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Simon’s Tyne Terminal has joined Certas Energy’s growing network of marine gas oil (MGO) storage and supply facilities. The Terminal, strategically located on the estuary of the River Tyne, is providing storage for DMA grade MGO with less than 0.1% sulphur, together with road loading and pipeline transfer systems for redelivery of product by road and sea. The new contract with Simon at Tyne forms part of an ongoing expansion of Certas Energy’s depot network to ensure customers can access its products across the UK.

Simon’s Tyne Terminal offers deep water jetties at a busy port with good sea connections to continental Europe, as well as excellent road links to the North of England and Scotland. The Terminal has expertise in storing and handling a wide range of hazardous and non-hazardous products and has marine bunkering capability and experience. Under the contract with Certas Energy, unmarked MGO is received by sea into the Terminal.

Marine fuels’ storage is provided in six tanks with a combined capacity of approximately 5,000m³. Stored product is fiscally marked and tested in tank by an independent inspectorate with results confirmed to Simon prior to onward delivery at a rebated duty rate. Road tankers are loaded via dedicated bottom loading gantries, fitted with HMRC-approved semi-intelligent mechanical batch meters. In addition to the supply of MGO out of Tyne by road, a new pipeline has been constructed by Simon’s engineering team to enable Certas Energy to offer an ex-pipe bunkering facility for large vessels.

As part of a complete service package for Certas Energy, Simon’s bespoke TASCS (Terminal Automation Stock Control System) incorporating real-time web portal access offers direct access to live information concerning movement of DMA grade MGO in and out of the Terminal.

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Simon Storage has invested around £2 million in upgrading the Jetty 1 facilities at its Seal Sands Terminal at the mouth of the River Tees. Works to repair the existing structures, replace existing fender systems with high-efficiency units, and construct a fourth dolphin (dolphin D) have recently been completed in a demanding marine environment with an exemplary safety performance and with a minimum of jetty outage. The project, managed by Simon’s in-house engineering team, will extend the life of the jetty and ensure safe berthing for vessels up to 40,000 DWT. The installation of the fourth dolphin provides a preferential berthing dolphin to act as the first point of contact for vessels being berthed on Jetty 1.

Simon is committed to a continuous programme of asset integrity management at its Terminals in the UK, Germany and Ireland to ensure facilities meet the needs of current and future operational capacity. The project management team worked closely with the Marine Management Organisation, PD Ports and the Crown Estate Commissioners to obtain the necessary licences to ensure that the works were completed on time and with the minimum impact to the marine environment. A design and build contract incorporating the requirements of the works licences was awarded to Southbay Civil Engineering Ltd of North Shields (SCE), which specialises in marine design and build projects.

The design and construction method developed by Simon and SCE utilised landside access and pre-constructed concrete panels for dolphin D to optimise construction safety and reduce jetty possession risk. It required installing 900mm diameter tubular piling into the river bed, followed by the precast concrete units and a continuous concrete pour to create the platform, and finally fitting the new fender panel as a single pre-assembled unit. Spud-leg barges were used to replace the existing fenders on dolphins A, B and C with a similar high efficiency system, and the timber facing panels to the Jetty 1 structure have also been replaced.

Summing up, Gary Lacy, Simon’s Engineering Director, says the close cooperation between the Simon engineering, operations and SCE teams, and their collective emphasis on construction safety, ensured a safe and successful delivery of a major engineering project, from initial design through to commissioning and handover to operations. He concludes: “The 24-hour / 7-day working pattern enabled the new build and renewal works to be completed in under 20 days, resulting in a minimum reduction to the availability of the jetty for our customers.”

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Adapting to change

The global recession, from which we are now beginning to emerge, has affected supply and demand for a wide range of products, particularly oil. Perhaps one of the most significant developments for oil storage in the past few years has been the switch from a contango to a backwardated oils market in mid-2011, which has seen oil inventory levels drop, leaving some storage terminals facing the prospect of empty tanks. The answer to the question: ‘how do you keep your tanks full in a backwardated market?’ seems simple: you fill them up with something else. For Simon Storage, this has meant modifying and investing in infrastructure requirements and services to cater for other products, as well as ensuring that we have the necessary commercial and technical resources to maximise opportunities in new and burgeoning markets. By taking this proactive approach we have increased storage of chemicals, biofuels and waste liquids at our UK terminals. In fact, our overall tank utilisation rates have remained broadly stable and averaged around 95% since 2009.

Expanding waste storage and handling capabilities with new licences and permissions has brought new business to Simon’s East Coast terminals. Our Immingham Terminal complex now holds an environmental permit allowing the handling of one of the most comprehensive ranges of liquid wastes in the UK bulk liquid storage sector. This capability has generated considerable commercial interest from the fast-developing waste management sector and resulted in contracts being awarded practically from day one of the new licences coming into effect. In addition, all of our key UK facilities have been granted permits to handle NORM products (Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material) which has opened up opportunities for handling NORM liquid wastes from the North Sea decommissioning programme.

Successful terminal operators like Simon Storage have to manage change continuously, from economic uncertainty and market swings to new regulatory requirements. Change brings both challenges and opportunities for today’s tank storage industry and demands an agile response – sitting on your hands and waiting for the next contango or economic upturn is not the only option. In the face of fast moving market conditions, Simon remains committed to maintaining its diverse product portfolio, developing new market opportunities, and investing in the infrastructure and people it needs to stay ahead in the storage sector.

Martyn Lyons, Managing Director of Simon Storage Limited, considers some of the current and future challenges facing the storage industry and the cost of managing change.
Simon provides specialist water separation services

Simon Storage has successfully provided specialist storage and water separation services for ship slops at its Immingham East Terminal on behalf of Hydrodec (UK) Ltd. The contract with Hydrodec, which trades as the OSS Group in the UK, involved around 11,000 tonnes of saline water containing oil residues from shipping operations. Having already undergone an initial oil skimming process, the product was re-sampled by Simon on arrival at the terminal to ensure it satisfied the adequate specification for water separation and disposal via Simon’s on-site water treatment facilities.

Received by sea into the terminal, the ship slops was stored in a number of specially configured tanks totalling nearly 20,000m³. After a settling period to allow for natural in-tank separation of oil and water, the water was drawn off for disposal through Simon’s water treatment facilities. Oil residues left in the tank were collected by OSS, using vacuum tankers, for recycling at its Stourport-on-Severn processing plant.

Simon’s Immingham East Terminal is permitted to carry out water separation activities and recovery of separated hazardous and non-hazardous waste products from industry and commerce. Simon’s investment in its own water treatment plant at the terminal provides the capability for disposal of separated waste water derived from a wide range of permitted EWC (European Waste Catalogue) codes.

In the face of finite global oil supplies, the market for collecting and recycling waste oil from sources such as the maritime and automotive industries is growing, says Rachel Lewin, Marketing Executive at Simon Storage. “This rapidly developing market is increasing requirements for suitable storage, treatment and disposal in the UK and mainland Europe,” she comments. “With a long history of handling bulk liquid wastes under permit and its own water separation facilities at Immingham, Simon has achieved significant business success in this demanding sector and is ideally placed to maximise emerging opportunities.”

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We are confident that the newly awarded Environment Agency permits will enable Immingham to strengthen its position as the first choice facility on the UK East Coast for the storage and handling of bulk liquids to both domestic and European customers.

Last year Simon Storage was granted an EPR permit from the Environment Agency for the handling of hazardous and non-hazardous bulk liquid wastes at its comprehensive Immingham Terminal complex, and this new waste storage capability is attracting considerable interest from the UK and European waste oil and recycling markets.

One such company that has been quick to take advantage of the possibilities presented by these new supply chain solutions is Avista’s German refinery business – Avista Oil Refining & Trading Deutschland GmbH. Together with Acumen Energy (of which Avista Oil AG holds a 56% share), Avista is now collecting waste lubricating oil from various recycled sources within the UK for bulk up at Simon’s Immingham Terminals, prior to exporting to Avista’s European refineries for recycling.

Avista Oil AG is one of Europe’s leading groups of companies involved in the recycling of used oil and regards itself as a technology leader in the production of upcycled high-quality base oils and lubricants. With refinery and collection logistics sites in Europe and the US, Avista has been positioned in this market for some 60 years.

In line with increasing environmental awareness, the UK has a potentially lucrative market for waste oil collections, and with limited refinery operations within the UK there is a growing demand for routes to export product to Europe for reprocessing.

Simon Storage has also recently been awarded a further environmental permit to handle NORM (Naturally Occuring Radioactive Materials) contaminated bulk liquid waste at the Immingham Terminal. Such materials typically arise from North Sea Oil exploration activities, and even at very low levels of radiation require appropriate permits with stringent conditions attached to ensure products are handled safely and securely before being transferred for treatment.

Marketing Executive Rachel Lewin commented “We are confident that the newly awarded Environment Agency permits will enable Immingham to strengthen its position as the first choice facility on the UK East Coast for the storage and handling of bulk liquids to both domestic and European customers.”
From operating our own storage assets to specialised distribution solutions. From project engineering and automation expertise to designing and developing biofuels facilities for our clients. Simon is investing in people and facilities for the future. Just ASK.

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