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Through wind & wave

04/06/2012 | Channel: [Shipbuilding & Repairs](#), [Ship Design / Architecture](#), [Environment](#), [Workboats](#)

Unique catamaran designs

Strong start up company

Big ambitions

Tidal Transit is based in the Norfolk village of Docking, UK, but possesses an ambition far larger than its quiet surroundings. Looking out onto The Wash and beyond that to the North Sea, the company is a newcomer to the wind energy support sector with a unique vessel design that makes it stand out from the market. Adam Wright had run

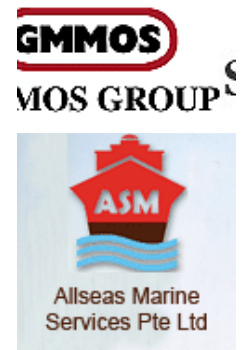
Norfolk Fishing Trips since 2005, and in January 2011 started Tidal Transit Limited after meeting Leo Hambro and discovering a shared passion to establish a successful marine business.

Leo talks in more depth about how Tidal Transit came to be: "We met in November 2010 and started to work on how we could create a purpose-built boat design for the offshore wind sector that would combat the issues it faces with regard to weather-limited windows of access, and efficiency and comfort of vessels particularly for people that are not mariners travelling to the farms. We inked the deal to establish the company in January 2011, raised the money in February, and ordered two boats in March. The first of these, Ginny Louise, arrived in December whilst the second, Eden Rose, arrived on April 30th 2012."

Both these vessels, named after two of Adam's three daughters, are uniquely designed catamarans that offer a number of advantages over traditional models. They were built by Spanish yard Mercurio Plastics Group, which has for many years built fish farm support boats that tackle one of the major problems with travel comfort: wave frequency. The Mediterranean, like the North Sea, poses short frequency waves and so solutions by Mercurio translate to Tidal Transit's potential operating region.

One such Mercurio design is a 28-metre catamaran fitted with bulbous bows and a wave-breaking central nacelle. This solution caught Tidal Transit's eye because unlike standard catamarans that effectively slam into a wave, thereby creating sickness-inducing motion, the central nacelle acts like suspension to absorb the wave's energy. It takes the broken wave and discharges the water through the bow windows, dampening the motion of the vessel.

The design also possesses elongated bows, which provide added stability when stationary. Perhaps the highest point of risk during crew transfer to wind farms is when people alight from the vessel onto the turbine; the vessel rises and falls with the ocean



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whilst the installation remains still, increasing the risk that a person will fall from the ladder. Tidal Transit's elongated bow design provides expanded stability that means it can handle higher swells without riding up and down the ladder.



"The industry norm is that in sea conditions of 1.5 metres or higher passengers do not leave the boat. Our design was very recently approved by Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE) to allow safe transfers in up to two metre waves without requiring motion compensating walkways or other additional technologies," explains Leo. "We entered an innovation award with the East of England Energy Group with the tagline 'More for Less - Innovation Through Design' because rather than bolting on extra capacity, innovation can be built in to the hull shape."

Both Ginny Louise and Eden Rose have been flawlessly employed since their launch, with the former working for SSE at Greater Gabbard since February 2012 and the latter now just completed a tenure with RES Offshore that has seen it service offshore meteorological masts. From the end of May, Eden Rose will be seen operating from Great Yarmouth for SCIRA on the Sheringham Shoal windfarm. During its time at the Greater Gabbard, Ginny Louise has often been used when other vessels have had to stay in port due to poor conditions.

The Eden Rose, meanwhile, recently undertook its first job servicing the Hornsea mast 75 miles offshore that proved a huge success. Whereas such distance normally requires a larger vessel with a high Area Code rating, the Eden Rose is rated Area Code 1 – up to 150 miles offshore – so was able to provide the necessary service without the costs demanded by a large ship. This in particular will become an advantage as the UK begins its third round of wind farm installations, which sees sites located further out at sea.

"Tidal Transit is ready," Leo confidently states. "The vessels have onboard accommodation if they have to travel 75 or 100 miles to do a day's work, the crew can remain on site and complete two days or more work instead of one. That means our vessels continue to provide greater efficiency and make the maintenance of offshore structures much more efficient."

The young business is already focusing on what it can bring to the market over the coming years, beginning by exercising an option with Mercurio to build a further eight vessels. Having avoided bank loans to finance its first two vessels, Tidal Transit continues to look at alternative sources of funding with an aim of having three catamarans built this year and the remaining five in 2013. Growing from two to ten boats in the space of three years will place it on good footing to compete with the sector's leading names. It is not confining itself to the wind farm sector either, with the entire offshore sector a field of potential for the company.

"Within the marine support sector there are other requirements needed, for example larger vessels or even jack-up barges, and we are keen to develop our business from crew transferring toward general offshore support," says Leo with an eye on the future. "Offshore wind may continue to be our main market but we may also develop from being simple crew transfer into installation or survey vessels, for example. Tidal Transit is here for the long term and we are developing a business model to achieve that."