



# Historical documents



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This Act imposes a duty on AWE to select those documents of historical value that are worthy of permanent preservation. Once selected as a record of historical value AWE is obliged to either transfer them to The National Archives (TNA) by the time the record is 20 years old or, if the records are deemed to be of continued use for administrative purposes, an application to retain them can be made.

Applications to retain are made through TNA to the Lord Chancellors Advisory Council (LCAC). The application is assessed and a decision to approve or not is made by the Advisory Council. There are a number of exemptions that enable the LCAC to reach a decision. On approval to retain the LCAC will issue a Lord Chancellors Instrument. This comes in the form of a certificate and is normally issued for five or 10 years. For continued retention re-applications are made to demonstrate the management and continued review of the records.

The list below outlines the AWE files held at TNA which will be useful for those undertaking research. A link to TNA is provided below and this should be the starting point for those seeking information in relation to AWE's work over the past 60 years.

TNA records are organised into Classes, the AWE class list is known as the ES class. Each class covers a topic of information:

### ES 1 Rowley Collection (1947 - 1962)

This class comprises papers covering the development of Aldermaston site and the early organisation necessary to set up the new research establishment such as staffing, building work, welfare matters etc. Also included are reports and minutes etc of various committees, papers concerning production of atomic and trials of weapons and associated equipment.

### ES 2 (B) Bomb Reports (1953 - 1980)

This series of reports covers weapon and weapon component design and consist of both theoretical and practical aspects. The majority of reports have been retained on non-proliferation grounds due to the amount of weapon design data included.

### ES 3 (E) Effects Reports (1953 - 1971)

This series covers studies on the physical effects of atomic weapons, studying mainly the blast and shock effects on structures, using scaled trials at AWRE Foulness.

### ES 4 (O) Ordinary Reports (1953 - 1983)

The O report series covers the ordinary work of the establishment, fundamental research and instrumentation, excluding weapon effects reports (ES 3) or overseas trials work reported in the trial (T) series of reports (ES5).

### ES 5 (T) Trials Reports (1953 - 1975)

The trials series describes the overseas trials work undertaken in Australia and the Pacific.

### ES 6 (NR Series) Nuclear Research (1957 - 1966)

This series of reports cover the fundamental research work of AWRE from 1957 onward. Between 1958 and 1962 the series was followed by a section identification letter and then the series number:

- NR/A concerns criticality of nuclear assemblies
- NR/C covers radiochemistry work
- NR/D covers nuclear devices

- NR/P concerns general nuclear physics
- Any report written subsequently would have been issued in the O report series (ES 4)

#### ES 7 (FS Series) Feasibility Studies (1962 - 1966)

This series describes studies into the practicalities of various weapon and warhead design. They have been preserved and retained on non-proliferation grounds.

#### ES 8 (J Series) Intelligence (1955 - 1959)

This series describes the scientific analysis of foreign weapon test material.

#### ES 9 (R) Reactor Reports (1957 - 1967)

This series contains reports written on the reactors at AWRE and other UKAEA sites. Early experimental, materials interactions, safety experiments and reactor manuals are included. Any work done after this period would be reported in the O report series (ES 4).

#### ES 10 (TPN) Theoretical Physics Notes

This series is a collection of papers written mainly to aid discussions within the Physics division at AWRE. It represents the theoretical, mathematical and physics related work upon which the trials and weapon engineering work of AWE is based.

#### ES 11 Explosive Research Notes (ERN Reports) (1955 - 1974)

This series of reports describe research into different explosive materials.

#### ES 12 Miscellaneous Reports (1955 – 1987)

This class contains directorate, divisional and miscellaneous referenced reports, including some progress reports.

#### ES 13 Directors / Chief Executive Files (D, PDD and CE Series) (1955 – 1994)

This series lists the registered files set up by the office of Directors of AWRE and its successors. The series continued when the position was appointed by a Chief Executive rather than a Director. During 1980 - 1982 the office was manned by a Principal Deputy Director as well as the Director who had MOD HQ responsibilities at the time. The series therefore consists of files with the prefix D, PDD and CE.

#### ES 14 Unregistered Files and Papers (1946 – 1996)

This class contains unregistered loose papers, files and folders; it is in the form of memos and papers by individual authors based on the contribution made to theory or technology of the weapons programme or other major areas of work undertaken by AWE.

#### ES 15 AWE Committee Documents (1952 – 1993)

This class contains the minutes, papers and correspondence of AWRE major committees.

#### ES 16 Atomic Weapons Research Establishment and successors (1958 – 1987).

This series contains Anglo-American visit reports and related material AVIS, VISAM and JOWOG series. These visits were undertaken within the terms of the 1958 Agreement for Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purpose.

#### ES 17 Foulness Reports, registered files and reports (FDN, FLN, FTN Reports)

This class contains the research and laboratory reports produced for the Atomic Weapons project and a considerable number of civil projects, on topics such as the strengths of atomic reactors, containment vessels and those of large civil engineering projects, such as bridges.

#### ES 18 Atomic Weapons Research Establishment: Atmospheric Testing files not covered in ES1 Rowley or ES5 T Reports Series (1946 - 1964).

Files, papers and reports from the UK atomic atmospheric trials cover the preparation, transport, trials and cleanup operations. The trials covered are: Hurricane, Totem, Mosaic, Buffalo, Grapple, Antler and minor trials. The series includes some scientific and technical material. The sites covered are Monte Bello, Emu, Maralinga and Christmas Island. Included with files are photographs and maps.

ES19 Aldermaston Site Administration Records, Media and Communications (1960 – 1995)

This class includes various records on the administration of the Aldermaston and Burghfield AWE sites; it covers subjects such as community liaison, management of security during protests in the 1950s, 1960s and 1980s, disposal of waste and building maintenance.

**Other classes of interest include:**

AB Class Records of the UK Atomic Energy Authority and its predecessors (1939 - 1999)

This class includes the records of UKAEA's London office, Northern Group (production division), research establishments at Harwell, Winfrith and Culham, and the records of the authority's predecessor body, the Directorate of Tube Alloys, plus private papers of Sir John Cockcroft and other prominent members of the authority.

FCO 1 Australian Royal Commission into United Kingdom Nuclear Weapons testing in Australia.

Includes photocopies of documents made available to the Commission by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

**A further source of enquiry is the Records of the Ministry of Defence report series DEFE:**

DEFE 7 Ministry of Defence prior to 1964: Registered Files (general series) 1942 – 1976

DEFE 16 Ministry of Defence: Australian Royal Commission into United Kingdom Nuclear Weapons testing in Australia; photocopies of Proceedings and Documents presented in Evidence c1947-1985

DEFE 19 Ministry of Defence: Central Defence Scientific Staff and predecessors: Registered Files (CSA)

DEFE 22 Ministry of Defence: Atomic Registry: Registered Files (AR series)

DEFE 21 Ministry of Defence: Directorate of Scientific Intelligence: Joint Intelligence Bureau: Division of Scientific Intelligence and Division of Atomic Energy Intelligence and Directorate of Scientific Intelligence: Registered Files 1946-1978

DEFE 41 Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence: Scientific and Technical Intelligence Branch and Overseas Liaison Branch: Files 1946-1963

DEFE 44 Ministry of Defence: Directorate of Scientific Intelligence: Joint Intelligence Bureau: Division of Scientific Intelligence and Division of Atomic Energy Intelligence: Defence Intelligence Staff: Directorate of Scientific and Technical Intelligence: Reports, Notes and Memoranda 1944-1991

**Publications**

AWE, and AWRE before it, played a key role in supporting the UK nuclear deterrent and a number of books deal with the organisation or the context in which it arose:

Lorna Arnold, Britain and the H-bomb, Palgrave, 2001

Lorna Arnold, Britain, Australia and the bomb: the nuclear tests and their aftermath, Palgrave, 2006

D J Hawkings, Keeping the peace: the Aldermaston story, AWE, Leo Cooper, 2000