

# History made as final fuel leaves iconic nuclear plant

It means the world's first full-scale nuclear power station is empty of fuel for the first time since the 1950s.

The achievement marks an important milestone in the decommissioning of Sellafield.

It also means the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's Magnox Operating Programme is a step closer to completion.

The opening of Calder Hall by the Queen in 1956 sparked national celebration.

Hailed as the dawn of the atomic age, it made Britain a world leader in the civil nuclear industry.

When the station was switched on, nearby Workington became the first town in the world to receive heat, light, and power from atomic energy.

Calder Hall's Magnox design was the template for Britain's first generation of nuclear power stations and the technology was exported around the world.

The station provided carbon-free electricity for 47 years. It stopped generating power in 2003 and defueling began in 2011.

Stuart Latham, head of remediation for Sellafield Ltd, said:

This is a truly iconic moment.

Calder Hall was the birthplace of the civil nuclear industry. It inspired the world and put our site at the forefront of the atomic age.

Completing the defueling programme is an important moment for Sellafield.

The defueling team have completed the task safely and professionally and have made a huge contribution to our mission.

Removing fuel from Calder Hall's 4 reactors was a complex task.

A total of 38,953 spent fuel rods had to be carefully retrieved from the station's 4 reactors.

The same machines that were used to load fuel into the reactors during its operational life were used to pull it out.

Once removed, the fuel was transferred in shielded flasks to Sellafield's

Fuel Handling Plant.

After being cooled in a storage pond, its casings are removed and the rod taken to Sellafield's Magnox Reprocessing Plant to be reprocessed. This extracts the reusable uranium and plutonium from the fuel.

Calder Hall's reactor buildings will now be placed into a state known as 'care and maintenance'. In due course they will be fully decommissioned and demolished.