



summer 2011

rock news

Message from the chief executive

The harsh reality is that the shipping world and therefore the ship repair markets are not improving as fast as we would like. That said, I am extremely proud of the fact that Gibdock is performing extremely well in what is still a depressed maritime market.

The last few months have seen some significant projects for the yard, including the docking of *Thomson Celebration* for Columbia Shipmanagement. This was a breakthrough contract with a major player in the business and it is certainly not easy to secure new business of this calibre right now. Winning this contract, and overcoming some tough challenges on the way to complete it on schedule, reflects very well on the yard and all our staff. Congratulations and thanks to all who worked on her for a job well done.

Gibdock is proving itself to be an important strategic facility for the cruise industry at a time when there is uncertainty surrounding the future of some other yards in the Mediterranean. This latest contract with Columbia Shipmanagement follows hard on the heels of two other notable dockings carried out for Pullmantur and we are optimistic of securing further work from cruise operators in the coming months.

We are also becoming something of an offshore specialist. Solstad has recently awarded us some interesting repeat

business, while Gulmar is another offshore customer that we have added to our growing client base. These projects demonstrate quite clearly the respect with which our capabilities are held in this sector. We look forward to meeting up with the leading offshore operators at Nor-Shipping in May.

These may be fickle times for ship repair yards. But we have picked up some demanding contracts from customers that demand a high quality service. The work we have secured this year shows that customers know they can rely on Gibdock to get the job done.

I would like to say that I can see better times ahead, but I don't have a crystal ball! There are some shipping markets where there has been clear improvement and this will filter down to our market eventually. In the meantime we continue to prepare for growth and stand ready to serve our customers as they may need.



Joe Corvelli
Chief executive officer
Gibdock



Project News

Celebration for Gibdock

Gibdock has recently handled a significant project for Cyprus-based Columbia Shipmanagement, which docked the 33,930grt, 215m long cruise vessel *Thomson Celebration*. Built originally in 1984 as *Noordam* for Holland America Line, *Thomson Celebration* arrived at Gibdock on 27th February this year and left, on schedule, on 16th March, after an extensive package of work that included general drydocking and tailshaft overhauls.

The main component of the job, however, was the renewal of around 40 tonnes of steel on Deck 10. A section of the deck was removed and replaced, but this left a number of the cabins below exposed to the elements.

Commercial director Richard Beards says: "This required an extensive amount of preparation and protection of these areas to enable the ship repair part of the project to be undertaken. The big challenge for us was carrying out the steel renewals in



Thomson Celebration arrived at Gibdock on 27th February this year and left on schedule after an extensive package of work

conjunction with the necessary cabin protection within the tight time frame that was available."

This was a significant project commercially for Gibdock, as it was the first time the yard had docked a cruise ship for Columbia Shipmanagement. Although it has docked another Thomson cruise ship, *Thomson Destiny*, on a number of occasions, this vessel is under different management. It was also by far the biggest project of any type that the Gibraltar yard has undertaken for the Cyprus-based ship management giant.

Mr Beards adds: "As a result of this docking we have developed a good working relationship with Columbia Shipmanagement. I am optimistic that this will lead to further business over the coming months."

Solstad returns for further conversion work

Norway's Solstad Offshore has returned to Gibdock for the conversion and drydocking of the 84m long, 4,500 dwt Platform Support Vessel *Normand Vester*. This follows on from the conversion of the *Normand Trym* and *Normand Vibran* at the Gibraltar yard, successfully completed for the same owner last year.

While the *Normand Vester* project is similar in scope to these earlier conversions, there are some differences. In this case the fresh water capacity is being increased by converting two of the stability tanks from water ballast to fresh water, while eight mud tanks are being converted for increased fuel oil capacity. Furthermore two wing tanks are being converted to void spaces

due to the conversion of the stability tanks.

This work is necessary to prepare the vessel for a new role, under a four year charter that Solstad has recently agreed with Petrobras of Brazil. This contract requires that the vessel is able to supply offshore units with 1600m³ of potable water and 1600m³ of fuel oil.

Malcolm Rosie, technical director, Solstad Offshore (UK) says: "Gibdock was chosen to carry out this work as they offered a very positive attitude to the project, were in a good location en route to Brazil and offered competitive rates. Gibdock also delivered excellent results with the *Vibran* and *Trym* conversions in 2010."

Another Solstad ship, the 127m long 9500 dwt offshore construction vessel, *Normand Cutter*, also docked at Gibdock in April this year, having been operating in West Africa. On this occasion the yard was required to dock the vessel for its second class renewal. In addition to general survey requirements, Gibdock assisted with thruster and crane work and carried out general repair work.

Commercial director Richard Beards says: "It is a tribute to the capabilities of the yard and our staff that Solstad keeps coming back and these latest dockings underline the close partnership that has been built up between us. They are a major quality player and we are honoured that they continue to have such confidence in us."



Normand Cutter docked at Gibdock in April this year, having been operating in West Africa



Offshore business from Gulmar

The UAE-based Gulmar Offshore group has entrusted Gibdock with the drydocking of two of its dynamically-positioned dive support vessels, *Gulmar Falcon* and *Gulmar Eagle*. Both vessels docked at the Gibraltar yard in April and represent work for an interesting new client.

In both cases the scope of the contract includes regular drydocking, with tailshaft overhauls, painting and machinery work. Chief executive Joe Corvelli says: "We are pleased to welcome Gulmar to the yard. They are yet another in a growing list of offshore clients that we are doing work for."

Investing in the future

Stepping up security

To comply with ISPS requirements, Gibdock has recently invested in new security infrastructure to improve access control at the yard. From now on all visitors and staff will need more than just a paper badge. They will have to use an identity card that can be electronically swiped at the gatehouse and other buildings throughout the yard.

Chief executive Joe Corvelli explains: "In part this is to meet ISPS legislation, but it is also in response to what our customers are telling us they require in terms of security. We now have a fully electronic pass system which constantly updates records of who is in the yard at any time." The new regime applies to all parties wishing to have access to the yard.

"The system applies to everyone, and there are no exceptions. Even the postman has to swipe in and out!" Mr Corvelli says.

Further security enhancements are being considered by Gibdock. These include systems to track the identity of those actually onboard individual vessels at a given time.

Mr Corvelli adds: "I realise that the installation of the new security system has slowed things down a bit for customers and staff alike but security and safety have to be top priorities. I appreciate everyone's cooperation while the new electronic swipe card system is implemented and I am sure the new procedures will quickly become second nature."

Apprenticeship scheme success

Gibdock's much praised apprenticeship scheme continues to pay dividends both for the yard and those who enrol in it. The latest batch of apprentices recently celebrated the completion of their four year training course at the yard, which leads to the award of an NVQ qualification.

Operating since 1998, the scheme is run together with the Government of Gibraltar, which provides three full time instructors at the yard to carry out training for the young people. Gibdock generally takes 18-20 of the apprentices, all from Gibraltar, into the training scheme every year, while the remainder find work with the Government of Gibraltar or other employers.

Joe Corvelli, chief executive, says: "This is a vital a programme for Gibdock as, like other shipyards, we find it hard to attract young people into this kind of work. If we didn't act proactively through the apprenticeship scheme, then the skills sets we need wouldn't be there in a few years time."

Training manager Willie Zammit agrees. He says: "Having the apprenticeship programme is a matter of necessity. If we don't train our young people then many of the trades we rely on will die out. It is a real sign of our commitment to the future of the yard here in Gibraltar."

Many of the apprentices make good progress once they join Gibdock as full time employees. "It is always encouraging to see apprentices come through the ranks and become fully fledged project managers at the yard in their own right," says Richard Beards, commercial director.



Gibdock takes 18-20 apprentices, all from Gibraltar, into its training scheme every year

Production matters

Efforts continue to refine production methods at Gibdock, and to remain forward looking when it comes to repair techniques.

Investments in the yard have included necessary maintenance – new workshop roofing; new crane rails for Drydocks 2 and 3; and the overhaul of one of the yard’s main pumps – but have also been customer driven. Meanwhile, Gibdock has shown itself willing to exploit latest technology. Last year, for example, saw the yard’s first use of the ‘ENVIROBOT®’ Ultra High Pressure (UHP) Robotic System from Chariot Robotics, which works in any position on the hull and offers clear scheduling advantages.

Operated by an individual, the robot uses patented magnetic air gap technology which allows it to sweep or full blast, back and forth across the hull’s flat bottom, vertical sides, bow and stern shapes equally.

For Gibdock production director, John Taylor, the search for production efficiencies is unceasing. The yard has recently made major investments in wet blasting, for example.

Also new is a completely reorganised stores operation, now in its own dedicated area.

Currently, Mr Taylor is concentrating on drydock operations, where blocks are being renewed and the performance of flooding valves is under review. In the latter case, the yard recently took two de-watering valves on trial, to evaluate whether all valves in the drydock would benefit from a full replacement investment. “We want to see whether the new hydraulic actuator system is more robust than the pneumatic system we currently employ,” says Mr Taylor, “and whether the approach will lead to the reduction in operating time claimed for it. The objective is to maximize reliability at the docking stage – one of the most critical parts of operations.”

Mr Taylor’s eye for detail is also witnessed by Gibdock’s switch to a new technique for crane wire greasing as part of routine tests to detect defects and corrosion. The technique involves the motorised stripping of grease from the wires and ultrasonic testing for defects. “This is the second year we have given the go ahead for this maintenance procedure. There is no doubt that it costs more than the manual approach, but this has to be balanced against the hours saved and the superior access the method allows in the case of wires higher up, which cannot otherwise be reached.”



The search for production efficiencies is unceasing

Overseas outlook

Italian agent appointed

Last November Gibdock named J.I.T Srl, of Naples, as its agent for Italy. This is the first time that the yard has been represented in this country and is an important step forward as Gibdock seeks out new markets in the Mediterranean.

“There are significant opportunities for the yard in Italy,” Richard Beards, commercial director, observes. “Italy is an important shipowning centre and we believe J.I.T will help us to develop the relationships we need. Indeed we have already had some successful contacts through the company.”

For more information contact: Davide Scalia, J.I.T. by email, dsc@jitrade.eu or telephone 39 338 713 8617

Come and see us at Nor-Shipping



This year Nor-Shipping takes place at Lillestrøm, near Oslo, between May 24th and 27th and Gibdock will be present on stand DO4-14. Please come and see us!

“Nor-Shipping is an event where shipyards, agents, ship owners and managers get the opportunity to meet face to face and both Gibdock and customers will benefit from this. Nor-Shipping is an ideal place where such relationships can be built and strengthened,” says Thomas Ness, general manager of Storm & Bull Shipping, Gibdock’s agent in Norway.

Gibdock has already had some success in the Norwegian market, carrying out work for offshore support and seismic survey vessel specialists, as well as some ferry operators. But Mr Ness believes Gibdock’s participation at this year’s Nor-Shipping will provide an opportunity to showcase its capabilities to a wider audience. He adds: “The strength and key advantage of Gibdock may be its strategic location, but the management and staff have shown they are capable, flexible and able to deal with complicated situations and to be creative in solving any kind of problems.”

Storm & Bull Shipping AS was established in 1898 and has over 112 years of experience. The company has offices both in Oslo and in Haugesund on the west coast of Norway.

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