

TECHNICAL AWARENESS SEMINAR 2003, SOUTH AFRICA

We Visited for You

In early December 2003 the Hydrographic Society of South Africa held a four-day Technical Awareness Seminar (TAS) hosted by the Institute for Maritime Technology (IMT) in Simonâ€™s Town, South Africa. The theme for the Seminar was â€™New Technologies for a New Centuryâ€™.

Over one hundred delegates from the Southern Africa region attended the TAS, providing a good representation of the regions Offshore Mining Companies, Oil & Gas Industry, South African Navy, Research Institutions, Educational Institutions and Local Marine Suppliers. Delegates generally registered for just one of the four days, as presentations and demonstrations were repeated every day. However, due to parallel presentation format some delegates registered for a second day to catch up on presentations that they had missed! Three of the four days focused on specific delegate interest groups (Offshore Minerals, Navy and Environmental) whilst the first day had no specific focus.

Representatives from Reson, Sonardyne, iXsea-Oceano, Valeport, C&C Technologies, Fugro, Coda Octopus, EUTEC and De Beers Marine were asked to give 40-minute technical presentations in the mornings. They also provided demonstration equipment, either to be fitted to a survey vessel or to be used as stand-alone, for delegate demonstrations in the Naval Dockyard in the afternoon sessions.

Due to tight scheduling of the daily activities the TAS Work Group had a busy time ensuring that presenters did not exceed their allocated 40-minute presentation slot, and ensuring that delegates did not get lost when moving between the two presentation rooms. Lunch was a relatively short affair, with the first of the afternoon session delegates being bussed down to the Naval dockyard promptly at 13:45pm. Those waiting for their lift had an opportunity to spend time in the auditorium foyer, browsing through participant companiesâ€™ static equipment displays and collecting marketing materials.

During registration, delegates had to choose in which of the afternoon sessions they would be participating, as the TAS Work Group wanted to minimise the number of delegates around any particular survey equipment whilst it was being demonstrated. Each presenter had a five-minute opportunity to recap on the technicalities of their equipment before the survey vessel sailed to the survey area. The survey was conducted only in the Naval Harbour, due to the gale force wind that blew throughout the week. This fortunately did not impact on the planned survey as there are a number of large targets within the confines of the harbour that made interesting viewing on the echo-sounders and side-scan sonar.

The survey vessel was fitted out with the following equipment:

- Reson 8125 MBES
- Klein 3000 SSS
- Valeport MIDAS Surveyor SBES with SVP, Tide Gauge and MSK Beacon DGPS input
- C&C C-Nav Positioning
- Fugro Starfix HP Positioning
- iXsea-Oceano Octans
- TSS Meridian Surveyor Gyro Compass
- Sonardyne USBL tracking system
- Coda Octopus F180
- TSS DMS2-05

Whilst waiting for the opportunity to attend the survey vessel demonstrations, AUV and ROV demonstrations were held from the quayside, affording delegates the opportunity to pilot a ROV and view a AUV launch and recovery. Presenters were on hand to give delegates a run-down on the technical workings of state-of-the-art equipment and post-processing of captured data. A unique close-up image of a crayfish was taken using the ROV. This was reported to be holding a small placard carrying the words â€™ROV, AUV, mutibeam, side-scan sonar, echosounders - how about some privacy!!!â€™

After a hectic day in the lecture rooms and out on the water, most delegates retired to the Phoenix Pub back at IMT in the late afternoon for complementary drinks and snacks. The opportunity was taken to talk to presenters and fellow delegates about the dayâ€™s activities, as well as to hold a meeting or two to discuss sales issues.

Feedback to the TAS Work Group from both presenters and delegates has been very positive. By all accounts, Africaâ€™s first mini-â€™Oceanology Internationalâ€™ went very well and the request from industry is that the HSSA hold a similar Seminar in late 2004 or 2005.

Source: Aubrey Price and Eddie Guild