



# On the Level

News and views from the LLW Repository site

## Drigg beach surveyed for shipwreck

**The remains of a ship possibly hundreds of years old, partially unearthed by shifting sands on Drigg beach, has been surveyed following a community request to Nuclear Waste Services.**

Alan Bell, Chair of Drigg Local History Group, approached us for assistance to determine how much of the boat's structure remains under the sand.

We asked our specialist sub-contractor Fugro, currently undertaking geophysics work on the Repository site, for assistance and they utilised non-intrusive ground-penetrating radar to survey the beach area, and the results are eagerly awaited.

John Shevelan, Site Characterisation Manager at the Repository, said: "Only a small part of what could be the base or side of a ship is exposed, and it's too early to say how much of it is still there.

"An area around 30ft by 20ft was surveyed and we now wait for the data to be processed. Wooden pegs are visible in the structure, but so are metal bolts, so it's not ancient, but the ship is not from this century or probably the previous one, either.

"It was good to be able to respond to a community request, to help our neighbours better understand the long history of Drigg beach.

"Sea transport played an important part in the history of the area and the area is marked on old maps as an anchorage. This work gives us a window back into history.

"Thanks also go to Fugro and our main contractor Jacobs, who both responded free of charge."



Specialist sub-contractor Fugro survey the beach

**30ft x 20ft**

An area around 30ft by 20ft was surveyed.

# New capability at MRF puts us on the 'cutting edge'

Members of our Waste Services team gave a vote of confidence to a major new development at supply chain partner Cyclife's Metal Recycling Facility (MRF) following a fact-finding visit to the Workington plant.

The addition of a cold cutting facility brings new capability to the MRF, thereby broadening the range of items that Nuclear Waste Services can accept through our metals framework, enabling us to make waste safe, sooner.

The development enables the final phase of a significant project to treat effluent tanks to proceed at Cyclife. Some 11 liquid effluent tanks arising from a redundant tank farm on a customer site – low level waste – similar in size to bulk tankers seen on our roads, at around 8m x 2m, will be transported to Cyclife for treatment.

Dr Andrew Hetherington, Waste Services Consultant with NWS, said: "The new capability at the MRF enhances the range of services available via our supply chain.

"It broadens the envelope of items that Cyclife can receive, and adds another string to our bow at NWS, providing an indoor facility for the size-reduction of large metallic items.

"The better we understand supply chain capability, the better we can communicate that capability to our customers, matching supply and demand.

"Clearly, a lot of thought has gone into the design of the new facility. At the touch of a button, tanks can be rotated which means there is no longer a requirement to work at height."

# Touching tribute to wartime heroes

A memorial to five people who lost their lives building or operating the Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) during WW2 has been unveiled outside the gates of the LLW Repository that now stands on the site.

The original memorial was placed on the site 13 years ago, when an oak tree was also planted, and the new tribute names those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) funded the memorial and Martin Walkingshaw, Chief Operating Officer, and Mike Pigott, Director of Site/Waste Operations, joined members of the U3A and Drigg History Groups for the unveiling.

Alan Bell, Chair of both History Groups, thanked NWS for its involvement, adding: "This memorial is important for the local community and for those

with relatives who worked at the Royal Ordnance Factory.

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**"The oak still has some growing to do and it should still be here for the site's closure in over one hundred years' time."**

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Mike, who presented Alan with a booklet on the history of the ROF, said: "It was really interesting to make the connection with the local community and see their interest in the history of our site, and it was a pleasure to share some of it with them."

The memorial notes the passing of Richard Ashburne and William Steele, in 1941, William Darby and Ada Bawden, an engaged couple, in 1943, and John Tunstall a year later.



History Group members and NWS personnel

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# Investing in our future

Nuclear Waste Services is launching its biggest apprenticeship recruitment drive yet, with 11 apprentices set to join the organisation in September this year, across nine disciplines, from finance to health & safety, nuclear technician, maintenance and mechanical design.

Most of the new apprenticeships offer flexible locations with new recruits given the option of being based in either Cumbria or Oxfordshire.

Corhyn Parr, CEO of NWS, said: "As chair of the Nuclear Skills Strategy Group, along with other organisations like Rolls Royce and EDF we face a challenge to recruit

10,000 new roles every year across the sector for the group to achieve their current programmes.

"This includes cross sector graduate and apprentice schemes, schools and return to work programmes with retraining.

"It's fantastic that we are launching our biggest ever apprenticeship recruitment drive to help us meet this target."

Applications have now closed and those called for interview will be notified in due course.

Kate Parr, Early Years Career Advisor, said: "There's never been a more exciting time to begin a career with us."

# We host police training on site

Gunfire on the Repository site was not an issue when it was our very own Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) calling the shots.

The Strategic Escort Group, a specialist arm of CNC, who work in rail and marine environments to protect material transports, had a week-long training stint at the rail sidings on site, utilising two rail vehicles and a low loader to practice the techniques they hope never to use in real life.

Drigg & Carleton Parish Council had been informed in advance of the training as had our local community close to the site via letter to ensure there was no alarm from local residents.

"We all have a part to play in the wider fabric of the nuclear industry, so it was our pleasure to be able to host the Strategic Escort Group, ensuring they are able to train effectively and fully-equipped to carry out their duties, said Mike Pigott, Director of Site and Waste Operations.

"We had asked that 'battlefield' blanks were used during training, which are still audible but quieter than

typical blank ammunition. I took that decision in consideration of our local community and their request to minimise disruption."

Temporary Sgt Phil Henderson, who first approached Mike about the possibility of the Strategic Escort Group using the Repository to practice scenarios, from minor to the most serious, was delighted with their reception.

"Everyone was phenomenal with us, they couldn't do enough," Phil said. "We were so pleased to be allowed on site, 10 minutes from our base at Griffin Park, and we took care not to disrupt any site operations."



Mike Pigott, right, with Phil Henderson

# All PCM radwaste to leave site within months

The Plutonium Contaminated Materials (PCM) programme proved a proud landmark for the Repository site, with work initially scheduled to take 10 years completed in little over six, saving around £20 million for the UK taxpayer.

This programme was completed in 2019 following the decommissioning and decontamination of five highly active bunkers, where PCM generated from operations across the UK in the 1950s and 1960s had been held, and seven support buildings.

And over almost three years, since the pandemic began, a dedicated team of operatives drawn from across the site have combined to ensure all radwaste from the programme is cleared from the Repository.

"Hopefully within the next six months we will have removed all of this material from site," said Robyn Johnstone, Lead Waste Co-ordinator. "And it's all because of teamwork with the likes of LLW Operations, Health Physics and so many others working with me.

"We work together to achieve the objective of the right waste form, in the right package and disposed in the right facility in line with our vision – nuclear waste – permanently safe, sooner.

"It has been a long, hard slog, and it's not the end of the story, as there's still waste to ship out, but there's light at the end of the tunnel."

The team has worked at such a pace that since September 2022, seven temporary waste stores on site have been closed.

# New Community Forest planted at Pelham

David Peattie, NDA Chief Executive, joined Nuclear Waste Services colleagues to celebrate the planting of the first Cumbria Coastal Community Forest in the grounds of Pelham House.

Around 1ha of grassland is being transformed into woodland, in partnership with Cumbria Woodlands, as part of a wider plan to see thousands of new trees planted along

the county's coastline over the next five years, with the NDA providing £200,000 in funding.

"It's been fantastic bringing together people from across the NDA group, as well as members of Cumbria Woodlands and local authorities, to get involved and play a part in establishing Cumbria's first Community Forest," David Peattie said.

"It's a great example of how we are delivering our decommissioning mission with care for the communities and the environment, investing money and resources in projects like this one which will benefit future generations for years to come."

**The trees are a mix of species, including oak, silver and downy birch, bird cherry, aspen and rowan.**

Martin Walkingshaw, Chief Operating Officer for NWS, said: "It's lovely to see the new woodland area at Pelham House taking shape. This will enhance the area not only for our colleagues, but also our local community who use our grounds for dog walking and recreation."



David Peattie, centre, with Martin Walkingshaw, left, James Cobbold, Cumbria Woodlands, and NWS apprentices

# And finally...

**You won't find our 'social licence to operate' on a list of projects for the upcoming year, but it is always in our thoughts at Nuclear Waste Services – and more importantly, it can be seen so often in our actions.**

This licence is our community's 'permission' for us to operate within it, through promoting honest and open dialogue, operating a policy of 'no surprises' and playing an active part in our community, supporting it wherever possible.

We can support in a host of ways, and some of these are evident in this edition of our newsletter.

We've worked recently with the Drigg Local History Group on a couple of projects, funding a memorial to five people who lost their lives building or operating the Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) during WW2 – now the site for the Repository, of course.

And we have also used equipment utilised in our current geophysics work on site to survey Drigg beach to determine if an intact shipwreck is sited under the sands after wooden sections were unearthed.

We can't wait to get back the results to discover if a full wreck lies feet from the surface – and how old it might be. I suppose a galleon bursting with pirate treasure is too much to ask for!

No one has ever said that our commitment to stakeholders ends at the West Cumbrian boundary,



and we're delighted to play our part in England's Community Forest initiative, planting around one hectare of trees at Pelham House in March, supporting a fantastic green initiative and playing our small part in helping preserve the planet.

Of course, we have always welcomed responsible owners who wish to exercise their dogs in our extensive grounds, which are going to be even more attractive given the new look.

Incidentally, three of our ex-armed forces personnel are camping out in the grounds on Saturday, 25 March – Dave Tennyson, Laura Wiseman and Steve Moger – to raise money for struggling veterans, Feel free to say hello, and you could even contribute to their fundraising, if you wish!

Now into our second year as NWS, we are really making strides in a host of ways, not least in recruitment.

We've recently been advertising for 11 new apprentices to start with us in September – more than ever before.

NWS is going to be around for a very long time and we will need a pipeline of enthusiastic, intelligent and engaged young people who want to help deliver our mission. Looks like we're making a solid start!

**Martin Walkingshaw**  
**Chief Operating Officer**

## Site tour

Anyone with a keen interest in the Repository is invited to take part in a site tour, with Martin Walkingshaw. If you have any burning questions you wish to put to our Chief Operating Officer, or simply wish to learn more about our mission, now is your chance.

The tour is planned for the morning of Wednesday, 19 April. But numbers are limited and it's first come, first served, so please inform [llwr.public.affairs@llwrsite.com](mailto:llwr.public.affairs@llwrsite.com) if you wish to join us, by Tuesday 4 April at the latest.

Later the same day, we hold our final West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group LLWR Working Group quarterly meeting before we reconvene as the Nuclear Waste Services Working Group in the summer.

## 2pm-4pm

**Please feel free to join us in Drigg Village Hall.**

### Nuclear Waste Services

LLW Repository site  
Old Shore Road, Holmrook,  
Cumbria CA19 1XP

Pelham House, Pelham Drive,  
Calderbridge, Cumbria CA20 1DB

## 'Dream' start to leadership programme

Our Dream Placement leadership development programme goes from strength to strength after we welcomed a group of motivated teenagers to Nuclear Waste Services locations across West Cumbria.

Dream Placement is a unique Cumbrian initiative, managed by the Centre for Leadership Performance, that brings together 16 to 18-year-olds for a week's placement in industry with organisations such as NWS that want to connect with their future workforce and showcase opportunities.

We hosted four students, Addison Harris, Macy Bradley, Sophie Beach and Andrew Elliott, drawn from

schools across the county, following a comprehensive interview and selection process.

Paul Skelton, Operational Readiness Director of the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) Programme and sponsor of our Dream Placement, said: "This is the second year that NWS has participated in Dream Placement and it is hard not to be impressed by the students.

"They go through a rigorous process of application, assessment and interview which led to them being here, and we asked quite a lot of them, but they were up to the challenge and surpassed our expectations."

The packed agenda included:

- Visit to Beacon Museum in Whitehaven to view the Sellafield exhibition
- Insights into GDF Programme
- Introduction to waste characterisation
- Repository site tour
- Meeting with NWS apprentices
- Careers talk
- CV writing workshop and mock interviews
- Insights into our community funding
- Introduction to projects