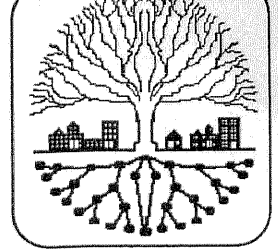


GreenNet and the **NEWS**

**Information on how GreenNet can help
Press Officers and Campaigners to make news.**



The Story of the Convoy

At about 2pm on Saturday, September the 17th 1988 there was a fatal car accident near Ilminster in Somerset. What made it special was that it involved an RAF convoy carrying nuclear weapons. Through **GreenNet** this story changed from being a minor item on radio news to being an item that was taken before the coverage of the Olympics on television and resulted in extensive coverage in the quality daily papers.

How did this happen ?

The weapons convoy was tracked by Nukewatch - a group who monitor nuclear transports. The accident was reported to **GreenNet** from them. As a result the Media Transcription Service (MTS), a group who monitor broadcasts on defence issues were alerted. They continued to post transcripts of developments in the story throughout the weekend on **GreenNet's** information system.

GreenNet was supporting a North Atlantic Network Conference in Glasgow that weekend - part of the Disarm the Seas Campaign. As a result **GreenNet** offered access to the experts who could comment on the incident and the dangers that could result from a release of radioactive material.

Specific questions were asked to find out if the Ministry of Defence had called out a special unit to deal with contamination, despite assurances of no danger to the general public. Police and Fire Brigades were also questioned as it was seen how important the story was and the responses shared on **GreenNet**.

At the same time, through **GreenNet**, campaigners were able to get in direct touch with the media. **GreenNet** allows you to send out telexes and faxes providing you can get hold of a computer terminal. There's no need to find shops open or search out machines in offices closed for the weekend.

Press Releases, comments and updates were sent out as soon as the information arrived. It is believed that a television crew from Television South West, the local independent station, came as a result of this activity. Because of them ITN had access to television pictures from the scene increasing its news-worthiness substantially.

Meanwhile campaigners in Glasgow were searching out the people needed to make it into a major story. Contact was made with MPs and experts and their comments were sent out to the press and broadcasters as they were obtained. They were also posted on **GreenNet** so allowing people in other areas, like the South west where the accident happened, to react to the story. The accident happened only 27 miles from Exeter - Devon's major City and if there had been a release of radioactivity areas of it might have needed to be evacuated. (The author of this leaflet was in fact in Exeter that weekend, gulp.)

Comment from other people like Martin Caldwell, Convenor of Nuclear Free Zone Local Authorities, pointed out that nuclear weapon convoys went through the centre of Glasgow, where a huge population would be at risk. Labour MPs called for an enquiry into the accident and the transportation by road of nuclear weapons. This last issue was picked up by the papers on Monday.

Through **GreenNet** the movement was able to respond effectively to a major incident and make sure that the Ministry of Defence weren't able to keep it quiet.

While accidents involving nuclear convoys don't happen every day (thanks be) **GreenNet** is crucial in allowing you to respond to major issues, as they develop. For instance **GreenNet** carried reports of Chernobyl from a variety of sources which were updated regularly. It offers over 40,000 pages of information which are being added to daily. Can your campaign afford to be without it ?