

Coasting ahead

Theone Wilson reports on a company that is becoming increasingly involved in the renewables sector

Osiris Projects was formed in 1997 by the two current Directors, Andrew McLeay and Jim Walters. The company is currently working on a variety of projects throughout the UK, ranging from small dock surveys, through to oil and gas pipeline inspections and large Round 3 offshore wind farm surveys. Osiris Projects has been working in the renewables sector since 2001, when it undertook offshore wind farm surveys in the Thames estuary and Irish Sea.

The company prides itself on being market leaders in high resolution marine surveys. "As such we do not strive to acquire the largest market share in the industry, as this would inevitably lead to compromise in quality," explains Contracts Manager Patrick Clark. "Rather, it is critical our business continues to grow in a sustainable manner and that we continue to provide the best quality service we can to all the clients we work for now and in the future."

Most of the group's work is undertaken around the coasts of the British Isles, with a proportion undertaken in the eastern North Sea as part of a term contract that is currently held with Shell UK/NAM. Osiris Projects is unusual in that it owns and operates its own fleet of small survey vessels and high resolution survey equipment.

"Osiris Projects originally operated within a niche market, providing surveys within the near shore environment, which are too shallow for large, deeper draughted vessels to work," says Jim Walters. "Our smaller vessels are able to reach remote sites

quickly at speeds of up to 25 knots, whilst retaining the ability to carry out detailed survey work at nominal speeds of around 4 knots - essential for good data quality. As the company has grown, our vessels have become larger and more capable, with the ability to work in deeper waters, further offshore."

In fact, Osiris Projects is looking forward to launching its latest vessel, Bibby Tethra, in March. This high specification survey vessel will be operated under the MCA small workboat code classification, bringing all the operational cost savings this provides, but will comfortably work with a full geophysical, geotechnical, environmental, ROV/Diver or AUV capability up to 150 miles from a safe haven. Her additional economic and environmental advantages come from her low fuel consumption; she has a dual propulsion system which allows for a relatively fast transit to remote sites but an exceptionally economical solution for slow speed work, whereby the diesel-electric power allows the entire survey operation to run from a single generator.

Osiris Projects prides itself on remaining up to date with the very latest technology; this is an important part of surveying, as the data collected needs to be of the highest quality. In this sector, the weather may often result in numerous lost working days on site, due to poor quality data caused by generally 'noisy' sea conditions. To this extent, Osiris Projects has invested heavily in technology such as the latest Motion Referencing Systems, which are used to compensate for the vessel's motion (heave, pitch and roll)

caused by the sea state.

"Technological advances in the marine survey field have quickened over recent years, mainly due to advances in computer speeds and memory capacities, together with rapid advances in software technology," explains Walters. "It is vital for a survey company to keep up with hardware and software advances."

In the near future, the company expects to increase its workload in the Southern North Sea, with increasing opportunities generated by the new survey vessel Bibby Tethra. The company also expects a general, but significant increase in wind farm survey activity outside the UK 12 mile limit as part of the Round 3 developments.

Osiris Projects is currently focusing on its niche sector and aims to ensure quality exists throughout the business. During 2010 the group established a formal graduate training programme, and has embraced the government supported apprenticeship scheme. "Investment in people now will be the key to our ongoing success," states Clark. ■

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