



Sellafield Ltd

Sellafield News

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Sludge recovery project takes major step forward

Work to decommission one of the highest hazards at Sellafield took a major step forward this week with the start of de-sludging activities in the Windscale Pile Fuel Storage Pond.

Sludge, in the form of corrosion products and wind blown material, which has accumulated in the pond since it was commissioned in 1952, is being mobilised by the use of water lances and flushed into the main pond. It is then being retrieved and moved into a pond corral.

A remotely operated vehicle, named 'Metal Mickey', will also be used by the plant operators to access some of the more difficult areas of the pond.

This first phase of remediation will see the sludge retrieved from two of the original twelve bays within the pond, in which fuel was decanned and exported for processing.

Future phases of decommissioning the plant will see the sludge transferred from the corral to a new facility which is currently being constructed adjacent to the pond, for interim storage prior to final treatment.

A delighted Steve Topping, Head of Delivery, said: "The step we've taken today is the culmination of years of effort by a dedicated team. We have started de-sludging one of the highest hazard facilities at Sellafield and we shouldn't underestimate the importance of this for the site and local community or the UK nuclear industry as a whole."

In parallel, the team has successfully started up a Local Effluent Treatment Plant to treat the pond water.

Steve said: "Activity levels in the pond may be affected by the sludge retrieval operations. What the Local Effluent Treatment Plant allows us to do is treat and control the activity in the pond water, helping to protect both the workforce and the environment and is a major achievement in its own right."

George Andrews, Superintendent for Legacy Ponds and Silos, was equally pleased with the achievement. "This is a very challenging project which the team have put an incredible amount of effort into. I can't emphasise enough what a tremendous job this is, and how important it is to the decommissioning of the Sellafield site. Fantastic work!"



40 years...and still counting!

Two of Sellafield's longest serving employees have just reached the staggering 40 year milestone of service to the company.

Dave Telford and Barry Mason, who both work within the Nuclear Decommissioning and Major Projects Group, reached the milestone on 9 September – 40 years to the date since they started as 16 - year-old apprentices in 1968.

With only three and a half years left until he retires, Dave started out life as a fitter/turner working in the both TRG and Main Group machine workshops. Throughout his career he has also worked in mechanical inspection both on site and off site, the Quality Control Group and for Legacy Ponds and Silos.

“There were about 52 apprentices who started at the same time as us” said Dave.

“There was no Thorp, no Pond 5, and no Encapsulation Plants. There was only really Calder Hall, the AGR ‘golf ball’, Separation area, North Group and a number of supporting workshops. In fact most of the site was just green grass. The changes over the years have been immense.”



Barry started his career at Sellafield as an electrician. With nine years left until he retires at the age of 65, Barry will have worked for the company for 48 years in total when he eventually leaves.

“I have worked all across the site throughout my time at Sellafield; from the Pile Chimney, to Calder Hall, the Uranium Purification Plant and the Thermal De-nitration Plant. In fact, I work I have worked on the highest point of the site - on top of the Pile Chimney and on the lowest - the sealines as part of the works dive team!”

“Safety is a lot more prominent on the site now than when we started; the change in culture is something we’ve all had to adjust to as the years have gone by. The future looks good for the site and we need to start looking towards that,” said Barry.

For their ongoing dedication and services to the company, the pair have been awarded £750 worth of high street vouchers.

Dave and Barry’s boss, George Andrews, Superintendent for Legacy Ponds and Silos, commented: “This is a fantastic achievement for both Dave and Barry as individuals but also for the company as a whole to have had two workers who have dedicated almost their entire working lives to Sellafield. Well done and thank you!”

MASFE is well connected

A key project to continued reprocessing in Thorp is progressing well. A new replacement Medium Active Salt Free Evaporator (MASFE) has been installed and is being brought on line to keep Thorp operating into the future.

The first of the four colossal vessels comprising the new MASFE was craned into Thorp just before Christmas. The project involved removing part of the building roof to allow for access to carry out the tricky lifting operation.

Since the four vessels - worth over £5m - were lifted into place, further minor vessels, pipework and ductwork have been installed. All the construction work and inactive commissioning has now been completed.

Thorp is now undergoing a planned engineering shutdown and active tie-ins of the MASFE are planned during this period.

Eleanor Billson, MASFE Project Manager, commented: "We completed a readiness review and the evaporator tie-ins started on 8 September. Basically what this means is that we will connect up this new evaporator system into Thorp and introduce medium active liquors in order to commission the system. The work will take place 24/7 and is anticipated to take 45 days.

"This has been a very challenging project and although there is a considerable amount of work to be done in a short timescale, I am confident that we can get the new MASFE on line successfully. The whole team have been hugely dedicated and have had to overcome significant hazards to get us to this important stage of the project."

The old evaporator plant - which had 10 years of successful operational life - has been run down, washed out and verified as fully isolated.



One of the four vessels being lifted into Thorp earlier this year

Raising Risk Awareness

A member of Sellafield Ltd's Risk Management team has been invited to deliver a presentation at the prestigious Institute of Risk Management (IRM) Risk Forum 2008.

Lynn Stalker, a senior risk practitioner in the programme management group will lead one of the workshop sessions, supported by Mark James, a colleague based in the finance and business management section.

The IRM is the leading international professional institute for life long vocational risk management education.

"This is an excellent opportunity to raise the profile of Sellafield Ltd's risk management capability," said Lynn.

The Risk Forum is IRM's annual flagship conference and is expected to attract over 300 risk management professionals.

Lynn said: "I am looking forward to meeting with fellow risk management practitioners and learning how risks are managed in a range of different industries."

VIP Visits to Sellafield

05-08/09/2008: IAEA Design Verification at Bulk Handling Facilities

09/09/2008: NDA Site Familiarisation

09/09/2008: Sunday Telegraph

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