Helping salvage the Costa Concordia

The raising of the stricken Costa Concordia was the biggest maritime operation of its kind – and Prolec’s Digmaster system was employed on the hydraulic digger used to build the false seabed on which the vessel now rests.

The successful 19-hour operation to haul the 114,500 tonne cruise ship upright took place last September off the Italian island of Giglio, where the Concordia had lain partially submerged since running aground in January 2012 – with the tragic loss of 32 passengers and crew. A process called parbuckling was used to roll the ship up to vertical, using cables and the weight of the water held in huge metal containers attached to the vessel’s sides.

Seabed preparation
The Digmaster system was installed on a hydraulic digger that was equipped with a pneumatic drill. Working in tandem with...
Proléc's Digmaster system was installed on the equipment used build the false seabed for the Costa Concordia to rest upon.

The GPS system provided by the Dutch company Seabed B.V., the Digmaster allowed the operators to see the tool's position underwater, enabling more rapid and more accurate construction of the pre-defined false seabed.

“There are a lot of guidance systems on the market, but ours is richer in content,” says Gary Tuffy, Proléc’s sales and marketing director. “The Digmaster gives a better, real-time view of what the machine is doing – and that’s important when you are doing precise work, as was the case in the salvage of the Costa Concordia. Raising the huge ship was indeed a delicate operation: it had been feared that it could break up, or even tip off the artificial seabed into deeper waters.

“Another benefit of the Digmaster is that it offers multiple views,” adds Gary. “You can zoom in close to the target and you can also ‘mirror’ the different tools used on the digger – such as the pneumatic drill used in the Concordia application – in their proper dimensions. This is something that our competitors cannot do.”

The Digmaster, as its name implies, is most often used for digging and dredging work, and Gary is delighted that it has proved to be an adaptable enough tool to be used in this very different – and high profile – operation. He is full of praise for the team at Seabed B.V., who distribute and sell the system: “They have been using the Digmaster for ten years, and they have an intimate understanding of it, and its many applications,” he says.

For the Costa Concordia, the plan is to refloat the vessel later this year and tow it to port, where it will be broken up. In total, it is reckoned that the salvage operation will cost in excess of €600 million. “We are really pleased to have been able to play such an important role in this high profile and very sensitive salvage operation following the tragedy surrounding the vessel's loss,” concludes Gary. “It serves to demonstrate that however challenging the task, Proléc is a very safe and trusted supplier.”

Diving and ROV

Divex delivers critical safety capability to Russian Navy

The Kursk tragedy of 2000, in which 118 sailors and officers perished when their nuclear-powered cruise missile submarine sank in the Barents Sea, clearly identified a need for a Russian submarine rescue ship – Divex is now providing the saturation diving capability for the new Igor Belousov rescue vessel.

Due to be commissioned later in 2014, the Igor Belousov will support a variety of rescue missions including the search, rescue and salvage of submarines in distress. That Divex was in a position to win this high profile and prestigious contract to equip the new vessel was a significant achievement against strong international competition, as project manager Fred Pope explains: “Divex won this contract simply due to an ability to produce, in the time required, at the standard required, the type of system that fits the needs of the Russian Admiralty.”

With over 25 years’ service, Fred is one of Divex’s longest serving and most experienced team members. As such, he was involved in the negotiation of the contract from the very start, following through to the design and production of the system. Most recently he has been overseeing manufacturing at Divex’s various global locations. “It’s exciting to be working on such a rewarding project, working to improve safety during critical rescue missions,” continues Fred. “From a personal point of view it’s the challenge of getting everything delivered in a timely manner that I most enjoy, I look forward to seeing this project to its conclusion and feel confident we can assist the Russian Admiralty in the most effective way possible through to completion.”

An international project

Divex designed and is manufacturing and supplying the 450-metre rated deep saturation diving system for Divex Russian partners Tetis Pro; and ultimately for the Russian Admiralty. The system is unique in accommodating 12 divers in saturation to enable them to gain access to a stricken submarine. Divex has an extremely strong and longstanding reputation in this area, having built 100 major saturation diving systems since 1974. The Igor Belousov system decompression chambers, diving bell and control system were built at Divex’s facilities in Perth, Western Australia while the bell deployment, life support and gas control system were manufactured and supplied from Divex headquarters in Aberdeen, Scotland. All environmental control systems equipment was manufactured by Divex’s facility in Cape Town, South Africa, making the system a truly international project.

“We are really pleased to have been able to play such an important role in this high profile and very sensitive salvage operation”

Gary Tuffy, Proléc

“It’s exciting to be working on such a rewarding project, working to improve safety during critical rescue missions”

Fred Pope, Divex
The purchase of the vessels has meant a change of mission for the JFMS team to one of assisting the purchaser with all aspects of handover and commissioning, including training for a large number of resident navy personnel. “Since 2007 we have been responsible for ongoing maintenance and upgrade of the three vessels,” explains JFMS project manager Jonathan Cody. “We created a corvette organisation with a team of engineers, electricians and able seamen. As these vessels needed to be kept in tip-top condition we had to create a ship crew organisation capable of moving the vessels when necessary and also demonstrating them to prospective customers. With the sale of the corvettes to the Indonesian Navy, the JFMS team had to move quickly to meet the needs of their new owners for effective handover and commissioning. “We created a site from scratch, known as Woodbridge Haven,” continues Jonathan. “It’s a brown field site, directly opposite the corvette berth and we assembled a temporary ‘Portacabin’ village for all of the personnel all from Indonesia, as well as our own team and staff from the vessel brokerage. It includes office and living accommodation and both Halal and European dining facilities, a prayer room, showers and single cabins as well as site security. In addition, we have helped five officers who wished to bring their families with them, to secure rented accommodation within the town.”

**United Nations of Barrow**

The JFMS team recognised the importance of community cohesion, both in preparing the local population for the influx of visitors and also, as Jonathan explains, the Indonesian Navy personnel for their stay in the UK. “We had the Cumbria Constabulary brief the Indonesian engineers on what they could expect when being here. It’s nothing fundamentally new, however, as Barrow has previously hosted teams from countries including Canada and Japan. It’s important though to make them as welcome as possible so that they can focus on the handover activities, for which we are all working to very tight timescales.”

As Jonathan concludes: “JFMS has a well-deserved reputation in merchant shipping but with this project we have demonstrated our growing skill level and expertise in the defence sector. Warships such as these corvettes have sophisticated management and operating systems, they can go extremely fast, and they are assigned for naval work. It really shows the breadth of JFMS capabilities and our flexibility in adjusting our core skills to new challenges.”

Jonathan Cody, JFMS
Testing conditions for Strainstall’s rig stability project

Atrocious weather conditions made tough work of a Red Sea pile testing assignment for Strainstall Middle East project engineers Mahmood Ur Rahman Khan and Santosh Pappy Varghese.

Pile dynamic testing involves taking instruments offshore to monitor the impact loads of piles – the steel tubes that are driven into the seabed to secure rigs in position. In this important project for Valentine Maritime, Mahmood and Santosh – overseen by project manager Prasanth Anto – were undertaking a critical test to ensure the stability of a rig platform.

The project was supposed to take a month, but atrocious weather conditions meant that it lasted over five – from May to October last year. The conditions were such that they often had to wait for long hours for the sea to calm down, and – because it was vital to make up time when it did – they had to be ready to resume work at all times of day and night.

“It was certainly a valuable experience for us,” commented Mahmood, “although it was very tiresome, not to mention the fact that we ran out of books and DVDs whilst offshore!”

Santosh added: “There was a lot of responsibility on our shoulders to ensure 100 percent correctness and safety during the project, and the weather conditions certainly made life more difficult. However, we relished the challenge and feel we stood up to the task well – although we did get somewhat bored of eating fish for five months!”

Mike Shaw, general manager at Strainstall Middle East, who championed the contract bid alongside technical manager Anil Cherian, added: “Strainstall’s strong marine connections put us in a very good position to win this work,” he commented. “We offer a quick response with a backup team and spare system to minimise delays – other than those caused by external events such as weather! Alongside this, Valentine Maritime was already familiar with the high quality of our work and in many respects this demonstrates that our reputation for past excellence is our best sales tool for future contracts.”

Fisher Offshore responds to demand in offshore training

In response to a surge in demand for offshore training from Aberdeen based drilling contractors, Fisher Offshore is providing a unique introductory course in pneumatic winches at its Aberdeen facility in partnership with Ingersoll Rand.

The new one-day course has been devised for offshore staff requiring hands-on training with utility and man riding winches prior to using them in the North Sea. Training will take place in Fisher Offshore’s newly refurbished pneumatic workshop, with attendees gaining an OEM-endorsed certificate on successful completion. The aim is to give offshore personnel an insight into the application, installation, testing, basic maintenance and trouble shooting of a range of winches – with the intention of promoting safety and efficiency, and preventing down-time.

“Fisher Offshore is about far more than simply providing equipment,” asserts the company’s sales manager Graeme Brand. “We now have the facilities and the expertise to provide a fully integrated package to clients and the introduction of this unique training course is another step forward in enhancing this offering.”
Intergroup collaboration provides innovative solution to Total

The supply of a critical mooring monitoring solution to oil giant Total has seen James Fisher group companies Strainstall and RMSpumptools come together in a fruitful collaboration, demonstrating how customers can benefit from the diverse and integrated solutions that the James Fisher group can provide.

The Integrated Marine Management System (IMMS) is for the Moho Nord tension leg platform, destined for installation off the Congolese coast in West Africa. Strainstall will provide Total with a comprehensive monitoring package that will be crucial for both production and safety; RMSpumptools will supply underwater connectors that are especially resistant to interference and malfunction caused by the growth of marine vegetation.

Strainstall’s IMMSs are designed to provide an integrated monitoring and control system for both fixed and floating offshore structures. The data monitored includes load and bending moments in the mooring tendons, the height of the deck above the sea surface, permanent and temporary ballast tank levels, wave condition, wind speed and direction, air temperature and pressure.

“Strainstall is the market leader in load cell-based tension leg platform tension measurement systems (TTMS), and those such as the Moho Nord IMMS are a natural progression from this,” explains Strainstall offshore systems engineer Ross Davidson. “A key differentiator for Strainstall has always been our ability to instil confidence, because we put our engineers in front of our clients. And the involvement in this project of our JF group colleagues at RMSpumptools has certainly added value to our offer.”

RMSpumptools are supplying seventy-eight of their innovative SeaConnect™ electrical connectors, a technology that – coupled with Strainstall’s monitoring expertise – offers a complete technical solution for offshore monitoring that is thoroughly robust in harsh marine environments. Michael Winfield explains: “With traditional ‘wet’ electrical connectors, the live side has electrical contact with the ocean. Using a unique latch patented technology, our systems have protected content on both sides – male and female – which offers a level of protection against extreme marine growth that no-one else can match.”

This combined capability that can only be supplied by a company as multi-disciplinary and diverse as the James Fisher group, brings significant benefits for the customer as Michael concludes: “For any client, there are obvious advantages to working with one supplier, providing one system that can be confidently deployed in an area with high marine growth and high potential for damage – and will provide a robust monitoring solution that works long term.”

Osiris attains key safety association membership

Osiris Marine Services has gained a vital health and safety membership of the Remote Systems and ROV division of the IMCA (International Maritime Contractors Association).

“In order to join IMCA you have to comply with a fairly strict series of practices in terms of quality assurance, quality control, safety management and maintenance,” explains Osiris offshore manager James Ridgeway. “We are proud to have achieved this, which reflects well not just on the services we provide, but also on the continued hard work and efforts of our staff.”

Oil and gas majors - who increasingly see IMCA membership as obligatory for contractors – will audit the next stage of Osiris’s accreditation. This achievement therefore counts as a vital enabler for the company, as it pushes for new business in the oil and gas sector, especially in the emerging markets of West and East Africa.

“The IMCA membership we have achieved relates to ROV operations, which is an area where we aim to grow in both capacity and strength,” added Osiris managing director Aiden West. This is an important organisation for us to engage with as IMCA is much more than a mere trade association. It is a procedural body putting systems in place that give the maritime community a structure to work to, in turn reassuring customers that their suppliers are compliant in regards to safety. IMCA rightly keeps standards extremely high, so the achievement of membership in the ROV division highlights just what a strong position Osiris is in, and I have no doubt that it will lead to more work in the future.”
A Day in the life...

Andy Brunton MBE

Andy Brunton has been defence business development manager at Divex since late 2010, having previously worked for the company as an ISS Technician.

Andy, tell us a bit about your role within Divex.
My work is varied, but on a day-to-day basis typical work includes reviewing potential client requirements with a view to offering solutions from our product range. This could see me briefing customers in the morning, and then diving with them in the afternoon! So I often work very closely with the customer, which I find rewarding.

Is there a stand-out project that you’re involved with at the moment?
Although I can’t reveal too much for security reasons, Divex is currently working alongside a partner organisation in the United States. This is in support of ongoing and developing opportunities within the US market and is both challenging and rewarding.

So having been with the company now for a few years, looking back was it an easy choice for you to join Divex? What was your role before you joined?
I knew Glyn Gilbert, general manager, defence and ISS at Divex, from my time working with him on the development of kit for the Royal Navy, for which I worked for 31 years. It was Glyn that first spoke to me about joining Divex, and naturally I was intrigued – and as the Divex Portsmouth office is a mere 11 miles from my home on Hayling Island, it certainly seemed like an offer worth considering! So yes, it was quite an easy decision for me. Immediately prior to joining Divex I was working in Counterterrorist and Threat Assessment with Allen Vanguard Technical Services, based in Swindon.

You mentioned your 31 years in the Royal Navy – tell us a bit more about your time there.
I joined the Navy aged 16 as a direct entry Clearance Diver. Looking back, this was a fairly strange decision since I didn’t learn to swim until I was 13! I was inspired to become a diver after watching the Jacques Cousteau programmes, and naturally I was intrigued – and as the Divex Portsmouth office is a mere 11 miles from my home on Hayling Island, it certainly seemed like an offer worth considering! So yes, it was quite an easy decision for me. Immediately prior to joining Divex I was working in Counterterrorist and Threat Assessment with Allen Vanguard Technical Services, based in Swindon.

Tell us about your MBE.
I received my MBE for my services during the second Gulf War, and also for helping to set up a voluntary rapid response first aid team on Hayling Island in 2000. Getting the award was a truly humbling experience and not one I’ll ever forget.

What do you like to do when you’re not working?
I enjoy motorcycling with my eldest son Jamie – he’s 23 – we go on trips at least twice a year; I love the freedom of the open road and the excitement that being on the bike brings. I also enjoy sailing with my youngest son Tom, 19 – we try to go out a couple of times a month in Poole harbour. I also undertook a rigorous training route for the 24 hour canoe marathon that I undertook last year!

So it sounds like you’re quite a family man?
Yes – they’re very supportive of me and my work – particularly my wife Helen, to whom I’ve been married for 24 years. We met when I was in the Navy when she used to give me discounted rates with her car hire company in Rosyth – my kind of lady! My family’s support and encouragement have definitely made it possible for me to progress in my chosen career, so I’m truly appreciative of that.

Any final thoughts?
Looking back, I’ve been blessed to do something I’ve always enjoyed with a passion – and that’s always shone through. My advice to my boys is that quality of life is not solely based on how much you earn each week.

Divex is recognised as a global industry leader in the design, supply and manufacture of diving and subsea equipment for the international market.
Remote handling

US debut for acclaimed remote handling system

James Fisher Nuclear (JFN) presented two papers at this year’s prestigious annual Waste Management Conference, hosted in March at Phoenix, Arizona.

This is the first time James Fisher has presented at the event, which is widely regarded as the premier international conference for radioactive waste management, decommissioning and site remediation. The conference is in its 40th year and attracted over 2,000 nuclear specialists from over 35 countries, presenting more than 600 papers in over 100 technical sessions. JFN’s head of engineering, Geoff Ashworth, gave papers on JFN’s new modular hydraulic power manipulator, and the design and construction of a modular, transportable, waste treatment station for use in a nuclear power plant in the process of decommissioning. James Fisher also exhibited at the Phoenix conference, through the newly formed James Fisher Technologies [see p.8].

Both presentations emphasised the flexibility and modularity of the solutions that JFN provides and, as Geoff Ashworth noted, “the conference provided the ideal platform to showcase James Fisher Nuclear’s capabilities to the international marketplace.”

ModuMan® and the water treatment plant are both current multi-million pound JFN projects for major UK Nuclear decommissioning programmes. ModuMan® also won recognition in National Instruments’ technical case study competition last November, when a paper on the innovative robotic manipulator by JFN’s Dr Carwyn Jones was a finalist in the Graphical System Design Achievement Award.

“I was proud for JFN to be recognised for this project case study,” commented Carwyn. “The nuclear decommissioning environment is challenging and requires robust control systems to complement robust and reliable mechanical engineering. The National Instruments control system has proved to be ideal for tough and hazardous conditions. The end result is a high quality product in ModuMan® with applications worldwide.”

Subsea Vision boosts ROV expertise

The latest addition to the James Fisher group is Subsea Vision, a Dorset-based firm of underwater survey specialists.

Subsea Vision owns and operates remotely operated vehicles (ROVs), and provides underwater surveys, inspections and construction support to the oil and gas industry – including floating, production, storage and offtake vessels. The company – for which James Fisher has paid £2.5m – will be grouped with Fendercare.

Managing director Chris Bryant set up Subsea Vision in 2002 with just one ROV, and has built up the business from there. He thinks the relatively small size of the company has been important to its client appeal. “It’s like a family environment. Everyone knows what they need to be doing and everyone pulls their weight. And our size means that clients can get in touch with me directly, which wouldn’t be the case with some bigger firms. I feel this is key to why we get a lot of repeat business.”

One of Subsea’s main clients is Bluewater UK, for which they perform annual surveys of two Floating Production Storage Offload vessels (FPSOs) in the North Sea. “We aim to be specialist survey providers in the FPSO market,” says Chris; geographically, he sees the company extending its future operations to areas like the Nigerian coastal waters.

Chris started out as a diver at the age of 19 and still approaches his job with the same relish. “From the initial enquiry email, to gathering the information to find out what the client wants, and up to completion, it’s all very exciting. Ultimately it’s all about flexibility and keeping up with technology – and, hopefully, saving the client money.” He is looking forward to pushing the company further under the James Fisher banner, and to some fruitful collaborations. “I can see Subsea Vision and Osiris – and other group companies – joining together very successfully on projects,” he concludes.
Fisher’s expansion continues

The global reach and ambition of the James Fisher Group has been underlined by the opening of four new facilities over recent months – in the United Arab Emirates, Colorado, USA, as well as closer to home in Manchester and Glasgow.

In February, Fendercare Marine Middle East celebrated the official opening of its new regional Head Office at Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. Attendees were given a tour of the brand new, purpose-built premises, including the extensive new warehouse facilities. General manager Bode Gbadamosi commented: “Our new base increases our ability to exceed customer expectations while giving us the space to expand our product and service offerings.”

“The UAE is fast becoming the regional hub for marine and oil and gas companies, making it the preferred location. The opening of the new office emphasises our position as a world-leading provider of high quality products, services and packaged solutions to the commercial marine, naval, offshore oil and gas and renewable energy industries,” added Fendercare Marine managing director Eric Plane.

New subsea manufacturing hub
Later in the same month Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal officially opened the new headquarters of James Fisher Defence (JFD) in Glasgow, and with it the global manufacturing hub for future James Fisher and Sons plc subsea engineering projects.

The 30,000 square foot facility provides a scale and an infrastructure that will enable JFD and sister company Divex Ltd to work closely together to deliver large-scale projects. It will also allow both companies to broaden their offer of products and services in the special operations, saturation diving and submarine escape, rescue and abandonment markets.

“Our customers will benefit from the numerous synergies between the two businesses including increased capacity, a greater breadth of capability and an even greater depth of shared experience,” said Ben Sharples, managing director of JFD. His Divex counterpart Doug Godsman added: “The shared facility will allow us to satisfy growing global demand for saturation diving systems whilst maintaining the high quality for which Divex is renowned.”

The move was supported by Scottish Development International, and demonstrates JFD’s commitment to Glasgow; a region that has provided the company with an abundance of skilled engineers and high-quality graduates for over two decades.

New Manchester office
The promotion of cross-group synergies is also the motivation for the setting up of a new James Fisher Marine Services office near Manchester. This will facilitate and support the bidding process for – and management of – large projects involving several group companies coming together to provide a suite of services and turnkey solutions to clients.

Launch of JFT
Moving across the pond, Longmont in Colorado is the base of the newly formed James Fisher Technologies (JFT), which will provide remote systems and services to the nuclear and high hazard industries across North America. The company has an exclusive licencing agreement with James Fisher Nuclear to offer its products and services to this market, and recently exhibited at the prestigious annual Waste Management Conference held in Phoenix, Arizona (see p.7).

JFT’s chief executive officer Scott Adams commented: “The hallmark of the James Fisher group is its ability to tailor its approach to the customer and to utilise group backing and experience, to deliver exceptional results. I look forward to bringing this ethos and commitment to our US customers through James Fisher Technologies.”

Cruise line selects Mimic

A major cruise line has saved over $1.5million in annual maintenance costs, thanks to a new monitoring system developed by James Fisher Mimic. The monitoring hardware and software was installed on eight vessels with an established pattern of turbocharger failure, in December 2012. Over the following twelve months there were ten catastrophic failures across the 90-odd turbochargers used in these ships: of these failures, seven were as a result of the known failure pattern, and therefore fell within the remit of Mimic’s contract.

“All seven of these failures were recognised in their early stages by our monitoring system and the operating crew were alerted,” reports Martin Briddon, Mimic’s engineering manager. “As a result, they were able to shut down the engine, reducing the load on the turbocharger – and so reduce the repair bill from $250,000 per catastrophic turbo failure to $25,000, meaning a notional saving to the client of $1,575,000 over the course of a year.”
ScanTech Offshore advances safety

ScanTech Offshore, market leaders in well test support services, has announced the development of a revolutionary new burner, and is soon to launch a game-changing fully automated sub pump deployment system.

The standard method of deploying and retrieving submersible pumps has always been a time-consuming effort, involving several hours of crane time. It ties up rig power supply, puts personnel at risk working under suspended loads or over the side of installations, and involves considerable manual handling. ScanTech's SafeDeploy™ system replaces the traditional hang-off frame and, once installed (which requires a single lift), is fully automated and significantly reduces critical path time.

The unit measures as a standard 10x8ft container, rendering it highly compact, and is designed to be incredibly versatile, allowing it to be positioned at many convenient locations, in an environment where free space is easy to mismanage.

Deployment and retrieval of sub pumps can be achieved in 15 minutes, versus the several hours required for the more traditional methods, making it extremely efficient during adverse weather conditions, such as cyclone season, where retrieval is critical. The rapid retrieval also helps to preserve the integrity of the pump and lessen maintenance requirements.

“Advancements in technology have enabled us to create the SafeDeploy™ system,” said Barry Craig, project manager at ScanTech Offshore. “It was developed by our committed team who are dedicated to improving safety and efficiency during deployment of submersible pumps offshore.”

Following the SafeDeploy™ is the Sea Wizard Burner, aimed at reducing the number of air compressors required during well testing by up to 50%, saving valuable deck space as a result and contributing towards cutting the carbon footprint and exhaust gas by up to half.

The Sea Wizard – in development with our portfolio to provide increased flexibility and efficiency during deployment of submersible pumps offshore.

Initial trials focused on work-up of the system, including recovery of LR5 using the Scorpio 45 ROV. Then, a full ‘rescue’ operation was conducted with the crew of the submarine HMAS Farncomb, which was berthed at a depth of 112 metres. As part of the operation, JFD and the Royal Australian Navy’s dive team successfully went through a ‘real time’ 36-hour decompression cycle in order to demonstrate capability for providing services such as food and hygiene over an extended period of time.

“From mobilising our equipment at Henderson to returning it there, ready to be used in a real submarine naval emergency, this was a highly successful exercise for both JFD and the Royal Australian Navy,” says Stuart. “And we are delighted to have successfully demonstrated our innovative, cost-saving rescue vehicle launch system.”

JFD demonstrates submarine rescue capabilities

James Fisher Defence has been commended by the Royal Australian Navy for its leading role in a successful submarine rescue test exercise.

JFD has worked on the annual exercise, codenamed Black Carlton, since 2009. Each year sees a different focus: this year, the challenge was to deploy the James Fisher Submarine Rescue Service (JFERS) by air to the opposite seaboard of Australia. “The JFD rescue vehicle LR5, and Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) Scorpio 45 were taken by air from our HQ at Henderson, Western Australia, to Roselle, New South Wales,” explains project manager Stuart Irwin. “The rest of our equipment was sent by road.”

Meanwhile in Roselle, the mothership – Australian Defence Vessel (ADV) Ocean Shield – was being prepared. “By installing four specially designed deck stools onto the vessel, we were able to mount the launch and recovery system used for the LR5 over the side of the vessel instead of over the stern. This avoided the need for costly stern modifications, and had never before been demonstrated successfully,” explains Stuart.

Adaptation of the launch and recovery system of the JFD rescue vehicle for side rather than stern deployment saved cost and was a world first.
Strainstall growth success in SE Asia

When Jasper Lee joined Strainstall in 2012 as general manager of the south-east Asia branch, Strainstall SEA, he set out to re-focus the organisation on a vibrant ‘can-do’ mind-set – a strategy that is helping deliver impressive results.

“Our team based here in Malaysia is incredibly motivated and dedicated,” explains Jasper. “We all look to encourage and help each other, and certainly work well together, with a core base including a strong technical manager, operations manager, and supporting team.”

The success of Strainstall SEA under Jasper’s stewardship was highlighted by the recent financial figures showing that sales in 2013 were £1.45 million; an almost three-fold increase over the previous year. Pile testing is the predominant service area for the Strainstall SEA branch, for which it is the leading provider in Malaysia. In addition to this it has recently become a more major player in the structural monitoring market, mirroring the success of Strainstall in Europe, and the SEA branch now aims to grow into new countries.

Prior to joining Strainstall, Jasper was responsible for sales and marketing for a US-based construction company. It is clear that an outgoing personality has been a backbone to his success, and that his proactive approach to business has been a key driving force to the recent growth of Strainstall SEA.

“Since I joined the company, I’ve been trying to get to know as many people as possible,” he continues. “Coming here, I wanted to change the system – to go to meet every single customer to find out exactly what it is they want, and to enable us to offer the best and most manageable solution. I enjoy getting to know as many people as possible, and making our name known. The strength and wide reach of the James Fisher and Strainstall group gives us support in tendering for contracts, and enables us to work with an effective blend of local culture mixed with the global reach of the company.”

Looking ahead, Jasper expects 2014 to be even stronger than last year, despite an increase in the competition. “I look forward to the further challenges that lie ahead that accompany the increased expectations for growth. As a team, we hope to become further involved in the structural monitoring market and look forward to a prosperous year ahead.”

Design assistance for Kawasaki Heavy Industries tidal turbine

James Fisher Marine Services (JFMS) has completed a front end engineering design study for the installation, maintenance and decommissioning phases of Kawasaki Heavy Industries’ tidal turbine system.

The design study lasted three months and produced a detailed analysis of all associated phases to enable KHI to address key factors with regards to development of a tidal turbine and subsequent offshore testing. The JFMS team on the project was managed by Peter Leach, supported by Alan Heslop and Stan Groundwater.

The work was carried out in conjunction with key partner Mojo Maritime, a specialist provider of marine project management support to the marine renewable energy sector. The study included an analysis of every single individual operation from quayside to seabed (and vice versa), from a risk, cost, timeline and capability perspective, including all necessary project and quality, health, safety and environmental requirements. The final report ended up being a very considerable volume of work and, according to Peter, Alan and Stan, when it was presented to KHI, they summed up their thoughts with one word: “brilliant.”

Overall, the project represents over two years of negotiation, trust building and work, beginning with initial discussions in Orkney between Stan and KHI. “It was our suggestion that with all of the complexities and variables involved in a full testing cycle of a tidal turbine, these would be best addressed through a thorough front end engineering design study,” he explains. “I believe that the capabilities, size and history of the James Fisher group enabled us to beat numerous other competitors to be awarded this work.”
This contract has come about as a result of a global sales initiative led by James Fisher’s Rita Painter. “The Weak Link – or Safety – Bails are designed for floating rigs,” she explains. “They are used when in a pinned to bottom condition such as well testing or completion, and are designed to help avoid catastrophic failure of the landing string and other pressure control equipment, should the compensator lock up during these critical operations.”

Rita has recently been awarded a foundation degree in marketing, and wrote her dissertation on the subject of compensator lock-ups. Such lock-ups, she notes, are fairly common, but most occur when the rig is not pinned to the bottom. The consequences are much more severe when it is, and three such incidents are known to have occurred in the North Sea oil field during the 1990s. “I ran a survey to try to find out about other incidents, and five more serious occurrences were brought to my attention, none of which are in the public domain,” she reveals. “These happened in parts of the world where health and safety is not as well recognised as in the UK sector.”

Weak Link Bails were originally designed by GMC – now Scan Tech AS – for Statoil in the North Sea where they have been in use since 2005. The new contract began in mid-March, and is worth approximately £1.2m a year to the James Fisher Group, excluding assembly, installation and service costs. At the end of the rental, the bails will be returned and will be made available to other companies.

Hard work yields results

Rita is pleased that her team’s hard work has paid off, and that the Weak Link Bails will be used for the first time outside the North Sea: “It is great that we have been able to demonstrate the benefits of this system to an oil major operating in the Far East.”

“This is an important technology that we continue to invest in; it helps reduce the risk of damage and hence consequential costs, hydrocarbon spillage and downtime. But most of all, it could help to save lives.”

Safety and control systems

Scan Tech supplies key safety product to oil major

An international oil major is leasing Scan Tech AS’s Weak Link Bails – a proven safety product in the offshore energy sector – for use in the Far East.

“It is great that we have been able to demonstrate the benefits of this system to an oil major operating in the Far East”

Rita Painter, James Fisher
Mary Rose revisits Barrow

A living link with the company’s heritage visited Fisher House in Barrow in November 2013: Mary Rose Bray, niece to Sir John Fisher, who led the business from the 1920s until the 1960s and later established the philanthropic Fisher Foundation. Prior to the visit, Mary Rose had not returned to Barrow since 1928, some 85 years earlier. She was hosted during the visit by Roger Chapman, of James Fisher Defence, and Diane Meacock and Poland Hart Jackson of the Fisher Foundation, who were able to tell her about the many ways in which the company established by her great grandfather in 1847 continues to thrive as a world class maritime organisation.

A sense of Superiority

While the James Fisher Everard tanker “Superiority” was in dry dock, Pelican caught up with the captain and crew to find out about life on board.

The tanker, built in 2007, was undergoing a rapid refit to enable it to carry additional petrochemical cargoes. The vessel has an international crew of eight, represented by five different nationalities: Filipino, Polish, Romanian, Canadian and British.

Neil Burns, Shipping Services fleet director, described Superiority’s crew as being like a family. “Psychologically it can be hard for some crew members to be away from friends and family for long periods, so not only is the captain responsible for managing the ship, he is responsible for looking out for everyone, their physical and mental well-being.” he added.

The man with this big responsibility for Superiority’s crew is the ship’s Master, Canadian Alexandru Almasan. It can, he admits, be tough at the top. “You may be in heavy seas, in a critical situation and then you have to make a rapid decision. Do you keep going or turn back and if you turn back, is it safe? Or if there was an emergency on board, you need to make a decision right away. You have to be in control all the time.”

Alexandru has seen some changes over the last twenty years. Advances in technology, making ships more manoeuvrable, have made his job easier, but the increase in paperwork hasn’t. “The crew need to view you as both an authority figure and someone they can trust,” he continues. “It’s not just a job – it’s a way of life. We live with each other 24 hours a day. Sometimes we can be out at sea for seven days at a time.”

Of his career choice; Alexandru says that “the sense of adventure always appealed to me. It is interesting with all the nationalities and cultures on board. You meet people who you wouldn’t usually get to meet. It’s a great perk – you learn a lot about people, where they come from, and their motivations.” An occasional cause of international friction is food. “We all have very different tastes, Filipinos love their fish, and I hate it!”

This point is confirmed by Filipino Cook/AB Lamberto Villanueva, who added that one of his own biggest motivators was the ability to provide his family with some stability and income. “It is a tough job being away from them for so long, but providing my family with security makes it all worthwhile,” he concluded.

Strainstall sponsors marathon endeavour

The prevention of childhood cancer is a subject close to the heart of James Fisher’s Nicola Morrow. Her nephew, Jake Ellis, sadly lost his brave four-year battle with cancer at the age of five years old. “Jake was such a special boy who was an inspiration not just to his family but to everyone in our small town – he showed so much courage throughout his illness and was a true hero to us all.”

Nicola and her sister – Jake’s mother, Jo-ann – are active in the charitable campaign known as the ‘Jake Ellis Fund’, established in Jake’s memory. The fund contributes to the Children’s Cancer and Leukaemia Group (CCLG), a professional charitable body that coordinates research and trials into potential cures for children’s cancer and leukaemia.

As a research organisation, CCLG is almost entirely reliant on grant and charity income, with all of the proceeds from its activities and events put to very good use in supporting its very valuable and worthwhile work.

In the latest fundraising endeavour of the Jake Ellis Fund, Jo-ann secured a place in the 2014 London Marathon which was run on Sunday April 13. “I am so proud of Jo-ann,” continues Nicola. “She is by no means an accomplished runner but she decided to conquer this challenge herself in memory of her young son. She put 100 percent of her effort into preparation and committed a large amount of her spare time to training.”

To help this very worthwhile local charity, Strainstall made a sizable donation to Jo-ann’s sponsorship of her Marathon run. Readers of Strainstall wishing to support this good cause by providing further sponsorship to Jo-ann can do so via her fundraising web page: uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/Jake.