

Scientists for Global Responsibility

Scientists · Architects · Engineers · Technologists

**SGR**

*Promoting ethical  
science, design  
and technology*

# Annual Report

## 2016 – 2017





Most of the NCC and staff:  
(upper rows, left to right): Paul Marchant,  
Philip Webber, Harry Tsoumpas,  
Gwen Harrison, Alasdair Beal  
(lower rows, left to right):  
Stuart Parkinson,  
Vanessa Moss, David Hookes,  
Jan Maskell, Philip Wood



## SGR staff and National Co-ordinating Committee

### STAFF

#### **Executive Director**

Dr Stuart Parkinson

#### **Office Manager**

Vanessa Moss

#### **Project Worker (Peaceworker)**

Philip Wood<sup>1</sup>

## NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE (NCC)

### **Chair**

Dr Philip Webber

### **Vice Chair**

Dr Jan Maskell CPhilol

### **Treasurer**

Alasdair Beal CEng

### **Secretary**

Dr Harry Tsoumpas<sup>2</sup>

Martin Bassant MPhil<sup>3</sup>

### **Committee Members**

Martin Bassant MPhil<sup>2</sup>

Gwen Harrison MSc

Dr David Hookes

Dr Paul Marchant CStat

Dr Harry Tsoumpas<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>until 1 September 2016

<sup>2</sup>from 19 November 2016

<sup>3</sup>from 19 November 2016

Front cover captions:

Testing water turbines during SGR's  
Science4SocietyWeek, March 2016

Philip Wood and Stuart Parkinson running  
an SGR stall in London, December 2016

Reporting period:

March 2016 to February 2017 (inclusive)

## Introduction

This was another busy year for SGR – with our activities especially important given political shifts against peace-building, environmental protection and social justice. From high profile campaigning against nuclear weapons to new project work investigating arms and fossil fuel industry influence on science and engineering, we have continued to work hard on numerous issues.

This year's key achievements:

- Our most high-profile activity focused on the parliamentary vote on the renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons system. We had an open letter, signed by Stephen Hawking and other leading British scientists, published in the *Daily Telegraph* – and this received a great deal of publicity online.
- We began a new project investigating links between professional science and engineering organisations and the arms and fossil fuel industries – while our annual conference focused on the university links to these controversial industries.
- We ran another Science4Society Week, including inspirational science education activities for young people. We greatly expanded the number of teaching resources available to download, and ran a competition to 'Design an eco-community'.
- We reached a record audience through our website. During the year, there were over 300,000 visits to the site, with our report on the corporate influence on science and ethical careers booklets being especially popular.
- We worked with other campaigners on many issues, including new EU funding for military R&D and oil industry sponsorship of UK museums.

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:** SGR's activities during this reporting year were, unsurprisingly, dominated by the parliamentary vote on renewing Trident. Although long promised, the vote was announced by incoming Prime Minister Theresa May with less than two weeks' notice. Nevertheless, we worked quickly with national peace groups to raise the profile of the issue in the media and to lobby MPs. Our highest profile activity was a letter signed by Prof Stephen Hawking, Nobel Prize recipient Prof Peter Higgs and 12 other leading scientists and engineers calling for MPs to vote against renewal. The letter was published in the *Daily Telegraph* and achieved a great deal of interest via the web (see p.3). Philip Webber, Stuart Parkinson, Vanessa Moss and other SGR members also took part in a parliamentary lobby shortly before the vote. Despite all this effort, the vote was lost – but our arguments reached a wider audience than ever, and we will not give up our struggle against these weapons of mass destruction. During the summer and autumn, we worked with ICAN and Nukewatch to highlight the risks of UK nuclear weapons – especially the transportation of warheads across the country by road convoy. SGR also took part in campaigning activities centred on the UN vote in October on whether to start formal negotiations on a treaty to ban nuclear weapons. We co-signed a letter to Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson calling on the UK to support this multilateral initiative. The UN vote emphatically went in favour, but Britain voted against. The formal negotiations began in March 2017 and SGR is continuing to work with other campaign groups to help achieve a successful outcome.

**ARMS/ FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY INFLUENCE ON PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS:** In September, SGR began hosting a 'Peaceworker', a one-year full-time post funded by Quaker Peace and Social Witness. Our Peaceworker was Philip Wood, and his main project was research and campaign work on links between professional science and engineering organisations and the arms and fossil fuel industries. This is an area which has received too little attention, especially given the

major ethical issues raised by these industries. He is due to complete his final report in summer 2017.

**SCIENCE4SOCIETY WEEK:** SGR ran another Science4Society Week in March 2016 to provide an alternative to science education events sponsored by the arms, fossil fuels or other controversial industries. New this year was a competition for school children to 'Design an eco-community'. The winners presented their designs at a special event held at a real eco-community, the Lancaster Cohousing scheme in which SGR has its offices. Numerous new downloadable resources were published on the SGR website for teachers and students to use. These were focused on seven main areas, including energy, food and industry. Over 2,000 downloads of the teaching resources were recorded. About 100 students also took part in visits to community-run eco-projects. 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.

#### OTHER PROJECTS:

- Our 2014 report highlighting the shortcomings of **shale gas and fracking** continued to prove popular with over 1,000 copies distributed during the reporting period. An SGR newsletter article and a presentation at the SGR conference on this issue were also popular.
- Our five reports on the problems of **military and corporate influence on science and technology** were downloaded over 4,700 times\* during the year.
- Our ten **ethical careers** booklets continued to be in demand with a total of about 4,000 copies downloaded during the year.

## Events

**SGR CONFERENCE:** This year's event was entitled *Universities for sale? The influence of the arms, fossil fuels and other industries*, with six speakers discussing how to challenge the damaging involvement of controversial industries within academia. SGR's Stuart Parkinson focused on the influence of the arms industry. Maeve McClenaghan, Greenpeace UK, and David Smythe, emeritus professor of geophysics at the University of Glasgow, highlighted the problems of the fossil fuel industry, especially in relation to fracking. Aubrey Blumsohn, previously of the University of Sheffield, highlighted the lack of oversight of university-industrial collaborations in medicine. Prof John Holmwood, University of Nottingham, heavily criticised the government's 'neo-liberal knowledge regime' which is accelerating the privatisation agenda at universities. Finally, Nicholas Maxwell, University College London, argued for an 'academic revolution' to deal with many of the current problems. Nearly 60 people attended the lively event, and feedback was very positive.

**INVITED LECTURES:** 11 invited lectures and talks were given by SGR speakers during the reporting period. Stuart Parkinson spoke at the World Congress of the International Peace Bureau (IPB) in Berlin on the militarisation of science. Philip Webber spoke at a UK parliamentary event on nuclear weapons accidents. Stuart spoke on arms conversion at a conference in Birmingham to mark the 40th anniversary of the famous 'Lucas Plan' and also at a seminar at Manchester University. David Webb spoke on 'scientists and war' at a peace history conference in Leeds. Other talks on military science were given by Stuart and David at events in London and Geneva respectively. Stuart spoke on climate change technology and policy at a public meeting in Lancaster. David Hookes spoke about Trident at a public meeting in Stockport. Stuart also spoke at public meetings in Preston and Lancaster on the risks of nuclear weapons convoys.

\*Figures include stand-alone executive summaries

## Communications

We had a very good year in terms of media coverage – mainly due to our work on nuclear weapons, military influence on science and sustainable energy. Visits to our website hit record levels, and we also saw a continued increase in the number of followers on social media.

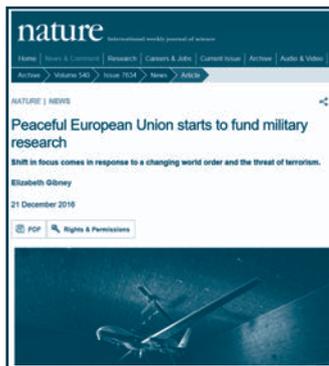
**MEDIA:** Having our open letter from scientists opposing Trident renewal published in the *Daily Telegraph* was ground-breaking for us this year (see p.1), given the difficulty of getting a hearing for such viewpoints in the right-wing press. Of course, having signatories as famous as Stephen Hawking was a big help! With the European Commission planning to fund military R&D for the first time, we gained important coverage in top science journal *Nature* (see below right) and on European website *ScienceBusiness* for our criticisms of this retrograde shift in policy. Articles written by SGR authors appeared this year on *The Ecologist* website (on Hinkley Point C), in *Clean Slate* magazine (on UK carbon emissions), and on the *GreenNet* website (on nuclear accident risk). Our support for campaigns against oil industry sponsorship of museums (see p.4) also led to some high-profile coverage in *The Guardian*, *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*. Stuart Parkinson appeared in live radio programmes on *BBC Radio 5 Live* and *BBC Radio Lancashire*. We were also quoted on a range of issues in *The Independent* and on numerous specialist student, peace and environmental websites during the reporting period.

**SGR WEBSITE:** We had another record-breaking year, with the total number of 'visits' passing 300,000 for the first time – a very respectable number for an organisation of our limited size. This was a 40% 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. However, the most popular item by a long way was the open letter opposing Trident renewal (see p.1), which alone

received over 20,000 visits. The website was maintained by Stuart Parkinson.

**SGR NEWSLETTER:** In addition to our usual full-length Newsletter, which appears in the winter, we also continued to publish *Newsletter Extra* in the summer – a short set of articles drawn from our website. Feature articles in these publications covered issues such as cybersecurity threats to nuclear weapons, fracking and public health, expanding renewable energy, links between the civilian and military nuclear sectors, progress on banning landmines, growing corporate influence within universities and schools, and decommissioning nuclear submarines. The lead editor on both publications was Stuart Parkinson, with help from Vanessa Moss and 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 3,500 followers on all our social media outlets: a 20% increase on the previous year. These media outlets were managed by Stuart Parkinson, Philip Wood, Vanessa Moss, Kate Maloney and Harry Tsoumpas.



## Other campaigning

SGR's campaigning activities covered a range of issues during the year. Our work on nuclear weapons has been covered earlier (see p.1), but other areas included the increasing military influence on science and climate-related campaigns.

In the autumn, SGR helped campaign against a new European Commission fund for military R&D – the first time such a budget had been formally proposed. Despite achieving some good publicity for the campaign (see p.3), approval was given in December for a total of 90 million euros for a three-year period. There are plans to expand this to 500 million euros *per year* from 2021 and SGR is continuing to work with the European Network Against the Arms Trade to oppose this.

We submitted responses to Labour and Liberal Democrat defence reviews during the year, arguing for an end to support for Trident renewal and a broader shift towards using science and technology to help tackle the root causes of conflict. Arms conversion to renewable energy was a particular theme. We were pleased to see some shifts in policy, although much more is needed.

SGR also supported two campaigns against oil industry sponsorship of museums: Statoil's sponsorship of the Science Museum; and BP's sponsorship of the British Museum. These campaigns received a great deal of publicity in the mainstream media (see p.3).

We continued to support campaigns opposing UK government funding cuts to wind, solar and other renewable energy programmes – as well as supporting anti-fracking campaigners.

SGR also supported the international Monsanto Tribunal and a call for a moratorium on gene-drives at the Convention on Biodiversity negotiations.

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

## Staff and volunteers

Stuart Parkinson continued as Executive Director and Vanessa Moss continued as Office Manager. In September, Philip Wood joined our team as a 'Peaceworker'. His one-year full-time post was funded by the British Quakers (see p.1). Jan Maskell was the project co-ordinator and worker for Science4Society Week (see p.2). Chris Langley briefly worked on our Military Influence on Science project. Alastair Maskell worked on an ad hoc basis as an Office Assistant. 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. In November, Harry Tsoumpas stepped down as Secretary after eight years in the post, but remained as a Committee Member. We thank him for all his hard work in that post. Martin Bassant took over as Secretary. 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 and Blog:* Keith Barnham, Aleem Dattoo, Ian Fairlie, Wiebina Heesterman, John Holmwood, Vanessa Spedding, Andrew Watterson and Steve Wright

*Office volunteer:* Alice Pledger

We thank them for their very useful contributions.



Prof David Smythe speaking at the SGR conference

## Financial review

SGR's finances for this reporting period (from March 2016 to February 2017 inclusive) continue to be in good health.

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

Income (£)	2015-16	2016-17
Membership subscriptions	£18,542	£17,935
Membership appeal	£12,685	£9,663
Grants	£10,690	£16,799
Donations	£1,945	£2,607
Conference fees	£1,742	£1,323
Sales of publications	£169	£212
Interest	£0	£18
<b>Total</b>	<b>£45,773</b>	<b>£48,557</b>

Income from membership subscriptions was stable, and donations (both to the annual appeal and throughout the year) reached a respectable level. At the end of the reporting period, we had approximately 750 members. We received grants towards core costs this year from The Martin Ryle Trust (£7,174) and The 1970 Trust (£3,500). We were also successful in raising project funding, receiving grants from The Martin Ryle Trust (£2,500), Lush Charity Pot (£2,000), Ecology Building Society (£750) and YES Energy Services (£500) for the Science4Society Week project. We also received an individual donation for the Nuclear weapons threat project of £375. We are very grateful to all who supported SGR's work this year.

One important source of income that does not appear in our accounts is the support provided this year from the Peacemaker programme of Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW). This programme has been funding a full-time early career worker for SGR for one year from 1st September 2016. The salary is paid directly to the worker by QPSW, so in effect the post is a secondment. The Peacemaker's project is summarised on p.1.

Expenditure (£)	2015-16	2016-17
Core wages and NI	£25,772	£25,075
Rent, insurance and utilities	£3,358	£3,318
Recruitment	£127	£2,846
Newsletter	£5,032	£3,016
Conference and AGM	£2,516	£3,064
Other core costs	£3,039	£4,326
Military influence project	£875	£0
Shale gas & fracking project	£239	£0
Science4Society Wk project	£4,491	£3,656
Nuclear weapons project	£393	£374
<b>Total</b>	<b>£45,842</b>	<b>£45,676</b>

Expenditure on salaries and most other areas of core activity has been stable. However, during the reporting year, we did markedly increase spending on recruitment activities, mainly due to the production of a new membership leaflet, which will be distributed over the coming years. Project expenditure was in line with grant income received in this and the previous financial year, but it should also be noted that there was significant voluntary input to our project work as well.

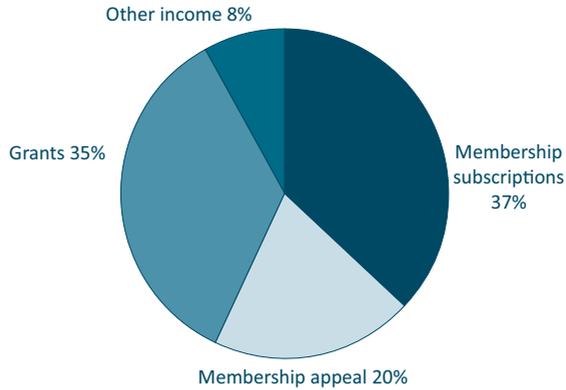
As a result of all these factors, SGR entered its new financial year with a healthy bank balance. However, our finances obviously continue to depend on the success of grant applications and the generosity of donors.

Balance on 01.03.16	£26,617
Income	£48,557
Expenditure	£45,676
Income minus expenditure	£2,881
<b>Balance on 28.02.17</b>	<b>£29,497</b>

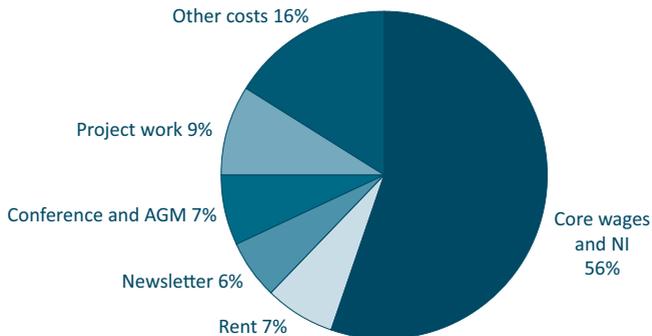


Dr Jan Maskell promotes SGR's Science4Society Week at the Association for Science Education conference

## Income 2016-17



## Expenditure 2016-17



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