

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
MOSAIC	16 May 1956	15	Kt
	19 Jun 1956	60	Kt
BUFFALO	27 Sep 1956	15	Kt
	4 Oct 1956	1.5	Kt
	11 Oct 1956	3	Kt
	21 Oct 1956	10	Kt
ANTLER	14 Sep 1957	1	Kt
	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