



**Commercial Diver Training    ROV Pilot Technician Training    ALST Training    Sea Trials**

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## Training You For The Job - Not Just The Ticket



Receiving industry-specific tools training at the Centre

At The Underwater Centre, we now incorporate essential subsea construction tools and skills training in all of our commercial diving course packages; ensuring that when you graduate as a commercial diver you have the confidence and ability to get ahead in your new career.

As well as having the correct qualifications to get you onto a job, you need to have the skills, knowledge and experience to do the job, and do it well.

From talking directly to the subsea industry, we've been able to identify the most important skills that new divers

must have. As a result, all of our commercial diving package courses now include a high level of subsea construction tools training.

Starting with learning how to use simple hand tools under the water, you will progress onto mastering pneumatic and hydraulic tools. You will be given tasks to complete such as erecting a scaffolding structure at 40m and using an airlift to lift mud from our purpose-built concrete pipeline; tasks all designed to simulate the types of jobs you will be expected to complete once you are working as a commercial diver.

We want to make sure that, rather than just 'blowing bubbles', you will be learning how to use key tools, providing you with the skills that will make you more employable when working in the inshore and offshore industries.

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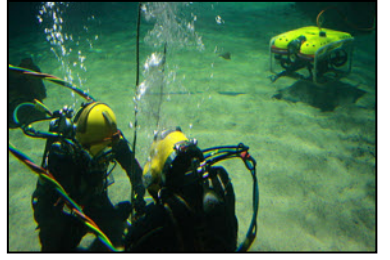
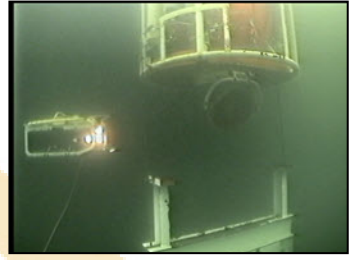
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## Preparing You for Work in Subsea Industry

With a recent report from Douglas Westwood showing that worldwide demand for ROV personnel in the oil and gas sector will be increasing by 22% over the next 5 years, it's more important than ever to ensure that when you enter the industry you are getting the right start in your new career as an ROV pilot.



Piloting an ROV around working commercial divers

At The Underwater Centre, right from the start, you will gain vital experience piloting around working commercial divers in the same challenging environment that you'll be working in.

The key to ensuring progression as an ROV pilot is practical experience. In our electronics and engineering workshop you will get hands on with a work-class Scorpio ROV, and its components, as well as the industry standard Seaye Falcon ROVs. In addition to the

experience gained when piloting the Falcon ROVs, in the challenging, tidal waters of Loch Linnhe from our private pier, students from a recently completed Premium ROV course also got the chance to fly to depths of 100m, monitoring commercial divers in saturation at our deep dive site. This gave them even more familiarity with industry practices to further prepare them for their new career.

We are the only training school in the world where ROV pilots train along with air and

saturation divers. This means that on completion of our ROV course, you step into industry with experience that many of your new colleagues will not have. There is no substitute for the experience of flying a live ROV in a real-life, subsea environment for giving you confidence in your skills in the workplace.



Learning about work class ROVs in our electronics and engineering workshop

View footage filmed by ROV pilots in training, of working commercial divers:  
[www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/video.asp](http://www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/video.asp)

## ROV Pilot Technician Adam Stephens Surveys his Success

After completing a diploma in Marine Engineering at the Australian Maritime College, Adam Stephens was keen to continue gaining skills that would help advance his career in the subsea sector. Adam decided to take his career in a new direction as an ROV pilot. Adam travelled from Australia to Fort William to complete the ROV Pilot Technician course and hasn't looked back since.

Adam says, 'On the course I was able to work with ROVs and technology that was being used offshore; it was really exciting to be able to train with equipment that we would encounter in the workplace. The course helped me understand what is involved in being an ROV pilot, and because positions can be limited

in this field, you need to have the edge over your competitors. The more qualifications you have, the better you look to a potential employer.'

Adam is now the director and owner of Subsea Access, an ROV survey company based in Tasmania. 'I was originally attracted to the subsea sector by the opportunity to travel, and of course, the good income. There are lots of opportunities to advance your career and work on some really interesting projects. No job is ever the same, and it's great using the latest in underwater inspection equipment.'

Like Adam, a lot of ROV pilots are now finding work in industries other than the traditional oil and gas sector.

A key area for development over the coming years is that of offshore wind farms.

Before wind turbines can be installed, extensive subsea surveys are required to examine the condition of the sea bed and also for top-side construction. London Array is currently the largest proposed offshore wind farm in the world, with installation due to commence early 2011; ScottishPower Renewables have awarded a subsea survey contract for their offshore wind farm site off the coast of East Anglia; and 10 different sites have also been confirmed for the construction of offshore wind farms in Scottish territorial waters, meaning opportunities for ROV pilots are on the up.



Adam now runs his own ROV survey company

For more information on our ROV courses visit:

[www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/rov.asp](http://www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/rov.asp)

## Italian Contract Highlights Commitment to International Students



Training on the Centre's saturation dive system

We recently underlined our commitment to further internationalisation with the delivery of a series of diving courses to staff from a leading Italian diving and marine contractor.

Members of staff from Impresub, based in Trento in the north of Italy, completed our HSE Closed Bell Course.

This contract follows Closed Bell (saturation diving) training previously provided to diving

contractors based in Italy, such as CNS and Rana. The course was delivered as new figures highlight the growth of our worldwide market and our international reputation as a provider of subsea training.

In 2010, 44% of students coming to The Underwater Centre are from Europe – compared to 30% in 2009 and 17% in 2008. The course was part of a rolling training programme with Impresub.

Alf Leadbitter, our Diver Training Manager, said, 'The HSE certification is recognised worldwide; internationalisation is a very important part of our growth strategy. This Impresub contract highlights that our reputation as a training provider is gaining a higher profile on the world stage,' he said. 'The

combination of our natural facilities, our seabed workstations, industry specific equipment and highly experienced staff means that students leave us fully prepared to work in the diving sector.'

David Marzi, Diving Division Representative from Impresub said, 'As a diving contractor, we are committed to providing industry relevant training for our staff so The Underwater Centre was the obvious choice to provide this.'

'On completion of the course, our staff will be able to work on diving jobs across the world.'

'The Centre has a much deserved global reputation as a subsea training provider and we have been very pleased with the courses delivered to our staff.'

## Opportunities for Divers in Inshore Sector

As a newly qualified commercial diver, you would traditionally find work at the start of your career in the inshore and civils sectors. Gavin Kennedy has built a successful career in this area. He tells us, 'I liked the idea of being self employed and having the freedom to choose where and when I worked, although this is not the case initially; being an unknown quantity, you take the work that is offered whenever, wherever!

'I knew I had some of the qualities needed to be an effective commercial diver, and the money is also a big incentive. The Diving Operations Director at the company where my wife worked recommended The Underwater Centre, so I completed my commercial diver training there. Everyone in the industry knows the Centre.'

'I got my first job within a month of completing my course, blanking a sea chest of one of the Grampian

standby vessels in Aberdeen harbour, which led to plenty of work after that. The job can get repetitive occasionally but it's never dull; every job is different and presents different challenges, which is hugely appealing to someone not cut out for a desk job. I mostly do civils diving now; more recently I've been working on wind farm construction. That's proved to be a nice little earner, as the rate was a bit better than the average for normal civils



Gavin prepares to dive

diving. It's not always easy finding the work, but you can always fill a niche and you'll always wonder 'what if?' unless you give it a go.'

## Centre Facilities Help Students Gain Winning Place

We recently provided the testing facilities for a group of talented engineering students from Heriot-Watt University, as they geared up for the prestigious Student Autonomous Underwater Challenge European (SAUC-E) 2010 competition.

The team from Heriot-Watt's School of Engineering and Physical Sciences previously scooped first place in 2008 and 2009. Despite tough competition the team were proud to take 2nd place in the 2010 event.

Heriot-Watt University chose the Centre due to our world-class testing and trials facilities. The SAUC-E event, which attracts competitors from across Europe, involved designing and building an Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) – crewless and untethered submersibles which operate independent of direct human control.

During the visit, the students carried out subsea testing and development for their specially designed NESSIE V, a new torpedo shaped AUV.

Prof Yvan Petillot, of Heriot-Watt University, said, 'The Centre's facilities and environment proved to be ideal for us to complete thorough testing. We tested our AUV



Heriot-Watt students launch the AUV into Loch Linnhe

from the Centre's pier in Loch Linnhe, giving us a great variety of depths and providing an excellent and highly realistic subsea environment'.

'This was complemented by the excellent support and expert advice we received from the staff at The Underwater Centre.'

Douglas Ormiston, Marketing Manager here at the Centre, said, 'As a subsea training provider, we believe strongly in supporting new talent and technology in the subsea sector. The SAUC-E event is a fabulous example of nurturing and encouraging students who will come to work in our industry. The Underwater Centre offers realistic testing conditions and we were extremely pleased to be able to support the team from Heriot-Watt as they prepared for such a prestigious competition.'

## ROVs Expand Into Aquaculture

Industries outwith oil and gas are increasingly realising that using ROVs to complete subsea surveys is an effective way of monitoring their marine equipment.

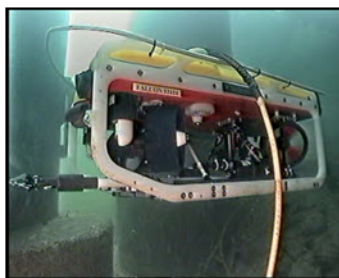
Aquaculture is one of those industries with a growing interest in the use of ROVs. The ROV team at the Centre provide essential ROV seabed and net surveys for organisations involved in the industry, such as seafood producers and governmental bodies such as SEPA (Scottish Environment Protection Agency). Representatives from our ROV team attended Aquaculture UK in Aviemore earlier this year. The biennial event, which showcases the latest technology and a range of new products, attracts visitors from across the globe.

Our ROV Operations Manager, Paul Bury, believes that the trade event will create excellent business links. 'Working with

organisations involved in aquaculture is a natural partnership for us,' he said. 'The industry is growing, meaning there is an increasing demand to survey sea beds, nets and other equipment.

'We have a wealth of experience and expertise at the Centre and attending this important trade event is a way of highlighting our services. As well as showcasing one of our ROVs, we displayed footage of previous survey work so people were able to see first hand the quality of the footage and the role that ROVs can play in carrying out surveys.'

The Underwater Centre can carry out a wide range of ROV surveys – from harbour and pier inspections to environmental studies; search and recovery to archaeological surveys. For the surveys, our team use Saab Seaeye Falcon Class II ROVs which can fly to depths of 300m, reaching potentially unsafe and difficult to access locations. These are the same ROVs that students on our ROV training courses fly in the challenging waters of Loch Linnhe, the sheltered sea-loch on which our facilities are based.



One of the Centre's Saab Seaeye Falcons on an inspection job

For more information on ROV surveys visit:

[www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/rov\\_surveys.asp](http://www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/rov_surveys.asp)

## Chris Chell Turns Passion for Diving into Career

Many leisure divers reach a stage where they decide to take their passion for diving and turn it into a lucrative new career. Chris Chell, former student from The Underwater Centre, tells us how he did it.

'Before training to be a commercial diver I worked in fabrication and as a welder for a heavy engineering firm and the British armed forces. At the time I was a keen SCUBA diver and mixing my hobby with my previous employment seemed to lead to commercial diving.

'At the Birmingham Dive Show I got the chance to speak to Ali MacLeod, Air Diving Manager at the Centre, after which I was sure that The Underwater Centre was where I wanted to complete my commercial diving training. With my background

in construction I chose to do the Construction Career Package, which gave additional training in welding and burning in a subsea environment. I found the instructors to be very professional and all very helpful. No questions were left unanswered.

'I'm currently working as an inshore supervisor and diver in the shipping industry. The equipment used by commercial divers in shipping is very specialised so when you first start there is still an element of on the job training; however the Construction Career Package gives you the tools knowledge and experience needed to get the job in the first place. My first job was blanking the bow thruster on a Royal Navy minesweeper at night – nobody said it was going to be easy!

'For me, the best aspect of being a commercial diver is the travel. I've replaced stern seals in the Bahamas and removed cofferdams in Soha, to name just a couple of the places I've worked in. The hours can be hard, but there's nothing better than the feeling you get after a hard job done well.'

If you're thinking of taking the step of going from leisure diving to commercial, Chris has this to say; 'There's definitely a niche for most people, if you're willing to put in the hours, both to find the job and see it through. You have to be willing to call round dive companies and badger their desk staff; once your foot is in the door don't get complacent, there are other companies out there and you don't get any points for tying yourself to one company. Just keep at it.'



Chris emerges from a harbour on a recent ship survey dive job

To read more from ex-students, visit:

[www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/comments.asp](http://www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/comments.asp)

## Demand for Commercial Divers in Offshore Wind

**With the worldwide demand for offshore diving personnel in the oil and gas sector set to rise by 21% in the next 5 years, a new report from industry analysts, Douglas Westwood, has shown that there is also an additional requirement for commercial divers in the offshore wind sector in Europe in the coming years.**

In the installation phase alone there is potential for over 17.7GW to come online in Europe. Following the installation of the wind turbines, there will also be a requirement for ongoing operations and maintenance, further ensuring the need for diving personnel. While ROVs can and will be

used for a portion of the work, as is the case in the oil and gas industry, there will always be some jobs where the dexterity and skills of a commercial dive team are essential.

The report predicts that the vast majority of work for commercial divers in the offshore renewables industry will be in UK and German waters, however with China constructing its first scale offshore wind project and the US making progress in establishing wind farm projects that will be ready for construction in the next 5 years, the global scope for job opportunities for commercial divers within this industry is also set to increase.

Steve Ham, General Manager here at The Underwater Centre,

said, 'We are at the core of equipping new divers with the specialist subsea skills which are essential in any subsea construction job, including offshore wind farms.'

'Training our students in a realistic and industry relevant environment is key to our overall approach as this means, once they complete their course and leave The Underwater Centre, they are able to hit the ground running when they get employment in the renewables sector.'

Subsea UK chief executive, Alistair Birnie said, 'There is a growing and urgent need for skills right across the energy industry. We cannot rely on our existing pool of resources to



**Offshore wind farms creating opportunities**

support the massive growth rate and the only way we will succeed is if we invest in the right skills at the right time.

'Attracting new blood into the industry, combined with the energy industry working together to consolidate existing resources, is essential if we are to address the demand for skills now and in the future.'

## Indian Consul General Visits Fort William



**Mr Anil Kumar Anand meets a commercial diving student**

**In April this year, the Indian Consul General visited The Underwater Centre, highlighting our continued recognition by the international market and helping to increase awareness amongst Indian students of the options open to them.**

Mr Anil Kumar Anand, who is based in the Edinburgh Consulate, was given a tour of our facilities, where students from around the world attend commercial diving and ROV courses.

We have already initiated business links with companies in India and we are now focusing

on strengthening existing relationships and establishing new contracts. In 2009, Centre staff delivered a number of specialist courses in Mumbai for Dolphin Offshore Marine, a leading provider of underwater services to the Indian oil and gas sector.

Steve Ham, our General Manager, believes the visit by Mr Anand will help to further build on links with Indian companies, and create opportunities for Indian students. 'The oil and gas market in India plays a vital role in the country's economy. Continuing exploration naturally leads to an increased pressure for skilled subsea personnel, specialising in areas such as commercial diving and ROVs,' he said. 'We have already delivered a range of training for Indian companies and hosted many students from India.'

'Mr Anand's visit was a great opportunity to showcase our facilities, industry relevant equipment and our expert staff who deliver the courses.'

As part of his visit, the Consul General saw ROV pilot students flying ROVs in Loch Linnhe, as well as commercial diving students completing inspection diver training.

Mr Anand said, 'I was keen to visit The Underwater Centre and find out more about the opportunities available to Indian students. I was very impressed by the Centre's facilities and the cutting edge subsea technology available to students training at the facility.'

'I am very keen to build new training links between India and Scotland and my visit highlights the huge opportunities for Indian students to come to Scotland and train for the subsea industry.'

## Francis MacLeod Retires After 24 Years of Service

**Graduates of The Underwater Centre have said a fond farewell to Francis MacLeod, who has retired after 24 years as the Centre's Equipment Manager.**

Thanks to his professionalism, experience, knowledge and

care, Francis is highly thought of and will be missed by staff and students alike. Francis has spent the last year training his replacement, Ali MacKinnon, who is looking forward to working with the students. Ali said, 'We will all be sad to see Francis

leave us, and I hope that I can fill his shoes as well as he did!'

Francis, who is starting his retirement with a 3 week tour of India, said, 'It's been a pleasure and I am incredibly proud of all that we've achieved at the Centre over the years.'



**Francis hands over the reins to Ali**

**THE UNDERWATER CENTRE**

### The Underwater Centre

Marine Walk, Carmichael Way,  
Fort William, PH33 6FF

T. +44 (0)1397 703786

F. +44 (0)1397 704969

E. [info@theunderwatercentre.co.uk](mailto:info@theunderwatercentre.co.uk)