Chartwell Marine Launches Scanwell Shallow Draft Survey Vessel

In response to calls from the scientific community, ports and industrial surveyors, Chartwell Marine, a pioneer in next-generation vessel design, has announced the launch of its Scanwell shallow draft survey vessel providing unparalleled standards of versatility and safety in one and half metre waters. The Scanwell range is available in multiple hull sizes – 10m, 12m, 15m and 19m – enabling use in a wide variety of applications, such as offshore energy, port infrastructure and scientific expeditions. There are already two vessels on order, the company says, the first of which has been recently delivered, a 10m survey vessel and a 19m teaching vessel.

According to the company, vessels with shallow draught capabilities such as the Scanwell are critical for port maintenance and expansion. Most channels in ports are dredged to a depth of 5 or 6 metres – but must be surveyed before initial dredging and for maintenance. When sediment and particle deposition fill these port channels, operating depths are severely reduced. The Scanwell can operate in waters of 1.5 metres – a parameter that could only be met with limited current market offerings.

Safe Decommissioning of Oil Pipelines

More widely, shallow-draft vessels are especially vital for cable transfers to beaches and UXO (unexploded ordinance) surveys – the North Sea requires significant amounts of both, in many cases very close to shore. The Scanwell's larger size enables an additional level of versatility, allowing the vessel to be effective in both shallow draught situations and further out to sea. In the offshore energy sector, wind farms need surveying throughout their entire lifecycles, from the initial preparations to lay cables, maintenance checks on sub-sea infrastructure and final decommissioning. The same goes for oil & gas – with the additional need to ensure safe decommissioning of oil pipelines.

Additionally, a hybrid version of the vessel has been used as a teaching/education vessel, a task to which the vessel is particularly suited, owing to its quiet and comfortable operations. Loud engines make teaching challenging, while potentially disturbing marine life. With options to equip seabed mapping, electronic scanning and launch sampling tools, the vessel also has space built-in for diver equipment, enabling operations that encompass biomarine and geological surveying.