



Commercial Diving

ROV Pilot Technician Training

ALST Training

Sea Trials

Inside this issue

- ROV survey
- Diver Medic Course
- Football sponsorship
- New ROV workshop
- Kirby Morgan visit
- ROV Pilot case study
- Continued demand
- Diver case study
- University research
- Spotlight on...
- Subsea Twitter
- Courses in India

Survey suggests 70% of ROV students in jobs

1 More than 70% of ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle) students from Scotland's only ROV and diver training centre have secured relevant industry jobs, according to market research released in July 2009. The Underwater Centre surveyed 264 of its previous students in a bid to track their career progression and gain a comprehensive overview of the commercial success of its ROV pilot training courses.

2 Results from the survey suggest that 71% of respondents who have undertaken an ROV course at The Underwater Centre since 2006 are now in employment, with the average taking only three months to find a post. Findings also indicated that not only were students successful in finding relevant jobs, the average annual salary of those in employment was £42,750. In line with this, 92% of respondents felt that training at



A student at The Underwater Centre, hands on with a Seaeye Falcon

The Underwater Centre made them more employable. These latest figures reflect the growing demand for the Centre's ROV courses – last year saw a 71% increase in the uptake of ROV courses, compared to 2007. Steve Ham, general manager at The Underwater Centre believes the new market research underlines the benefit of the industry relevant courses being developed by the Fort William training facility. He said:

'Despite the recent economic downturn, the future for the ROV industry is predicted to be very successful. As the prices of oil and gas recover, the opportunities within this sector will in turn increase. The rise in ROV use outwith the oil and gas sector, in the rapidly expanding renewable energy industry, for example, is also set to make the next few years the most lucrative there have been for the ROV sector yet.'

INSTRUCTORS WANTED

For details of positions available visit:
www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/jobs.asp

Vital IMCA Diver Medic course re-instated in Fort William

As at least one member of every offshore dive team is required to be a Diver Medic, the availability of high-standard training on the subject is paramount. To that end, Ali MacLeod, The Underwater Centre's Air Diving Manager, has created a new IMCA (International Marine Contractors Association) Diver Medic course to be delivered by The Underwater Centre. Specifically designed to meet current industry standards, the course incorporates practical training with the working saturation dive system at the Centre, giving graduates experience that will make them immediately more attractive to employers.

Ali has nearly 20 years experience as a Diver Medic,



Left: Diver Medic students in the saturation chamber Right: In the classroom

and is running the course in conjunction with Dr James, a renowned diver medical practitioner who has been looking after commercial divers offshore for the past 30 years. The course is rich in information and experience and students can be confident that the

training received will be relevant and useful in the subsea industry. Ali said: 'I've really enjoyed bringing this new course to Fort William and working closely with Dr James. The role of Diver Medic is so vital in the diving industry and it is a course I am particularly

proud of. I feel it complements the high standards of our existing courses perfectly, with a combination of practical and classroom learning, as well as training with commercial divers in an actual saturation system, which is ultimately where their skills will be put into practice.'

Winning sponsorship for Highland Football Team

Earlier this year, The Underwater Centre in Fort William kicked off a special new business deal close to home – sponsorship of the Highland town's football club.

As well as a generous £10,000 donation, the Centre is also offering behind the scenes business advice and guidance to the executive team at Fort William Football Club.

The Centre is keen to help turn round the fortunes of the club which has languished at the bottom of the Highland League for a number of years.

The current management team at The Underwater Centre bought the Centre after it went into receivership five years ago and have turned it into one of the world's top providers of subsea training.

Fort William Football Club Chairman John Wattsman said that the club is delighted to have secured the sponsorship deal with such a high profile local business. 'The Underwater Centre is a major employer in the area and at the hub of the Lochaber community so it's a very fitting partnership'.



Steve Ham presents Fort William Football Club with their first sponsorship cheque



Further investment with new ROV workshop

The Underwater Centre has extended its already unique facilities to include a new workshop and control cabin for additional practical skills and experience for ROV students to train with.

The workshop hosts a number of work stations as well as an impressive work-class ROV – a Scorpio 43 – with a full scale seven function master/ slave manipulator. Students will be trained to use the master arm and monitor bank from within the control cabin to remotely control the slave arm attached to the ROV. Students will gain experience undertaking tasks using the manipulator arm, such

as operating valves and hot stabs – replicating typical offshore operations. Most of the more advanced work-class ROVs in industry use these types of manipulators, meaning students leaving The Underwater Centre will be better trained than many of their counterparts.

Along with this are a number of 'clean' work benches, for students to learn about the use and repair of fibre optics. This includes learning about two methods of repair to a fibre optic – 'hot melt' and 'fusion splicing'. Hot melt is a more traditional method for bonding fibres on to connectors using hot glue.

Fusion splicing bonds the fibres using a precision electric arc to melt and join the two fibre ends together to fractions-of-a-micron accuracy. This latest technology is a recent addition to the offshore ROV industry. All communications with the ROV are via this fibre optic link, so understanding and learning these tasks, with practical hands-on experience, makes students even more attractive to potential employers. These additional facilities further complement The Underwater Centre's existing pier, loch side location and indoor 1.5million litre tank complex, which are unique for ROV training.



Above: Learning about different classes of ROV in the workshop



Middle: Operating the Perry Slingsby TA009 manipulator from the control cabin



Right: Practising with the fusion splicer

Kirby Morgan President visits Fort William

Connie Morgan, President of Kirby Morgan Dive Systems Inc., was recently in Scotland and found time in her busy schedule to visit The Underwater Centre. Connie is also the daughter of Bev Morgan, who was one half of the original duo who designed

and founded the original Kirby Morgan systems. She was delighted to see a number of the Kirby Morgan helmet systems being used by students on her tour of The Underwater Centre's pier. Upon leaving she presented Francis MacLeod, Equipment Manager, with a

brand new Kirby Morgan 47, one of the most recent models to be produced, with an entirely new breathing system, oral nasal mask and water ejection system.

Right: Francis receives the Kirby Morgan 47



Case study on... ROV Pilot Jamal Abdulla



Jamal in an electronics class

Twenty-four year old Jamal Abdulla from Thurso cut his teeth as an instrumentation technician offshore so when he considered a career move into the ROV sector, his experienced technical background meant he was well positioned to support a transition. Jamal decided to move into the ROV sector to broaden his offshore expertise. He carried out research and was given recommendations for The Underwater Centre's taster ROV course. He signed up and this affirmed his desire to move into the sector. Following this he subscribed to the Centre's seven week Premium ROV Course.

One month after completing the specialist course, Jamal secured a post at Fathoms Diving where he works as an ROV pilot technician. He is part of a team which is currently operating the custom built TROL ROV system in the Pentland Firth recovering radio-active particles for disposal at the Dounreay nuclear power station. He plans to gain more experience in the ROV sector over the next five years and, long term, would like to own his own ROV company. He believes that studying at The Underwater Centre gave him a strong advantage when looking for his first job in the ROV sector. 'Doing the taster course was really worthwhile as it confirmed that it was a career in the ROV sector I wished to pursue. The tutors have a wealth of experience and a very strong knowledge base from which to provide a high standard of training. With their help and support and my previous experience, I gave myself the best possible chance of securing a career in the ROV world. 'I am really excited to be starting out on this new career and I would urge anyone thinking of working in the ROV sector to do the course at The Underwater Centre. It gave me an excellent grounding and good head start in finding a relevant job.'

University Research Facility

The Underwater Centre's extensive dive tank complex was recently the subject of further diversification within subsea trials and training. Stirling University's Marine Technology department required a controlled depth environment in which to test and calibrate their wave sensors, using realistic seawater conditions. The 1.5m litre seawater tank, with depths of up to 5m, proved to be the ideal facility for the trial. Ben Perry of Stirling University said: 'It was fantastic to be able to complete our research at our convenience in such an accessible environment.' The resulting equipment from the University's research will be used to monitor the effect of waves on nets and cages used



Collecting the results

in fish-farms. The University adds to the growing list of companies using the Centre's facilities for trialling new equipment, including Rolls Royce, Fugro and Subsea7.

Continued demand in the oil and gas renewables sectors

The deepwater oil and gas industry is due to spend an average of \$32billion annually between now and 2013, according to a recent report by energy analyst Douglas-Westwood. The EU has also set a target of installing 600 offshore wind turbines per year to meet the 2020 target of between 20GW and 40GW of renewable energy. Strong evidence to suggest that now is the time for divers to gain their HSE Closed Bell certificate at The Underwater Centre to meet this continuing demand.

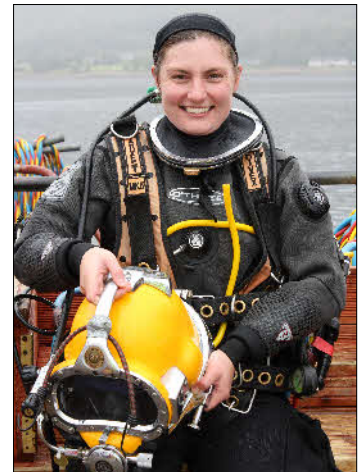
In addition, for those who are self-employed and registered for VAT, the VAT on the course fees that has to be charged can be claimed back, providing a saving of 15-17.5% off the cost of training. What's left may be also be deductible from earnings for tax purposes, so the effective cost of training may be as little as 60% of the net amount initially charged.*

*The Underwater Centre does not take responsibility for tax or VAT advice and you should speak to your own financial advisor if you are unsure about the treatment of VAT or Income Tax in relation to the cost of your training.

Case study on... Commercial Diver Andrea Hamel

Originally from Canada, Andrea Hamel now works in Salisbury in the UK for Wessex Archaeology as a maritime archaeologist. Having always been passionate about maritime archaeology, Andrea received a BA in Anthropology from the University of British Columbia, during which she spent a year on exchange in Glasgow. She then went on to do an MA in Maritime Archaeology at the University of Southampton. In her role with the Wessex coastal and marine team, Andrea has worked on desk based assessments, field surveys and watching briefs. Having previously volunteered for six years with the Underwater Archaeological Society of British Columbia, which provided many opportunities to explore and study shipwrecks, Andrea was very interested when a colleague completed her HSE Surface Supplied commercial diving course at The Underwater Centre. She realised there was an opportunity to take her career further.

Andrea was keen to complete her training at The Underwater Centre. With her HSE Surface Supplied ticket, gained in the tidal sea-water loch off the Centre's private pier, she is now able to dive with Wessex Archaeology, performing monitoring dives on protected wrecks around the UK, and exploring seabed anomalies



Preparing to dive in Loch Linnhe identified by geographical surveys.

Andrea said: 'The staff at the Centre are knowledgeable and approachable, and the facilities are top notch.' She went on to say: 'I would absolutely encourage others to seek a job subsea. If you're interested in archaeology and human interaction with the sea, and want to further explore the submerged historic environment, then maritime archaeology is the job for you. It would also help to have a background in archaeology, an in-depth knowledge of shipbuilding or another maritime speciality. Unfortunately, maritime archaeology is not very well paid compared to other subsea industries; an average salary would be £17,000 - £20,000 per annum, and it can be difficult to get a job. It's something we do because we love it.'

Opportunities at The Underwater Centre

If you are interested in a career with the world's top subsea training centre, there are full-time positions available now at The Underwater Centre. A dynamic company with extensive facilities, a superb training site, and an experienced, positive team who are committed to delivering high quality training in a great location. Perfect for those looking for onshore work.

For more information or to apply, visit our website www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/jobs.asp



The Underwater Centre pier

Subsea Twittering

The Underwater Centre is now on Twitter, allowing students, past present and future, to stay current with all things subsea from the world's leading subsea training centre.

With it's finger on the pulse when it comes to industry developments, both inshore and offshore, following The Underwater Centre on Twitter keeps people up to date with career developments, industry news, new course dates, last minute course availability and student services.

Sign up at

<http://twitter.com/TUCFortWilliam>

Spotlight on... Lorna MacPherson Sales Office Manager

For over ten years now, Lorna MacPherson has been on the end of the phone to hundreds of potential students, giving advice and guidance to those considering embarking on a career as a commercial diver or an ROV pilot. As well as managing the day to day running of the office which is the main point of contact for anyone considering training at The Underwater Centre, the part of her job Lorna enjoys most is helping the students through the tricky process of deciding on a new career.

Lorna explains: 'After numerous conversations before the students' arrival you feel you gain a connection with them and a better understanding of what they want to achieve from training here. It's great to be able to use the knowledge we have to help them on their career path.

'I admit when I started I didn't really know much about the diving industry, but over the

years I have learned so much about diving and ROV training. I've gained a wealth of experience from listening to the students and talking to the experienced instructors we have here at the Centre. I've done a surface supplied dive, flown an ROV and even tried optical-fibre fusion splicing in the new ROV workshop.

'I remember years ago, when we were still doing leisure trips before the commercial subsea side of the business really took shape, we used to provide trips to the seabed in a wee Russian submarine. I was lucky enough to get the chance to experience the sights on the seabed around our pier. Seeing all the wrecks, and tanks and even the oil-platform leg up close was just amazing and it certainly added to my knowledge of the environment in which the students train.

'Over the years I've seen The Underwater Centre grow into a world-leading training centre,

The Underwater Centre was founded in the 1970s by the British Government who selected it as the ideal location for a commercial diver training and underwater trials facility.

Located on the shores of Loch Linnhe - one of Scotland's deepest lochs - the large private pier gives unrestricted sea access, with water depths of 50 metres nearby and 150 metres within half a mile. The site provides conditions similar to those experienced offshore, and has a range of underwater structures and wrecks. Unlike most seawater sites the sheltered waters allow operations to continue all year round in almost all weather.

The Underwater Centre is the only Health & Safety Executive approved training centre to offer a full range of HSE Commercial Diving Courses from SCUBA to Closed Bell. And the Career Packages include additional skills training preparing divers for the real experience of commercial diving.



Ready to speak to a student

and we're now running three times the number of courses we were when I first joined the team. I've really enjoyed being a part of the improvements in the service that the students receive before, during and after they attend a course here. The improvements made in the training given to students and the equipment they use has been great to see too. You can see it in the confidence they have when they leave us, well prepared to go and find work in the industry.'

To speak to Lorna, call:

+44 (0)1397 703786

Course development in India

Alf Leadbitter, The Underwater Centre's Diving Manager, recently travelled out to Mumbai in India to deliver an Air Supervisor course for Dolphin Offshore Marine Services, a leading provider of underwater services to the Indian oil and gas industry. Shortly afterwards he was followed by Willie Stitt, a highly experienced and ever-

popular Life Support Supervisor also from The Underwater Centre, who delivered an Assistant Life Support Technician course for them. Dolphin were looking to develop a respected training programme in India and approached The Underwater Centre thanks to their reputation as the world's leading subsea training centre Commodore Abraham Lucose, Training Officer with Dolphin said: 'The courses were run in a

professional manner and the instructors did a wonderful job. We are looking forward to establishing a long term partnership.'

The relationship was developed following Alf's previous visit to India, where he gave a talk on the myths and reality of diver training. Alf said: 'It's very exciting to be thinking about developing new training courses in India with Dolphin, and we're pleased to be bringing our expertise to such an exciting development.'



An ALST communicating with divers in the closed bell

THE
UNDERWATER CENTRE

The Underwater Centre

Carmichael Way, Fort William, PH33 6FF

T. +44 (0)1397 703786

F. +44 (0)1397 704969

E. info@theunderwatercentre.co.uk

W. www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk