



Siemens' powerful turbines have become a North Sea standard

Scots firm bags two-year Siemens extension

Prontoport of Irvine has secured an additional two-year contract from Siemens to support the commissioning and build of several new offshore windfarms.

The contract value has not been disclosed but is in the £millions and would at least double if a two-year extension option is implemented. Siemens is a longstanding client of Prontoport, which already provides project design, build and engineering maintenance services to the German engi-

neering/manufacturing giant.

MD Scott Telfer said the firm had already proved its worth on previous Siemens UK offshore flagship projects at Gwynt Y Mor and West of Duddon Sands.

"We successfully passed Siemens' Global Audit Procedure and have been chosen over much larger competitors to support the work that Siemens are doing in Hull, where they are investing £160million on two manufacturing sites for the preassembly,

installation and commissioning of several new offshore wind farms," said Telfer.

"We'll be supplying trained personnel, from ground and tower technicians, to highly specialist engineers across a range of disciplines."

The latest contract win is with Siemens Projects, the part of the offshore turbines market leader that constructs new windfarms, and the initial two-year period carries an option to extend for a

further two years. The company has been working with Siemens Projects since March 2010 and, through the industry-approved Prontoport Training Academy, recruits, vets and trains personnel, both to EU & industry standards, and to client and project specification.

Prontoport carries out servicing and repairs on more than 50% of the UK's windfarm assets.

MORE RENEWABLES, PAGE 30

As I write this column, I'm feeling a little guilty as my colleagues are bustling around me and finalising the preparations for our office move. In fact, it's almost nine years to the day that I first walked into the office we're leaving behind following my (first) maternity leave – that was some change, let me tell you!

After nearly a decade in one location, I can confirm that an office move is both exciting and painful.

Change, indeed change at scale, is something this industry has had to deal with on a near daily basis, and on a fundamental level for the last couple of years.

Certainly, for the first time in my generation, we've had to individually and collectively fight for our industry's very existence.

One outcome of this has been a shift in the way asset management is approached. Another has been a readiness to accept that new solutions need to be found to address challenges such as maximising economic recovery (MER), decommissioning and the creation of efficiencies across operations, for example.

Change is constant despite perhaps being less obvious during periods of stable and higher oil prices.

Effectively managing this is crucial to asset management, whether

The 'c' word

ASSET MANAGEMENT **R2S**

by Claire Fleming

that be changes to personnel, asset ownership, project handover, physical hardware, business processes or control systems. As highlighted in a 2015 paper by one leading insurance broker, Marsh;

"Each one of these changes has the potential to increase the risks involved in operating the plant for example, through:

- Inadequate identification or evaluation of the risks of making the change.
- Inadequate physical design or execution of the change.
- Inadequate communication and documentation of the change".

To successfully manage this change, there needs to also be a readiness to move with the times – think the advancement of the digital oilfield, big data, new technologies and the internet of things (IOT).

This is happening. I know from

our work with our clients and their wider supply chains that our technology, R2S, is being used effectively in this respect and to tackle all the inadequacies highlighted by Marsh.

Our users are also identifying strategic ways in which to utilise R2S where its intuitive interface, plug in architecture and intelligent search function make it a natural repository for all critical asset information.

Change in the way we handle information as an industry is a current agenda topper, but not all critical information is "big data". Indeed, one of the biggest changes industry has faced has been the loss of personnel and with them their knowledge and experience.

We know from our clients that the ease of use of R2S makes it universally accessible, resulting in high uptake of use and, therefore,

enhanced capture and sharing of asset data and corporate knowledge. Asset management, after all, represents the preservation and dissemination of knowledge on critical infrastructure.

When it is considered that, according to the Oil & Gas Financial Journal in October, over 350,000 jobs have been lost across oil and gas since 2014, it is almost impossible to comprehend just how much corporate knowledge has also been lost and the impact this will have going forward.

We don't yet know how effective our collective management of these overwhelming changes since mid-2014 has been. Our industry's fight for existence is not yet over but these shifting approaches to asset management and the technological tools at our disposal mean that we are in with a chance.

Change and managing change is challenging. Of course, it varies in magnitude and levels of disruption and, like an office move or a new baby, it can be nerve-racking and tiring, but also presents opportunity and excitement.

Claire Fleming is head of corporate communications & research at Return To Scene Ltd. As of October 31, the company will be based at Level 1, City Wharf, Shiprow, Aberdeen

Fifty years on, from not so humble beginnings!

SCIENCE

Bob Allwood



The Society for Underwater Technology (SUT) celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

We were founded in 1966 by a group of scientists following the demise of the Underwater Equipment Research Society the previous year. Their intention was that the SUT, as a totally independent membership-based organisation, would bring together people and companies with interests in all areas of technology and related industry sectors – with the simple aim of furthering knowledge across their fields of interest.

Whilst they were aware of the first North Sea oil and gas activity that was taking place around that time, I suspect they had no idea about how this industry would develop in the coming years and the impact it would have on our lives.

It might be considered serendipitous that our North Sea oil & gas activity exceeded all expectations in the wealth it generated and the timescale over which it did it. Certainly this wealth and the technological requirements for the success of this industry has had a very positive influence on the development and shape of the SUT.

However, I don't need to remind any of you that due to market forces, the fortunes of this industry are cyclic in nature and the present downturn is arguably the most severe that we have experienced. We would very much have preferred our 50th anniversary not to have coincided with this downturn in oil & gas.

The SUT can boast rather illustrious beginnings. Our first General meeting took place in March 1967 and was hosted by Lord Wakefield of Kendall in the House of Lords. His Lordship was duly elected as president, with Rear Admiral Sir Edmund Irving as the first chairman of council. Some eight years later, HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, was appointed as our president.

The SUT had been registered as a charity in England and Wales very early on, and around 1990 established the Educational Support Fund (ESF) to support students studying relevant courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The Fund has now supported in excess of 285 students, most of who have gone on to relevant and successful careers in industry sectors that are relevant to the interests of the society.

Over the following years, North Sea oil & gas developed rapidly and it made sense in 1992 to establish our first branch of the SUT in Aberdeen which by now had become the UK's energy capital. Around the turn of the century, we recognised that our numbers of members based outside of the UK were increasing and, to provide them with some benefit, over the following years we encouraged the formation of a number of overseas SUT branches based in Rio de Janeiro, Houston, Perth, Melbourne, Kuala Lumpur, Norway, China and Singapore.

So, we have become very much a global organisation. Further SUT branches within the UK were set up in Newcastle and, most recently, London and the South of England.

Whilst many associate the SUT with oil & gas, our interests and activities extend to many other areas, such as marine renewable energies, offshore site investigation and geotechnics, underwater vehicles, including undersea gliders, mining, salvage and decommissioning – and more.

For further information, go to www.sut.org

Bob Allwood, CEO Society for Underwater Technology