

Offshore Survey 2007 Presentations

In conjunction with Ocean Business 2007, the conference Offshore Survey 2007 is organised. Adam Kerr followed the lectures and reports about them.

After the coffee break, the programme turned to a presentation by Ian Florence of SIMRAD who discussed the value of having Dynamic Positioning associated with ROVs.

He noted that there were now a total of 435 work class ROV systems worldwide, some of which had DP retrofitted. He gave his opinions on the value of DPs in terms of making the pilot's task less arduous and the entire operation more efficient. The outstanding question is whether the addition of DPs is worth the money.

A shift of scene followed from deep ocean matters to the shallow but complex hydrography of the Thames River. This was presented by John Dillon-Leetch, Deputy Port Hydrographer of the Port of London Authority. He started by giving a resume of the port and its activities, noting that it was one of three major UK ports and handled 50 million tons per annum. The hydrographic office had the use of two survey vessels, both equipped with multibeam echo sounders – RESON 8101 and 8125. Processing was carried out using Hypack/Hysweep and Fledermaus. He pointed out the great variety of the tasks and particularly the new task associated with security for the Olympics.

The next speaker was Dave Mann from Gardline who discussed an interesting trial that had been carried out by his company to compare different methods of tidal reduction in the offshore. The traditional method was to use a co-tidal reduction chart BA 5058. This could be improved by the use of offshore tide gauges to verify/improve the co-tidal model. Various techniques making use of GPS were now possible. These included RTK and network RTK, PPK (post processing kinematic), PPP (Post Processing Solution.).

During the recent trial various systems by various manufacturers had been compared and the results (anonymous relating to the manufacturers) were presented.

Moving to a more general view of hydrography, Nick Tasker, the Head of Corporate Public Relations of the UKHO gave an enthusiastic outline of the latest developments of that organisation. He stated that there were three programmes: Defence Programme, which was its first priority; the National programme – working with the MCA and the Commercial programme that supporting merchant shipping on a worldwide basis. He noted that there was a new internal structure for the organisation: to support the end user; to exploit expertise; to focus on Industry segments; to adopt new production technology and to complement joint venture partnerships. He discussed how the organisations was supporting MBES technology and had formed a Bathymetric Data Centre of Expertise. He noted the important surveys conducted by HMS Scott following the Boxing Day tsunamis.

They were developing a common surface approach from which many products could be made available.

Following the lunch break the programme addressed LIDAR in a discussion by Ed Danson of Admiralty Coastal Surveys AB. Although its origins go back some time the Hawkeye II Bathymetric Lidar system is trying to find a niche in the competitive laser surveying business. Numerous examples were given of the system in use on various small projects in the coastal zone, in Brittany and elsewhere.

Back again to autonomous underwater vehicles, Dan Hook of Autonomous Surface Vehicles Ltd. Provided a discussion of their latest developments. This in fact appears to be a thoroughly modernised version of the ISE produced Dolphin. The new vehicle has been successfully trialled and recent work has been on the design of a vehicle for NOAA with instrumentation by C & C . Testing so far has shown that vehicles up to 9 metres in length have much greater sea keeping abilities than traditional vessels.

To end the days programme there were two papers discussing offshore surveying for the oil industry. The first of these by Chris Mott of FUGRO was an enthusiastic presentation of a major survey carried out using the AUV Hugin. A short film presentation showed the remarkable resolution possible with these vehicles that can be deployed so close to the seafloor in deep water. The second and last presentation of the day was by Tim Jackson, Senior Advisor Survey and Seismic Operations of BP. He showed schematically how offshore surveys played a part in all aspects of oil and gas development from initial research to final closure. He acknowledged the great importance of the work to the oil industry and thanked the surveyors for their contribution.