

GeoDrilling

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Testconsult records displacement data for flyover project near Southampton

UK-BASED Testconsult has been involved in a contract to replace bridge bearings beneath live loads at the Redbridge Flyover on the A34, close to Southampton Docks.

Testconsult designed a continuous, real-time monitoring system for Mabey Support Systems (MSS), which will record all loads and displacements in the structure, during the works.

MSS installed the temporary supports and operated the jacking system on the project, for the main contractor, Concrete Repairs.

The system, designed by Testconsult, not only measured relative displacement between the bridge soffit and the top of the pier, but also the displacement of the deck and pier foundations located 10m below, and any rotational movement of the bridge deck.

All of the data was posted on a dedicated web service that clients can log on to access their data at any time.

Alerts were also set up to warn Mabey engineers if any movements exceeded the pre-defined values.

Trevi reports revenues up and rise in profitability

GRUPPO Trevi's interim results to September 30, 2009, reveal growth in revenues and an increase in profitability, particularly at the level of net profit, despite an unfavourable global macro-economic climate.

Total revenues for the first nine months at the consolidated level were €836 million, compared with €779 million for the first nine months of 2008, representing an increase of 7%.

EBITDA was €161 million (19% of total revenues), compared with €131 million for the first nine months of 2008 (+23%). Net profit of €70 million showed strong growth from the €57 million reported in the first nine months of 2008 (+22%).

On September 30, the group had a net debt of €441 million; a slight improvement of €7 million on its position at June 30. Twelve months ago it was €247 million.

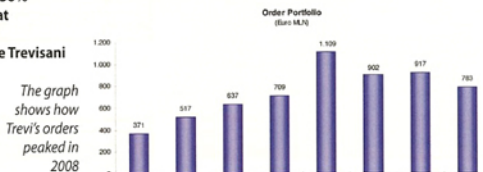
The order portfolio was €783 million, representing a decline of 36% compared to its position at September 30, 2008.

Group chairman Davide Trevisani



said: "In spite of the macroeconomic environment, the results for the first nine months of the current year confirm the group's growth, with a significant increase in net profitability.

"The trend of the order portfolio must be considered in light of the specific area of activity of the group and, in particular, in terms of the natural fluctuations inherent in the acquisition of so-called 'large' projects. With regard to this point, major projects are currently tendered for worldwide."



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Lankelma UK11 rig in Antarctica trip to test polar snow

LANKELMA has designed and constructed UK11, a cone-penetration testing rig that can be attached to a tractor's rear three-point linkage.

UK11 was constructed in-house and includes all of the equipment necessary to conduct cone-penetrometer testing in the harsh conditions of Antarctica. Hydraulic and electrical power are supplied by the tractor.

The rig will be shipped by the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) to Antarctica, where it will be attached to BAS's John Deere or Challenger tractors.

Lankelma is sponsoring and collaborating with Adrian McCallum, a former Major in the Australian Army and now a PhD student at the Scott Polar Research Institute, to investigate the strength of polar snow.

This is specifically for the purpose of assessing sub-grade strengths for the construction of polar infrastructure works, including runways, and the design of the new BAS Halley Station on the Brunt Ice Shelf and, hopefully, on the Australian Antarctic Division's new ice runway near Casey Station.

In addition to assessing cone-tip resistance and sleeve friction, Mr McCallum plans to address spatial repeatability, rate effects, effective cone area, and the existence and dimensions of any compacted ice zone beneath the cone.

Mr McCallum said on December 1: "I'm now in Halley after flying in from Cape Town to the Russian blue-ice runway, Novolazarevskaya and then via the Norwegian Base, Troll. The ship carrying the CPT equipment is delayed and is not expected until mid-January.

"In the meantime, I will be becoming familiar with the tractors we plan to mount the CPT on, and also maybe do some initial snow-density and stratigraphy work, as well as some ground-penetrating radar work to determine the spatial extent of any subsequently identified 'weak' layers.

"I may also do some 'pressure bulb' experiments in the field to try and determine how far ahead the cone will 'sense' in snow."

Mitchell moves beyond drilling

Mitchell extends reach from drilling to global energy exploration and energy services

MITCHELL has long been a regarded name in the drilling industry worldwide, especially for its pioneering work in coalbed methane (CBM) horizontal in-seam drilling.

However, the strategic sale of its Australian operations in August 2008 and the subsequent expansion of its international operations have energised the focus of the shareholders and management, in some bold new directions.

In early 2009, Group CEO Nathan Mitchell fulfilled his strategic vision and created the Mitchell Group, which acts as an umbrella entity to the main streams of the business, the services operations that includes Mitchell Drilling International (MDI) and Mitchell Energy Services (MES), the realisation of a long-

held aspiration to create an investment arm to participate directly in the development of energy opportunities.

Nathan Mitchell said: "It was clear that with the experience and innovation we had built over 40 years as a contractor, coupled with enquires we were receiving from key players to become part of their projects on an equity participation basis, my long-held vision for the future of the Group was ripe for execution."

In terms of operational services, MDI continues to expand its client base within the CBM and minerals sectors. In addition to driving existing markets in India, China and the US, MDI is also deploying to new markets in Africa and South America.

Markedly, the growth in demand for CBM drilling expertise has been significant in the past five years.

Since 2003, its CBM reputation,

built by creating the techniques in horizontal in-seam drilling that enabled it to execute CBM drilling programmes in Australia, drew the attention of rapid growth economies such as India, where a growing demand for energy from non-traditional sources was a perfect fit for MDI's CBM drilling expertise.

Mitchell's has subsequently drilled for CBM in India for companies including Reliance Industries Ltd (a Fortune 500 company), Greater Eastern Energy Corp Ltd – the first company in India to commercialise CBM gas production via its Mitchell drilled wells, and Arrow Energy – a client with which Mitchell's enjoys global connections.

Complementing the drilling operations, MES offers a suite of integrated exploration services. This specialist range of wireline, perforation and production logging services has to date operated under the IES brand in India. Going forward, the MES entity will align these geophysical and geotechnical service disciplines globally.

Utilising advanced downhole tools, these services offer the proposition whereby MES can define a reserve, allowing clients to progress from exploration to production. Other specialist services in the MES portfolio include Maxial2 – the company's CBM geo-steering solution.

The recently formed equity participation business is actively looking at energy projects – independently as well in co-operation with like-minded companies – to unearth and capture the resources important to development of countries in which Mitchell's has industry experience. It also allows the Group to leverage the skills of its services businesses.

MES's analysis has already borne fruit with it now operating in partnership in a CBM project in Botswana, which may offer underground coal gasification (UCG) potential.

The project is a joint venture between Tlou Energy – itself a joint venture between Mitchell Energy and Walcot Capital – and Saber Energy.

The opportunity for this project centres on the fact many countries in the region historically have relied on South Africa for their energy needs. However, the growing domestic energy demand within South Africa to fuel general economic expansion as well as significant development programmes such as the World Cup 2010, has meant energy markets dynamics may have a real impact on countries such as Botswana, due to sharply rising tariffs there for imported energy. Nathan Mitchell said it is this potential to positively affect the lives of



everyday people and give them more autonomy over their energy future, that really excites him.

"The prospects for this project, with 12,500km² of

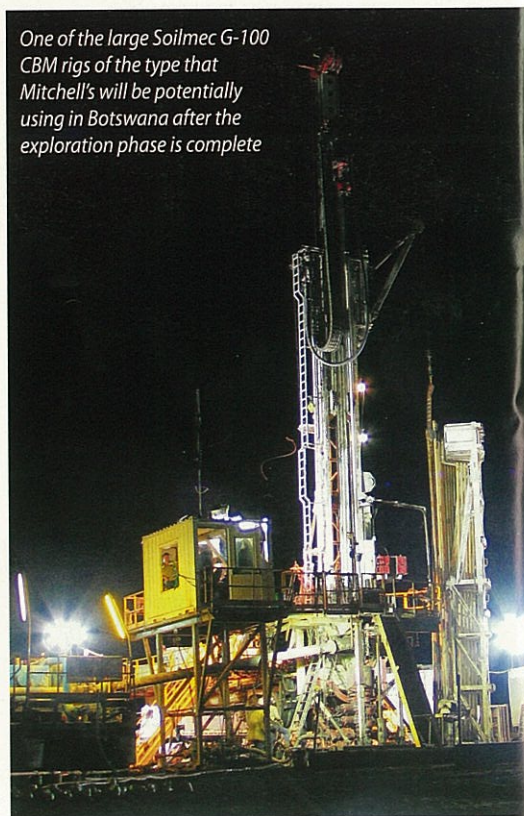
territory to explore, could potentially offer far-reaching benefits for Botswana and other countries in southern Africa as they respond to the dynamically changing southern Africa energy market and move to greater self-reliance in terms of their energy resources," Mr Mitchell said.

"Demand for cleaner energy will continue to be a key objective going forward. And in the same spirit that saw us revolutionise the CBM industry with our cutting-edge technologies such as Maxial2, I

firmly believe our unique insight linked to our direct participation in strategic projects will unleash new and exciting energy outcomes for end-users in the CBM and UCG."

"The prospects for this project, with 12,500km² of territory to explore, could potentially offer far-reaching benefits for Botswana and other countries in southern Africa"

One of the large Soilmec G-100 CBM rigs of the type that Mitchell's will be potentially using in Botswana after the exploration phase is complete



Group CEO Nathan Mitchell