



Ocean Guardian spuds first well



The Ocean Guardian in Invergordon prior to departing for the Falklands

Semi-submersible rig *Ocean Guardian* (pictured) 'spudded' the first well of the 2010 drilling phase on 22nd February.

The *Ocean Guardian*'s journey from Invergordon, on the Cromarty Firth, Scotland, to the Falklands took 83 days. The rig is expected to remain in the Falklands for 8 months. After this it is expected that the rig will leave the area while the well results are analysed.

The rig is set to drill a minimum of four wells for Desire Petroleum (with the possibility of an additional two wells), and two for Rockhopper Exploration in the North Falkland Basin. It will also drill one well for BHP Billiton, and partner Falklands Oil and Gas, to the south of the Islands.

Ocean Guardian is currently drilling Desire Petroleum's Liz prospect, after which it will move to Rockhopper Exploration's licensed acreage to drill Rockhopper's Sea Lion prospect. BHP Billiton, with partner Falklands Oil and Gas, will drill the third well in the drilling programme on their Toroa prospect. This will be the first well to be drilled in the South Falkland Basin.

The rig is supported by three vessels, *Maersk Traveller*, *Maersk Pacer* and *Toisa Invincible*. The three tugs will take turns to monitor the 500m safety exclusion zone enforced around the rig.



Support Vessels Toisa Invincible and Maersk Pacer alongside FIPASS, Stanley
(Picture: Lee Clement)

Update: Environmental Impact Statements

BHP Billiton's Environmental Impact Statement and the addenda to BHP Billiton, Desire Petroleum and Rockhopper Exploration's Environmental Impact Statements have been approved. These addenda provide information about the rig and season specific impacts not contained in the main Statements.

Borders & Southern Petroleum has recently submitted its EIS, and it is currently out for public consultation. Copies of the EIS can be obtained from the Mineral Resources Department, or it can be viewed at the Environmental Planning Department or the Public Library. The Statement has also been sent to Fox Bay, Port Howard, Hill Cove and Goose Green. The deadline for public comments is 4.30pm on Thursday 25th March. Comments should be addressed to the Department of Mineral Resources.

Slick Private Sector

The Falkland Islands private sector certainly rose to the challenge of preparing for the drilling round at very short notice. This has included Byron McKay's preparation, in record time, of an impressive laydown and storage area to support drilling operations. The laydown area also houses the offices of AGR, the well management company.



Drilling mud storage silos and drill pipe in the laydown area

Map of Offshore Exploration Areas



Map of Offshore Exploration Areas showing current licensed blocks

Visitors in January and February

FIG consultant, Dr Phil Richards of the British Geological Survey (BGS) made a brief visit to the Islands in January to brief the new Members of the Legislative Assembly. Representatives from Desire Petroleum and Rockhopper Exploration also visited in January for final pre-drilling meetings.

Late February saw the arrival of representatives from Borders & Southern Petroleum plc. Dr Howard Obee and Bruce Farrer have visited the Islands on a number of previous occasions, and on this visit they were accompanied by Board Members, Harry Dobson and Stephen Posford.

While in the Islands, the Borders & Southern team met with private sector companies and updated the Mineral Resources Committee on their current activities.



Borders & Southern representatives, Dr Howard Obee, Mr Stephen Posford, Mr Harry Dobson and Mr Bruce Farrer with the Director of Mineral Resources, Phyl Rendell

On Tuesday 23rd February, Borders & Southern held a well attended public meeting in which they discussed their Environmental Impact Assessment, and gave a technical presentation on their licensed acreage with details of their current preferred drilling targets, Darwin East and Stebbing.

For further information about mineral exploration in the Falkland Islands please contact the department for a free brochure, CD ROM and map on email: nilloyd@mineralresources.gov.fk Fax +500 27321 or Tel +500 27322. Details about licensing activities and conditions are available on website www.falklandislands.com and www.falklands-oil.com or from pchristie@mineralresources.gov.fk or prendell@mineralresources.gov.fk A list of geological brochures, maps and reports for sale is also available from the department.