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# Measured growth

Specialist in aluminium vessel repairs and renewals

Completed work on the world's largest fast ferry in 2009

Plans to move into the super yacht market

**Headquartered in the UK** across its two facilities at Dover and Portsmouth, Burgess Marine has a legacy dating back to the 1970s as an expert in the specialist fast ferry engineering industry. With a focus on delivering the complete package, the company's essential ship repair activities are spread over the two core areas of aluminium repairs and renewals as well as medium and high-speed diesel engineering.

While still very active in the steel arena, the 40-strong staff base is made up of highly experienced, fully coded aluminium welder fabricators, while a smaller sector of the company also provides diving and underwater engineering services.

Having built an enviable international reputation for market leading structural repairs and refits, Burgess Marine has also forged a number of beneficial associations with industry partners and customers. The biggest of these is BAE Systems in Portsmouth with whom the company has a long-term agreement of support for high-speed refits taking place in Portsmouth and key vessel contracts with the Royal Navy. Moreover, the organisation works closely with all of the major ferry operators in the UK including extensive works with Brittany Ferries, Sea France and P&O Ferries, while customers such as Wightlink provide key business for engine contracts.

The company's impressive portfolio is not its only strength, however, as Nicholas Warren, managing director of Burgess Marine explains:

"Our fast response time and notable flexibility are key elements of our success with our workforce of highly skilled marine and mechanical engineers thoroughly backing up our offering. We are set apart from any competition by the close relationships we maintain with our customers and the way in which we try to find a unique solution to meet their requirements. We are happy to work either on an hourly rate or on a project-by-project basis providing clients with a fixed fee turnkey solution. The way that we have built our business in line with BAE Systems has also resulted in our health and safety standards and procedures being some of the best in the business."

One of Burgess Marine's greatest accolades was its involvement in the conversion of the world's largest fast ferry in 2009. Manufactured by Incat, with whom the company has a preferred partner relationship, the 'Manannan' ferry was an ex-military specification high-speed craft that was converted into a passenger vessel. Entirely unique, this contract called for Burgess Marine's expertise and support from BAE Systems in-situ in Portsmouth where the works took place. Whilst the company had never completed a project on this scale before, the expertise it has in every element of the build was key to the successful delivery. From accommodation modules to the stern ramps, Burgess Marine was able to meet the client's exact requirements.

More recently, however, the organisation has identified the super yacht arena as a possible new



market for growth. "While the core of our business is to support high-speed craft operators and BAE Systems, there is a definite window of opportunity for us for the refit, repair and overhaul of super yacht vessels," Nicholas notes. "Rather than dealing directly with the owners or project teams we are approaching this niche through supporting the yards actually refitting the vessels and working with the management companies running the projects. The inherent knowledge we have in ship repair is transferable to any vessels and we have already gained a preferred partner arrangement with the syncrolift facility in Cherbourg that is owned by the Chamber of Commerce."

Indeed, the ability to call on the facilities of its key industry partners will greatly aid this venture and the successful completion of a number of contracts is already spurring growth. Supporting a 40-metre new build super yacht for Pendennis was the first on the agenda, followed closely by work for Southampton Yacht Services on its sailing vessel Velsheda and motor yacht, Bystander. At the present time, however, the company still regards the current high-speed refit season for its existing customers as a priority and Burgess

Marine is currently involved in the overhaul and refit of all of Condor Ferries high-speed craft, while the overhaul of Brittany Ferries Incat 057 vessel in Cherbourg will also take place in the next three months.

Burgess Marine will continue to invest regularly in its skills base and workforce who receive additional training on a frequent basis, as well as in its facilities in Portsmouth and gaining greater recognition on the industry exhibition circuit. "We are looking to sustain slow and controlled growth in a cost effective fashion while keeping the customer firmly at the centre of our operations. My aspiration is to expand the company without sacrificing the quality of service we provide, and we thoroughly recognise that in this business you are only as good as your last job. Strategically I would like to double our current turnover of £8 million and grow the business to a size that it can absorb the seasonal peaks and troughs inherent in commercial ship repair. I intend to do this by supporting an increased number of customers in a sustainable fashion, and looking at bespoke steel and aluminium fabrication projects," Nicholas concludes. ❖



### HART FENTON & CO. LTD.

Hart Fenton (HF) is a firm of consulting naval architects and marine engineers with expertise in ferries and specialist vessels. This expertise is not only in design but also in service support. HF has provided technical advice to Burgess Marine, on a variety of projects, for more than 15 years.



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