

National Grid celebrates 50 years of North Sea gas

25 Jul 2018

- **50 years since North Sea gas started to come ashore at Bacton terminal on Norfolk coast**
- **Still the entry point for more than a third of Britain's gas, handling around 100 million cubic metres a day in winter**
- **Terminal and National Grid transmission network to play a vital role in future to help UK hit carbon targets**

Homes and businesses across Britain have been relying on North Sea gas coming ashore at National Grid's Bacton terminal in Norfolk for 50 years this month.

Since the terminal started operating in July 1968, it has opened the door to North Sea gas and to supplies from continental Europe which have helped the UK develop the national gas transmission network that has been the backbone of the country's energy system for half a century now.

Today, around a third of the gas the country needs flows through Bacton, and the terminal handles well over 100 million cubic metres a day in the winter months.

And National Grid is now looking at the role the gas network could play in a low-carbon energy future by using it to move pure hydrogen, blends of gas and renewable biogas around the UK.

Phil Sheppard, National Grid's Director of Gas Transmission, said: 'This is a landmark month for us. 50 years ago, Bacton opened to start taking the first flows from the North Sea gas fields as Britain started the process of converting from manufactured 'town' gas to natural gas. Today, Bacton is still the entry point for North Sea gas and also for two interconnectors with Europe, one of which is capable of both importing and exporting gas.'

In 1965, the first North Sea gas field was opened and in July 1968, the first flows came through Bacton. They were fed into a 36 inch diameter gas pipeline which ran 140 miles from the coast to Rugby, connecting into the Number 2 feeder main on the developing national transmission system. At the time, homes and businesses were being converted to natural gas – a process that would take until 1977, the year of the Queen's Silver Jubilee, to complete. Conversion of domestic cookers and other appliances was needed because 'pure' North Sea gas had a higher energy value than manufactured town gas.

The Bacton terminal, 32km north of Great Yarmouth, has grown over the years and it now covers 180 acres. It adjoins terminals operated by Perenco and Shell. Treated gas flows from these three terminals into the National Grid terminal and then at 70 bar, more than 40 times the pressure of a fully inflated car tyre, into the national transmission network of pipes.

Two interconnectors come ashore at Bacton. The Interconnector can send gas to or receive gas from Zeebrugge in Belgium or receive gas from the Netherlands via the Balgzand Bacton Line (BBL) pipeline. The terminal is of strategic national importance and there is a ring main in place which can be used to bypass the terminal in an emergency.

Phil Sheppard added: "Gas flowing through Bacton has played an important role in keeping homes warm and production lines running over the past 50 years. North

Sea gas will continue to support our heating and economy for many years to come. We are very excited to explore with our customers and stakeholders how our network can support decarbonisation by greening the gas we carry, ensuring that we hit our carbon targets at the lowest overall cost to consumers.”

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Notes for editors

Notes to Editors:

National Grid is pivotal to the energy systems in the UK and the north eastern United States. We aim to serve customers well and efficiently, supporting the communities in which we operate and making possible the energy systems of the future.

National Grid in the UK:

- We own and operate the electricity transmission network in England and Wales, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. We also operate, but do not own, the Scottish networks. Our networks comprise approximately 7,200 kilometres (4,474 miles) of overhead line, 1,500 kilometres (932 miles) of underground cable and 342 substations.
- We own and operate the gas National Transmission System in Great Britain, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. Our network comprises approximately 7,660 kilometres (4,760 miles) of high-pressure pipe and 618 above-ground installations.
- As Great Britain's System Operator (SO) we make sure gas and electricity is transported safely and efficiently from where it is produced to where it is consumed. From April 2019, Electricity System Operator (ESO) is a new standalone business within National Grid, legally separate from all other parts of the National Grid Group. This will provide the right environment to deliver a balanced and impartial ESO that can realise real benefits for consumers as we transition to a more decentralised, decarbonised electricity system.
- Other UK activities mainly relate to businesses operating in competitive markets outside of our core regulated businesses; including interconnectors, gas metering activities and a liquefied natural gas (LNG) importation terminal – all of which are now part of National Grid Ventures. National Grid Property is responsible for the management, clean-up and disposal of surplus sites in the UK. Most of these are former gas works.

Find out more about the energy challenge and how National Grid is helping find solutions to some of the challenges we face at <https://www.nationalgrid.com/group/news>

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