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Debate over South Crofty's future to face judicial review

The owners of the South Crofty mine have been successful in gaining the right to proceed with a full judicial review following a High Court ruling in favour of their claims of unfairness and bias in the planning process.

Crofty Developments brought Kerrier District Council to the High Court claiming that the Local Area Plan, the Camborne Pool and Redruth Area Action Plan was biased towards an Urban Regeneration Company, the Camborne Pool and Redruth Urban Regeneration Company. The mine site owners claim that the Regeneration Company actually wrote key sections of the Local Area Plan.

This is part of the continuing saga of the South Crofty mine which closed in 1998 and signalled the end to tin mining in Cornwall. Baseresult Holdings bought the mine in 2001 with the plan to reopen the mine and begin production within two years. Environmental planning conditions for the mine were approved in September 2006 but hopes of reopening suffered a blow when the Regional Development Authority announced later in the year that it was going to compulsorily purchase South Crofty tin mine.

Sources : <http://www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/>

Offshore wave farm gets go ahead

The South West of England Regional Development Agency (RDA) have given the go ahead for £21.5 million investment, subject to final Government and EU approval, for a large-scale wave farm. The farm to be known as Wave Hub, is to be built 10 miles off the coast from Hayle in west Cornwall.

Wave Hub will be installed 60 m beneath the surface of the sea and will be connected to a number of electricity generating devices that could supply enough energy for upto 10 000 homes via the national grid.

The project is not without controversy as a number of parties have expressed fears regarding the proposal including the British Surfing Association and the Cornish Fish Producers Organisation.

At the other end of the country, Scotland 's First Minister Alex Salmond, unveiled a new testing facility at the European Marine Energy Centre. The facility will offer developers the opportunity to test prototype energy-generating devices in wave and tidal conditions.

Sources:

<http://www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/cornwall/content/articles/2007/04/25/planetcornwall_wavehub_feature.shtml

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/north_east/7017325.stm

Severn barrage feasibility study announced

Business and Enterprise Secretary, John Hutton, announced a new study into the feasibility of using a tidal barrage to generate electricity on the Severn Estuary between Cardiff and West-Super-Mare. The study will also review other possible tidal barrage projects, addressing the environmental, social and economic impact of projects of this nature.

Tidal barrage energy exploits the natural rise and fall of tidal waters. Estuaries tend to have greater ranges of tides due to various factors such as water funnelling. This makes them favoured sites for tidal energy generation.

Environmental groups, Friends of the Earth and the World Wildlife Fund, have been critical of the proposals stating that smaller tidal lagoons would be cheaper and more efficient. However, a Government independent watchdog, the Sustainable Development Commission, has endorsed the proposals in their recently published report titled *Turning the Tide, Tidal Power in the UK*.

Sources:

Planning Magazine, The Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute, 28 th September 2007

<http://www.planningresource.co.uk/news/ByDiscipline/Policy/login/740824/>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/7020870.stm>

<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=607>

UK Coal reports pre-tax profits



Colliery headgear

Photo Copyright: BGS©NERC

The UK 's largest mining company, UK Coal announced a pre-tax profit up 143% to £40.6 million in the half-year ending 30 June 2007. This is a significant increase over the first half of 2006 when profits were £16.7 million.

UK Coal supply 7% of UK energy needs for electricity generation from its eleven UK-based operations in central and northern England . It employs 3500 people.

Source:

<http://www.ukcoal.com/home>

UN law drives rush for seabed resources



Offshore island

Photo Copyright: PMcD

A new law due to come into force in a couple of years is driving a modern, resources-driven land grab. Countries with coastlines are invited to provide evidence before the May 2009 deadline, that distant offshore islands are extensions of their topography. The successful countries will gain significant mineral and hydrocarbon rights covering the seafloor surrounding these offshore islands.

Rockall is one of these islands. This 25 metre-wide granite island located in the North Atlantic 260 miles north west of the British Isles, is claimed by the UK , Ireland , Iceland and Denmark . A recent meeting in Iceland between these countries was the latest in a series trying to find an agreement over the ownership of the seabed around Rockall.

Sources:

<http://www.ireland.com/newspaper/frontpage/2007/0924/1190324635564.html>

http://www.guardian.co.uk/argentina/story/0,,2174616,00.html#article_continue

Cornwall kaolin investment



Kaolin Production

Photo Copyright: BGS©NERC

Kaolin producer, Goonvean, has opened a new laboratory in Cornwall , initiating a programme of investment worth £4 million. The company plan to make further investments in new primary and secondary separation units and a mill, before next spring. This is a positive move for the kaolin industry in Cornwall after the disappointing news last year that Imerys, a major employer in the area, was cutting jobs in favour of its kaolin operations in Brazil .

Source:

Industrial Minerals Magazine, September 2007

Future of Scotland's energy policies



UK offshore oil rig

Photo Copyright: BGS©NERC

Ongoing differences in opinion between the Scottish Government and those in the Westminster have resurfaced this month over the future role of Scotland in the UK 's nuclear policy and the future of North Sea oil. At a recent oil conference a UK minister from the Scottish Office indicated that the UK Government had no intention of devolving North Sea oil

to the Scottish Government. However, Scotland 's First Minister, Alex Salmond, replied that the proposed devolution was common sense for the industry. In a separate statement, Mr Salmond announced that Scotland could produce more green energy than from nuclear options and that future generations of Scots should not be burdened with radioactive waste.

These differences in opinion add to the growing discontent in Scotland regarding energy issues. Ofgem's recent proposals to impose charges for connection to the national grid have been particularly contentious in Scotland . The proposed charges will be based on the distance that the power has to travel to population centres. The Scottish Parliament believes this will adversely affect Scotland 's renewable energy industry.

Sources:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/south_of_scotland/6982308.stm

<http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/index.cfm?id=1413042007>