



Radiation Research Trust Conference
Eileen O'Connor's - Welcome Speech
Royal Society
8th & 9th September, 2008

Eileen O'Connor, Radiation Research Trustee

Good Morning and welcome everyone hope you all had a safe journey, it is lovely to finally get to meet everyone after months of communication. I would be grateful if you all take a few minutes to hear my opening speech.

Today, you will hear presentations from some of the worlds leading scientists and you will also have the opportunity to take part in the debate on health and electromagnetic fields. On behalf of the Radiation Research Trust I would like to warmly welcome you all to the conference and hope that you will leave with a deeper understanding of this global matter.

There is no doubt that this has been a difficult task costing me many days and nights tearing my hair out in order to get you all together from every corner of the planet. And I have several people to thank for their constant and continued support.

On behalf of the Radiation Research Trust, I would like to thank the members of the public who have made generous private donations in order to financially support this important event. Without them, this conference would not be happening.

I am also very privileged to have four great mentors who have offered continued guidance and support and who always fight my corner. I am grateful to them for their patience, expertise, generosity and warm sense of humour. They have been the backbone on the build up to this event and are a constant support to me. They have all given their time freely, despite personal challenges including one suffering with Electro Hyper Sensitivity (EHS). I extend my personal thanks to these wonderful men. – Of the Radiation Research Trust Mike Bell and Brian Stein and from Powerwatch UK - Alasdair and Graham Philips.

I would also like to thank trustee's Dr Ian Gibson Member of Parliament, Dr Caroline Lucas Member of the European Parliament and Andrew Mitchell also Member of Parliament for their continued support and interest in this campaign. They will be chairing sessions over the next 2 days along with other politicians for which we are also grateful.

I will just touch a little on why I am here today.

Seven Years ago, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. It was during my treatment, I discovered that I was living in one of the **many cancer clusters around phone masts worldwide**. I am not here apportioning blame or finger pointing, but I have no doubt in my mind that my condition was due to living 100m from a mobile phone mast.

With the support of my family and friends I have continued to strive for scientific evidence to be collected and also called on the government to adopt a precautionary approach to this technology. I have attended and presented at many conferences and public meetings worldwide and have met some wonderful people along the way. Many of the people I've met include some of the brilliant scientists and campaigners who are attending this event, sadly many cannot attend due to the limited spaces and some are too severely debilitated with electro sensitivity.

My life has been on hold for the last seven years and I am proud of our many achievements to get this issue recognised but there is still a lot of work to be done. The time has come for our doctors, scientists and the Government to recognise that some people are truly suffering with health related illness due to this technology and some are completely debilitated and are now living in isolation from society.

I have met and spoken to many people who have been diagnosed with cancer or living with electro sensitive symptoms and the situation is heartbreaking. In fact, I am due to speak at a public meeting in Kingswinford, West Midlands on Wednesday, along with American scientist Dr George Carlo. The residents living around a disused water tower which is now littered with phone masts antenna have also discovered a massive cancer cluster after long term exposure. 14 people have already died from cancer and a further 16 are living with cancer and many are reporting health related illness which they believe is associated with the phone masts. We also hope to meet the residents MP Ian Pearson, Minister for Science and Innovation. Ian Pearson along with many other Cabinet Ministers have been invited to attend the Radiation Research Trust Conference, but unfortunately no one was available to attend.

I believe many people will be living with health related conditions without realising the cause. Our doctors are not trained to recognise electro sensitivity and have not been informed and will therefore be misdiagnosing patients and treating them with drugs rather than investigating the cause. I found myself in this position many years ago when I visited my GP with headaches, dizzy spells, vertigo and sleep problems only to be told it was either stress or a virus, I now believe it was due to exposure to a phone mast which was 100m from my home.

Our greatest fear is for our children and their future as no one knows what the long-term effects are and they are likely to be the most vulnerable group of people.

I recognise the benefits of modern communications technology, but no one can guarantee safety and until such time, the Government really owes it to this country to protect public health. It is estimated that the UK Government receives up to £20 billion per year in revenue from mobile phones, along with the £22.5 billion received for selling the licences to the phone industry.

The UK Government should release major funds in order to support more independent **health** research in this area and a more precautionary approach should be implemented **immediately**.

This conference has been one of the hardest challenges I have dealt with over the last seven years campaigning. I am very grateful to Dr Michael Repacholi for offering support and working closely with me in this year in order to encourage his colleagues to attend. We have developed a good working relationship and I hope other people can do the same and start working together and build trust and respect for each other.

I am delighted that UK Health Protection Agencies Chairman, Sir William Stewart is attending this conference. He invited me as a representative of the British public to become a member of the Health Protection Agencies EMF Discussion Group when it was founded in March 2006.

We would like to see this conference as the beginning of communications and not the end. So, we are asking you all to please show each other respect and hopefully we can find a way of moving forward in a new direction together.

It has taken nine months to plan for this event; there have been many highs and many lows along the way. Nine months is significant as takes nine months before giving birth to a child and when you achieve this wonderful task, life changes as you begin to take responsibility for a new life; all your hopes and dreams are channelled into this new gift while you **protect** and **nurture** your child until the end of days.

I wouldn't be here today without my husband and two children who have stood by me over the last seven years through pain, joys and sorrows. They have made many sacrifices but have continued to support this mission to get the EMF health problem recognised. When you are told you have a life threatening illness you realise what is really important in life and that is our partners, our sons, our daughters, our mothers, our fathers, our brothers, our sisters and our friends and we need to think about everyone of them who are important to our lives as no one wants to see their loved ones suffer and I'm sure you will all agree that this is the reason why we need to put health first.

I have come to realise that differences of opinion in science can be good as it helps each side to strive for perfection and answers. I have also come to realise that the debate is not just about science but about how such knowledge is taken forward into developing appropriate public policy.

I hope we can all open our ears, open our minds, open our hearts and accept the truth and find a safer way forward together for everyone.

I would be grateful if you could all warmly welcome all our guests and look forward to joining in what should be a stimulating and interesting debate.

Without further a due, it is a great honour and privilege to introduce you to our Chairman this morning. He chairs the All Party Parliamentary Group on Cancer; he also is the former Chair of the Science and Technology Select Committee. I would like to warmly welcome you to Dr Ian Gibson MP.

Thank you for listening