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1. Andrew Darke of PLACE asked the HSE for data on UK deaths from overhead powerlines. The reply refers to what is reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR 95, which covers England, Scotland and Wales), with a note about restrictions and variations in that reporting process. The data contain only “work-related” incidents. Over almost 8 years 2001-2009 there were 129 work-related serious injuries (34 fatal) from overhead powerlines. They comprise 85 (16) of employees, 8 (5) self-employed and 36 (13) members of the public.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm>

http://www.revolt.co.uk/new/PLACE_brochure.pdf

<http://www.p-l-a-c-e.org/>

2. In December 2009 Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) made a submission to the DOE Planning Service seeking consent for a new 275/400kV volt substation near Moy, Co Tyrone and 33.9km of 400kV single-circuit overhead transmission line from the new substation to a crossing point on the Armagh Monaghan border. This is the NI part of the 400kV Tyrone Cavan Interconnector major infrastructure project.

<http://www.nie.co.uk/majorprojects/>

<http://www.niemia.co.uk/newsstory.php?ID=1432>

3. The NIE web site (at 30-1-10) says: “The formal public consultation process will begin in January 2010”. I could not find the project on the DOENI site but eventually found it from the planning site using “planning explorer” under “advertised applications”. It is the last application listed for December 2009 and has reference O/2009/0792/F. Even then the site gives no detail of consultation and no access to any Environmental Statement. And mind it starts with letter O, not a zero. What an obstructive service!

<http://www.doeni.gov.uk/>

<http://www.planningni.gov.uk/>

4. Adverts placed 18-1-10 in local papers by NI Planning Service appear inaccurate. The ad leads with a block on application O/2009/0819/F for a Mechanical and Biological Treatment Facility including an NIE substation. This application has an Environmental Statement costing £80 and not fully available on line – that is most unnecessarily obstructive. The time for responses to that one is stated as 4 weeks. Lower down the advert, heading a list of applications, there is O/2009/0792/F for the 400kV line from Moy to the border. There is no mention of an Environmental Statement and the consultation time for the list is stated as 14 days, which ended

yesterday 1-2-10. The application O/2009/0819/F also reappears in this list, and is now described as for the 400kV line. I suspect there are errors in these adverts, and they could have a material effect because some potential objectors may only see the adverts at a time when they would believe it to be too late to respond. In a reasonable system, these errors and confusion should invalidate the consultation, which should be started again.

5. Objectors' group SEAT have conferred directly with the NI Planning Service and say "We have four weeks from today (i.e. from Fri 22 Jan to Fri 19 Feb) in which to register" objections. They must be as written letters on paper (not email) addressed to Divisional Planning Manager, Planning Services Headquarters, Millennium House, 17-25 Great Victoria Street, BELFAST BT27BN. They can be sent via any SEAT committee member.

<http://www.seatactiongroup.com/>

6. It should be noted that the NIE application in Northern Ireland is for a single-circuit 400kV line, not for a balanced double-circuit line, and therefore contrary to the SAGE recommendations of 2007. The EMF from a single circuit line will not have the tendency to cancel as it would from a balanced double-circuit line. As a result, the EMF will remain high for a substantially greater distance from the line.

7. Stour Valley Underground (SVU) has imaginative proposals for a sub-sea "UK ring main" of transmission cables around Britain. I'm not sure there's any point in a complete ring, since there would be many in-feed and take-off points, unlike a household ring main. But the idea of major sub-sea north-south cables from the windfarm sources in northern Scotland to the net consuming regions in southern England has long been proposed by Revolt and others, including government ministers. It also needs considering at a high strategic level of EU networks.

<http://www.stourvalleyunderground.org.uk/>

8. More locally in East Anglia, SVU proposes:

- To increase the capacity of the existing pylon lines (as is included in NG's proposals) as a short term expedient to transmit the power from the proposed New Holland and Kings Lyn Gas Powered Power Stations
- To connect the proposed Sizewell Nuclear Reactors along with the proposed east coast Wind Farms to London via the Thames Estuary by undersea cabling.
- To bury underground the existing EDF owned local distribution lines along with all other local distribution cables

9. The scientific peer review process came under fire again today 2-2-10, this time in the field of stem cell research. Almost refreshingly, it seems to be about good old scientific jealousy and competition for money, rather than ideological or political motives. I rather liked Sir Mark Walport, Director of the Wellcome Foundation, on the BBC Radio 4 Today Programme: "like democracy, it's the worst system except for all the others". The complaint about an influential clique, refereeing each others' papers, reflects the social networking analysis of the Wegman report (news260 etc.) on the hockey stick controversy in climate change. Peer review may be better if the reviews (and the dialogue between reviewer and author) were openly published while retaining reviewers' anonymity, as sometimes happens.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/-/1/hi/sci/tech/8490291.stm>

10. It is with deep sadness that we learn from the BBC 1-2-10 that Alan Turner, 54, from Winton in North Yorkshire, was found injured by walkers on Great Gable on Sunday, alongside a fellow climber, and died on the way to hospital.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/8490851.stm>

Alan was prominent in Revolt in the 1990s as a landowner objecting to the 400kV line across his land at Winton. Colleagues will remember his protest “pylon” and “NO” cut into the hillside crops and widely visible from the A684.