calling for the government to review potential avenues of Chinese influence in Britain and Beijing's investment in the nuclear power station at Hinkley Point.

21 July – Sunday Times: Data on the AFD and fish kill, etc <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/nuclear-power-plant-will-suck-fish-to-their-deaths-zm6cmj0ft>

23 July – Electrical Review: Nuclear Lies and Deceit. A damning article on HPC from nuclear enthusiasts.

23 July - Whitehaven News: Copeland Council's executive has voted to "open up discussions" on the possibility of building an underground nuclear waste repository (the national GDF) in the borough - though not in the Lake District.

25 July – Telegraph: EDF executives suppressed horror as their Chinese partners made a risky suggestion. Senior engineers from China General Nuclear (CGN) proposed a way to lift a concrete dome on to the reactor at Hinkley Point C in Somerset. According to EDF sources, their plan would have entailed dangling the 270-tonne structure over more than 5,000 workers on site at the time. (NB Although SH knows that it would be impossible to gather all the 5,000 workers on site over a 24 hour period into a spot under the dome where they would be in mortal danger, it's an interesting aspect of EdeF working with CGN and indicative of the Chinese company's attitude to H&S matters.)

25 July – Telegraph: Tories demand review of Chinese involvement at Hinkley nuclear site. Calls for a new review are growing amid diplomatic tensions between Britain and China over Hong Kong and the telecoms equipment maker Huawei.

27 July – Bristol Post etc: Construction giant Balfour Beatty has temporarily closed one of its manufacturing plants near Bristol after 19 staff tested positive for Covid-19. The company, which is helping build cooling systems for Hinkley Point C nuclear power station in Somerset, said it had carried out a "deep clean" of the facility over the weekend.

27 July: Bristol Post – Covid-19 outbreak shuts Avonmouth HPC construction plant <https://www.business-live.co.uk/manufacturing/balfour-beatty-manufacturing-plant-closes-18667404>

30 July – FT: Ministers challenged on future of nuclear energy industry dogged by doubts about China and rise of renewables calls for clarity. The head of construction at the UK's first nuclear

power plant in three decades has challenged the government to decide whether “it wants nuclear or not” as ministers prepare to publish a new energy policy later this year and uncertainty hangs over China’s continued involvement in the sensitive sector. “The government needs to decide if it wants nuclear or not,” said Stuart Crooks, managing director of Hinkley Point C. “If it doesn’t want nuclear, no amount of financing will make it happen.”

1 August – Bloomberg: No Fukushima at HPC! In the event of a crisis (at HPC), a computer command will start a process to melt the nuclear core funneling the liquid into the pool where it’s mixed with concrete, that sets and then can’t escape into the atmosphere. The reactor would be destroyed but the surrounding area kept safe.’

3 August – The Times: No let up in heavy lifting at Hinkley plant. Includes quote from HPC MD: How confident was Mr Crooks that the plant would start up in 2025 as planned? “There’s a long way to go yet. It is a big, complex project.”

3 August – Popular Mechanics: France EPR Nuclear Reactor Is a Mess - implications for HPC. A damning indictment of EdeF's work at Flamanville, from self-confessed nuclear enthusiasts!

4 August – WNN: France's nuclear safety authority, Autorité de Sûreté Nucléaire, last week authorised EDF to commission the Iceda activated waste conditioning and storage facility on the site of its Bugey nuclear power plant. ASN insisted on 15 amendments to EdeF’s Safety File.

5 August – World Nuclear News: EDF counts the cost of coronavirus to new build projects. HPC liable to budget and time overruns.

6 August – Financial times: China tensions raise doubts over UK nuclear projects. “The big question is: if CGN were chucked out of Bradwell, whether they would walk from Hinkley,” said Stephen Thomas, emeritus professor of energy policy at University of Greenwich. “They are contractually obliged, but good luck suing the Chinese government.” Aside from the financing questions, this could potentially increase the construction risk at Hinkley. “The Chinese have an engineering role in the project,” said one nuclear expert. “It would be a blow if they took away that know-how.” Ministers are yet to deliver their verdict on the RAB funding model and have continuously delayed a white paper on energy, originally expected last year, and which nuclear industry executives hope will emerge in October.

6 August - Nuclear Engineering International: In its decision of 28 July 2020, France’s Autorité des Marchés Financiers (AMF) Enforcement Committee fined EDF €5 million (\$5.9m) for disseminating false information in a news release in October 2014. It also imposed a fine of €50,000 on former EDF Chairman and CEO Henri Proglio.

8 August – The Times: National Grid pays EdeF £73m to halve the output of Sizewell B (hot weather/lack of demand)

11 August – Western Daily Press: Alan Debenham’s letter on Hiroshima published.
<http://stophinkley.org/NewsPages/News200811WDPLetter.htm>

14 August – Maldon Nub News: Turmoil as Maldon District Council meeting stopped abruptly due to disagreements over Bradwell Site Prep Application. <https://maldon.nub.news/n/maldon-district-council-meeting-suddenly-cut-short-in-new-row>

21 August: France 24 – Steve Thomas on bad news re CGN backing HPC
<https://www.france24.com/en/20200821-after-huawei-spotlight-on-china-s-role-in-uk-nuclear>

24 August: East Anglian Daily Times (and local ITV) – Councils unhappy about Sizewell C
<https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/east-suffolk-council-draft-sizewell-c-dco-report-1-6806704>

25 August: Times – EdeF admits it could take six years to offset the greenhouse gas emissions generated in Sizewell C's construction. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/sizewell-c-faces-six-year-emissions-lag-xm72b92tb>

31 August: Burnham-on-Sea Times – HPC dredging starts. <https://www.burnham-on-sea.com/news/huge-oil-platform-vessel-visible-from-burnham-on-sea-starts-hinkley-dredging-work/>

1 September: Ipswich Star – Pro-Sizewell C demo in Ipswich. <https://www.ipswichstar.co.uk/news/nuclear-for-net-zero-ipswich-protest-sizewell-c-1-6816680>

2 September: Power Technology – How to make new nuclear 'cheaper'! <https://www.power-technology.com/news/nuclear-industry-collaborates-to-create-blueprint-for-cheaper-nuclear-power/>

3 September: Telegraph – New nuclear U-turn. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2020/09/03/britains-nuclear-industry-faces-sharp-u-turn/>

3 September: Utility Week – Hinkley C cost nonsense. <https://utilityweek.co.uk/nuclear-sector-pledges-lessons-from-hinkley-will-drive-costs-down/>

October: Sedgmoor Apple

Covid concerns remain at Hinkley

IT'S hard to know where to start on the ludicrous white elephant that is the Hinkley Point C (HPC) new nuclear power station.

However, given the latest concerns about a rise in costs and newly imposed restrictions, let's start with HPC and Coronavirus.

In the beginning, EdeF were determined to keep working at HPC and slow to impose restrictions. It was only when workers on the site posted photos of the queues and congestion in the canteens that EdeF reacted by imposing 'social distancing' (SD).

Not all workers were willing to observe SD. As they pointed out, SD in the canteen was pointless as they



stops in the town (and surrounding villages) being spreaders of Covid-19. EdeF eventually moved to concentrate bus pick ups at the Park & Ride and workers' accommodation in the hostels.

Despite pressure from Stop Hinkley and other groups, EdeF steadfastly refused to close the site, saying they had to keep pouring critical concrete. Yet when a silo dramatically collapsed, an as yet unexplained major industrial accident, EdeF had to stop concrete production but with no apparent problems.

A major Covid-19 outbreak in the plant producing concrete sections for HPC at Avonmouth has been largely ignored.

Throughout all of this, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), which is meant to protect us against bad practice by EdeF, has been as effective as a chocolate fireguard.

All of this must have led to massive additional cost and further delay for HPC, but local EdeF people continue to play down the effects of Covid-19. As has happened before, it will be next year when EdeF HQ in Paris reports that we will get the true picture of how bad it's been.

As for Covid-19 at HPC now, working in the tunnels at the site where SD is well-nigh impossible remains a big problem. And for HPC, as for all of us, winter is coming.

by Roy Pumphrey
Stop Hinkley Campaign

were shoulder to shoulder at work on the site and in the buses.

Residents in Bridgwater were concerned about workers staying in their homes and queuing at bus

