



Marine Ecological Surveys Limited

Over 30 years of experience in Environmental Impact Assessment, Site Appraisals, Eco-Audit & monitoring programmes and research in the marine environment

Winter Wonderland at MESL....

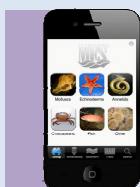


Marine Planning Consultancy Ltd

December saw the launch of Marine Planning Consultancy Ltd, a joint venture within the Gardline group, initiated by MESL. MPC offer a full range of services from policy advice, socio-economic analysis and stakeholder engagement to an end-to-end service on all aspects of marine planning, impact assessment, licensing, monitoring and enforcement. Since its launch MPC has completed a number of projects from different industries. MPC looks forward to servicing the wider marine sector over the course of the coming years as marine planning becomes the driving force behind sustainable development. For further details see <http://www.marineplanning.org.uk/>.

Visiting Scientist from Russia

Since January, MESL have had the pleasure of welcoming Russian taxonomist Dr Igor Jirkov into the laboratory. Igor is an internationally renowned scientist with a long and distinguished career in the field of benthic taxonomy and in particular the study of polychaete worms. Through his work at Moscow State University he has undertaken extensive research on the biodiversity and benthic ecology of the North-eastern Atlantic, the Pacific, and many areas of the Arctic Sea. Dr Jirkov has already become an integral part of the laboratory team, and has organised several workshops to share his expertise. His experience will undoubtedly prove to be a great asset to MESL. Igor's polychaete key and publications can be accessed at <http://hydro.bio.msu.ru/Personal/Jirkov.htm>.



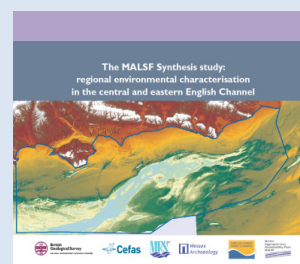
MESL Handbook Goes Live

MESL's App "Marine Macrobenthos Genus Traits Handbook" is now live! Over 3600 downloads have been seen already. Downloads are free and can be obtained from the AppStore on iPhone or iPad, just search 'MarineLife', or go to:

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/marinelifelife-genus-trait-handbook/id413654051?mt=8#>

Publications

Winter has been a busy time for MESL in terms of publications. MALSF funded Regional Environmental Characterisation studies for the East Coast, Humber and English Channel Synthesis areas have been published in draft form and have been widely commended by the steering group. Additionally, in the past few months MESL have published 'Impacts of Marine Aggregate Extraction on Adjacent *Sabellaria spinulosa* Aggregations and Other Benthic Fauna' and the MALSF funded 'Recovery of Benthic Resources following Marine Aggregate Extraction' as part of the MALSF Science Monograph Series. The report can be found at <http://www.alsf-mepf.org.uk/media/26567/monograph2-web.pdf>.



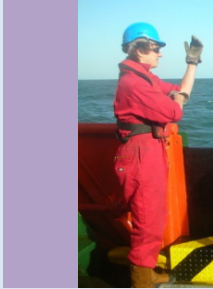
Sabellaria Reef Ecology and Ecosystem Research

MESL continue to frontier important biological research and have recently been awarded a prestigious contract from the Crown Estate which sees our research team investigating *Sabellaria spinulosa* reef ecology and ecosystem services. The aim will be to provide a comprehensive assessment of the ecosystem services provided by newly identified *Sabellaria* aggregations and to identify meaningful ecological parameters to assist in the management of this Annex 1 habitat.



MESL School of Marine Taxonomy
Helping you fulfil your potential

In November our laboratory successfully carried out their first training in the School of Marine Taxonomy at MESL, a joint venture with the Marine Biological Association of the UK (MBA). There was excellent feedback, "The experience was very useful and well organised" said one attendee. A subsequent workshop took place early in February, and the next is planned for the 23rd to the 25th February. For more information on upcoming events visit: <http://www.seasurvey.co.uk/news>. Additionally our laboratory staff are keeping up to date, with their attendance at the latest NMBAQ experts' workshop in Newcastle last November. Here they tested new keys for species identification and learnt of updates within the industry.



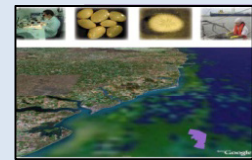
Out at sea bracing the winter winds

After almost four months of battling the North Sea on the East Anglia Offshore Wind Farm survey, our survey staff are now back on dry land. This was perhaps one of the largest offshore benthic surveys to have taken place in the UK, taking hundreds of benthic grabs and epibenthic trawl samples. For further information on see: www.eastangliawind.com.

Our wind farm work enjoys another boost with the recent award of the post construction monitoring work for Thanet Offshore Wind Farm. MESL will be undertaking benthic surveys over the next 10 year period, examining the *Sabellaria* reefs and monopile colonisation.

Our continued aggregate work

Work for the aggregates industry has continued, with benthic monitoring reports completed for Areas Inner Dowsing and Coalpit, both in the North Sea . MESL have recently produced Terms of Reference for additional monitoring surveys in the English Channel and the North Sea, ensuring a busy survey season ahead this summer.

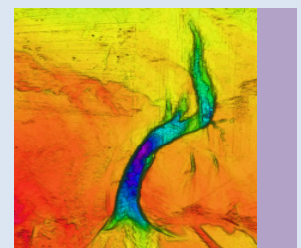


Growing MESL

MESL welcome a collection of new recruits: Jack Pitts, David Alexander, Gina Brackenreed-Johnston, Bianka Rasch, Oliver Bittner and Nicola Pennisi. Jack becomes MESLs lead GIS technician; David joins as Commercial Projects Assistant; Gina, Bianka, Oliver and Nicola enable the lab to be ever more productive as Senior Benthic Taxonomists. Angie de Burgh, Jen Gallyot, Sheryl Earnshaw and Ross Griffin continue to progress within MESL, with Angie now a Commercial Projects Assistant, Jen as MESLs Operations Coordinator and Ross and Sheryl now Research Assistants.

Deep Blue Something

It's time to 'pit' your wits against the MESL newsletter readership to be the first to guess the official identity of the landform opposite. It's a sliver (CLUE!) of a trench. *Remhumber* to get your answers in quick! Congratulations go to Nick Henderson of Cornwall Computers Ltd for providing the best response to the autumn newsletter's 'MESL learn to fly' photo: 'these guys are diving into the sea from the partly built base platform of one of the Thanet wind turbines'! In reality they were doing a fun jump down a provisional slidy slope on our weekend away...but good guessing everyone!



Expanding offices into new sites

MESL are spreading out across Bath! With the increasing numbers of staff taken on over the past few months MESL have converted space previously used as storage into a second new laboratory. MESL have secured additional garaging and storage premises within walking distance of their current offices. "Storage is like gold dust in the centre of Bath, it will be great having a warehouse so close to our main offices" reported the Office Manager who is coordinating the refurbishment and premises expansion.