

CAMMELL LAIRD (Gibraltar) Limited

Gibraltar's Dockyard, owned and managed by Cammell Laird (Gib) Ltd, continues to impact heavily on the environment and neighbouring residential areas.

ESG has and will continue to publicly campaign against these serious impacts which include chronic issues such as: noise and air pollution from ship spray painting, burning of waste on site, welding and other metal work carried out at night and into the early hours of the morning. Dust and other particles coat every front line residence whilst vehicles parked in the vicinity frequently get splattered with paint droplets. Crane activity creates constant background noise which is disturbing to people especially as these are located very close to the public road and housing. Until recently the ESG campaigned strongly on the need for action over the accumulation of sand blasting grit used to remove old paint off a ships' surface in preparation for spraying. This grit had literally become the size of a mountain and a growing concern to the local community. After much publicity Government used taxpayers' money to export the waste for appropriate disposal. It is believed that new grit will be stored in a purpose built container and will not be allowed to build up as it did before its expensive removal. The company have announced that a water pressure system will replace the grit blasting, the question is WHEN?

With regards to paint overspray, the dockyard has said that technology exists to contain the airborne paint using special netting. The ESG wants to see such netting in place without further delay as its impact on the health of residents is unknown but could be serious.

It is clearly difficult to contain environmental impacts from dockyard activity from the neighbouring communities and it is therefore especially important that the dockyard follows best practice at all times to lessen these effects.

Another recent issue taken up by the ESG was the asbestos contract "won" by Cammell Laird. This was to do with SS Rotterdam which crossed the Atlantic to secure a company willing to do such a dangerous job. Touted as a refurbishment job on arrival, the ESG was soon after shocked to hear that the primary job was a massive asbestos removal contract. Concerned about the standards used for such a large asbestos job the ESG visited the ship and met the owner and technical staff to see how the work was being done. The group was very concerned that local supervision of works was not adequate and placed the onus of standards on the ship owner. The group regrets that such work was done in Gibraltar and urges Government to ensure that the dockyard is more selective about the nature of works it will undertake in the future.

The ESG understands that new ownership of the dockyard will mean a thorough upgrade in its environmental profile and standards and looks forward to seeing the improvements soon.

Dockyard: Key environmental words: noise and air pollution