

Scientists for Global Responsibility

Scientists · Architects · Engineers · Technologists

SGR

*Promoting ethical
science, design
and technology*

Annual Report 2015 – 2016



Climate change etc

- UK government concern falling
- Government response
 - Major cut backs in public funding/ programs for energy conservation and renewable energy
 - Successful programmes cut
 - Greater focus/ more subsidies for natural gas
 - Especially UK sources in North Sea and fracking shale gas on land
 - Greater focus/ more subsidies for nuclear power
 - Large plants + R&D on small modular reactors
 - Encourage more international emissions cuts





Some of the NCC and staff (from left to right):
Paul Marchant, Jan Maskell, David Hookes,
Vanessa Moss, Alasdair Beal, Philip Webber,
Gwen Harrison, Stuart Parkinson

SGR staff and National Co-ordinating Committee

STAFF

Executive Director

Dr Stuart Parkinson

Office Manager

Vanessa Moss

NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE (NCC)

Chair

Dr Philip Webber

Vice Chair

Dr Jan Maskell CPsychol

Treasurer

Alasdair Beal CEng

Secretary

Dr Harry Tsoumpas

Committee Members

Martin Bassant MPhil

Prof Tim Foxon¹

Gwen Harrison MSc²

Dr David Hookes

Dr Paul Marchant CStat

Front cover captions:

Science4Society Week classroom
activities in Cumbrian school, March 2015
Stuart Parkinson speaking at the People's
Climate Summit in Paris, December 2015

¹until 31 October 2015

²from 26 September 2015

Introduction

SGR has again had an active year – which has been especially important given a distinctly less favourable political climate in Britain. From publishing a new report on nuclear weapons to reaching a record audience through our website, we have continued to work hard on a wide range of activities to promote more ethical science, design and technology.

This year's key achievements:

- We published a new report on the risks of UK nuclear weapons, and this has been sent to senior politicians across the political spectrum. About 4,000 copies have been disseminated, and its findings have been repeatedly quoted by nuclear disarmament campaigners and Green politicians.
- We ran our first Science4Society Week, running inspirational science education activities for young people. Over 1,000 school and university students took part in classroom activities or visits to eco-projects.
- We took part in numerous campaigning and education activities in the run-up to the Paris climate change negotiations. SGR's annual conference was also focused on this issue.
- We reached a record audience through our website. During the year, there were nearly 230,000 visits to the site, with our report on the corporate influence on science and ethical careers booklets being especially popular.
- We contributed to debates on UK issues such as the new national security strategy and controversial reversals of sustainable energy policies.

We would like to thank our membership, our trust funders, and individual donors – all have been essential in SGR's successes. We also thank our staff and volunteers who worked very hard during the year.

Stuart Parkinson, Executive Director
Philip Webber, Chair

Projects

THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS THREAT: The main focus of our project work during the year has been to challenge UK nuclear weapons, given the impending parliamentary vote on renewal of the Trident system. In August 2015, we published a new 15-page report *UK nuclear weapons: a catastrophe in the making?* This summarised the scientific and technical data on the devastation – on both human society and the environment – that could be caused if the UK were to ever launch its nuclear weapons, whether intentionally or by accident. The report was written by Philip Webber and Stuart Parkinson. Copies were sent to influential MPs, including Labour's shadow cabinet and leading figures in other parties. It was also distributed to journalists, security analysts and peace campaigners. In all, during the reporting year, over 4,000 copies of the report were disseminated – mainly downloads from our website. Statistics from the report are now routinely quoted by leading peace campaigners and Green politicians. SGR also had several articles on nuclear weapons issues featured in various publications. Philip Webber authored an opinion article in *New Scientist*, while Stuart Parkinson wrote one for *The Ecologist* website. Another of Phil's articles appeared in *Peace News* in the run-up to the CND-organised national demonstration against Trident in London in February. SGR was an official supporter of this demo, and numerous members attended carrying SGR placards. Other articles appeared in the *SGR Newsletter* and on our website (see p.3). Phil spoke at an international conference for nuclear disarmament campaigners in London and a CND public meeting in Exeter, as well as on this issue at the SGR conference (see p.2). We also made the case against retaining nuclear weapons in a submission to the government's national defence and security review.

SCIENCE4SOCIETY WEEK: SGR ran its first Science4Society Week in March 2015 to provide an alternative to science education events sponsored by the arms, fossil fuel or other ethically questionable industries. Over 1,000 students from schools and universities participated in a range of inspiring

activities. Interactive lessons included building model wind turbines and debating science ethics. Students also visited community-run renewable energy schemes and cutting-edge eco-homes. The visits took place in northern England. We received some very positive feedback on the activities from staff and students alike. We thank the Scurrah Wainwright Charity, Lush Charity Pot and The Martin Ryle Trust for grants towards this work. All these activities were co-ordinated by Jan Maskell.

MILITARY INFLUENCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: We continued to highlight the problems of large-scale military influence. We made submissions to government's defence and security review and a parliamentary inquiry. Stuart Parkinson and David Hookes between them gave five presentations to peace groups and university audiences across the country (see p.?). Over 2,900 copies* of our reports in this area were downloaded during the year.

OTHER PROJECTS:

- Our work highlighting the shortcomings of **shale gas and fracking** also continued this year. Stuart Parkinson gave a presentation to local councillors in Wakefield. We also set up an information-sharing email-list for scientists and engineers who are 'fracking sceptics'. Our 2014 report continued to prove popular with 1,400 copies distributed during the reporting period.
- Our work on the problems of excessive **corporate influence on science and technology** continued to be in demand as well. Stuart Parkinson gave a prestigious 'TEDx talk' on the issue (see right). Meanwhile, our in-depth 2009 report was downloaded about 2,700 times* during the year – its highest ever level.
- About 3,900 copies of our ten **ethical careers** briefings were downloaded during the reporting period – one of our highest levels. SGR also ran a stall at an ethical careers fair at Cambridge University.

*All figures include stand-alone executive summaries

Events

SGR CONFERENCE: This year's event was entitled *Messages for the Paris conference: The forgotten dimensions of climate change*. Timed to take place a month before the start of the historic Paris climate change negotiations, our event focused on a range of issues which we thought had been neglected in the run-up to the formal negotiations. In the first session, speakers Prof Keith Barnham (Imperial College, London) and Dr Laurence Matthews (Cap and Share UK) focused on the need to keep about 80% of fossil fuel resources in the ground to prevent 'dangerous' climate change. In the second session, speakers Tamara Lorincz (International Peace Bureau) and SGR's Phil Webber discussed some of the relationships between the military and climate change. SGR's Annual General Meeting also took place during the event. 65 people attended and the feedback from participants was generally very positive.

INVITED LECTURES: 13 invited lectures and talks were given by SGR speakers during the reporting period. Three were especially notable: Stuart Parkinson spoke at a workshop on climate change and the military at the 'People's climate summit' in Paris – an alternative to the official proceedings organised by environmental organisations; Phil Webber spoke on the risks from UK nuclear weapons at an international campaigners event in London; and Stuart gave a TEDx talk in Lancaster on corporate science, broadcast live on the internet. Other presentations were given by David Hookes (on military science in Liverpool and Stockport); Jan Maskell (promoting Science4Society Week in West Yorkshire); Phil (on nuclear weapons in Exeter); and Stuart (on fracking in Wakefield; two on climate change in Lancaster; and three on military science in Leeds and Derbyshire).

Communications

We had another good year in terms of media coverage – this time mainly due to our work on nuclear weapons (see p.1). Visits to our website hit record levels, and we also saw a continued increase in the number of followers on social media.

MEDIA: A particular success this year was an opinion article by Phil Webber in *New Scientist* (see image) summarising the arguments against the planned renewal of Britain's nuclear-armed submarines. Given the magazine's UK readership of over 350,000 science and technology enthusiasts, this was especially prominent. Stuart Parkinson had an article published on *The Ecologist* website entitled 'Wind turbines and solar panels into nuclear weapons: the UK's new industrial strategy?' Another article by Phil outlined the flaws in the UK's nuclear deterrence policy. It appeared first in the *SGR Newsletter*, then a shortened version was featured in *Peace News*, and it also attracted coverage in *The Guardian*. SGR was also quoted in the *Sunday Herald* and *Edinburgh Evening News* following the decision in early 2015 by Edinburgh International Science Festival not to continue its sponsorship deal with arms corporation Selex. We were also quoted on a range of issues in *The Morning Star*, *BuzzFeed News* (a popular youth website) and on a variety of specialist science, peace and environmental websites during the reporting period.

SGR WEBSITE: We had another record-breaking year, with the total number of 'visits' reaching nearly 230,000 – a very respectable number for an organisation of our limited size. This was a 24% increase over the previous year. Our regular blog, newsletter articles (see right), project reports (see pp.1-2) and conference presentations (see p.2) were all key factors in this success. Among the most popular outputs were the new SGR report on nuclear weapons and related articles, as well as the recent newsletter article 'Scientific publication in peril' and a presentation from 2012 entitled 'Science

and technology: when does use become misuse?'. The website was maintained by Stuart Parkinson.

SGR NEWSLETTER: In addition to our usual full-length *Newsletter*, which appears in the winter, this year we also began publishing *Newsletter Extra* in the summer – a short set of articles drawn from our website. Feature articles in these publications covered issues such as UK and international climate policy, nuclear weapons, ocean acidification, nuclear power, teaching science ethics, and the human cost of military technology in World War I. The lead editor on both publications was Stuart Parkinson, with the co-editor on the Newsletter being Vanessa Moss and on Newsletter Extra, Alasdair Beal.

SOCIAL MEDIA: Our use of social media continued to grow during the year, helping us to reach new and younger audiences. We gained hundreds of new followers on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. We also maintained our two email-lists: sgforum, for discussion among members; and sgrupdate, an announcements-only list for anyone. By the end of the year, we had a total of nearly 3,000 followers of all our social media outlets: a 16% increase on the previous year. These media outlets were managed by Stuart Parkinson, Vanessa Moss, Kate Maloney and Harry Tsoumpas.



Other campaigning

SGR's other campaigning activities covered several issues during the year. Our work on nuclear weapons has been covered earlier (see p.1), but another particular focus was climate change.

SGR staff and members took part in numerous activities in the run-up to the Paris climate negotiations in December 2015. As well as our annual conference in October (see p.2), we worked with a range of scientists and campaign groups, taking part in conferences and demonstrations, publishing articles and signing letters on climate issues. With the incoming Conservative government making large cuts to numerous funding streams for energy conservation and renewable energy – while protecting funding for fracking and nuclear power – we objected in responses to government consultations and joint letters organised by groups such as the Solar Trade Association and the Nuclear Consultation Group. Some of the proposed measures were thankfully watered down by the government, but unfortunately most were not. We also gathered views from leading climate scientists and disseminated them to climate campaigners in advance of a parliamentary lobby in the summer. We also helped Greenpeace UK publicise new data on fossil fuel industry funding of UK universities. In Paris itself, SGR staff took part in seminars on climate change and conflict, including giving a presentation on the highly problematic roles of military interests (see also p.2).

Another important issue that SGR campaigned on during the year was armed drones, including the possible development of autonomous weapons systems. We took part in demonstrations against some of the arms manufacturers involved and co-signed a widely publicised international letter on potential risks.

Finally, SGR committee members ran a stall at Leeds Science Fair.

Staff and volunteers

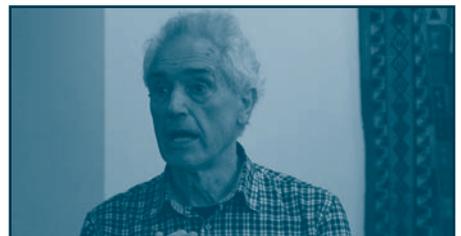
STAFF: Stuart Parkinson continued as Executive Director. Vanessa Moss also continued as Office Manager, moving to a permanent contract after Georgina Sommerville decided not to return after her maternity leave so she could spend more time with her young family. Jan Maskell was the project co-ordinator and worker on Science4Society Week (see p.1). We thank all our staff for their hard work.

NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE: The NCC – chaired by Philip Webber – continued to provide oversight of SGR's activities. Tim Foxon stepped down in October 2015 after 20 years on the committee, including several years as Secretary. We thank him for his long years of service, and wish him well in his new professorial post at Sussex University. We were pleased to welcome Gwen Harrison to the NCC in September. Gwen is a sustainability consultant, and was lead author of the SGR's 2014 report on shale gas and fracking. A full list of NCC members is given on the inside front cover. Many thanks to NCC members for all the effort and expertise they provide for the organisation.

OTHER VOLUNTEERS: Vice-chair Jan Maskell continued to co-ordinate SGR's other volunteers. These were:

SGR Newsletter: Philip Chapman, Wiebina Heesterman, Richard Jennings, Michael Reinsborough, Didier Sornette, Benjamin Sovacool, Spencer Wheatley
Staffing SGR stalls: Richard Jennings, Harald Molgaard and Louisa Radice

We thank them for their very useful contributions.



Prof Keith Barnham speaking at the SGR conference

Financial review

Our finances for this reporting period (from March 2015 to February 2016 inclusive) are reasonably healthy.

A detailed breakdown of our income and expenditure is shown in the tables and figures.

Income (£)	2014-15	2015-16
Membership subscriptions	£18,521	£18,542
Membership appeal	£9,897	£12,685
Grants	£18,103	£10,690
Donations	£858	£1,945
Conference fees	£1,179	£1,742
Sales of publications	£141	£169
Total	£48,699	£45,773

Income from membership subscriptions was stable and donations to the annual appeal once more exceeded our target. At the end of the reporting period, we had 755 members. We received grants towards core costs this year from The Martin Ryle Trust (£5,690) and The 1970 Trust (£5,000). We are very grateful to these trusts for their support of SGR's work. Unfortunately this year we did not have any successful applications for project grants.



Dr Lawrence Matthews speaking at the SGR conference

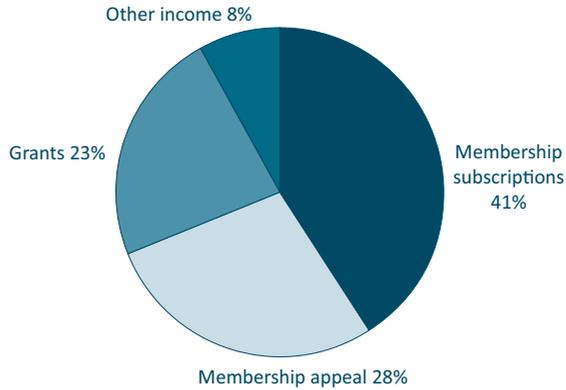
Expenditure (£)	2014-15	2015-16
Core wages and NI	£21,138	£25,772
Rent, insurance and utilities	£3,914	£3,358
Recruitment	£494	£127
Newsletter	£1,030	£5,032
Conference and AGM	£2,245	£2,516
Other core costs	£2,740	£3,039
Military influence project	£580	£875
Shale gas & fracking project	£439	£239
Science4Society Week project	£0	£4,491
Nuclear weapons threat project	£0	£393
Total	£32,580	£45,842

Office expenditure has been stable and, as a result of the financial balance carried over from 2014-15, it was possible to increase the Executive Director's number of paid days. Project expenditure was in line with grant income received in the previous financial year, but it should also be noted that there was significant voluntary input to our project work as well. Our transition to a new accounting system in the last couple of years has improved monitoring of SGR's finances and budget control.

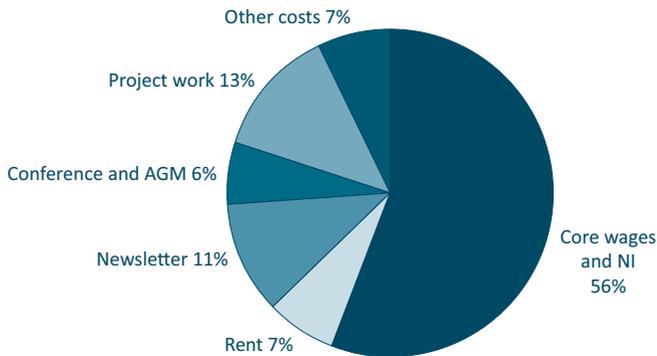
As a result of all these factors, SGR entered its new financial year with no debts and a reasonably healthy bank balance. However our finances obviously continue to depend on the success of grant applications and the generosity of donors.

Balance on 01.03.15	£26,686
Income	£45,773
Expenditure	£45,842
Income minus expenditure	-£69
Balance on 28.02.16	£26,617

Income 2015-16



Expenditure 2015-16



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