How we intend to serve you better

Davide Calcagni
President EAGE

As a member you will receive every month EAGE's flagship magazine First Break, filled with technical articles, special topics, industry news, reports on EAGE past and upcoming events, and more. In addition, you can choose one online subscription to one of EAGE's scientific journals (Geophysical Prospecting, Near Surface Geophysics, Petroleum Geoscience or Basin Research), and get free access to EarthDoc, EAGE's online geoscience database with over 30,000 scientific papers which you can search by author, topic, keyword, and more. All this is included in your membership fee.

In addition the regional EAGE office in the Middle East offers a wide variety of workshops on a broad range of topics, such as: Tar Mats, Passive Seismic, Borehole Geophysics, Fracture Characterization, and more. Workshops have limited attendance and provide

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Podium place for quiz team at EAGE Barcelona

The Geo-quiz gave us the chance to compete with students representing different universities from all over the world. It made us feel confident and enhanced our knowledge in various disciplines of geosciences in front of international students. Thanks to the EAGE who gave us this valuable opportunity to be involved in such competitive contest. Thanks also to the Petroleum Geosciences Department at the Petroleum Institute for their generous support and encouragement to form a team and enter the competition. Ultimately, this is really an excellent experience that is worth being a part of.

Osama Al-Zinati

Picture above the Petroleum Institute (PI) Abu Dhabi team members who won second place in the Geo-quiz competition held during the EAGE Conference and Exhibition in Barcelona. From left to right: EAGE president Mahmoud Abdulbaqi, the winning team members Owais Ameer Mohammed, Mohamed Ali Al Bloushi and Osama Saeed Al Zinati, Gerry Ross, the geo-quiz prizes sponsor representative from PetroSkills, and quizmaster Prof Patrick Corbett of Heriot-Watt University.

The students were the members of the team from the EAGE Student Chapter of the Petroleum Institute Geosciences Society who placed third in an online Geo-quiz organized by the EAGE last March with the prize of sponsored attendance at the conference in Barcelona where the live Geo-Quiz was held as part of the special Student Programme at the meeting.

Time to sign up for EAGE membership benefits!

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an excellent opportunity for interactive discussions about a specialized topic. EAGE members always register at discounted rates, both for the workshops and for the larger events worldwide. EAGE’s Annual Conference & Exhibition attracts some 6000 geoscientists and engineers from all over the world. In 2011, Vienna (Austria) will host this event from 23-26 May.

For those looking for education opportunities, EAGE has a lot to offer and being a member you will also benefit from reduced prices for registration. October 2010 will be a busy month for the Middle East as Abu Dhabi will be hosting various short courses (Education Days Abu Dhabi) including the SEG/EAGE DISC 2010 by Colin Sayers on ‘Geomechanical Applications’. For 2011, many events are currently being planned in the Middle East such as the SEG/EAGE DISC 2011 by Julien Meunier on ‘Seismic Acquisition’ as well as the EAGE Education Tour V (EET V) on ‘Seismic Geomechanics’ by Jorg Herwanger.

Joining the EAGE is easy, and the chart below shows the growing number of Middle East-based geoscientists and engineers who are taking advantage of the benefits offered. So, why not go to the EAGE website at www.eage.org and find out how to sign up, or contact the EAGE regional office Middle East at middle_east@eage.org.

How we intend to serve you better

Continued from p.1.

The Middle East region continues to grow at a remarkable pace and its global importance in the field of geoscience and engineering, is undeniable. EAGE will be on hand to provide a full range of services to its members throughout this growth period and beyond. We place a high priority on keeping our members as well informed as possible, not just about our activities but what is happening in the industry – new discoveries, technological advances, and developing markets – and that is one of the purposes of the EAGE Middle East Newsletter. I hope you enjoy our first edition and will welcome subsequent issues. Please feel free to give us your feedback with suggestions on areas where you feel we can improve. After all, this newsletter is for you. Enjoy.
It was a momentous day when members of the geoscience community in the country got together to form the Qatar Geological Society (QCS). That was on 30 January, 2007, and since then GCS has exceeded all expectations in building a range of activities for its members.

The most recent initiative in August this year saw QCS sign up to become an Associated Society of the EAGE. It was a logical move for the society in fulfilling its fundamental objectives, which are to provide technical and professional development for its members in geology, geophysics, and related sciences with the emphasis on exploration and production of petroleum and mineral resources in the State of Qatar and surrounding areas.

QGS hopes that collaboration with EAGE will act as an enabler so that members can take advantage of the knowledge, networking possibilities, and experience of an international society, especially the EAGE which over the past several years has amplified its presence in the Middle East allowing for greater cooperation and assistance in the region amongst its sister societies.

In its short life QCS has already established regular monthly meetings, field trips, publications, and social events. There are plans to expand activities to include seminars, technical symposia, and special projects and educational outreach to local universities to encourage the study of geosciences, a subject currently not offered as a full degree in Qatar universities.

QCS enjoys an active and growing membership, drawn mostly from the oil and gas sector in Qatar. The monthly public presentations are given on a variety of geoscience-related topics, either by local professionals, but often by visiting internationally recognized experts. Last year QCS hosted a presentation on ‘Middle East Oil and Gas Reserves and the Role of National and International Oil Companies’ provided by His Excellency Dr Mohammed Al Sada, Minister of State for Energy and Industrial Affairs.

QGS also held a special meeting in 2009 to honour Abdulla Salatt, senior advisor to His Excellency Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, as the inaugural recipient of the Society’s Serdal Award. The award recognizes significant achievements in the geosciences related to Qatar. Salatt worked alongside Claude Cavelier in the early 1970s to produce the first complete Geological Map of Qatar.

Among the most popular of QGS’s growing list of activities are field trips several of which have been organized. A traverse of the Qatar Arch has become an annual event. The trip is designed to provide an overview of the surface geology of the Qatar Arch, which defines the peninsula of Qatar.

Another field trip appreciated by members is a visit to the Umm Tays Preserve in the north of Qatar. This involves a walking traverse from the shoreline coastal sabkha, through an inter-tidal zone, across a barrier island, and into the shallow shoreface along the open sea. Depositional environments encountered are defined and applied to subsurface reservoir rocks with implications for reservoir quality.

QGS believes in promoting itself at leading events in the region. The QGS booth at IPTC 2009 in Doha became a regular and popular focal point for visitors during the conference. Publications on display included a one-page handout on the surface geology of Qatar which was very well received. There were numerous enquiries from geoscientists wishing to join the Society. QGS also had a stand at GEO 2010 in Bahrain last March.

With its track record already, the Society has every reason to look forward to becoming a fully recognized and registered professional society in Qatar. More information, plus news of upcoming events and activities can be found on the QGS website: www.site.qatargeolsoc.com.
Some students may not be aware of the Student Affairs section of the EAGE and the benefits available. It is definitely worth getting to know! There is a whole range of activities offered to students worldwide including support for student organizations and events, attendance at major conferences, special lecture tours, and numerous other educational and career initiatives designed to build the next generation of geoscientists and engineers.

First things first. To take advantage of the benefits on offer, students need to join the EAGE. Already the student membership of EAGE totals some 17% and is growing rapidly, 18% this year alone. Students can apply for their first year EAGE student membership for free, then just €25 for the next five years if still a student.

In 2012 the first ever Middle Eastern Student Programme is planned to take place Iran. Details will be announced in due course, but Student Conference Programmes (SCP) are organized as a feature at the bigger EAGE geoscience and engineering conferences held in Europe, Russia/CIS, North Africa, and soon the Middle East. Programmes typically offer such things as student level short courses, lectures, workshops, poster/oral presentations, career advice and mock job interviews, plus the EAGE’s legendary geo-quiz-zes between student groups!

Next year students from Middle East universities will again be able to compete in the newly established Online Student Quiz, with the prize of attendance at the EAGE Annual Exhibition and Conference in Vienna next June. As reported on p. 2, students from the Petroleum Institute, Abu Dhabi won their way to EAGE Barcelona this year.

We encourage all students to become EAGE student members and also to think about forming a Student Chapter at their places of study, thereby gaining access to additional benefits. For information on EAGE Student Affairs visit our website www.eage.org/students or email: students@eage.org.

Trivia answer
A - More than 4000 years ago, according to Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, asphalt was used in the construction of the walls and towers of Babylon; there were oil pits near Ardericca (near Babylon), and a pitch spring on Zacynthus.
EAGE workshop to feature cores from Saudi Arabia’s tight gas reservoirs

A total of about 300 ft of cores from at least four wells drilled in Saudi Arabian tight gas reservoirs will be displayed at the 2nd Middle East Tight Gas Reservoirs Workshop being held from December 13–15 in Bahrain. The event will be a significant opportunity for industry professionals in the Middle East to share knowledge and experience on one of the hottest topics in E&P today. Also associated with the workshop will be a field trip led by Dr. John Aitken of PDO which focuses on Permo-Carboniferous tight gas reservoirs of Arabia: the Al Khlate and Gharif Formations, Southern Al-Huqf, Sultanate of Oman.

The cores selected for display will show the Late Ordovician Sarah/Zarqa Formations, and the Permo-Carboniferous Unayzah-C sandstone as examples of the Paleozoic tight gas reservoirs in Saudi Arabia in which large gas reserves have been discovered during the last two decades. In the Late Ordovician, polar glaciers expanded across Gondwana and covered most of western Arabia. Deposits in these glacial environments were first identified in Saudi Arabia by McClure (1978). They are now known as the Sarah and Zarqa Formations. The Sarah and Zarqa Formations were deposited during the advancement and retreatment of glaciations, forming together a complex glacial and periglacial sequence. The Sarah Formation consists mostly of fine to coarse-grained sandstone and, in some areas, tillite. There is a heterogeneous lithology of basement and cover rocks that are preserved at the base. It is bounded by an unconformity at the base and lies on an erosional surface that cuts into the Zarqa Formation and, in some areas, tillite. The thickness of the Sarah depends on its position within the paleovalleys, and reaches more than 300 m in outcrop. Seismic data shows that the Zarqa and Sarah infill may reach several hundred metres in the subsurface. Core data across the Zarqa and Sarah is often chaotic and lacks any definitive pattern, particularly in the diamictite and pebble-cobble intervals; in some instances, no discernible dip information can be obtained even when using high-resolution dipmeter tools.

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The Unayzah C sandstone represents the lowermost stratigraphic member of the Permo-Carboniferous Unayzah Formation. It rests unconformably on older units that range in age from Devonian to Ordovician. Its lower contact, known as the Hercynian Unconformity, represents one of the strongest unconformity surfaces in the Paleozoic sequence of Saudi Arabia. The Unayzah C member is overlain unconformably by the Unayzah B member of the Unayzah Formation. Because of the glacial cut nature of the Hercynian Unconformity and the younger unconformities within the Unayzah Formation, the thickness of Unayzah C varies significantly. It ranges from zero to several hundreds of feet. Usually in wire-line logs, the Unayzah C shows typical blocky cylindrical Gamma Ray patterns due to its massive and clean nature. The Unayzah C consists of white to light grey, very fine to medium-grained, massive, tight (high degree of silica cementation), horizontal-planar to gently dipping cross-bedding, well sorted sandstones, with common very thin layers of siltstones and silty shale, styloites and fractures. The sediments of this unit were deposited in glacio-fluvial to periglacial environments for which the paleo-latitude of the Arabian Plate was high to the south. In such depositional setting, the glacio-fluvial deposits grade downward into outwash plains or outwash fans where strongly seasonal melt water-flows deposits coarse-grained successions.

Field trip focuses on Permo-Carboniferous tight gas reservoirs of Arabia.

The Unayzah C member is one of the Paleozoic reservoirs of Saudi Arabia that contains large gas reserves. Pressure transient analyses for wells that produce high rates of gas from the Unayzah C indicate that the high productivity is attributed to the fractures in the reservoir rock.

(Core information supplied by Abdulaziz Al Duaiji, Mohammed Al Masrahy, Salem Al Shammari and Mohammed Al Mahmoud, Saudi Aramco.)
Put these workshops on your upcoming schedule!

Workshops really work, especially when they are geared to the technology issues and challenges of a particular region. This is why the EAGE has over the last few years been building a programme of workshops in the Middle East area, where professionals at every level from veteran to new recruit can gather and discuss particular aspects of the E&P business with experts in the field. The next few months will see a number of these workshops take place. We list them below and on the opposite page you can find a fuller list of other key EAGE events that may be of interest. We encourage you to take advantage of these meetings.

Geosteering & Well Placement Workshop
Balancing Value & Risk
7-10 November 2010, Dubai, UAE

Never before have so many international experts from the field of geosteering and well placement gathered in the Middle East to share their knowledge and learning from the success stories and challenging experiences of operators in the region and further afield. Active participation is the most important message the committee wishes to communicate to participants interested in joining us in Dubai. The technical programme covers; State of the Art; People and Processes; Unconventional Applications; and Value Articulation and Future Challenges.

Registration Open!

Second Middle East Tight Gas Reservoirs Workshop
Exploration & Development Strategies
12-15 December 2010, Manama, Bahrain

The purpose is to increase understanding of the challenges, competencies, and integrated technologies required to explore, develop, and produce this important resource type. The workshop will provide an opportunity for interaction with world class experts from multiple exploration and production disciplines.

Registration Open!

Second Middle East Tight Gas Reservoirs Workshop - Field Trip
Permo-Carboniferous Tight Gas Reservoirs of Arabia: the Al Khlat and Gharif Formations, Southern Al-Huf, Sultanate of Oman with field trip leader Dr John Aitken, PDO. The Permo-Carboniferous clastics of the Arabian Peninsula (Unayzah and base Khuff clastics) are increasingly becoming a major focus as a tight gas play. This trip will visit the time equivalent deposits, the Al Khlata and Gharif Formations outcrop in the southern Huqf region of the Sultanate of Oman.
Participants will visit these famous Permo-Carboniferous glacial and post glacial outcrops which highlight the challenges, from exploration to development, of these complex reservoirs. The trip includes a lateral and vertical ‘walk through’ a reservoir layer of the Al Khlata Formation (Unayzah B) highlighting the rapidity of facies changes both laterally and vertically.

Registration Open! For further information please contact Honey Barba on hba@eage.org or visit the EAGE website www.eage.org.

Borehole Geophysics Workshop
Focus on 3D VSP
16-19 January 2011, Istanbul, Turkey

The aim is to provide an understanding of the latest technological developments in the field of borehole geophysics. Various topics will be covered focusing on borehole seismic, with special emphasis on 3D VSP. A company display area will showcase new software. Interest in this workshop is high and with attendance limited to 100 participants we expect the event to be fully subscribed.

Registration Opens 1 November 2010

Third Workshop on Passive Seismic Actively Passive!
27-30 March 2011, Athens, Greece

The active use of passive seismic techniques is expanding with applications spanning various disciplines. From monitoring to exploration, passive seismic is proving to be versatile, cost effective, and environmentally friendly, aiding geoscientists and engineers alike in their daily activities. The workshop will highlight applications of the various techniques beyond the drawing board and into the field. The event will feature a seismic equipment display area, showing instrumentation featured in the technical presentations.

Call for Papers Deadline 31 October 2010

Naturally Fractured Reservoirs Workshop
10-14 April 2010, Nafplio, Greece

This multi-disciplinary workshop will highlight and address the impact of natural fractures on exploration, production, and reserves calculation. A number of technologies will be presented and the effects of natural fractures on fluid flow will be discussed with case studies illustrating the advantages of integration of outcrop, geomechanical, seismic, borehole, and production data.

Call for Papers Deadline 12 November 2010
Calendar of key EAGE events

November 2010

7-10 November 2010
EAGE - Geosteering & Well Placement Workshop
Dubai, UAE | www.eage.org

15-17 November 2010
EAGE - KazGeo 2010
Almaty, Kazakhstan | www.eage.org

December 2010

5-7 December 2010
EAGE - Second Workshop on Exploration
Cairo, Egypt | www.eage.org

January 2011

16-20 January 2011
EAGE - Borehole Geophysics Workshop
Istanbul, Turkey | www.eage.org

March 2011

27-30 March 2011
EAGE - Third Passive Seismic Workshop
Athens, Greece | www.eage.org

April 2011

10-13 April 2011
EAGE - Naturally & Hydraulically Induced Fractured Reservoirs
Nafplio, Greece | www.eage.org

May 2011

23-26 May 2011
EAGE - Vienna 2011 - 73rd EAGE Conference & Exhibition incorporating SPE EUROPEC
Vienna, Austria | www.eage.org

September 2011

12-14 September 2011
EAGE - Near Surface 2011
Leicester, UK | www.eage.org

November 2011

15-17 November 2011
EAGE - AAPG/SEG/SPE - IPTC 2011
Bangkok, Thailand | www.eage.org

Food for thought

Exchanging knowledge is essential in a fast evolving industry. EAGE gives its members an opportunity to stay up to date with the latest technologies and innovations through the EAGE Bookshop and EarthDoc. The EAGE online bookshop offers over 500 titles in various geoscience disciplines and showcases and sells its own publications and those of reputable publishing houses such as Cambridge University Press, Editions Technip, Springer, and Elsevier. Members of the EAGE receive a discount on the full range of publications, along with monthly updates that provide information about the latest bookshop additions. Visit the EAGE Online Bookshop at www.eage.nl/bookshop.

Another tool made available to members is EarthDoc. EarthDoc is EAGE’s online database giving access to thousands of event papers and journal articles. EarthDoc currently contains over 30,000 papers and is a source of information that is well respected by everyone in the geoscience industry. The number of papers increases rapidly as new material is frequently added. Please, have a look at Earthdoc.org and browse through our archives!

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Aramco president speaks at Oxford forum

Saudi Aramco president and CEO Khalid A. Al-Falih recently told delegates at the Oxford Energy Forum in the UK that the global petroleum industry faces trying times as a confluence of factors − demographic, political, business, macroeconomic, and operational, as well as public perceptions of the industry − presents significant challenges and, possibly, tremendous opportunities.

He said off-and-on fears that the world’s oil resources are about to be exhausted are baseless. Geological evidence showed that the world has a plentiful endowment of oil and gas, with a vast quantity of known reserves yet to be tapped and additional resources still to be discovered. The most comprehensive analyses estimate between 6 and 8 trillion barrels of conventional oil and natural gas liquids and about 7 trillion barrels of unconventional oil in place. The ability to produce those resources hinges on a complex interplay of technology, economic, environmental, and regulatory factors.

Al-Falih addressed the negative public perceptions of the industry and doubts about its ability to supply energy responsibly and reliably. In some countries, national security, the environment and economic growth are being mixed together in an attempt to turn away from petroleum. Specifically with regard to the BP Macondo well disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, he said: ‘It is likely that there will be tighter regulations on petroleum activities in many markets, with ramifications both for the way we do business and for the cost of industry activities. But in the long term, the world will continue to rely upon oil and gas for essentially all of the energy used for transportation and much of what fuels and feeds industry.’

The Aramco president also spoke about environmental concerns and the need for industry to attract young professionals.

BGP carrying out three seismic surveys in Saudi Arabia

BGP is currently working on three seismic surveys in Saudi Arabia which began last year. S64 is a 2D transition zone (TZ) project expected to last approximately 15 months. The prospect consists of water with a depth of 1200 m, shallow water, shoals, islands, and desert. S63, a 2D land project, expected to last approximately four years, is located in the desert. S53, a 3D TZ project, is covered by shoals and shallow water, and crosses an oilfield and several urban districts.

Leviathan estimates still good

Noble Energy, supplier of domestic gas to Israel through the Mari-B field, offshore Mediterranean, said in August that contrary to recent media reporting, the prior resource and chance factor estimates for the Leviathan exploratory prospect in Israel have not changed. Total gross resources for Leviathan are estimated at 16 trillion ft³ and it has a 50% chance of success. The company has recently received government approval for a development plan involving its Tamar offshore gas field.

Polarcus building business in Dubai

Dubai-based Polarcus is beginning to make headway in its bid to establish itself as a major player in the marine geophysical market with its growing fleet of Ulstein Design seismic vessels with the distinctive X-BOW hull being built by Drydocks World-Dubai. Reporting on its second quarter results, the company said it had completed inaugural projects for the company’s first two ultra-modern 3D vessels, Polarcus Nadia and Naila, and achieved its first profitable quarterly operating margin. First backlog had also been booked for the Asima.

During pre-delivery sea trials of Asima, a commissioning-related failure was identified in one of the vessel’s two main propeller shafts which caused a postponement of the launch until August. As a result of the revised delivery schedule and to some additional structural modifications, the latest Ulstein SX133 design Samur will now be commissioned in the fourth quarter 2010. The two optional vessels, Alima and Selma, will come out in the first quarter of next year.

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UAE has a future in oil and gas exports!

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) will account for 4.62% of Middle Eastern (ME) regional oil demand by 2014, while providing 10.73% of supply. That’s the latest forecast in the Oil & Gas Report from BMI, and there are plenty more predictions. Between 2010 and 2019, BMI expects an increase in UAE oil production of 31.3%, with volumes rising steadily to 3.50 mn b/d by the end of the 10-year forecast period. Oil consumption between 2010 and 2019 is set to increase by 36.3%, with growth slowing to an assumed 3.0% per annum towards the end of the period and the country using 656,000 b/d by 2019. Gas production is expected to rise from an estimated 53 bcm to 120 bcm by the end of the period. With 2010-2019 demand growth of 72.9%, this provides net gas export potential rising to 16 bcm over the period.

UAE real GDP is assumed by BMI to have fallen by 3.4% in 2009, followed by forecast 2.1% growth in 2010. Assuming average annual growth of 3.4% in 2010-2014, the report expects oil demand to rise from an estimated 472,000 b/d in 2009 to 552,000 b/d in 2014. Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) is working in partnership with major international oil companies (IOCs) to deliver an estimated 2.65 mn b/d of oil and liquids production in 2009, rising to 2.92 mn b/d by the end of the forecast period – subject to OPEC quota policy. Gas production should reach at least 85 bcm by 2014, up from an estimated 53 bcm in 2009. Consumption is expected to rise from an estimated 58 bcm to 79 bcm by the end of the forecast period, allowing net exports of around 6 bcm.

Between 2010 and 2019, BMI expects an increase in UAE oil production of 31.3%.

Second Workshop on Exploration
Unconventional Resources: Entering an Era of New Exploration Play Concepts
5-7 December 2010 – Cairo, Egypt

The demand of hydrocarbon is increasing and the expectation is that it will increase even more in the future. Current conventional exploration targets cannot satisfy this increasing demand, therefore unconventional discoveries will compensate for this increase in hydrocarbon demand. The current and the expected future oil and gas prices encourage the industry to take the risk and proceed down this route.

The event will focus on the exploration side of the unconventional plays, traps other than the conventional four way closures or fault controlled structures. Case studies, new technologies, methodologies, integration, and knowledge sharing will be presented and discussed in this workshop.

Topics
- Shale Oil & Gas
- Source Rock Plays
- Tight Gas & Oil
- Hydrodynamic Traps
- Heavy Oil
- Fracture Fairways
- Diagenetic & Stratigraphic Traps

Register now!
OBC contract work for Saudi joint venture

ARGAS, the Saudi Arabian joint venture owned 49% by CGGVeritas and 51% by TAQA, has been awarded two major ocean bottom cable (OBC) 3D data acquisition contracts by Saudi Aramco. The two contracts have a combined value of around $375 million. The first project was scheduled to start in June 2010 and operate for a period of 18 months while the second is scheduled to run from October 2010 for a period of 24 months; each contract respectively has an 18- and 24-month optional extension period. The projects will cover an initial 6000 km² over the next three years and require operational expertise working in complex environments, such as producing oil fields and busy shipping lanes within the Saudi waters of the Gulf with depths ranging from 20 to 60 m.

ARGAS will mobilize two fully independent OBC crews equipped with the latest Sercel SeaRay 4C equipment and recording systems. These fully offshore operations will be managed through a fleet of vessels equipped with CGGVeritas deployment and positioning systems geared to operate in such environments. The latest survey work follows on from the completion by ARGAS of offshore projects for Saudi Aramco in 2009 which covered close to 12,000 km² in the Gulf.

Land seismic productivity record claimed in Kuwait

WesternGeco this year claimed a new industry record in Kuwait for Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) by acquiring data from 80,000 live digital point-receiver channels at a two-millisecond sample interval using its propriety UniQ integrated point-receiver land seismic system. During sustained slip-sweep production in February, the UniQ technology acquired and real-time quality checked one terabyte of data per hour − the equivalent of five days of production for a typical 3000-channel conventional crew. All data were concurrently pre-conditioned using an in-field integrated seismic data acquisition and processing workflow for near real-time seismic data analysis. The UniQ system was being deployed in conjunction with WesternGeco's DX-80 Desert Explorer vibrators and MD Sweep low-frequency technology. Part of the Q-Technology point-receiver seismic hardware and software portfolio, the UniQ system is said to combine extreme channel count technology with support for advanced simultaneous source techniques. Building upon the fidelity provided by the broad bandwidth geophone accelerometer sensor, the system can support up to 150,000 live channels at a two-millisecond sample interval.

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Mabrouk oil onstream for PDO

Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) inaugurated the Mabrouk oilfield in Central Oman at a special ceremony in May attended by PDO’s oil north director Saif al Hinai and senior company officials. The new oilfield was brought onstream in less than two years and with no lost-time injuries (LTIs). The Mabrouk field development project involved the construction of a major new production station and associated gathering system as well as the drilling of 76 new wells. The project also included the installation of three powerful gas compressors capable of sending natural gas produced at the field to the Saih Rawl gas processing plant where it enters the Government Gas System. The new facility can process 63,000 barrels per day of gross liquids (oil and water) and 2.5 million standard cubic metres a day of gas. In all, PDO and its contractors worked 4 million man-hours and drove 5.4 million km without any lost-time injury to complete the project.

Global tie-up for Saudi group

US land seismic company Global Geophysical Services has entered into a joint venture with the Saudi Shoaibi Group to establish Global Geophysical Services Arabia (GGSA). Based in Al Khobar, the company will provide Reservoir Grade 3D (RG3D) seismic acquisition services. Both organizations will actively participate in the management of the joint venture, and the first chairman appointed for the joint venture company will be Khalid Al Shoaibi, group director of Shoaibi Group.

RAK farm-out move

Oil company RAK Petroleum has farmed out a 50% interest in Block 47 onshore Oman to Repsol, subject to government approval. RAK Petroleum will retain operatorship of the block. The partnership plans to drill the Zad prospect with the well expected to spud in October 2010.
Iraq claims No 2 spot in world reserves league

Oil Minister Hussein Al-Shahristani has announced an increase in the official size of Iraq’s proven oil reserves. New data suggesting proven oil reserves of 143.1 billion barrels of oil, up from a previous 115 billion barrels. This first update since 2001 would lift Iraq to second place in the world’s largest reserves league, ahead of Iran’s 137.01 billion barrels of proven reserves, but still far behind Saudi Arabia, which has 264.59 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, according to OPEC figures.

Minister al-Shahristani said: ‘These aren’t random figures, rather they were the results of deep surveys carried out by the ministry’s oil reservoir company and international companies which signed contracts with Iraq. Most of these figures were the result of surveys conducted by international companies, specially at oil fields such as West Qurna and Zubair.’

Iraq has signed 12 deals with international oil companies to increase output capacity to about 12 million b/d from the current rate of around 2.4 million b/d. The companies involved are BP, Exxon Mobil, Shell, Lukoil, Eni, Total, Japan Petroleum Exploration, and China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC).

Shahristani noted that 71% of Iraq’s total oil reserves were located in the southern Iraqi governorates, particularly in Basra. Some 20% of the reserves are in the northern governate particularly in Kirkuk, while the remaining 9% are located in central Iraq. He said the new reserve figure doesn’t include the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan in northern Iraq with estimated reserves of around 40 billion barrels.

OPEC celebrates its 50th anniversary

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has just celebrated its 50th anniversary at its HQ in Vienna. OPEC Secretary General, HE Abdalla Salem El-Badri, said that in 50 years had become a notable player on the world stage. ‘This has not just been because of the contributions of its Member Countries to international oil supply. But it has also been due to OPEC’s progress and achievements being envisaged as a beacon of hope to other developing countries. In short, OPEC has shown that it is possible for well-intentioned, but heavily exploited developing countries to stand up for themselves, develop their economies, defend their sovereign interests, and make a significant contribution to the global community in a constructive and meaningful way.’

Deputy Premier and Minister of Energy and Industry of Qatar, HE Abdullah bin Hamad Al Attyah, who is OPEC’s longest serving head of delegate offered his commendation in a letter to OPEC’s Secretary General. He wrote that OPEC should be congratulated to helping to bring stability to the oil markets, and for its ability to adapt to new technologies and shifting market conditions which have transformed the oil industry. He also highlighted OPEC’s contribution to poverty alleviation and development in poorer nations through the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID).

To celebrate its Golden Jubilee OPEC staged a festival of African, Latin American, and Middle Eastern art, dance, fashion, food and music. An Anniversary Exhibition at Vienna’s historic Kursalon on 20–29 September 2010 featured the rich cultural offerings of the 12 Member Countries – Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela. The exhibition also highlighted the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) and the city of Vienna.

The opening festivities included the unveiling of a special anniversary stamp produced by the Austrian Post to mark the occasion.

Sheikh Jabor joins for Sky

US-based Sky Petroleum has announced the appointment of His Excellency Sheikh Jabor Bin Yusef Bin Jassim Al-Thani to the Board of Directors of the company. H.E. Sheikh Jabor is the chairman and director of several privately established companies in Qatar, which are active in industrial, commercial, representation, real-estate, energy conference, and exhibition industries. On his appointment, he said: ‘I am delighted to join the Board of Sky Petroleum, and strongly believe in the future growth of the company and the region.’

Help sought for passive seismic

Middle East Oil, a company concentrating on the exploration, development, and refining of oil and gas in the Middle East, has entered into an agreement with Italian company Geo Dynamics Research. The agreement with Geo Dynamics will provide technical support in the area of passive seismic activities in the exploration and development of oil and gas projects for the company.
RAK Petroleum has agreed with the Ras Al Khaimah Gas Commission (Rakgas) to take a 100% stake in and operation of the Saleh field, offshore the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah in exchange for 100,000,000 shares in RAK Education Company (EDRAK). RAK Petroleum already holds a 40% interest in the currently non-producing gas and condensate field.

The signing ceremony was attended by His Highness Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah, Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani, chairman and CEO of RAK Petroleum, and Ruurd Sybren Abma, COO, Rakgas as well as other directors and officers of RAK Petroleum.

Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi, said: ‘We are pleased to have RAK Petroleum strengthen its commitment to development of the offshore oil and gas sector of Ras Al Khaimah. Mossavar-Rahmani noted that advances in technology as well as in oil and gas prices have regenerated the company’s interest in the remaining potential of this field.’

The Saleh field was discovered by Union Oil in 1964 and an appraisal well drilled by Gulf Oil Company in 1982 led to the development of the field and start-up of production in January 1984. Production came from seven producing wells from five platforms. A total of 109 bcf of gas and 14.4 million barrels of condensate were produced between 1984 and 1988. Small volumes of gas and condensate have been produced intermittently since then. An existing 18 in, 45 km pipeline links the Saleh field to the Rakgas gas and liquids processing facilities onshore Ras Al Khaimah.

The Company expects to begin redevelopment of the Saleh field in the first half of 2011 by deepening an existing well to the Thamama reservoir.