ropecordNEWS

THE CORDAGE INSTITUTE

Dedicated to the Advancement of Rope and Cordage Products

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Cordage Institute Joint Conference with EUROCORD

On June 2-4, 2013, the Cordage Institute will be traveling to Dublin, Ireland to team up with EUROCORD for a Joint Conference. With over 140 attendees registered and a program, which includes panel discussions, working group meetings, and informational presentations, you do not want to miss out. If you are interested in learning more about the Joint Conference, information may be found at www.cordageinstitute.com/new/events.asp.

We look forward to seeing you in Dublin!

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Workboats aid Revolutionary War Ship Dig

By: Garry Boulard

It is not the most glamorous work, although countless TV shows and movies suggest otherwise.

Archaeologists with the Lighthouse Archaeological Maritime Program (LAMP) at the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum are trying to figure out what is buried beneath the ocean floor not quite a mile off of Florida's Atlantic coast.

"Some divers might get interested in doing this type of work," remarked Brendan Burke. "But then they get in the water and cannot see their hands in front of their face and find out that they do not like it at all."

Welcome to what Burke, an archaeologist and logistical coordinator at LAMP, characterizes as "archaeology in the dark": scheduled dives plunging some 30 feet beneath the ocean's surface with the mission of uncovering information about a vessel that sunk in late 1782.

The vessel was one of half a dozen which carried British Loyalists fleeing Charleston that crashed into a sandbar outside St. Augustine and sunk.

LAMP scholars initially thought the vessel might be the Sally, a 300-ton boat that often moved along the Atlantic coast.

Now, through the work of Chuck Meide, LAMP director, who recently unearthed transport ship lists, letters, and other documents relating to the sunken vessel at Britain's National Archives, it seems clear that another vessel called the Storm Wreck also fell to the ocean bottom.

The Sally, according to the records unearthed by the LAMP staff, lived to serve another day.

Money for LAMP in the past has come primarily through grants from the Florida Humanities Council. But currently, the program is self-funded through ticket sales to the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum.

That money naturally helps the LAMP staff in its ongoing quest to find out more about the historic vessel embedded outside St. Augustine.

For Meide, the quest has become a process of elimination.

"We know that the British 71st Regiment was in Charleston and departed on December 18, 1872," he said. "We know that a fleet arrived in St. Augustine on December 31. And we know that our shipwreck is one of the ships from the evacuation of Charleston, and that is firm."

Answers to additional questions regarding the vessel could perhaps be found by simply bringing the whole thing up. But that is not an option the LAMP archaeologists entertain seriously. "You do not want to do a 100 percent excavation of any site," explained Burke, "whether it is a shipwreck or a terrestrial site."

Burke added: "Because a 17th or 18th century shipwreck is a non-renewable resource, we want to leave it where it is for future generations."

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Liquid Gold

By: By: Ken Hocke, Workboat.com

The tank barge construction boom continues.

Deliveries of new tank barges increased about 60 percent from 2011 to 2012. A big factor driving the increase is the abundance of natural gas available through hydraulic fracturing or fracking.

"Cheap natural gas is giving the U.S. an advantage, particularly with the international chemical industry," said Sandor Toth, publisher of the RiverTransport News (RTN), a biweekly newsletter that covers the inland waterways industry. "Chemical shipments are strong and, to a lesser degree, petroleum movements."

In 2012, shipyards delivered 261 tank barges to the industry, as compared to 165 in 2011, according to RTN's recent survey of inland barge operators and a review by RTN of the U.S. Coast Guard's latest numbers. "It is just hitting on all cylinders," said Toth, "and I think 2013 might even be a little bit better."

Trinity Marine Products led the way in tank barge construction in 2012, building 112 units with a combined capacity of 2.66 million bbls., according to RTN. That is up from 2011 when Trinity built 97 barges with a total capacity of 2.33 million bbls. "Trinity is the big cheese," said Toth. "They are converting one of their hopper barge plants to build tank barges this year."

Trinity is converting its Caruthersville, MO, hopper barge yard to handle 10,000 bbl. tank barges so it can build more tank barges in 2013, according to Toth.

IT IS THE FRACKING

Conrad Industries, Morgan City, LA, has also ramped up its tank barge construction. The company built 37 tank barges last year and has a total of 56 liquid carrying barges, both inland and coastal, either delivered or under construction for 2012-2013, according to WorkBoat's latest Construction Survey.

"We can build tank barges at four of our shipyards," said Gary Lipely, Conrad's director of marketing and sales. "We know how to build these barges. If somebody came here today and ordered barges, we could deliver by the end of the year."

Lipely said he agrees with Toth that the abundance of natural gas in the U.S. is behind the building boom. "What we hear is that the fracking that is going on in the Midwest is driving it," he said.

Florida Marine Transporters, Covington, LA, has been aggressively building new equipment since FMT was founded in the mid-1990s. Slowed some by the recession, the privately owned company has picked up the pace of its newbuilding program recently. The company has 28 297 foot × 54 foot, 30,000 bbl. liquid barges under construction at TY Offshore in Gulfport, MS.

"In today's tank barge world, oil companies look at the age of your fleet," said Norm Antrainer, FMT's director of strategic asset planning. "We have one of the youngest, if not the youngest, fleet in the industry."

Demand is high. "Everything we have right now that can work is working," said Antrainer.

Kirby Corp., Houston, TX, the largest tank barge operator in the U.S., took delivery of 56 new tank barges in 2012. In addition, the company acquired 17 barges from Houston-based Lyondell Chemical.

"In the 2012 fourth quarter, our inland tank barge business maintained high utilization rates with consistent and healthy levels of demand across all our markets," Joe Pyne, Kirby's chairman and CEO, told analysts during a fourth-quarter conference call on January 31.

The company also invested in its coastwise tank barge fleet in 2012. Kirby now has 81 coastal tank barges. And those investments are paying off, according to Pyne.

"As many of you are aware, we made the decision last year to invest more capital in our coastal fleet in 2012 and, frankly, for the next couple of years, to bring our coastal equipment up to our internal maintenance standards," Pyne said.

Blessey Marine Services, New Orleans, LA, continued its new construction program, taking delivery of 19 tank barges in 2012.

"The market is just about at equilibrium right now," said Walter Blessey, chairman and CEO of Blessey Marine Services Inc. "But there is a lot of building going on. I think it will get overbuilt, giving shippers a choice of carriers."

Blessey said that this year and next the New Orleans-based tank barge operator will have added about 20 30,000 bbl. barges. Also, the company currently has 12 towboats on order and is selling two boats, for a net increase of 10. "But everything is spoken for," Blessey said. "We are expanding because company XYZ has already booked the barges."

Toth said most of the shipyards that build tank barges are booked solid, and he expects that to continue into 2014 because the demand will be there. "I see the tank barge side having a lot of new builds," he said. "For the sake of the industry, I hope so because they have a lot of new barges under construction this year and next year, as well."

HOPPER BARGES

Deliveries of new jumbo hopper barges reached 1,076 in 2012, an increase of 7.9 percent over the 997 delivered in 2011, the highest level since 1997, according to RTN.

A big driver of the construction was record lower Mississippi River coal exports in 2012. Exports grew because reduced demand for coal from the U.S. power generating industry created a surplus, Toth said.

Unfortunately, Toth added, hopper barge deliveries will not mirror deliveries of tank barges this year and beyond. "There are a host of coal plants on the river that are going to be closing in the next three years, and corn volumes are lower on the river than when Nixon was in office."

Toth said prospects for hopper barge newbuilds are not good. "If we build hoppers in quantity this year, it would be in the 500 unit range," he said. "I have a hard time seeing them get back to 1,000 barges a year for the foreseeable future."

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New Member

The Cordage Institute is happy to welcome the following members, who have joined since the last issue of ***ropecordNEWS***.

VULCAN BRANDS
Manufacturer Member
Detroit, Michigan
Contact: Paul Stafford, National Sales Manager
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Vulcan Brands is a manufacturer of products used for any tie down or lifting application. Some of their products include car tie downs, winch straps, ratchet straps, binder chains, ratchet binders, lifting slings, round slings, chain slings, cargo straps, cargo nets, and winch cables.

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EPA Issues Final Vessel General Permit

Workboat Staff

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued a final vessel general permit regulating discharges from commercial vessels, including ballast water, to protect the nation's waters from ship-borne pollutants and reduce invasive species in U.S. waters.

The final vessel general permit covers commercial vessels greater than 79 feet in length, excluding military and recreational vessels, and will replace the 2008 vessel general permit due to expire on December 19.

This permit regulates 27 specific discharge categories, and will also provide improvements to the efficiency of the permit process, and clarify discharge requirements by the following:

Reduce the risks of introduction of invasive species. The permit includes a more stringent numeric discharge standard limiting the release of non-indigenous invasive species in ballast water. The permit also contains additional environmental protection for the Great Lakes, which have suffered disproportionate impacts from invasive species, aligning federal standards with many Great Lakes states by requiring certain vessels to take additional precautions to reduce the risk of introducing new invasive species to U.S. waters.

Reduce administrative burden for vessel owners and operators. The permit will eliminate duplicate reporting requirements, expand electronic recordkeeping opportunities, and reduce self-inspection frequency for vessels that are out of service for extended periods.

The new discharge standards are supported by independent studies by the EPA's science advisory board and the National Research Council, and are consistent with those contained in the International Maritime Organization's 2004 Ballast Water Convention. The EPA is issuing the permit in advance of the current permit's expiration to provide the regulated community time and flexibility to come into compliance with the new requirements.

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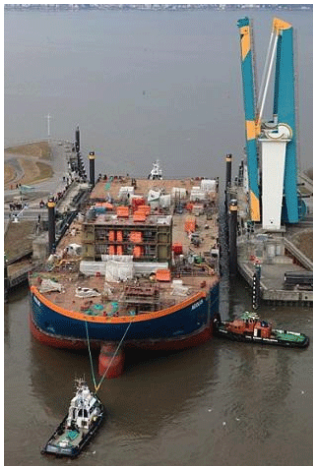
German-built Jack-up Vessel for Offshore Wind Farms

MarineLink.com



The hull is complete, the steelwork concluded, and the building of the deckhouse has begun. In the dock of Sietas shipyard, the first jack-up vessel for offshore wind farms developed and constructed in Germany is currently taking shape. Construction started in April 2012 and the handover of the ship to the client, the Dutch marine engineering company Van Oord, is planned for July of 2013. For further work on the final assembly, the jack-up vessel needs to be floating in the dock harbor of the Sietas shipyard. For this reason, it has now been undocked with an elaborate change in position, and its former construction platform has been removed from the dock harbor.

Berthold Brinkmann, Sietas insolvency administrator, said, “The jack-up vessel demonstrates the outstanding performance of the Sietas shipyard and its team. During the insolvency proceedings, a highly complex special purpose ship for demanding offshore wind farms is taking shape as a result of the contract between Van Oord and the insolvency administrator. Sietas also developed this ship itself. This is unique for a German shipyard and underscores the globally competitive know-how of the engineering, construction, and work output that this shipyard offers.”

UNDOCKING FROM THE DOCK HARBOR FOR FINAL ASSEMBLY

Up to now the jack-up vessel lay on a construction platform in the dock harbor of the Sietas shipyard. Dr. Ludwig Reichert, authorized agent of the insolvency administrator, explained, “The ship’s hull is now complete, the steel work concluded, and the building of the deckhouse has begun. With this, the load-bearing capacity of the construction platform had been reached with around 12,500 tons. For the concluding final assembly, the 140 meter long ship must now float in the water of the dock harbor of the shipyard.”

For this purpose, a switch in the position of the ship was necessary through the Este dam structure bordering the dock harbor to the rivers Este and Elbe. First, the water tanks of the construction platform were filled so that the platform could be lowered. With the incoming tide, the ship then started floating. In the next step, it was towed by tugs out of the dock pit and hauled through the Este dam structure. This required precision work, because at 38 m the jack-up vessel is barely narrower than the gate of the dam structure which is 40 m wide. Afterwards, using a tow up the Elbe, it was securely parked at a quay in the Hamburg harbor. In the next step, the water was pumped out of the tanks of the construction platform, so that the platform also floated and could be towed out of the dock harbor. Finally, the jack-up vessel was again towed through the Este dam structure into the dock harbor and now lies afloat in the water for final equipping and its initial commissioning at the Sietas shipyard.

STATUS OF CONSTRUCTION AND NEXT STEPS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

The Sietas team is currently working on the special purpose ship in a three-shift system. Approximately 400 workers were involved in the especially intensive construction phase. “In just six weeks we built the afterbody and the forebody out of nine blocks. A top achievement by the team in such a short period of time,” explained Oliver Arnold, Sietas shipyard project manager for the jack-up vessel. The four heavy rudder trunk blocks, in which the stilts are held, with which the ship can later raise itself out of the water while working at sea, were also produced at the shipyard. “Our workers were classified for the construction of the jack-up vessel for offshore structures and thus are among the few in Germany who can work with offshore steel. With the construction of the ship we are showing that we master the right mixture of industrial production skills such as assembly, special technical skills, and highly technological engineering,” said Martin Stolzenberger, head of final assembly and commissioning of the ship at the Sietas shipyard.

In the coming weeks, among other things, the deckhouse bridge from which the ship is controlled will be further set up, the expanded leg guides for the stilts will be installed and the offshore crane that can lift 900 tons will be erected with its foundation, pillars and booms. After this work has been concluded, the ship will leave the shipyard at the end of June for its first trial voyage. Construction at the Sietas shipyard is then concluded. The ship is unlikely to receive its four stilts, with their length of 84 m each and corresponding “shoes”, until after the first trial voyage at sea outside the shipyard due to the special dimensions of these components.

The Sietas shipyard also developed the jack-up vessel in cooperation with the client, Dutch marine engineering company Van Oord. The crane was built at the former Sietas subsidiary Neuenfelder Maschinenfabrik (NMF), now belonging to the TTS Group. The construction of the jack-up vessel involves close cooperation between the Sietas shipyard and Van Oord; a team of about 20 engineers, experts, and

project managers from the client firm, which specializes in complex offshore projects, is on-site during the formation phase at the Sietas shipyard.

ABOUT THE JACK-UP VESSEL

The Sietas jack-up vessel ship was developed for use in offshore wind farms. It has a transport capacity of up to 6,500 tons and can work safely in water depths of up to 45 m. It can load itself, has DP2 equipment (Dynamic Positioning System 2) that positions it very precisely, keeping it stable even in heavy seas, and a jacking system with four stilts that are 84 m long, each weighing around 900 tons and with a diameter measuring 4.50 m. This allows it to lift itself far above the surface of the water and ensures a secure working position for installation tasks.

The ship is 140 m long and 38 m wide, its molded depth amounts to 9.12 m, its draught to 5.70 m. Its speed during service is 12 knots. The diesel-electric drive with four sets of generators achieves a total of 10,000 kilowatts. The special offshore crane can lift a 900-ton load with a jib reach of 30 m and work at a height of about 120 m above the water. The installation ship will accommodate 74 crew members during its deployments on the wind farms.

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IHC Winches' Deepwater Fiber Rope System

Press Release

IHC Winches has presented its 50 ton fiber rope traction winch, known as IDsis, to the Dutch and Belgian offshore markets.

The name 'IDsis' is an abbreviation of IHC Deep-sea installation system which is a dedicated deployment system for handling fiber rope, developed to overcome the restrictions of using conventional steel and synthetic wires. Steel is durable but heavy, which limits its usage in deeper water. Currently used synthetics are light, but low-heat resistance and high-creep properties limit their application on large winches. The rope is designed for critical deepwater applications, such as deep-sea installation, abandonment and recovery (A&R), and offshore mining operations.

The development of IDsis has resulted in the combination of a traction winch, which reduces wear of the composite cable for the given load situations, and a storage winch, which is capable of reeling large amounts of fibre rope. Both are combined with an intermediate tensioner for safe and reliable operation in the offshore environment.

Following the completion of the Factory Acceptance Test, the new deep-sea installation system will be tested in operational circumstances in the North Sea later this year. This will take place in association with Seaway Heavy Lifting on one of its offshore vessels.

The Dutch Maritime Innovation Program has funded the development of the IDsis deployment system. This R&D project is executed in conjunction with such companies as Bexco, Seaway Heavy Lifting, and Reden, which joined forces with IHC Winches to combine their various areas of expertise, such as winch and fiber rope technology, rope construction, operational offshore knowledge, modelling, simulation, and legislation.

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U.S. Clears Way for Offshore Wind Farm Development

Associated Press

The federal government cleared the way for Virginia to seek a research lease in its Atlantic coastal areas to help speed up development.

The move would allow for greater study of wind, waves, and wildlife in a 130 square mile area set aside for wind development. The announcement by U.S. Interior Department's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management was welcomed by Gov. Bob McDonnell, energy companies, and proponents of clean energy, reports Associated Press.

Bidding is expected later this year by up to 10 energy companies interested in building wind farms in the federally designated leasing area 27 miles off Virginia Beach. The companies include Energy Management Inc., developer of the nation's first offshore wind project off Massachusetts' Cape Cod, and Dominion Virginia Power, the state's largest electric utility.

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Six Mile Deep GoM Oil Strike

Press Release

Chevron Corporation has announced an oil discovery at the Coronado prospect in the deepwater U.S. Gulf of Mexico.

The Walker Ridge Block 98 Well No. 1 encountered more than 400 feet (122 m) of net pay. The well is located approximately 190 miles (308 km) off the Louisiana coast in 6,127 feet (1,868 m) of water and was drilled to a depth of 31,866 feet (9,713 m).

The well results are still being evaluated, and additional work is needed to determine the extent of the resource. Chevron, with a 40 percent working interest in the prospect, is the operator of the Coronado discovery well. Other owners are ConocoPhillips with 35 percent, a subsidiary of Anadarko Petroleum Corporation with 15 percent, and Venari Offshore LLC with 10 percent.

"The Coronado discovery demonstrates how Chevron is achieving its strategy of superior exploration performance," said George Kirkland, vice chairman, Chevron Corporation. "The discovery adds to our global portfolio of high-quality opportunities for future growth."

"The Coronado discovery continues our string of exploration successes in the Lower Tertiary Trend, where Chevron is advancing multiple projects," said Gary Luquette, president, Chevron North America Exploration and Production Company. "It also highlights the importance of the deepwater Gulf of Mexico as a source of domestic energy for the United States."

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Second Australia Floating LNG Project Planned

Press Release

Exxon Mobil plans to develop a floating liquefied natural gas project to develop the Scarborough field off the coast of Western Australia.

Exxon, whose partner in the field is Melbourne-based BHP Billiton Ltd. (BHP), expects to make a decision on whether to go ahead with the floating LNG venture in 2014 or 2015, with the project starting production in 2020 or 2021, reports Bloomberg.

In Australia, after costs for onshore LNG plants in the country surged, Shell has begun developing the Prelude floating LNG vessel, which is expected to be as long as the Empire State Building and weigh six times as much as the biggest aircraft carrier. Exxon's floating LNG facility in the Carnarvon Basin off northwest Australia is expected to be about 495 meters (1,624 feet) long and 75 meters wide.

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Important Events

Cordage Institute Joint Conference with EUROCORD
June 2 - 4, 2013
The Burlington Hotel
Dublin, Ireland
http://www.cordageinstitute.com/new/events.asp

OCEANS 2013 MTS/IEEE
June 10 - 13, 2013
Grieg Hall
Bergen, Norway
www.oceans13mtsieeebergen.org

International Workboat Show
October 9 - 11, 2013
Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, Louisiana
www.workboatshow.com

Web Sling and Tie Down 2013 Annual Meeting
October 15 - 17, 2013
Sax Chicago - A Thompson Hotel
Chicago, Illinois
www.wstda.com

Associated Wire Rope Fabricators Spring 2013 General Meeting
October 20 - 23, 2013
Century Plaza Hyatt Regency
Los Angeles, California
www.awrf.org

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D. Philip Skaer II

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of Phil Skaer. Phil was a long time member of the Cordage Institute first when he was CEO of Wall Industries, and more recently with ROPETECH INC. Phil Served as President of the Cordage Institute from 1994-1996. When Phil retired, he moved to Austin, Texas, where he was active as an expert witness and consultant. When his wife became ill, he stayed close to her until her death. Phil was always positive and was very knowledgeable of the rope industry. He will be missed by all who knew and worked with him.

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ropecordNEWS
Editor: Dave Richards, Technical Director

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