

COMMUNICATION HUB FOR THE WIND ENERGY INDUSTRY

WindEnergy

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10TH QUO VADIS CONFERENCE

PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague was the location of the 10th Quo Vadis Conference, the annual gathering of windfarm owners and operators that is hosted by Kevin and Sigrid Donovan of GWA Supplies Ltd. The event, which was first held with a small group in Lowestoft in 2007, is unique in the industry as it is only for invited guests and excludes the turbine manufacturers, which in turn provides a great opportunity for owners and operators to share their knowledge and experience.

Kevin and Sigi take great pride in the fact that they offer the conference and the framework programme free of charge which is only possible because sponsors like ZF Services, DNV GL, Renewable Advice, Romo Wind, SKF, and others, help to pay for the costs.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Sharing of knowledge amongst the delegates is particularly easy at Quo Vadis for two main reasons to ensure the format of the event and the family atmosphere

1. The event is spread over two days, with day one including a city tour and conference dinner
2. The conference being held on day two

This provides a relaxing setting with plenty of opportunities to network and catch up with all the delegates. The family atmosphere comes from the fact that many of the participants have been to previous events so it is an opportunity to reacquire with old friends and make new ones.

HALL OF FAME

Many have been regular attendees, with some people actually having participated at all 10 conferences. These die-hards are recognised during the conference when Sigrid Donovan presents the Quo Vadis hall of fame which highlights the most frequent attenders. This year, Huw Smallwood (Tegni) and Steve Higman (REG Power Management) were acclaimed for having been to each of the 10 Quo Vadis events.

SOCIAL

The delegates gathered on the Wednesday afternoon and were treated to a river boat tour of the city with local

Hall of Famers

“SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE AMONGST THE DELEGATES IS PARTICULARLY EASY AT QUO VADIS...”



guide Patrick giving a very colourful commentary on the passing sights, including his personal political view of the history of Prague, right up to the current president. The evening dinner was held on the 24th floor of the Corinthia Hotel, with a panoramic view over the city.

CONFERENCE

The conference on day two included a range of speakers and the topics reflected the industry we work in – both maturing and continually innovating and included the following subject areas...

- Michael Wilkinson from DNV GL spoke on the topic of life extension of wind turbines, drawing interesting parallels with other energy sources including hydroelectric, nuclear and gas, which had all been the subject of extended performance periods greater than their original design life
- Dealing with ageing equipment has its challenges and we heard from RWE's Paul Sheldon about applying first principle engineering analysis to address problems on old generators
- Benn Faulkner from Renewable Advice gave a graphic account of how to do a major up tower repair on a blade that the owners had nearly written off as beyond repairable
- Gary McGougan from RES reminded us that whether it is mature or innovative, heavy things can be difficult to hoist, and therefore lifts need to be planned out carefully and implemented by experienced people

ADDITIONAL PRESENTATIONS HIGHLIGHTING THE INNOVATIVE ASPECTS OF THE INDUSTRY INCLUDED...

- David Morgan of ZF gave an insight into the development of applying dynamic load monitoring equipment to gearboxes so that features such as active torque control can be incorporated into the turbine control system to avoid placing high stresses on the gearbox
- Alexander Strobel of SKF introduced us to hybrid bearings and how they avoid wear due to current leakage
- Markus Billman of the Fraunhofer Institute made us all glad that there is someone who understands electronics, working away on solutions for the industry while we all get on with our simple lives.
- Karl Fatrdla and Nigel Parlor of ROMO Wind presented a methodology for getting a more accurate method of measuring wind to enable the right corrective action to be taken thus getting the most out of the wind turbine

All of this was ably moderated by Clifford McSpadden (GWA Supplies) who ensured active involvement of the delegates throughout the day.

11TH QUO VADIS CONFERENCE

And finally, for those who were worried that Kevin and Sigrid might end on a high note with the 10th Quo Vadis, their doubts were cleared up as the 11th Quo Vadis date and location were announced – September 2017 in London.

Kevin and Sigrid Donovan
GWA Supplies Ltd