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### **ShipRepair & Conversion 2009 proves exhibitions are valuable business tools**

Leading figures from the global ship repair and conversion industry gathered in London in April, for the 18<sup>th</sup> ShipRepair & Conversion exhibition, the specialist ship care event. Just under 1,500 attendees passed through the doors during the three day event at Olympia's National Hall, which took place 28-30 April, a 38% increase in numbers from the last show in 2007.

Both visitors and exhibitors spoke highly of the exhibition, reflecting the fact that companies are realising exhibitions really are a fantastic platform to demonstrate new innovations and technologies, gather the latest industry knowledge and source new business leads.

With many exhibitors expressing their delight with the level and quality of business conducted on the show floor, due to the high numbers of key decision makers visiting, ShipRepair & Conversion strengthened its position as a highly targeted and must attend event in the industry's calendar. Robert Birchley, technical director, ACM Bearing Limited agreed, commenting: "We have had an extremely successful show and seen a good mix of visitors from ship yard to vessel owners. In my view it is very important to have a presence at this event as it attracts the right calibre of visitor through the doors. We have met some new contacts this year which is great, and we will be following up on a number of leads over the coming weeks."

Many of this year's 100 exhibitors who showcased the latest technology, products and services to help ship owners, managers, engineers and superintendents operate more successfully and efficiently, have already reserved space for 2011. Max van Someren, consultant at First Marine International/Royal Haskoning added: "The show definitely attracted the right people. We used the event to publicise the acquisition of

First Marine International by Royal Haskoning and it has been a great platform to communicate to both our current clients and also to the industry in general. We also met a number of new contacts and in the next few weeks we will be busy following up leads.”

Michael Oliver, sales and marketing director at Trimline Interiors, agreed: “We’ve thoroughly enjoyed the show and have certainly seen a relevant audience. During the show, we signed on the dotted line for a substantial interior fit out contract with a Spanish company, which we’re absolutely delighted with, and just proves the value of exhibitions such as this. We are a family run business so chatting to our established clients in an informal setting is ideal as well as giving us the chance to meet potential new customers.”

Both Lloyd’s Maritime Academy’s timely seminar on shipbuilding conversion and repair contract management and the condition monitoring workshops held by Lloyd’s List Events were big hits with delegates and were well attended. The seminars featured contributions from leading industry experts, and major yards offering their thoughts on current and future trends and technology plus how businesses can be best prepared to weather the current storm. The sessions prompted some interesting debate and plenty of questions from the floor – which, as one delegate put it, “is always a good sign of a well-delivered programme.”

This year’s exhibition is perhaps best summed up by Robert Birchley, technical manager, ACM Bearing Limited, who commented: “We have had a successful show and seen a good mix of visitors from ship yard to vessel owners. In my view it is very important to have a presence at this event as it attracts the right calibre of visitor through the doors. We have met some new contacts this year which is good, and we will be following up on some leads over the coming weeks.”

Richard Gayle, exhibition director, ShipRepair & Conversion, concluded: “We are very pleased with the feedback we’ve received from exhibitors and visitors alike. The significant number of key decision makers present and the range of exciting solutions all under one roof made for a valuable show. Perhaps indicative of the current economic climate, the event reflected industry opinion that despite all the modern communication tools, an exhibition really is one of the most cost effective ways of doing business; seeing a whole variety of products in one place is invaluable in these tough times.”

The next edition of ShipRepair & Conversion takes place in April 2011 in London.

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