

THE DISPOSAL OF LONG-LIVED AND HIGHLY RADIOACTIVE WASTES

The disposal of the radioactive waste arising from nuclear power generation, from arms production and from fuel reprocessing raises unique problems involving predictions about the waste and the environment in which it is placed on time scales equivalent to the half-life of the radioactivity. For the long-lived and highly radioactive wastes, this is of the order of tens of thousands of years. Concentrated and solidified waste may be stored or disposed of deep beneath the land surface or the ocean floor. The debate about the use of nuclear power must be based on sound scientific evidence of the nature of the waste and its behaviour in the natural environment. This volume, the report of a Royal Society Discussion Meeting held in May 1985, presents an authoritative review by world experts of the state of knowledge in this field and should provide the basis on which policy decisions can be based.

EDITED BY

A.S. LAUGHTON, F.R.S., L.E. J. ROBERTS, F.R.S.,
SIR DENYS WILKINSON, F.R.S., AND D.A. GRAY

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