

## **KEY EVENTS IN THE UK ATMOSPHERIC NUCLEAR TEST PROGRAMME**

### **BACKGROUND EVENTS**

Jan 1947	Ministerial decision on UK weapon production
May 1948	Decision disclosed to UK Parliament
Nov 1953	First UK nuclear weapon in service (RAF)
Feb 1955	Government announces decision to develop H bomb

### **AUSTRALIAN TESTS**

Mar 1951	Australian Government approval sought to use Monte Bello Island for tests
Oct 1952	First UK Test on 3 October – code named “Hurricane”
Sep 1953	Minor trials at Emu Field on Australian mainland
Oct 1953	Next two UK tests, known as “Totem 1 and 2” on 14 and 26 October, at Emu Field
May 1955	Permanent test site at Maralinga announced
Jun 1955	Minor trials start at Maralinga
May 1956	UK conducts tests “Mosaic 1 and 2” on 16 May and 19 June at Monte Bello
Sep 1956	“Buffalo” tests at Maralinga (four shots on 27 Sept, and 4, 11 and 21 October. Buffalo 3 was the first UK airdrop test
Sep 1957	“antler” tests at Maralinga, 3 shots (14 and 25 September and 9 October)

Minor trials continued in short annual campaigns until May 1963

### **RELATED AUSTRALIAN ISSUES**

Aug 1967	The final UK clean up operation at Maralinga completed, (Operation Brumby in May to Aug 67)
Jul 1984	Australian Royal Commission (ARC) established
Nov 1985	Royal Commission Report published

Feb 1986	Post ARC Technical Assessment Group (TAG) established with UK membership. Study of options and costs of decontamination and rehabilitation of Emu and Maralinga
March 1989	TAG reports to Australian Ministers
Dec 1993	UK Government agrees to pay £20M on an ex gratia basis towards the cost of site rehabilitation
Mar 2003	Report into the clean up of Maralinga published in Australia. The Australian Science Minister reports to Federal Parliament that the land at Maralinga can be handed back to its traditional owner, the Maralinga Tjarutja.

### **CHRISTMAS ISLAND RADIOLOGICAL SURVEYS**

Jun 1964	Surveyed by Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (AWRE)
Sep 1975	Surveyed by Washington State University for Gilbert Island Government
Mar 1981	Surveyed by New Zealand Department of Health for the Kiribati Government. (Christmas Island is now known as the Kiribati Republic)
Ongoing	MOD has agreed to carry out the collection and removal of materials associated with the nuclear test programme's construction and accommodation works. Defence Estates is managing the clean-up project using commercial specialists. Completion of clean-up of site expected in 2006/2007

### **HEALTH STUDIES**

Early 1983	MOD commissioned NRPB Study of UK test veterans
Nov 1983	Australian Government Study published (No detriment to health reported)
Jan 1998	NRPB Study (R314) published. Reported no detriment to health except a possible risk of leukaemia and multiple myeloma
Mar 1990	New Zealand Study published. (Reported no detriment to health except some risk of leukaemias and possible other hematologic cancers)
Nov 1993	NRPB second study reported (R266). (Reported no detriment except possible small risk of leukaemia in the first 25 years following exposure).

Feb 2003      NRPB third study reported (W27). Concluded that overall levels of mortality and cancer incidence in UK nuclear weapons test participants have continued to be similar to those in a matched control group and for overall mortality to be lower than expected from national rates.

## **UK NUCLEAR TESTS**

### **AUSTRALIA**

Test Codename	Date		Yield	
HURRICANE	3	Oct 1952	25	kilotons (Kt)
TOTEM	14	Oct 1953	10	Kt
	26	Oct 1953	8	Kt
	16	May 1956	15	Kt
MOSAIC	19	Jun 1956	60	Kt
	27	Sep 1956	15	Kt
BUFFALO	4	Oct 1956	1.5	Kt
	11	Oct 1956	3	Kt
	21	Oct 1956	10	Kt
	14	Sep 1957	1	Kt
ANTLER	25	Sep 1957	6	Kt
	9	Oct 1957	25	Kt

### **PACIFIC OCEAN**

GRAPPLE	15	May 1957	0.3	Megatons (Mt)
	31	May 1957	0.72	Mt
	19	Jun 1957	0.2	Mt
GRAPPLE X	8	Nov 1957	1.8	Mt
GRAPPLE Y	28	Apr 1958	3	Mt
GRAPPLE Z	22	Aug 1958	24	Kt
	2	Sep 1958	1	Mt
	11	Sep 1958	0.8	Kt
	23	Sep 1958	25	Kt