

# Head of national marine facilities

The UK Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) has announced the appointment of Commodore David Lewis CBE, RN as head of National Marine Facilities at Britain's National Oceanography Centre, Southampton (NOCS).

"The division of National Marine Facilities within NOCS is being created as part of the implementation of a refocused vision for the Centre and David will play a key role in establishing the new organisational arrangements," said a NERC spokesman.

"The division brings together, under a common overarching framework, those marine facilities and related functions within NOCS that are to be delivered for NERC in an impartial way for the benefit of the whole UK marine science community as part of the Centre's national remit."

The division will include the UK Ocean Research Services (UKORS), the National Marine Equipment Pool (NMEP), the NERC Research Ship Unit (RSU), the British Ocean Sediment Core Research Facility (BOSCORF) and a number of other national co-ordination functions within the Centre, the spokesman said.

"David has a strong background in marine affairs ideal to provide the required strategic leadership in this challenging new role," the NERC spokesman added.

"He served in the Royal Navy where he undertook a variety of command and strategic executive roles."

**UCi** How would you describe yourself in three words?

Honest, hardworking and reliable.

**UCi** What was your first job in your chosen field?

I served my time as a welder with a structural engineering company.

**UCi** What does it take to be successful in your industry?

No surprises here – lots and lots of hard work, determination and perseverance, and of course ability.

**UCi** Which person do you most admire in your industry?

It's a long time since I have given any thought to this kind of question. As a very young man I would have to say Jacques Cousteau certainly opened my eyes to a world of diving. But thinking about such a question today, I would have to say people who make a contribution to industry through personal achievement, which benefits all.

**UCi** What has been the most embarrassing moment in your career so far?

To be honest, I'm not sure I've had one. The nearest thing I can think of would be when I've made a presentation or speech and my mind has gone completely blank!

**UCi** What is the first thing you do when you get to work in the morning?

This is not always possible, but given the chance I'm in the workshops getting my hands dirty.

## Career path - David Keats

- 2002** Put MBO to MOS and set up Speciality Welds
- 1999** Joined the MOS Group as MD of Speciality Welds Ltd
- 1995** Freelance consultant
- 1988** MD of Hydromech Technical Services Ltd
- 1983** Offshore welder diver
- 1975** Welder and NDT inspector



Weld expert David Keats, owner of Yorkshire, UK-based Speciality Welds, likes nothing better than to get his hands dirty and says there's no substitute for hard work, perseverance and ability

**UCi** What is the most exciting aspect of your job?

That's easy, travelling and meeting other professional people with as much enthusiasm as me in providing a quality product or service for the welding/diving industry.

**UCi** And what do you least enjoy doing?

Accounts, legal matters and general admin.

**UCi** Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?

I guess I'm lucky, as I feel have achieved all my early goals in life.

The last personal goal is to follow through for my Chartered Engineer. I passed my profes-

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sional interview and was accepted as a Sen.M.Weld.I. nearly 10 years ago, but never got round to fully completing the job for CEng! After that, I will continue to develop the business and its products and services.

Within the next five to 10 years I would like to see my Weldcraft-Pro welder-training programme adopted for all diver training – we have made an excellent start, but still have more to do.