



"Winter is here, and it's cold this time of year.
There's snow everywhere in sight, falling on this winter night."
~ Angel

Winter 2012

Seasons Greetings

Although we've already had our first flurries of snow, as you will all no doubt be well aware from the BBC and perhaps other more trusted news sources, here in the South West, wind and rain have been the predominant elements to have affected our region.

However the elements have not prevented us from travelling. Recently, John has been in Germany, Richard in Belgium, Fraser as always off-shore somewhere in the Danish sector, whereas Keith has just returned from another stint in Turkey.

Chris and Richard even found time to visit many of our clients in Piraeus where they were persuaded to use some of their spare time on Sunday to visit a couple of the outlying islands, via the Flying Dolphin from Piraeus port. Although the trip out was only 30 minutes needless to say the vessel was thoroughly 'vetted' en-route by our intrepid surveyors!

We do hope you enjoy reading our winter newsletter.

Wishing you all A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.



Engineers can move boats too!

Richard chose early November to move his much loved narrowboat from Limehouse Marina in London, to Saltford Marina in Somerset to be closer to his home. (The first voyage photo below needs no labelling)



The 156 mile trip with 122 locks en-route was via the Thames and the Kennet & Avon canal and included a blizzard just east of Bath during the epic 9 day delivery voyage. (Yes, that is a snowflake)



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Raising and Lowering

One record we are particularly proud of is that of our heavy lifts, although we have not kept a running record of how many lifts or how many tonnes we have variously witnessed and approved over the years, what we have kept a record of is our percentage success rate, 100%.



We are pleased to be able to say that we maintained this record following the safe transportation of a Slag Granulation Module on behalf of insurers from Newport to Port Talbot, where it will recycle steel slag as cement admixture.

Ports

As well as carrying out Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) audits for various authorities around the country, and obviously running the port of Bridgwater, we have just completed a second biennial layerage survey for one of our clients in Newport.

They are the operators of their own NAABSA (Not Actually Afloat But Safely Aground) berth where they import and export steel to and from their mill.



It was particularly interesting for ourselves to see the physical changes that had occurred to the berth since our previous survey in 2010, i.e. strengthening of the river bed and deepening of the scour pit.

Next time we will take radios so we can communicate a little easier and more importantly plan for a slightly warmer day (or at least warmer water) than that experienced in November in Wales.

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Pollution

Pollution is never good, however we were able to rebut the claims of the Police and Port recently when we attended a vessel which it was alleged had dumped oil barrels into the dock.

Fortunately for our client we were able to support the master and demonstrate that the particular grade was not used on board and never had been.

This was relatively easily done when we pointed out that another 30 drums of identical product were stacked by a shed at one end of the dock and that one more such drum was stuck under a rubbish skip and also that it had been quite windy the previous day.

And then the MCA arrived.....

London Drinks & Farewells



Chris's (first) retirement party seemed to be enjoyed by those who attended, indeed some have even prebooked for next year. Thank you to all our friends and clients who attended and made it such an enjoyable evening.

The best plans are those which are flexible, and instead of saying goodbye to Chris, it turns out that we should also have said goodbye to Fraser. After 6 years he has now left us to take up a new role as rig manager in Denmark and we all wish him well for the future.

Pipelaying

Following on from our Pipelay experience in the North Sea last Summer, we are currently supplying a client with manpower for a pipelaying project offshore from the United Arab Emirates which will run over the Christmas and through to next year.

Although not in particularly deepwater, or in a harsh environment, we are sure the project will, as ever, provide several unique challenges for the team.

For a change this time there were even a few days forewarning which allowed adequate planning before we had to run out of the office and catch a flight.

Tales of Previous Encounters

By pure chance, whilst Chris was telling one of his salty tales (of when he was a cargo super for an oil major on a VLCC off Fujairah, way back in early 1990's) Richard's ears pricked up when he heard the vessel's name.

Chris had detected (by smell) and later confirmed by explosimeter that the attending bunker barge had 100% LEL in its tanks. He in turn advised the VLCC's Chief Engineer, who then refused to accept the bunkers. Yes, you've got it in one, the Chief Engineer was none other than Richard. It's a very small world isn't it!

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