

Spotlight on Suppliers

Local companies are continuing to benefit from the Robin Rigg wind farm development as another key contract is awarded to a local company. Solway Maritime, a marine services company based in Workington, will operate and maintain the 15m catamaran The Solway Spirit which will be used in both the construction and on-going maintenance of the wind farm.

Highlighted in this section is a list of others who have been used to provide services to the wind farm. In addition local hotels have benefited from visitors to the construction project as well as local restaurants and taxi companies. In future issues of The Round Robin we will focus on our local suppliers in a special Suppliers Spotlight section.

- **Allerdale Borough Council (waste services)**
- **Allerdale Court**
- **Al's Kitchen**
- **Broughton Crags**
- **Carillion**
- **CPL Storage**
- **Derwent Lodge**
- **Derwent Valeting**
- **Hughes Beatty**
- **Hunday Manor**
- **Jackson Marine**
- **Millweld**
- **Natural Power**
- **Oyez Stracher (Maryport)**
- **Port of Workington**
- **R&J Supplies**
- **The Manor House**
- **The Trout Hotel**
- **Thomas Armstrong**
- **Thomas Graham & Son**
- **Travelodge**
- **Washington Central**
- **Whitehaven Marina**



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In the next issue

Construction Update
Suppliers Spotlight
Community Focus

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The Round Robin

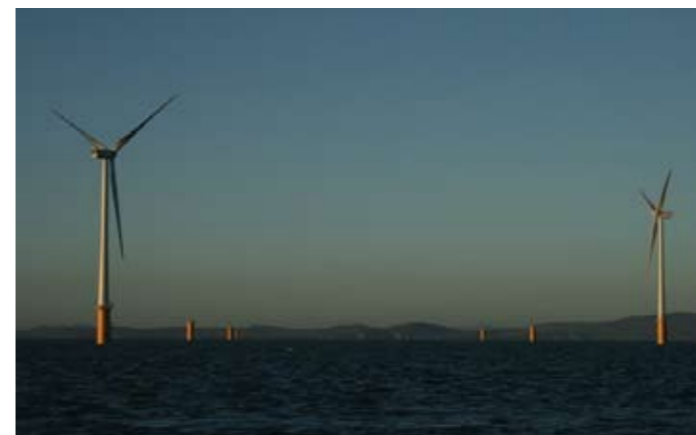
Keeping our community informed

Half way milestone reached

Construction of the Robin Rigg wind farm is celebrating two major milestones; more than half of the turbines are now in place and we've installed the first of the two export cables which will be used to bring ashore enough renewable electricity to provide power for the equivalent of 117,000 homes.

On the evening of 18 March an unusual sight would have met those walking along the coast near Flimby – the cable laying barge the UR-101 approaching the beach to begin laying the first export cable. The cable is buried beneath the beach and the sea bed and stretches around 14km out to sea where it connects with the offshore substation. A special plough dug a trench and buried the cable deep into the seabed as the barge crawled forward, along anchor wires, on its steady journey from the beach to the wind farm site.

"This is one of the key project milestones as this cable will carry ashore half the power produced by the wind farm," said Ian Johnson, Senior Project Manager. "It's a



Above: Wind turbines at Robin Rigg



Above: The barge in action laying the cables

challenging part of the project to complete as we required the right tidal conditions to allow the barge to safely approach the beach and also relatively calm weather as the cable was unwound and ploughed into the seabed."

This single cable weighs more than 700 metric tonnes and has been engineered to withstand the conditions in the Solway Firth. "We are delighted that the cable installation ran smoothly and without incident," added Ian.

The team is now looking forward to beginning the process of energising the wind turbines installed so far. This will then allow energy to be sent ashore through the newly installed cable to the onshore substation at Seaton, which was completed last year. Installation of the turbines also reached a major landmark in the month of April when the halfway stage was reached. As we go to press 32 of the 60 turbines have now been installed offshore. Over the summer months the process of testing and energising the turbines should commence – the next stage in preparing the site to begin generating clean and green electricity.



Our new home....

The Robin Rigg project team have moved into their permanent accommodation at the Port of Workington.

“It’s just great that the team now has a solid base from which to work and feel embedded in life at the Port of Workington,” said Sally Shenton, E.ON’s Site Manager at Robin Rigg.

The building comprises of a large service and changing area for the project team on the ground floor as well as a drying room, mess room and office space. The top floor houses a kitchen area and further essential office space. The building will also accommodate staff from Offshore Design Engineering (ODE) and turbine manufacturer Vestas who will be relocating in the near future.



Colin Sharpe, Business Development Manager for the Port of Workington, welcomed the new homes as a sign of E.ON’s commitment to Cumbria. “The establishment of E.ON’s operations and maintenance facility on site at the Port of Workington demonstrates their huge commitment to the area,” he said. “Robin Rigg offshore wind

farm is a strategically important project in underpinning West Cumbria’s master plan ‘Britain’s Energy Coast’ and also helps deliver one of the Joint Economic Commission’s priorities for the North West Region: renewables. It is therefore a privilege for the Port to be supporting this project throughout its working life.”

As well as providing a few home comforts for the operations team, the building itself is doing its bit for energy efficiency. Sally explained: “We are actively monitoring and always improving our carbon footprint.”

The building is heated using an air source heat pump which results in less CO² emissions than conventional electric heating. There are also other lower energy features such as automated lighting, low energy hand driers and underfloor heating in the service area.



From ice to water

The call of fatherhood helped David Mitchell return to the UK after 20 years working in some of the most challenging environments on earth – luckily he found an exciting new career to keep his exploring mind busy.

David, 46, first trained as an electrical apprentice after school, which started him into a career performing a wide variety of roles in the polar regions. From working on the operation and construction of Antarctic research stations to polar guiding and supporting expeditions, David gained years of practical engineering experience as well as becoming the first Britain to reach the North Pole unassisted, a personal lifelong ambition.

He comments: “When we found out Sarah, my partner, was expecting a baby, I naturally wanted to work a bit closer to home. But that didn’t mean I wanted a run-of-the-mill job. It still had to be a challenging and interesting role.”

Knowing the Robin Rigg offshore wind farm was under construction, David looked on the E.ON website

and by chance found the perfect job. In December 2007 he started as a wind farm engineer for the Robin Rigg project in the Solway Firth, just an hour from his Cumbrian home. David is currently supporting construction work and preparing for when the wind farm becomes operational in 2009. Once complete, David will work in a team of four engineers overseeing and assisting with maintenance and operational work on site to ensure the 60 3MW turbines, offshore substation and onshore substation stay up and running.

“At the moment we are undergoing a wide variety of training to help build up our knowledge of the way the windfarm operates. A lot of this is new technology, so we are investing a lot of time in making sure we know it inside out from health and safety training right through to qualifying to handle high voltage systems.”

When the turbines are producing electricity to homes and businesses, David and the team will work on a rota system to be available 24 hours a day for any unexpected maintenance work, as well as overseeing planned work by contractors, preparing safety documentation for the site and its associated sub-stations.

So how is David finding the change from engineering in the cold winds of Antarctica?

“I’ve always tried to be energy conscious, but it is really important to me that this job is helping supply renewable energy. It’s exciting to be involved at the start of a project, but particularly because this is such a worthwhile one.”

When up and running the wind farm will be one of the largest schemes in the UK, generating enough energy to power 117,000 homes and save 237,000 tonnes of CO²* annually.

* Based on an installed capacity of 180MW, and a load factor of 35%

