Well-Safe Solutions provides a ground-breaking approach to the safe and cost-effective decommissioning of onshore and offshore wells. Offering a specialist well abandonment service that allows operators to meet the challenges and regulatory requirements around decommissioning, while significantly reducing costs. Working in collaboration to create the perfect package, offering you more. Click here to find out more!

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November’s edition of Decom News.

I think it’s safe to say that 2020 has been passing at a rate of knots, but the past three months - since our last edition of the magazine - seem to have passed particularly quickly.

Since I last wrote, Decom North Sea has been exceptionally busy. In late August, we hosted the very first virtual Decom Offshore, which saw a total of 200 delegates attend to hear from and engage with our programme of international speakers. I’d like to take this opportunity to once again thank all those who contributed, sponsored, attended and organised. We have also continued our successful series of Decom Digital webinars, designed to inspire and inform on a number of topics.

And as the difficult and unpredictable times continue for our industry, we’ve been working hard to represent you, our members. As you may have seen in the press, we have been vocal in pushing for decommissioning to be included in the sector deal in a bid to help mitigate impending job losses and we’ll continue to represent you as the months progress. We believe offshore decommissioning is a key stepping stone to helping realise the practical benefits of energy transition, by providing key employment and maintaining offshore skills whilst nascent industries develop and scale.

In a similar vein, we’ve continued to make strides into our internationalisation campaign, with our first virtual trade mission taking place in late last month. Held in conjunction with Darussalam Enterprise (DARe) and supported by the Department of International Development, this Brunei v-trade mission connected >60 participants and has led to direct and practical discussions on collaboration and potential partnerships. Our series of virtual technical workshops with Petronas (and supported by Scottish Development International) in Malaysia continues with over 700 participants to-date. These provide DNS members with unique and direct access to technical authorities throughout Petronas and their key operator and main contractor partners. This model of direct access and practical connections with technical authorities and partner companies is one we will be continuing.

Many of you will be aware of our efforts to host a live event during Autumn. Held in conjunction with Aberdeen Harbour Board, the first “Decom Live…” was designed to get kit on show and allow delegates to really examine and find out more about some of the incredible innovations our supply chain offers. Sadly, due to COVID-19 restrictions, we judged it wise to postpone this (and subsequent Decom Live…) events until 2021. But rest assured, it is very much on our agenda and as soon as it is safe to do so, we will be there to facilitate ‘real life’ networking and knowledge sharing.

In the meantime, we’re focusing on what we can do on a virtual basis and to that end, make sure you look out for our YouTube channel, which will be launching shortly with a view to streaming more practical content that we know you’ll find useful. It will also come into its own during Decom Week, which is currently slated to take place during May. Revolving around the traditional Decom Offshore event and including tech-talks, demonstrations and practical networking, Decom Week will take us far and wide, allowing delegates to undertake virtual tours of a range of facilities around Scotland, the UK – and perhaps further. Watch this space!

Finally, you will read on the following pages that there have been some changes to our Board of Directors. We are saying farewell to Ron van der Laan, after four years of unstinting service, and we welcome Alvaro Ranero as our latest addition to the Board. The Board, together with the Decommissioning Leadership Group, welcome any feedback on our performance. We exist to support and represent you, so be assured that the channels of communication are always open to all members.

Will Rowley
Capability to Deliver

As every business knows, people make the difference. Building the right culture and growing a team with clear training and competency systems in place allows your workforce to develop with the confidence to tackle any project they take on. Keeping this at the forefront of our minds has driven how we build our team at Well-Safe Solutions.

Culture
As a new entrant in the industry, the opportunity to create the right culture was paramount. Attracting and convincing the experienced, high-calibre individuals demanded clarity in vision of the future journey we wanted their help to shape. This remains a powerful feature at Well-Safe.

There is simplicity and consistency in our messaging that as we grow, we ensure everyone within the organisation truly understands and engages with our vision, enabling it to become a reality. Every employee within Well-Safe is an ambassador for the company, and we recognised very early on that words are not enough; their own experience within Well-Safe would determine whether they became true and genuine ambassadors.

The sense of welcome and engagement starts long before an employee joins the team. After being offered a position, the comprehensive onboarding process begins, which includes contact at regular intervals. As they work their notice, they receive a series of videos welcoming them on-board the team, an introduction to the company, what it's like to work at Well-Safe and finally a comprehensive plan issued in advance of their first day of what their induction consists of. On their first day everything is set up and ready – it’s not a difficult thing to do, but it is amazing how many companies lack in this area, and the negative impact this has on a new start should not be underestimated.

Feedback on the onboarding process has included; “I’ve never experienced anything like it”, “I feel like part of the team before I’ve even started” and “it’s very welcoming and organised”. The same process occurs for both on and offshore employees – we don’t differentiate.

We value and encourage ideas, knowledge, and experience from everyone. When you are establishing yourself as a new company, this is essential, and early on we realised that this was why our employees enjoy and engage fully at Well-Safe. They feel like they are contributing and helping to shape the future success of the business.

Competency & Training
Using that same ethos, we have created a bespoke Well P&A Competence Management System, to ensure we can demonstrate to all stakeholders that our team has the capability to deliver. Using the knowledge and experience of a dedicated team consisting of onshore and offshore employees, including one of the rig OIMs, we set about creating a system that would work for us. The result; a competence management system that is:

- Bespoke to Well P&A operations
- Meaningful and relevant to each individual role
- Driven by employees
- Robust in terms of assessment, carried out by qualified assessors on a ‘show me, tell me’ basis
- Clear with a visible focus on safety-critical operations

The system itself is cloud-based with easy access for all employees and a comprehensive suite of reports. This provides both individual and team competencies, ensuring evidence in support of our overall rig readiness.

One of the hardest aspects of any Competence Management System is employee buy-in. At Well-Safe, we used our team to help develop the system, so the leadership and buy-in have been second to none. The system has already been subject to several external audits with one auditor classing it as ‘gold standard’. We do believe we have now set the standard for Well P&A competence.

We encourage our employees to take control and lead their own development, and our performance development process is designed to reflect this. Again, ensuring involvement and buy-in as we developed the process, we recognised from previous experience, traditional appraisal systems were pretty ineffective. As a result, we have introduced quarterly one-to-ones between an employee and their manager – set up and led by the employee with all actions and development recorded on an employee’s performance journal. Regular quality conversations are what makes this meaningful.

Finally, it’s very easy to say, effective communication is the most important factor in building a strong team, but it’s tough to achieve. In Well-Safe, the single most significant factor that has supported us as we strive to achieve this is the accessibility of all. There is no communication hierarchy and therefore, no barriers to effective communication flow. Decisions are made close to the source with the relevant people involved, which means we are responsive. This supports our culture, our employee involvement and our continued recognition that our people will shape our future.

Our people make a difference.
They are true ambassadors of Well-Safe.

wellsafesolutions.com
A farewell to Ron van der Laan

After four years of service to the Decom North Sea Board of Directors, we say a heartfelt “thank you” to Ron van der Laan, who has retired from his position with us. Before he left, we asked him to reflect on his time on the Board and Decom North Sea as an organisation...

“I was voted onto the DNS Board back in November 2016, at the St Andrews’ Offshore Decommissioning Conference. Since then I have been acutely aware of the vital contribution DNS makes to knowledge sharing and collaboration – both of which are vital to a safe and cost-effective decommissioning sector.

“I’ve thoroughly enjoyed working with the DNS team, as well as my fellow Board members. Despite the many difficulties associated with a global pandemic, 2020 has seen DNS go from strength to strength. Over the past few months, DNS has increased its visibility, and I believe this to be of real benefit to our members.”

DNS Chair, Jinda Nelson added “Ron is a genuine loss to the DNS Board. He has always been keen to share his vast supply chain knowledge and experience with the organisation, and has been highly supportive during periods of change within the organisation. We thank him sincerely for his loyalty and input to DNS and wish him every success in his next venture.”

Internationalisation Special Interest Group

The Internationalisation SIG is being re-energised, led by chair Callum Falconer. The group has established a clear purpose to connect Decom North Sea members with international opportunities to provide services and/or products and to develop and/or increase their decommissioning market share, improving the efficiency of international decommissioning.

Internationalising involves hard work and risk therefore part of the group’s strategy is to provide coaching, advice and guidance to members wishing to enter and/or expand into the international decommissioning market. Other strategic themes include raising the DNS profile internationally, enabling informed quality decision-making and streamlining front end international business development.

If any members are interested in finding out more regarding the Internationalisation SIG please contact Callum Falconer: callum@crfconsultants.co.uk
Is there a “win-win” solution?

Energy Voice Editor, Mark Lammey, offers his perspective on recent events

North Sea industry is facing the daunting challenge of manoeuvring into the energy transition at a time of unprecedented upheaval and disruption. The task was difficult enough before the coronavirus pandemic swept the globe and contributed to a dramatic drop in oil prices in March and April.

Much damage was inflicted by Saudi and Russian leaders’ failure to see the bigger picture, of course. Swingeing cuts to budgets, project deferrals and painful job losses have been the result. The drilling contractors were the first to show the strain, sacking hundreds of workers, followed by the oilfield service firms and operators, with both BP and Shell to cut thousands from their payrolls.

In April, Oil and Gas UK (OGUK) predicted 30,000 people could lose their jobs in the space of 12-18 months, while trade unions claimed 3,500 workers could be “displaced” by September 2020. By July, OGUK estimated 7,500 redundancies had been announced and RMT has since calculated the loss of 6,000 offshore jobs and 3,000 onshore.

There is some disagreement about whether the end of the furlough scheme and its replacement with the new jobs support scheme will spark an upsurge in redundancies, or whether the worst of the cuts have already been made. Time will tell, but whatever the upshot, it seems fair to say that by the time the new normal has been established, the oil and gas industry will have undergone a fairly substantial downsizing for the second time in the space of about five years.

There is also disagreement about whether the Covid-19 pandemic will accelerate or dent different nations’ and industries’ efforts to lean into the transition.

It’s difficult to see how the latest downcycle can do anything but harm the oil and gas sector’s ambitions, despite positive noises from some of the major operators and indeed, industry bodies, who seem determined to forge ahead. From a workforce point of view, the fear is that groups of highly-experienced oil and gas veterans within certain age ranges will be lost, along with their extensive knowledge.

Many of those people have the skills required by oil and gas companies to make the transition and lower their carbon footprints via the delivery of new carbon capture, usage and storage and hydrogen projects. A scary thought has occurred on a number of occasions this year: What are all of the people who have been made redundant going to do next?

Chris Claydon, chief executive of the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB), has been among the more effective commentators when it comes to spelling out the problem. In September, he warned that the oil and gas sector needed to act swiftly or risk losing thousands of engineers capable of delivering the energy transition.

Mr Claydon also urged Prime Minister Boris Johnson to help pick up the pace of decarbonisation projects, almost none of which are “shovel ready”. Even if they were, how many would use technology made in the UK? Perhaps not many, though assembly, installation and operations and maintenance would surely create worthwhile numbers of jobs.

The renewables industry’s ability to create large-scale employment in Scotland appears to have been dramatically overstated in the past by government and industry bodies alike. The oil and gas industry and the parts of the energy transition which will require oil workers’ skills need something to help bridge the gap between the present day and the advent of large decarbonisation projects.

In recent months, energy sector experts, unions, regulators and trade bodies have all suggested that decommissioning work – specifically well plugging and abandonment - could provide some of the bigger planks used to form that bridge. The Scottish Government’s Just Transition Commission (JTC) said in July that bringing forward deferred oil-well plugging and abandonment (P&A) work would immediately create jobs. Decom North Sea (DNS) and the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) have been pushing the UK Government to provide funding support via separate schemes to help kick start well P&A jobs next year.

No one is portraying decommissioning as a silver bullet for preventing job losses.

But if successful, either or both of the proposals put forward by DNS and the OGA could keep hundreds of people in work, or help some of those recently made redundant return to employment quickly. Those jobs are worth saving.

In addition, this isn’t an optional work. It absolutely must be carried out, so better to do it before supply chain capacity is diminished to the point where demand outstrips supply and prices shoot through the roof. Hopefully, Westminster will heed the industry’s calls to help provide a catalyst for P&A work, though Energy Minister Kwasi Kwarteng’s seeming unwillingness to engage is less than encouraging.

It is important to point out that the Treasury’s purse strings are under considerable strain, with just about every sector requiring support at present. But a solution which frees up cash to allow mandatory work to take place in a timely fashion and create employment seems “win-win”.

If support takes the form of a £100 million loan, then that relatively small sum will eventually be paid back. This is pretty low-risk stuff.

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It’s equally difficult to see many drawbacks if the government opts for the early release of tax reliefs that would have to be paid out at some point, anyway.

As most are aware, well P&A is the part of the decommissioning lifecycle which requires the most investment. North Sea operators and contractors have been getting practice in, with more than 150 wells decommissioned in both 2017 and 2018, according to OGUK’s 2019 insight report. The same report said the rate would remain consistent, predicting 1,630 more wells would be pluged and abandoned between 2019 and 2028 on the UKCS.

The UK oil and gas industry does seem to have been making progress in its crusade to lower the amount of money that will need to be spent on dismantling offshore infrastructure. But it is concerning that while average cost forecasts for the decommissioning of individual platform and exploration and appraisal wells went down between 2017-19, the estimate for subsea wells rose.

UK industry should surely be putting serious effort into ensuring it can carry out this work as safely and cost-effectively as possible, setting it up to export its skills to other, less mature oil and gas provinces. Organising well P&A clubs and campaign approaches should allow more work to be carried out at less expense.

Getting those campaigns up and running must be a priority for industry and government alike. As DNS recently warned, if this work is going to be included companies’ 2021 budgets, support needs to be provided soon.

Failing to do so could leave behind a terrible legacy.

energyvoice.com
Decommissioning – Building the Team
Scott Taylor, Head of Commercial (UK), Maersk Training

The industry outlook
As the offshore oil and gas facilities are coming to the end of their lives, the North Sea region and the UK Continental Shelf (UKCS) are entering a period of intense activity around the decommissioning of subsea infrastructure.

It is estimated that the UK’s decommissioning budget will reach £15.2 billion by 2028, with 10% of total oil and gas expenditure dedicated to this industry. More than 2300 wells, an average of 12 topsides and 203 fields are set to be abandoned by 2025. Those are headline grabbing numbers, however, is the industry truly looking at all aspects of this market to ensure the Oil and Gas Authority’s (OGA) target of 35% cost reduction is met?

Decommissioning of wells is predicted to amount to 45% of the total decom expenditure; nevertheless, with the predicted decommissioning budget cuts and project deferrals caused by the global pandemic, the industry may face a challenge of dealing with older and lower-integrity assets, potentially increasing the project costs and risk levels.

Therefore, now more than ever, it is vital that industry workforces are competent, and that knowledge and learnings are shared across industries. Training is crucial in order to provide the correct level of knowledge is provided to ensure a workforce is in place capable of performing in an environment that lacks open communication and teaming.

Decommissioning is hazardous and is the most practical source of labour to be utilised throughout the various phases of decommissioning would come from those who have worked in the oil and gas industry with their transferable skills, experience and motivation.

In the past, the oil and gas sector has been the envy of other industries regarding its level of training provided, mandatory or otherwise. This course has been driven by lessons learned, accidents, near misses, and unfortunately at times, fatalities. Where the industry has been unenviable is its hesitation in embracing a new aspect of its life of field, decommissioning has been pushed to the side over other projects, and undoubtedly, the value it has upon the business is the reason behind that.

It was quickly determined by Maersk Training that in order to provide training to the decommissioning industry the wheel did not need to be recreated; and value had to be added. With the majority of personnel coming through the doors for decom related training having an experience and working history, the core competencies of legacy service work did not need to be covered. The key was to ensure that a new training approach was to take place, with a strong focus on team building.

The course offers a mix of existing operational skills and industry decommissioning knowledge, and collaboratively come up with a tailored course for every campaign, meeting clients’ specific needs. Maersk Training believes that this offering can improve on what is a good foundation in the decommissioning sector by bringing all functions together to increase safety, awareness and efficiency. The heart of a successful operation is always people. Decommissioning signals the end of field life, it should be the beginning of excellent operational relationships.

Decommissioning – Build the team
Team relationships are vital in any industry, and this is where Maersk Training believed the answer lay to any successful and efficient running of a project - bringing the team together.

Uniting the team must be at the core of any operational plan, this means connecting not only the onshore decision makers but also the supervisors and operational teams, those who will be on-site whether it be a big or small project. It is vital that projects follow the design, plan and execute stages, and each are assessed for their team knowledge, input, communication, and experience.

Service contractors build up relationships through ongoing work scopes, history of working together and company training – be it technical or otherwise – but what happens when the operational team on an asset is truly bespoke to the project, to the asset, to the stage of the decommissioning work? The team struggles to perform in an environment that lacks open communication and knowledge of people and their personalities, skills and strengths. Experience and expertise are lost as the scope and the team expand. Does having this in tow expose any failures at operational execution and safety levels? Maersk Training believes so.

Maersk Training knew that team building was not a new approach, it has been building team competence and leaders through training for more than 40 years. What was realised was that in order to be able to offer a more bespoke learning experience and provide a solution that would fit multiple service companies coming together on a decommissioning project, Maersk Training had to adapt its current offering the decommissioning. This was how ‘Decommissioning – Build the team’ was established in 2020.

Maersk Training is renowned for course creation and setting standards across the energy industry, we believe this is the case once more. The company wants to engage with contractors and businesses within the decommissioning industry before they start new projects in order to create a bespoke and tiered blend of training involving human factors, team building, goal setting as well as sharing the common message and values to the decommissioning team.

It was apparent to Maersk Training very early in that discussion that right training for the right needs
The need for more specialised training within the decommissioning landscape has become increasingly prominent in the last few years, with a growing demand for decommissioning oriented professionals and services, and even decommissioning specific courses.

Being leaders in its field, Maersk Training has had decommissioning at the forefront of its strategy in the last couple of years and has been discussing the demands of training as the industry continues to rapidly grow and evolve.

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maersktraining.com
November 19, 2020

Join Energy Voice as we fire the starting pistol on the countdown to:

COP 26!

1 day - 4 expert panel sessions

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This year, Decom North Sea celebrates its 10th ANNIVERSARY

Since establishing in 2010, we’ve seen some major shifts in the sector (as well as some constants). Who better to describe the past 10 years - and give a flavour of what the future may hold - than those members who have been with us since the very beginning...

Commissioning a future in decommissioning
John Cox, Global Decommissioning Manager
Worley

Decommissioning isn’t a new concept to Worley. In fact, we have a 25-year history of removal work. However, it’s only during the last four to five years that decommissioning has become more widely accepted in the industry and deemed less of a financial and reputational risk.

When Decom North Sea was established in 2010, decommissioning wasn’t seen as a legitimate part of the oil and gas facility lifecycle. Decommissioning is a long-term, highly planned engineering process. Getting it right involves intensive pre-study work, environmental considerations and adherence to regulations, schedules, budgets, legalities and ethical strategies. And at Worley, we’ve worked hard with our supply chain colleagues to demystify the decommissioning process for our customers.

Safeguarding decommissioning

In recent years, a number of ground-breaking projects in the North Sea have shifted the perception of late life and decommissioning activity. And there are more on the horizon. However, there are often delays to projects and the risk here, is that if decommissioning activity begins to stagnate, the relevant skillset will be lost. That’s why it’s vital that the complex planning stages of projects still go ahead.

Right now, we have some outstanding onshore decommissioning facilities in the UK, including Kishorn, Dundee and The Energy Park Fife. There needs to be increased encouragement for these and other facilities to be utilised as currently, much of the North Sea’s onshore decommissioning work continues to be won by overseas players. Perhaps there is an argument for contracts to include a local content clause.

Pushing the boundaries for future success

The industry has embraced the Oil & Gas Authority’s decommissioning cost reduction target – introduced in 2017 – with technical innovation and the potential for new contracting models. We’ve offered end-to-end decommissioning services as part of a consortium, and I see these services gaining traction. We’ve also helped bring new technology to fruition with partners. And we’re currently working with the Oil & Gas Technology Centre to push the boundaries even further.

There are real positives surrounding the UK decommissioning sector, not least our ability to form meaningful alliances and to collaborate. Cross-sector collaboration should allow us to transfer our knowledge and skills as the energy transition gathers pace. We can look at things like carbon capture storage, production of hydrogen and the redeployment of facilities. That’s the next chapter for the decommissioning sector.

Decom North Sea plays a crucial role in much of this by listening to its members, creating conversation and facilitating relationships. Here’s to the next 10 years.

worley.com
A Decommissioning Journey

Ian Sherrington, Director
Waves Group

My first foray into offshore oil & gas decommissioning was as Marine Warranty Surveyor during the demolition of the Brent Spar in Vats Fjord, Norway in the late 90s. Shortly after this I was the MWS Project Director for the re-floating and demolition of the Maureen steel Gravity Base Platform. Both projects had fascinating technical challenges and for the Brent Spar project the most memorable part was the jacking and cutting of the Spar structure, whilst supported from below using the rocker arms of the jacket launch barge H851. On the Maureen project there were also many memorable technical challenges, the most fascinating was breaking free of the steel perimeter skirt from the seabed soil. The complete 110,000t GBS and topsides, then, slowly ascended to the surface, massive forces at play - engineering is such fun!

In 2000, I was Study Director investigating the overall cost and schedule associated with removing the entire Frigg development, as well as all the steel onboard the concrete gravity base platform MCP01. This was a unique study in that it was a collaboration of several competing contractors. The study focused on optimising the marine operations and investigated numerous methods of dismantling the many jackets and decks, piece small demolition, reverse installation and single lift; the philosophy being that if we reduced the number of marine operations we would reduce the cost.

In 2005 I decide with three colleagues to start up Mwaves Limited, a marine consultancy focused on Marine Warranty Services and Marine Consultancy. It wasn’t until 2010 that Brian Nixon visited our office in London and told us about a new initiative, Decom North Sea. We immediately signed on the dotted line and have been members ever since, attending many of their annual conferences. Since then Mwaves has worked as Marine Warranty Surveyors on the Murchison Platform demolition carried out by reverse installation of the topsides and cutting the jacket into sections and removing them. This year saw our involvement as Marine Warranty Surveyors in the single lift of the 14,200t Ninian North Topsides, an impressive achievement which it is a massive privilege to have been a part of.

Congratulations to Decom North Sea in its 10th year – it has been a valuable partner on our decommissioning journey.
The Future’s Bright
Decom North Sea members since “Day One”, Petrofac takes us on a journey through the past 10 years, courtesy of Alex Macdonald, Well Engineering and Decommissioning Managing Director and Murray Cooper, Well Engineering Regional Director.

Petrofac’s decommissioning track record goes back a considerable amount of time, having undertaken well P&A projects in particular, for almost 20 years. However, the past five years have seen a shift in gear within the sector, and since 2015 the company has come to regard late life operations and decommissioning projects as a fundamental part of the revenue stream. Projects dating from around that time include the seminal BP Miller project in 2016, for which Petrofac was appointed duty holder, managing all aspects of on and offshore activities in support of BP’s decommissioning programme. In the same year, the company commenced work on Tullow’s Thames project, decommissioning a total of twelve subsea and platform wells over three campaigns, saving the client $6.6million in the process.

Both Alex and Murray have described Petrofac’s late life and decommissioning activity as “snowballing” since that time, which created the need for a distinct service proposition. But what do they feel has been the catalyst for this increasing focus upon decom?

Cost and Culture
Alex explains: “Whilst project deferral continues to be an understandable feature of decom activity, there has been an undoubted shift in operators’ approach to the subject. Ten years ago, industry was focused on exploration and production, so decom cost estimating was made at a high level and was much more of a balance sheet exercise, that has changed. As cessation of production looms for many assets in the basin, operators are much more attuned to realistic, granular estimates around asset and well decommissioning, and as such can commence activity as a part of their overall budgeting.”

In addition to clarity around costs, Murray believes that a culture change has taken place over the past few years, with attitudes towards decommissioning taking a new turn:

“Until recently, the excitement lay in exploration and production – that’s what everyone wanted to mention on their CVs. Generally speaking, that level of interest can now also be applied to decommissioning; it’s a challenge, it’s full of new technology and, as such can commence activity as a part of their overall budgeting.”

The Future Is Bright, The Future Is Integrated
So what does the future hold for Petrofac and the wider decommissioning sector?

Both Alex and Murray can see a growing trend of outsourced, integrated decommissioning. It’s a model which started off being applied to smaller assets, but both believe it is an option that will inevitably grow throughout the sector as operators look for full project - and risk - management. This goes hand in hand with the increasing focus upon cost delivery certainty. Petrofac has undertaken work on this basis, for example recently delivering a four well P&A project in the North Sea for a fixed price. Whilst not suitable for every project out there, it’s an option which is likely to increasingly help achieve the OGA’s cost reduction target.

When asked about marketplace uncertainty – especially bearing in mind the added challenge of a global pandemic, Alex is clear that decommissioning is here to stay:

“Whilst regulators are encouraging decom activity, the fact remains that operators are stretched. Despite this however, decommissioning has not been brought to a halt; it is an inevitability which only becomes more costly the longer it is deferred and the operators understand this. Our bidding pipeline is strong and that is because, regardless of deferrals, there is an enormous amount of late life and decom work to be undertaken - and not only on the UKCS. With Denmark, Holland and Norway decom sectors also ready to take off in the near future, the late life and decommissioning sector is proving to be an incredibly exciting and potentially fruitful area of activity for many years to come.”

petrofac.com

A Lifecycle Process
This is one of the key reasons behind Petrofac’s decision to involve its team in the entire oil and gas lifecycle, rather than pigeon-holing staff into either E&P or late life/decom.

“Our business model simply reflects the full circle of offshore oil and gas activity, as well as the need for collaboration. We don’t separate the stages, because there are so many overlaps and our clients appreciate the continuity of their relationships with their Petrofac team”, says Alex.

He continues: “Our model utilises the breadth and depth of Petrofac’s capabilities, in order to provide comprehensive solutions based on a “project”, rather than an “operations” mindset. We’ve seen a huge increase in clients who require our late life planning capabilities whilst they continue production. In other words, early engagement allows us to introduce and facilitate an effective decommissioning culture, whilst also aiming to reduce operations costs. This means that, where possible, we’re helping extend asset life and maximise planning and preparation. Our clients in this respect are often new entrants to the market, who have a need for this multi-faceted, multi-stage service, from duty holder and well stock manager, all the way through to P&A specialist.”

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The Future Is Bright, The Future Is Integrated
So what does the future hold for Petrofac and the wider decommissioning sector?

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petrofac.com

Those of us active in the North Sea are lucky to be involved in a mature basin, which offers a mixture of stages; production, late life and decommissioning. That in itself provides us with a valuable environment in which to continue honing our skills.
Thompsons of Prudhoe/Port of Blyth Decommissioning Partnership in ‘full swing’

Thompsons of Prudhoe Ltd (Thompsons), in partnership with the Port of Blyth, have successfully completed the successful decommissioning of a 2MW SR2000 floating tidal turbine on behalf of Orbital Marine Power Ltd (Orbital).

The project involved heavy lift specialists Mammoet carrying out a 516-tonne tandem lift onto the Blyth quayside using crawler cranes, in what was the Port’s largest heavy lift to date.

Working as Principal Contractor under CDM Regulations 2015, Thomsons then progressively decommissioned the asset ahead of schedule and without incident, with all works being completed in less than 3 weeks. The extensive knowledge and experience of carrying out dismantling and decommissioning of onshore assets proved vital in the safe execution of these works and demonstrates Thomsons core capabilities.

Thompsons were also able to reclaim key components and elements of the prototype turbine and return them to Orbital, to allow them to carry out engineering inspections to support the development and manufacturing of the new 2MW O2 turbine which will be commissioned early next year.

Nick Shilling, Managing Director of Thomsons of Prudhoe, said: “We were delighted to be given the opportunity to decommission the SR2000 on behalf of Orbital. This project gives us a strong platform to demonstrate and promote our capabilities to the offshore industry for all future onshore dismantling and waste disposal requirements.”

This project comes hot on the heels of the joint £1m investment from Port of Blyth and Thomsons of Prudhoe in enhancing the fully licenced decommissioning facility at the Port.

Alan Todd, Port Director of Port of Blyth, said: “Completing the largest project lift the Port has ever planned and executed highlights the skill and competence of the Port of Blyth’s engineering and operations teams. Although we have a wealth of experience in relation to heavy project lifts, the tidal turbine brought its own challenges and required exceptional planning and a well-coordinated operation. The project also highlights both the strength and potential of our new decommissioning partnership with Thomsons of Prudhoe.”

Thompsons of Prudhoe is a leading demolition and decommissioning contractor having been named as #34 in the World’s Top 100 Demolition Contractors by Demolition & Recycling International (DR&I). The Port of Blyth is regarded as one of the UK’s leading offshore energy support bases and is home to some of the world largest offshore and renewable energy firms.
Ecosse IP drives forward its product development strategy with new appointment

Ecosse IP Ltd (EIP) appointed Stephen Ball to the company during lockdown. Stephen joins in a new role focusing on Product Design and Technical Sales, as EIP continues to drive forward the company’s product development strategy in offshore energy and renewables.

Stephen brings to the business over 16 years’ industry experience in product design and engineering, which will be a great asset to EIP. His appointment introduces a range of new skills to the engineering team, including robotic systems, product rendering and concept design. Stephen’s role also encompasses technical support across EIP’s broader portfolio, to both existing and new clients, ensuring that current and future technologies are tailored to their requirements.

On his appointment, Stephen said: “I am excited about the new technologies EIP is bringing to market, and over the last few months I’ve been focusing on developing its latest product MOWT (Mass of Water Turbine), refining the product functionality of the prototype version.”

MOWT (Mass of Water Turbine) generates renewable energy from slow moving water in rivers, inland waterways and offshore environments and can deliver anything from 5-10kw to multi-megawatts in slow moving water. EIP’s engineering team have been working on the product technology and in-water testing. MOWT is a solution for both the public and private sectors; it offers a cost-effective renewable energy solution, enhances environmental sustainability and can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

MOWT is ideally suited in the drive towards Net Zero, powering SMEs and businesses across a range of sectors such as distilleries, aquaculture, offshore oil and gas, supporting Smart Cities, powering towns, remote communities and historic buildings for example. The product is in the final stages of product commercialisation and will be available in 2021.

www.ecosse-ip.com

RGS Nordic. One of the largest wastewater treatment companies in Northern Europe.

Since 1989 we have purified over 5,000,000 tonnes of wastewater for the oil & gas, decommissioning and shipping industries - providing tailored solutions covering biological treatment at our state-of-the-art facilities, logistics support, export/TFS approvals and full regulatory compliance reporting

Over 100,000 tonnes of on-site storage capacity ensures we can cover both planned and unplanned deliveries and we are pre-approved by the Danish authorities to treat wastewater containing oil as a recycling process.

RGS Nordic strives to ensure a better world by developing partnerships and setting value-creating and circular processes as the new standards within the water treatment industry.

RGS Nordic – transforming wastewater into safe water.
Introducing Ampelmann’s Temporary Work Platform for safer under-deck operations

Whether it’s for inspection or during decommissioning, under-deck, leg and caisson work is always an area of concern. Operationally it is challenging and can become expensive if poor weather plays its part. Ampelmann, the Dutch offshore access provider, known for its motion compensated gangway systems, is introducing the Temporary Work Platform (TWP). The solution provides an innovative way to access such areas without the need for any scaffolding.

The gangway system delivers the TWP in a matter of minutes, providing a safe working platform that enables inspection, repair and maintenance (IRM) scopes to be executed efficiently. It can particularly prove its use during the decommissioning of offshore platforms.

With the TWP and its innovative clamp-on technology, there is also no need to modify the structure. As the TWP is detached as easily as it is installed, repositioning of the work platform can be done in minutes, saving many hours of non-productive time.

This solution provides a safe and comfortable working platform for up to three workers and additional equipment, resulting in increased hands-on-tool time, higher productivity, at a significantly lower cost.

ampelmann.nl

FLOWT: designed for efficiency

EIP’s floating offshore wind tension leg system (FLOWT) has been designed and developed to help the offshore energy sector increase efficiencies and deliver effective solutions to drive down costs.

FLOWT can be deployed to provide renewable energy to power offshore platforms - for example for late life platform power optimisation, for power contingency, or for platforms which have commenced decommissioning, but still have a power requirement during the preparation for decommissioning phase (or after Cessation of Production).

During late life optimisation a platform could be reliant on hydrocarbon fuel to supply power for its production systems which can become expensive or ineffective as the reservoir is depleted. FLOWT offers an alternative energy source which also gives a positive move towards energy transition. Where reliable installed power generation is not readily available, FLOWT would be an alternative source of power.

In decommissioning it is normal for a platform to require power for a year or more after cessation of production (CoP) - FLOWT provides an interim power source which can be un-installed when no longer required.

Using EIP’s FLOWT solution to position a 10MW wind turbine alongside the oil platform will deliver energy during its late-life or decommissioning phase and the whole assembly can be towed from shore using a cost-effective multi-cat vessel and positioned alongside the platform 500m zone.

ecosse-ip.com
Innovative solutions for the offshore sector

Teesside based Laytrix Ltd, a business developing innovative solutions for the offshore sector is delighted to announce a recent funding award for a Front End Engineering Design (FEED) study to investigate the feasibility of using its innovative pipelay concept for carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects.

The adaptable and modular system is focused on the use of cost-effective vessels of opportunity resulting in significant savings for the end client.

The award, made by the Tees Valley Mayor and Combined Authority under their Collaborative Networks Fund will see Laytrix partner with Darlington based design house Ardmore Craig and an international partner alongside the wider Teesside supply chain to adapt its existing design for CCS projects such as the Net Zero Teesside development.

Welcoming Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen to its engineering office to view progress on the project and update on other business developments, Laytrix CEO Andy Stevenson thanked the Mayor and Combined Authority for their backing and added “that Laytrix was developing adaptions of its products for multiple markets including CCS and was now starting to see traction with interest from international companies involved in a number of sectors who were focussed on reducing their project costs.”

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen said: “As we work to make Teesside, Darlington and Hartlepool a pioneer in clean energy projects, including our massive potential for carbon capture, utilisation and storage, we need to put innovation at the heart of everything that we do as part of my plan to create good quality local jobs for local people.

“Laytrix has a track record of thinking outside the box and developing new and exciting ways of working for the offshore sector. This study will help it to go further and support our ambitions and, when we see the outcomes of the work, could strengthen our already impressive offshore supply chain.

“It was fantastic to see Laytrix’s project first-hand and discuss the implications that this funding could bring.”

laytrix.com

Salvage, Decommissioning & Wreck Removal Workshop – 2020

The ‘Decom workshop’ at the MASTS ASM attracted a record 140 online participants to each of the four sessions, with a dozen high quality presentations covering global sustainability challenges.

Two underlying themes were the threats and opportunities posed by climate change, and the need for consistent decision making across decommissioning, salvage and wreck removal.

A pertinent keynote came from Scotland’s Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands, Paul Wheelhouse, who took an enthusiastic forward look at Scotland’s aspirations for energy supply in the context of the stated aim to reach Net Zero by 2045.

Laura DeLa Torre, Deputy Secretary of OSPAR, described their workings and decision-making processes relating to ‘Decom’.

Three speakers demonstrated how far computer simulation of projects has come. The stunning imagery and sheer flexibility of these systems allow for every eventuality to be included or overcome before having to put to sea, so enhancing safety and efficiency and reducing risk and cost.

Surprising to many, Scotland’s expanding space industry, shares salvage challenges when recovering jettisoned rocket stages from the sea. At least one cross-sector collaboration was sealed live on screen. The explosive end to the meeting illustrated that using explosives to ‘cut’ structures had come of age but, included a cautionary note about how the accompanying noise and pressure waves might impact marine creatures, from shrimps to cetaceans.

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Join us in making energy safer, cleaner, and more efficient for people and the planet. Contact your local representative to learn more.