

Steve Cromar – Vice Chair Continuing Education



After completing his apprenticeship in the shipyards of the Clyde, Steve studied mechanical engineering whilst working in Edinburgh. In 1981 Steve joined Vetco Offshore and worked on wellheads, production trees and well tieback systems. Steve worked in the engineering office and offshore, installing the equipment in the field. Steve became supervisor for offshore support and, after a period in the training school as an instructor, he returned to the field to run the first trees West of Shetland on the Foinaven field.

Steve joined Arco British and drilled a series of exploration wells West of Shetland. After moving to Conoco, Steve drilled a number of production wells in the Central North Sea, before moving to production engineering and running completion systems in conventional and HPHT wells. Steve was promoted to Chief Engineer and during this time the Macondo incident occurred. Steve joined the OSPRAG group and was assigned to the Global industry response group (GIRG) and set up the wells expert committee of IOGP. This group made a number of recommendations which have now been accepted and implemented by the industry; OPRAG nationally and IOGP internationally. Steve then moved to a well decommissioning group and initiated the SNS well abandonment project for ConocoPhillips. After taking an early retirement, Steve remains active in the SPE, ISO and IMechE and is working to develop new industry standards and industry collaboration.

In the Spotlight

What career advice would you give your younger self?

Remain as flexible as possible and get ready for change through your career. Be ready when the opportunities arise and grab them. You will fail at some but be successful at most.

What do you think are the benefits of being a member of SPE?

Membership means I can share my knowledge and experience with other engineers outside of a professional of competitive environment. I have a chance to give something back to the engineering community in a truly altruistic fashion.

Best Achievement so far?

My chairing of the team who became the Wells expert committee of IOGP and the team who published ISO 17969, which is an international standard on competency of well operations personnel to reduce the risk of well control events.

What did you want to be when you were younger?

An engineer like James Watt and to get out of the shipyards of the Clyde like Billy Connolly.

What are the main career stepping stones you have taken?

My apprenticeship, redundancy, moving out of Greenock and going to Uni, joining the oil industry, and moving to Aberdeen, staying aware of the industry trends, joining ARCO British, redundancy, joining Conoco UK, Chief Engineer for well ops, redundancy and early retirement.

Anything you would do differently?

Nothing, including being made redundant 3 times in my career, which forced me to change and find a new comfort zone.

Who has been your greatest influence?

Each time I have had a job, I have found a peer who has been able to teach and mentor me (some of them did not realise they were doing this); each one has influenced me in some way.

What's your idea of perfect retirement?

What I am doing now. Good health, enough money to live on from my pension, and able to give something back to the engineering community, spend time with my grandchildren and family, have a classic car or three to restore and drive when the sun shines, 2 holidays per year.

What would your autobiography be called?

Around the World on an Expense Account.

What is the best way to motivate others?

Show them that they are going to get something out of the deal. Different people want different things however, eg, recognition, respect, being treated on a professional level, friendship and social contact and acceptance, a free lunch.

Your favourite stress-buster?

Tai Chi or restoring an old bit of engineering in a cold garage listening to progressive rock.

What's your dream job?

Early retirement is a dream job and what I do now, but my previous position was also a dream job, as was the one before. Maybe I make myself and each job fit as I go through my life by remaining adaptable and looking on the good side and ignoring the downside.

Where is your favourite place to go on holiday?

Japan.

What are you reading, listening to or glued to on TV?

A Tai Chi manual, Pink Floyd, BBC channel 4.

If you were a character in a TV series or movie who would you be?

Rick Stein the chef.

What's on your bucket list – the things you still want to accomplish?

See my children and grandchildren through a good education and into a good career. Go around the world, including Hawaii and New Zealand. Drive a classic Jaguar to Monte Carlo and round the Italian lakes.

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