

VISIT TO OIL SPILL RESPONSE COMPANY IN SOUTHAMPTON 26 JUNE 2013

Report by Michael Minton - Press Secretary



On 26th June members of the club visited the main location for Oil Spill Response, the biggest company in the world providing immediate and professional support to 103 oil companies attending incidents around the globe. The company owed its existence to the Torrey Canyon disaster in 1967 and has built up its operations with strategic sites in the Far East, Middle East, Africa and the Americas. It was heavily involved in the BP incident in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 and has developed new technology for capping undersea wells. From Southampton incidents are controlled and managed by systems integrated with rescue systems in Canada and America. The key is speed of response with the right people with the right equipment to deal with whatever type of major incident occurs some of which are on land as well as at sea. Environments can vary from the frozen north where ever more oil exploration is being undertaken to the heat of the jungles in the Congo and Nigeria. With 120 highly trained personal in England and another 112 overseas they can mobilise people and equipment with engineers on 1 hour standby.

The key to success is preparation and training. In a bonded warehouse on site equipment is stored on custom-cleared aircraft-ready pallets some of which are already loaded on to trailers ready for the cab unit to take it to an airport whether in the South, or the Midlands. Every pallet is listed on a computer detailing the equipment and each pallet has a labelling and document pocket setting out operating instructions. Members were given a comprehensive briefing and taken on a one and a half hour tour seeing equipment such as booms, skimmers, ships, lorries, ancillary pumps and much more varying in size from almost domestic to some weighing many tons on pallets that are designed to fit aircraft such as the Hercules. The list of incidents handled over the last 30 years in formidable and with the increasing size of ships and the more remote locations future challenges are considerable. Much of the equipment is designed by the company and on hire to their oil companies.

Colin Jolly thanked our hosts for an invaluable insight into a world beating organisation and Jane was given a vote of thanks for such an interesting insight into one of the south' gems by .

