



**Commercial Diving**

**ROV Pilot Technician Training**

**ALST Training**

**Sea Trials**

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## Ground breaking submarine trials

**Rolls-Royce has conducted the first open water trial of the groundbreaking new NATO Submarine Rescue System (NSRS) at The Underwater Centre in Fort William, the UK's leading commercial diving training centre.**

The Underwater Centre was chosen as the ideal site for the trial due to its world class support facilities, as well as the unique location and topography of Loch Linnhe, one of Scotland's deepest lochs. The sea loch provided the trials team with realistic sea conditions as well as multiple depths to test NSRS.

Scheduled for service in 2008 and jointly developed and funded by the NATO countries of France, Norway and the UK, NSRS comprises a remotely operated submersible, or ROV,

that locates and establishes underwater communications with the distressed submarine. A larger manned Submarine Rescue Vehicle (SRV) then docks with the submarine and rescues the crew, and finally

aboard the mothership, a decompression system is used to treat up to 72 rescuees simultaneously.

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NATO Submarine Rescue System at The Underwater Centre

**INSTRUCTORS WANTED**

Air, Mixed Gas instructors & LSS wanted. Visit [www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/jobs.asp](http://www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/jobs.asp)

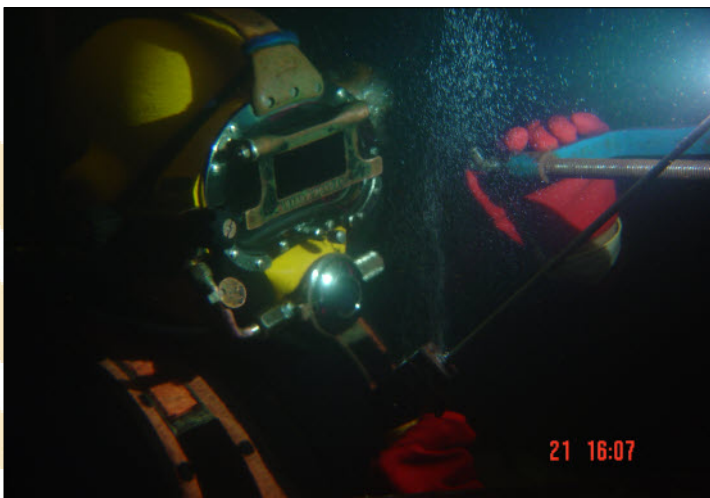
## Wind farms push demand for commercial divers

**The current operational figure of a shade under 150 offshore wind turbines (the government term all 'wet' wind turbines as offshore, although a large proportion will be within the 12 mile limit) may be of little interest to commercial divers. The fact that there are another 1000 either under construction or approved for construction, and that further offshore wind farming sites are likely to result in another 1000 turbines might.**

Like oil production platforms, for offshore wind turbines, time is money – so downtime is a big headache if you're an offshore wind farm manager, but could

prove to be a golden goose for divers. The routine inspection, planned maintenance and emergency repair of over 2000 turbines will require an increasing number of divers. All this, at a time when high oil prices have fuelled a massive increase in exploration.

One issue still to be resolved with offshore wind farms relates to pay rates. It is likely that somewhere between 500 and 1000 of these will be more than 12 miles from shore. Should the decision to extend the current offshore pay rates in place in the North Sea to cover the offshore wind farms, prospects for divers look rosy.



The increase in off-shore wind farms means increased demand for commercial divers and ROV pilots

**For more news coverage visit:**

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

**Or to make an enquiry, email:**

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

## More than just training

**Commercial diver training and ROV courses at The Underwater Centre offer students much more than the certificates that permit them to work.**

The Underwater Centre offers a unique learning environment; unlike anything experienced anywhere else. As well as the range of courses for prospective divers and ROV pilot/ technicians, the Centre runs closed bell training, sea trials and technology trials, in addition to playing host to numerous different groups from the MOD.

This means that, at any point during their training, students can expect to be sharing the water with experts from different disciplines and getting a close up perspective of some of the most cutting edge subsea

technology. This brings several massive benefits to students; just by sharing the same environment as these seasoned professionals, students have the opportunity to gain a greater insight into the industry, as well as the opportunity to build contacts – it's not unusual for students to pick up the lead that brings them their first job in the lounge.

This does mean that the pier, jutting some 200m out into Loch Linnhe, can be busy – often there are three or four different groups in or around the water at any given time. The chance to operate in waters where there are other activities taking place means that students leave having already experienced the kind of bustling activity typical of shared water operations that are not uncommon with modern off-shore working.



**Stingray Geo used recently qualified diving students during their trial in Fort William**

As part of ongoing work with trials partners, The Underwater Centre is often asked to provide support functions such as diving and ROV teams. This has meant that, for some students, their first job as a commercial diver or ROV pilot/ technician was working for The

Underwater Centre as part of a trials team.

**For more information on trials at The Underwater Centre contact Steve Ham:**

+44 (0)1397 703786

## Spotlight on... ROV Instructor Paul Bury

**'Initially, I trained in law, graduating from the University of Lancaster and Chester College of Law – the prospect of thirty five years of high street litigation loomed. Sufficient dislike of the idea of long term lawyery meant that I needed a plan! Whilst training as a Solicitor, a fellow student at Law College said he didn't think I was destined to be a Solicitor – at the time, I was replacing some power transistors for an electronic flash gun and re-designing the battery charge circuits. Maybe I should have listened then!**

My love of sport diving brought me to Scotland. Whilst here, I signed up for a familiarisation dive at The Underwater Centre, and as a result, I enrolled on a course and completed my HSE part IV, Surface Supply and Wet Bell courses. It was on this course I saw my first ROV. Inevitably, this led to my taking an ROV course. From there, I went to work for Sonavision. Pretty soon I was teaching electronics to other ROV students whilst still working offshore.

Over the years, I've moved from being an ROV pilot/ technician who did a bit of training to running ROV training at The Underwater Centre and doing a bit of offshore ROV supervising (I managed two stints offshore over the Christmas period, with Fugro and GB Diving. I bumped into seven TUC graduates on these trips which was great to see – all were really enjoying their work and career progression). My current role means I have the best of all worlds; I teach at a world class facility, I'm involved with cutting edge industry developments via TUC's industry trials programme, and I get to keep my hand in offshore, too.

There are three questions I get asked by nearly every person who is considering being an ROV pilot/ technician; can I do it,

how much can I earn, and will I get a job? So, as you're all dying to know, here are the answers.

Can I do it? IMCA (International Marine Contractors Association), who's curriculum we follow, recommend people from an engineering, electronic, electrical or hydraulic background, although I've found that many people with only a keen interest in these subjects can be successful, even when coming from a completely unrelated background like I did. If you have the will to learn and desire to succeed, your destiny is in your own hands.

How much can I earn? At the moment, employers are crying out for good pilot/ technicians with demand being fuelled by extensive subsea oil exploration and extraction – a result of high oil prices. There is no reason to suppose that the current situation will change over the next few years, with industry experts making bullish predictions about ROV requirements. Typical starting rates will be something like £150 per day; within a few years you may command £500 per day as a supervisor.

Will I get a job? Whilst I can't personally guarantee any student a job, I can say that



**Paul Bury, Head of ROV Training and Operations**

we work really hard to ensure that every student has the best possible chance of a career in the ROV industry. I keep every student's email and add this to my mailing list. This means I can keep them informed about every new job that comes along, and employers use me as a way of finding new talent. There are hundreds of former students on this list and many let me know about job opportunities for me to circulate to everyone else. This has proven to be a great support network for all of our former students. Recently, I carried out a survey of ROV course graduates and discovered that 95% were working – the remaining 5% I did not hear from, so I can't confirm what they are doing.'

**'...industry experts making bullish predictions about ROV requirements. Typical starting rates will be something like £150 per day'**

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

## The Russians are coming...

**The Underwater Centre recently welcomed the first in a series of ROV students from Russia. The group, and their translator, have come to Fort William from Pod Vod Servis, an underwater/technical services company based in Moscow.**

The group of four students are studying the three week ROV pilot technician course, which covers a variety of subjects including electrical installation, microprocessors and the components used in the hydraulic systems of ROVs.

Their timing for coming to study at The Underwater Centre was impeccable: The Centre has recently bought another new Falcon Seaeye ROV, which the students took great pleasure in piloting around the purpose built indoor 1.5 million litre seawater tank.

Pod Vod Servis serves all of Russia and currently employs around 200 people. The company undertakes a great deal of underwater work including laying and checking pipelines across rivers,

burying pipelines and underwater construction. They tend to work with oil and gas companies, urban maintenance facilities and the shipping industry.

Deputy director, Vladim says: 'The experience our staff can gain here at The Underwater Centre in Fort William is really unique, not only with the indoor facilities but also the in-depth, first hand knowledge of the instructors and the extensive equipment at the end of the pier. We are looking forward to having a really strong, knowledgeable team come the end of the year when our staff have been to Fort William.'



**ROV Instructor, Paul Bury and Pod Vod Servis team with the new Falcon ROV**



**Increased numbers of DSVs mean increased demand for commercial divers**

## DSV commissioning increases need for commercial divers

**With at least six dive support vessels (DSVs) scheduled to be commissioned in 2008 and a minimum of eight more in 2009, the need for commercial divers is likely to increase further over the next few years.**

Focussing solely on the impact the commissioning of these new vessels is likely to have on diver demand, the industry is suggesting there will be a requirement for about 750 additional closed bell divers and a similar number of air divers. To

support these additional divers, around 200 life support technicians (LSTs) and a similar number of assistant LSTs, dive supervisors and dive technicians will be needed to adequately man the new DSVs. And that's before taking into account factors such as retirement and the growth of offshore wind farming.

All of this means just one thing for prospective divers, there has never been a better time to become a commercial diver within the past 25 years.

## Oil price boom increases ROV capacity in subsea industry

**The Underwater Centre in Fort William is at the forefront of the international effort to meet the oil industry's unprecedented demand for subsea operators.**

It is one of only a handful of places in the world which trains pilot/ technicians for ROVs on the seabed. The seven-week course, costing £10,000, can open the door to a highly-paid career.

Steve Ham, General Manager of The Centre, said: 'The need for ROV pilots and technicians depends on the level of subsea exploration, which in turn is closely related to the price of oil. The higher the price of oil the more investment and exploration goes on.'

With oil close to \$100 a barrel, exploratory wells and offshore production sites are forecast

to increase dramatically. A recent report by energy industry analysts Douglas Westwood predicted work-class ROV usage, rather than inspection-only ROVs, would rise by 76% over the next three years.

'According to that report, at the end of 2006 there were 3261 operational subsea wells. It estimates that, by 2011, it will be almost 6000,' Steve said.

He added: 'The forecast is for 200 new work-class ROVs every year. Each one needs six people. So we have to find 1200 new people a year for the foreseeable future just for the work-class ROVs, and there will also be a huge increase in the inspection ROVs that need two operators. But we will probably train only about 250 this year.

'On top of that there is a demographic problem. A lot of people who have been in ROVs

since the late 1970s and 1980s are starting to retire now.'

Steve said it was the same with North Sea divers, many of whom are now approaching retirement.

'There are divers still working in the North Sea at the age of 60,' he said. 'They are fit and healthy and some are earning up to £1000 a day. But they can't go on forever.'

'We are very busy, but we must find and train more subsea personnel so that Scotland can stay at the forefront of this industry.'

**For more information on commercial diving or ROV courses call:**

**+44 (0)1397 703786**



**Mobilising a Falcon ROV**

## Opportunities at The Underwater Centre

If you are interested in a career with one of the world's top diver and ROV training centres, there are full-time positions available now at The Underwater Centre. A dynamic company with extensive facilities and a superb training site, we have an experienced, positive team who are committed to delivering high quality of 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](http://www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/jobs.asp)

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 the deepest Scottish 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.

## Ground breaking submarine trials (continued from page 1)

The development of the new Submarine Rescue System follows a number of high profile incidents involving stricken submarines, most notably the Kursk disaster in 2000 which resulted in the tragic death of 118 Russian Navy crew.

Rolls-Royce programme manager, Jonty Powis, comments:

'The extensive facilities which are provided here by The Underwater Centre and the established history with previous trials of other submersibles, such as the LR5 and UK Submarine Rescue Service, have allowed us to test

**'This is the first trial in open water for the NSRS, but is the first of several planned here at The Underwater Centre'**

**Jonty Powis,  
Rolls-Royce  
Programme  
Manager**

the increased capability of our new remotely operated vehicles and submersibles with great confidence. This is the first trial in open water of the NSRS and is the first of several planned here at The Underwater Centre in Fort William.'

General Manager of The Underwater Centre, Steve Ham, adds:

'We are delighted to welcome such a prestigious company as Rolls-Royce to The Underwater Centre to carry out the NSRS trials on behalf of France, Norway and the UK. It is also a privilege to be involved in the development of such an

important submersible, especially given its role with NATO. We are in a great position here on Loch Linnhe to be able to provide optimal trials opportunities for companies like Rolls-Royce. Our location, facilities and experience mean we really can provide the best.'

**For more information about trials or to visit our Fort William facility:**

+44 (0)1397 703786

or

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

## Fugro trial flagship ROV

**Fugro, the Dutch technical underwater geological consultancy, has conducted the first UK open water trial of their FCV3000, the new flagship ROV at The Underwater Centre in Fort William.**

It has been built in-house by Fugro and is a highly capable, 5<sup>th</sup> generation work class ROV system, built to service their clients' needs across the global market for ROV operations; whether that is in survey, inspection, intervention or specialist operations.

The Underwater Centre was chosen as the ideal site for the trial due to its world class support facilities. The sea loch provided the trials team with realistic sea conditions as well

as multiple depths in which to test the FCV3000.

The FCV3000 offers the next generation of performance and capability. At the heart of the FCV3000 is Fugro's well-proven control and communication system, based on single-mode fibre-optic technology. This is complemented by the capability to host three HD cameras or 12 conventional cameras, which provide a wide range of communications. However, it is the implementation of the 'hidden capability' that will distinguish the Fugro contribution to remote technology.

Jim Mann, Global ROV manager at Fugro, comments:

'The Underwater Centre has been running Fugro ROV



Fugro FCV3000 being launched into Loch Linnhe, Fort William

courses throughout 2007. We have built a close working relationship with the company during this time. The facilities and support here have been ideal for the first UK sea trials of

our flagship ROV, the FCV3000. The trials have been a great success and we hope to be back here next year.'

  
**THE  
UNDERWATER CENTRE**

### The Underwater Centre

An Aird, Fort William, Inverness-shire, PH33 6AN

T. +44 (0)1397 703786

F. +44 (0)1397 704969

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

W. [www.theunderwatercentre.com](http://www.theunderwatercentre.com)