Dear Roger

Thank you for your letter – apologies for the long silence, but as you can imagine things have been humming up here. Just to fill you in on the details – the meeting at Capper Pass lasted until about 2pm that day. We didn’t go round the works, but may possibly arrange to do that in the near future, in the light of comments made by a former worker about dumping materials, and as way of asking questions that hopefully they will find uncomfortable to answer. Spin-offs from that meeting were quite useful. We pressed them on reports and references and they in fact sent several articles, etc by post later. It was also instructive to see how genuinely worried they are, and to gauge the effect a group like ours/partizans can have.

The next big event(!) was the publication of the Cartwright Report a week last Monday. It was launched at a press conference that I attended on the grounds of writing for a University newsletter. They clearly did not want to answer any question of a faintly medical nature, but it was obvious from the 3 page Readers Digest summary of the report given out at the meeting that there were some horrendous omissions and inaccuracies. Perhaps the most significant is that the report does not consider the high incidence of bone tumours. It suggested that Cappers could not be responsible in a uni-factorial way for the leukaemias – a point interpreted by the press as "plant cleared of connection with leukaemia cluster" which is not quite the same thing. However it did say that there is an unusual cluster of brain tumours and has not ruled out the possibility of links for these. The table of incidence of tumours in children under 15 since 1957 that claims to be all known cases, in fact omits at least 3 cases of Ewings Sarcoma (bone cancer) and when the incidence nationally is something like ten a year, we are turning these up in this area with devastating frequency. We have sent a letter to Cartwright to raise this point. He seems to be suggesting that he carries out a fuller piece of research, but we feel VERY strongly that a national inquiry should be carried out by CoMARE or other independent body, not him. There is much discussion at the moment about money to pay for the report, with the East Yorkshire Health Authority asking local councils for donations. It has also been funded to some extent by the Leukaemia Research Fund (aka the CEBG!) and the Candlelighters a charity supposed to fund equipment etc for terminally ill children. Its iniquitous that their money particularly should be used to fund a whitewash that hides what is probably making them ill in the first place. The report was promised to be publicly available. There is one copy lodged in the library of the local psychiatric hospital, some 4 or 5 miles out of town where the public can read it but not take it out. Other copies are available from the health authority on application at a cost of £25.
Anyway, all in all, it was as unsatisfactory as we all knew it would be.

On a positive note, though, James Cran the MP for Beverley, has revised his views quite radically and is now pressing for a national inquiry, after originally saying that that would take too long and it would be better to keep it local. This at least represents some progress.

Snowy sends apologies for not writing either. She also said to ask you if you have any information about a place in Australia called Emerald that is reputed to have a huge cluster of cancers, and is also RTZ. Someone she knew in Ilkley has just come back from Australia and had heard something about it but no details. The other query is, do you know anything about Beverloid at Beverley? This is a chemical company, owned by RTZ, and it occurred to me that there could well be a connection eg disposing of chemical drums etc in the furnaces at Cappers. Any info?

Interesting comment in the Sunday Times today, that people may be able to sue for damages caused to health around Sellafield. I don’t know if there is any way we could use that to pressurise Cappers. It would need VERY careful thought because the trauma of long drawn out court wrangles is not appealing.

Our next moves are, a meeting with James Cran next Saturday, at which we will be pressing very hard for him to badger the DHSS to commission and fund CoMARE to look into the whole range of problems here. We have just written to Cartwright as I mentioned, and copies of that letter have gone to Environmental health Depts, Medical Officers of health, Community Health Councils etc. The Soroptimists (a sort of female version of the Round Table) have also shown a great and intelligent interest in the issue and are hoping to take it up as their project at their national conference. I had to give a talk there a few weeks ago, and put in a good few plugs for Partizan too!

In the meantime of course, there seems to be Real Life, but I for one feel as though I am doing much less of that! My phone bill was £177, which had a distinct air of unreality/disaster about it, and I am supposed to be job hunting as well as writing up this damn thesis. Never mind, I suppose one day life will go back to being boring and predictable and I shall grumble about it. Hope all is well with you, and that you have got your breath back so to speak after the shareholders meeting and the following few weeks. Keep in touch, and again sorry for taking so long to write.

Yours,

Liz

P.S. forgot to mention the tape - it was an old dictaphone tape and Terry is trying to get it copied onto regular size but it’s not reproducing very well. Will have another go on different equipment + you’re certainly welcome to a copy. Should it turns out better...