

News story: North businesses are powering Sellafield clean-up

Businesses in West Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cumbria are joining forces to produce self-shielded boxes which will store legacy waste from the First Generation Magnox Storage Pond at Sellafield.

The 66-year old open air pond was originally used to store nuclear fuel from the UK's first generation of nuclear power stations. It has been prioritised for clean-up by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

The clean-up work requires the manufacture of hundreds of boxes to store material taken out of the facility.

The final number needed is still to be decided but the work could ultimately be worth between £50m and £100m.

The first steps have now been taken on the production of the first of the 33-tonne metal containers

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They began life in Brighouse, near Huddersfield, where expert craftsmen at Arthur Jackson & Co made intricate wooden 'patterns' to create moulds into which molten iron can be poured to cast the boxes.

Next, the Shakespeare Foundry, in Preston, made the mould and poured the iron, which takes a month to cool. The mould was recently broken away to reveal the basic structure of the box inside.

The next destination will be Eaves, a Blackburn-based company, which will carry out precision machining to make holes for process ports, filters and bolts.

Later this year, the final step of the first boxes' journey will be to Workington-based TIS, where seals, filters, process ports and bolts will be assembled before they are transported to Sellafield.

Once the boxes are on the site they will be filled with waste and stored in a newly-constructed interim waste store from early 2019.

Dorothy Gradden, Head of Legacy Ponds at Sellafield, said:

The arrival of the waste boxes on site will be another landmark in cleaning up the most hazardous facilities on the Sellafield site.

This is the Northern Powerhouse in action – a chain of manufacturing specialists, some of whom are delivering products for the nuclear industry for the first time, are stepping up and

helping us achieve one of the most important projects in decommissioning the UK's civil nuclear legacy.

All of this work has been managed by the primary contractor, Westinghouse (with its UK base in the North West of England) which won a multi-million pound contract to manufacture up to 750 of these self-shielded boxes.

Tremendous progress has been made to remove fuel and sludge from the pond since retrieval work began in April 2016.

The self-shielded boxes will also be used to store skips of zeolite, a filter mineral used to absorb radioactive particles from the pond water in order to make it safer for nuclear workers during the plant's 30-year operational life

[News story: Cotswald bakery proves an export success](#)

Huffkins, established in 1890, shipped a 1.7 tonne order of fruitcakes, shortbread and branded merchandise to Japan, with more orders already secured for October 2018 and into 2019.

The business secured the export deal after receiving support from the [Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs](#) (Defra) and the Department for International Trade (DIT) to attend the FOODEX trade show in Tokyo last March, as part of a delegation showcasing British food and drink to the Japanese market.

Following the trade show, Huffkins received strong interest from a number of Japanese food and drink distributors, one of which it secured a partnership with in October of last year.

The bakery's products are now available in 2 high-end department stores in Tokyo, and as of this month will be for sale online through Huffkins' Japanese distributor's website. In November, the distributor will also be opening a shop in central Tokyo, with a dedicated section for the bakery's goods.

Huffkins products are loaded into a van, to be shipped to Japan. (c) Huffkins

Over the next year the company will be looking to further expand its exports into Scandinavia and other European markets, and has been working with International Trade Advisers from DIT to carry out market research and identify new business opportunities. Through its attendance at trade shows, the business has also secured orders to Australia, Canada and Switzerland, which will be dispatched later this year.

This support comes as part of the Food is GREAT campaign, an ambitious programme run by Defra and DIT to showcase the UK's food and drink abroad and encourage more businesses to consider exporting.

Huffkins has 3 tea rooms in the South West including 2 in Cheltenham and 1 in Stow on the Wold, as well as a further 3 sites in England. In October, the company will be opening a sixth tea room in the new John Lewis store in Cheltenham.

Last year the company sent 3 of its staff from its tearoom in Burford and its bakery in Witney to Toyko, to open a pop-up tearoom in luxury department store, Isetan, in the city's Shinjuku district, where they sold more than 12,000 Huffkins scones in just 6 days.

Natasha Whittaker, Head of Wholesale and Export, Huffkins, said:

Exporting has been a key element of Huffkins' business strategy, and our new deal with Japan is a real opportunity for the business' growth.

The response we got from attending the FOODEX trade show in Tokyo was incredible. People were queuing up to get a taste of our goods, and it was clear that Japanese customers were very attracted to the fact that we were a British company offering an authentic product.

Although there was clearly strong demand, there were still a few barriers we had to address in getting our products on Japanese shelves. For example, Japan has strict quarantine regulations that determine what ingredients can be included in food and drink and require you to list each ingredient's country of origin.

The support of DIT here in the South West helped us get to Tokyo in the first place, but it has also provided us with access to UK government support on the ground in Japan who could assist in co-ordinating with possible buyers and help overcome the language barrier.

We're now working with our government trade adviser at home to explore how we can get our products to Scandinavia. Exporting isn't always plain sailing, but with the right knowledge and support, it can be very fruitful. If a Cotswold bakery like ours can do it, others can too.

Paul Shand, DIT's Head of South West, said:

Huffkins has been proactive in seeking out new business overseas, and are now reaping the rewards.

There is currently huge demand for British food and drink overseas, with exports totalling £760 million from the South West in the year

to March 2018. Huffkins should be proud to be adding to this figure.

Although the demand is out there, we know that there are a number of challenges that firms have to address. These include everything from legal requirements – like the quarantine restrictions encountered by Huffkins – to logistics.

To help businesses tackle these issues, and many more besides, DIT has a dedicated team of International Trade Advisers across the South West to support ambitious and innovative businesses looking to access new markets and increase exports.

We also have a team of experienced sector specialists and an overseas network in 108 countries, who can offer a range of guidance and support, including international market research and enabling contact with buyers and distributors in new markets.

Online support, find a buyer, and export readiness tools are available at great.gov.uk, where thousands of live export opportunities are also promoted.

News story: Education Secretary Damian Hinds meets Irish Education Minister

The Secretary of State for Education Damian Hinds was welcomed to Dublin on Thursday 6 September by Irish Minister for Education Richard Bruton, T.D. to reinforce the close relationship between the two countries and discuss the challenges that lie ahead.

Secretary of State Hinds and Minister Bruton discussed the common challenges facing both countries' education and training systems in a rapidly changing world.

Both reiterated their commitment to maintaining the Common Travel Area, which, amongst other things, ensures reciprocal rights to access education at all levels for Irish and British citizens in each other's countries.

Minister Bruton and Secretary of State Hinds agreed that their officials will continue to work together to ensure that this access will be maintained after the UK's withdrawal from the EU. They also discussed continuing broader education cooperation.

Other topics of discussion included Technological Universities, skills, both countries' focus on maintaining excellent literacy and numeracy standards, how to ensure children from disadvantaged backgrounds are given the best

opportunity to fulfil their full potential – as well as the importance of integrating new technology in teaching to benefit both pupils and teachers.

[News story: Poster from the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review](#)

The text from the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review (IMMDS) is:

The Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review (IMMDS) is investigating 3 medical interventions where patients have reported problems and suffered serious harm. These are pelvic mesh implants, Primodos and hormonal pregnancy tests, and sodium valproate (Epilim or Depakote). Full details can be found on [their website](#).

The Review wants to make sure any individual or family affected by these three interventions is aware of its work and can make contact or provide evidence.

They are therefore asking Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to distribute a poster to GP practices and community pharmacies so that it can be displayed prominently for members of the public to see, and if possible to feature it on the CCG website. The poster is available in two forms: [print-sized version](#) or [e-version](#).

For further information, please contact the IMMDS Review communications team at reviewcomms@luther.co.uk or on 0207 618 9189.

Anyone who suspects they have had a complication due to a medical device, including from mesh implants or a side effect to a medicine, including from sodium valproate (Epilim or Depakote) is encouraged to report it to the MHRA through its [Yellow Card Scheme](#). Even if information is given to the Review we would also encourage you to report it to us.

Women prescribed Epilim or Depakote (sodium valproate) should not stop their treatment unless told to do so by their GP or healthcare professional.

We are supporting the Review as we recognise it is important to review and learn from how the healthcare system and regulators have handled these issues, including how we make sure the patient voice is carefully heard.

By all parts of the healthcare system working together, we can make sure

patients' concerns are addressed.

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