The Geological Survey of Estonia

M25 England

Ground characterisation from a layby at one of Europe’s busiest highways...

“not much room to work in”

Logging in Paradise

Birmingham, UK

Kimbiji Aquifer Assessment Project

Tanzania

INSIDE:
FOUR PAGE EDITORIAL INSERT

ESSENTIAL LOGGING SERVICE
Premium quality borehole data acquisition, equipment rental, training & data processing
In these challenging times rely on us to continue to deliver a premium quality Geophysics service.

The outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to dominate the news headlines. We know so many people are affected in some way either indirectly or directly during this pandemic, and we want to send our best wishes to you, your families, and your employees during this time, and we hope you can stay safe.

Clearly it will have significant implications for public health, and will no doubt cause a great deal of economic disruption. Despite this, we wanted to reassure you that Robertson Geo has measures in place to safeguard the wellbeing of our employees and clients in addition to strategies that will allow us to continue to support you through these difficult and disruptive times.

Robertson Geo is committed and determined to maintain the high standards of service our customers and users of our equipment have come to expect as we continue to “be open for business” and ready to respond to your needs.

THE NEW HIGH speed railway (HS2) is due to run from central London through England, to Birmingham, Manchester and on to Glasgow and Edinburgh Scotland.

As part of the ongoing work on the current phase of the project that originates in central London through to the railway hub of Crewe, United Kingdom, Robertson Geo was instrumental in the downhole ground investigation where the rail track is due to cross the London orbital motorway (M25).

The M25 is one of Europe’s busiest motorways, it would not have been practical to close it and drill boreholes in the traffic lanes. Instead, in order to investigate the ground conditions underneath the live carriageway, the client drilled 30° angled holes from a service layby into which Optical and Acoustic Televiewers and a Caliper probe with natural gamma were applied to acquire the data for the ground characterisation.

With this site being in a small layby on the side of the M25, there was not much room to work in and the portable Robertson Geo Mini Winch’s small footprint was essential for the deployment of the probes in a tight awkward space. It is portable, compact and robust - ideally suited to deliver long-term reliability under arduous conditions.

Simon Garantini
Managing Director
The Estela de Luz (Stele of Light) is a monument in Mexico City built to commemorate the bicentenary of Mexico’s independence from Spanish rule.

Its design was the winning entry in an invited competition to seek the best combination of Mexico's past and future. The monument is popularly known as the Suavicerema (a brand of ice cream wafer) due to the resemblance on its shape to said wafer.

This Robertson Geo built PS Logger was one of the first delivered back in 2011. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México deployed the probe supported by a suite of surface equipment of Mini Winch and Micrologger2 surface interface with acquisition software. Initially the equipment was used for soil stability studies for the building of the Estela de Luz.

It has been used successfully over the years for assisting the Engineering Institute departments use for analyze of earthquake zones within Mexico City and additional training has recently been made by Robertson Geo to retrain on-site personnel with the updates of the system for subsurface data acquisition for highway construction projects, typically logging 70m runs of 6” diameter boreholes.

The Geological Survey of Estonia (GSE) is a research-oriented government institution that started operation in affiliation with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications in 2018.

The GSE objective is to serve as a primary source of geologic information for Estonia related to geological mapping, groundwater, mineral resources and environmental geology.

The GSE uses Robertson Geo equipment and has in 2020 extended its suite of geophysical probes and surface equipment by taking delivery of a Triple Sonic, Optical and Acoustic Televiewers and a 2,000m Winch.

A three-day Training programme was prepared and delivered for GSE nominated personnel in Tallinn, Estonia. The training comprised probe handling, calibration methodology, logging set up in the field, winch operation/maintenance and data processing.
A ROBERTSON GEO logging crew on site in central Birmingham, running both Optical and Acoustic Televiewers, 3-Arm Caliper and the PS Logger, making up a good suite of geotechnical probes. All deployed by the Mini Winch and run in via a tripod. The versatile, portable Mini Winch proving it’s worth yet again on a small site where vehicle access was not possible.

Reliable and consistent data from wireline borehole logging provides an important understanding of rock strength and the presence of fractures, essential for the location and positioning of new build construction and its foundations.

How does the PS Logger work?

THE PS LOGGER probe measures P (compression) and S (shear) wave velocities in a single borehole without the need for external energy sources, making it simple and quick to deploy.

When combined with bulk density values (from a density log or from core sample tests) small strain moduli (Young’s, Shear and Bulk) can be calculated using simple formulae.

It operates using indirect excitation rather than mode conversion as in a conventional sonic.

The probe contains a unique design of powerful hammer source and two receivers, separated by acoustic damping tubes. To acquire data, the probe is stopped at the required depth and the source is fired under surface command. Firing causes a solenoid-operated shuttle aligned across the borehole axis to strike plates on opposite sides of the probe in turn, setting up a pressure doublet in the surrounding fluid.

Full waveforms are recorded digitally at acquisition time across 6 channels (P wave, S wave left & S wave right at the near and far receivers) at a predetermined sample rate as low as 2.5μsec. The sample rate is carefully selected to be as small as possible to provide the best resolution but high enough to capture the arrivals within the listening window. Using the acquisition software, the waveforms can be displayed, scaled and filtered to allow for the picking of the first arrivals at each receiver.

Shear wave data.
ESSENTIAL LOGGING SERVICE

With a continued commitment to provide a market leading service for geophysics, Robertson Geo has pioneered the development of the slimline wireline industry for over 40 years.

As designers and manufacturers of its own technologies it is the “go to source” for geophysical probes, supporting equipment and software that is time proven for innovative solutions for accuracy and reliability.

Robertson Geo Services offer premium quality borehole data acquisition, equipment rental facilities, training and data processing services.
ESSENTIAL LOGGING SERVICE

Robertson Geo Service engineers come from a variety of backgrounds including geophysics, engineering, geology, geography and electronics. The engineers are selected not only for their technical skills but also for their ability to work well as part of an effective team.

Data processing standards are applied to all logs to ensure the provision of the highest quality geophysical data. The delivery of high quality calibrated data necessitates that expertise and support in many areas is required to facilitate the planning, data collection and subsequent processing activities.

Robertson Geo comprehensively calibrates all its logging systems and uniquely uses an on-site borehole for testing at its test well and calibration facility providing customer confidence for all data gathered with its probes. Current conformance certificates are always supplied for all probes deployed, further confidence that the equipment is tested and “ready to go”.

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Adherence to the various applicable ASTM standards (e.g. D5434-12 - Standard Guide for Field Logging of Subsurface Explorations of Soil and Rock) is a prerequisite for all logging work undertaken.

The logging and rental services are complemented by an industry proven back up and support system for all probes and equipment, with access to expertise available from the Robertson Geo support desk and the development and engineering departments.

All logging engineers complete an extensive in-house training programme and are issued with competency certificates detailing their expertise on the full range of probes and ancillary equipment. Ongoing training also covers offshore emergency training (BOSIET) and Radiation Protection Supervisor as well as numerous other Health and Safety courses.

Robertson Geo Service Engineers are required to work in a variety of challenging environments, from the arctic circle; mountain regions through peat bogs to deserts and jungles and all across the weather spectrum for land-based work. Offshore and underground situations are similarly routinely encountered by engineers and service teams.

Robertson Geo is a truly global service provider with experience gained from working across the UK, Ireland, Europe, Asia, Australasia, N & S America and numerous offshore locations. Travel risk assessments are completed prior to mobilisation.

Reliability & Accountability - All equipment and vehicles are fully checked before the engineers set out for a logging job. For the logging equipment a full systems test is conducted immediately prior to mobilisation and all probes are checked to ensure they have a current conformity certificate. A full life history of all probes is also maintained detailing calibrations, maintenance, repairs and job history.

For overseas work, where equipment needs to be delivered separately to site, Robertson Geo Services ensure that it is handled professionally to arrive in good time, eliminating any potential project delays; always preferring to deliver the equipment to the vessel or site, where appropriate, making sure that clients can confidently delegate this responsibility.

Assurance - The comprehensive training system and the experience of engineers ensures they are best equipped to make the correct decisions in the field relating to data quality and safety. Throughout the logging process the logs are monitored on-screen in real time as a vital part of the QC process.

Data processing can be performed in the field if time allows or more routinely back at base. Processing standards are followed to ensure accuracy of data and consistency of presentation.

Renewables

For many years Robertson Geo Services has been providing logging services to the offshore renewables sector. In an industry dominated by the UK for many years engineers have worked on many of the wind farms in and around UK waters. The expertise gained
Geotechnical

Geotechnical requirements involve the collection of logging data relating to structure (bedding, fractures and dip angles), hydrogeology and material strength. Where core samples have been obtained, the televiewer logs provide the definitive method for core orientation.

The Geotechnical sector accounts for the largest proportion of land-based work undertaken. The greatest challenges that have to be overcome are generally the ground conditions, both at surface and below ground. In simple terms this means getting there and then ensuring the borehole remains open/stable.

On active building sites access is often an issue as there is often limited space available and there may be many concurrent operations taking place.

For more remote areas there has been a widespread adoption of mud mats to minimise disturbance to the site, as in UK mud and waterlogged sites can often be considered normal, especially in winter months. The provision of trackways allows more flexibility in the choice of logging vehicles as 2WD only may be required.

In mountainous terrain it is possible that even 4WD logging vehicles cannot gain access to boreholes. Given prior notice, Robertson Geo Services can take a portable system in these cases. Usually the client can provide a “marooka” or similar vehicle to minimise the heavy lifting and carrying, but in extreme cases all equipment may have to be hand carried to the borehole.

For geotechnical investigation, where boreholes can be quite shallow there is usually a requirement to fully log the borehole, including the top unconsolidated formations. Where borehole stability is an issue it is common for the logging to be conducted in stages whereby the drill string is removed incrementally. This can involve from two to ten logs being recorded for each probe maximising the chances of getting full coverage for the borehole but is far more time consuming. Processing of the subsequent logs then becomes a more complex exercise as they all need to be spliced and then combined into a single log for each probe.

Geotechnical investigations have been conducted by Robertson Geo Services on many types of major civil engineering projects including:

- Bridges: Mersey Gateway Bridge at Runcorn, Queensferry Crossing in Edinburgh and the second Lake Mancaibao Bridge in Venezuela.
- Tunnels: Lower Thames Crossing, A303 Bypass - Stonehenge, HS2 (Chalfont) and the Elan Valley Aqueduct bypass tunnels.
- Port Developments: Haifa and Ashdod in Israel, Aberdeen Harbour, San Antonio - Chile, Lochboisdale Harbour - Outer Hebrides, Greenore Port - Ireland.
- Linear Infrastructure: HS2, Crossrail, Western Peripheral Route - Aberdeen, Bontnewydd Bypass - Caerarfon, M9 - Ireland, A5 - Northern Ireland.
- Buildings: Canary Wharf, Owen Street - Manchester, Paradise Circus - Birmingham.
- Nuclear Sites: Hinkley Point C, Bradwell B, Sizewell C, Dounreay, Oldbury and Wylfa B.
- Slope stability: A66 - Shap.

Mining and Minerals

Geophysical logging for mineral exploration involves some of the deepest boreholes encountered outside of the oil industry. Robertson Geo Services has the capability to log to 2,000m depth.

Service engineers have regularly worked on coal mines and quarries on the UK mainland, zinc, lead and gold mines in Ireland, uranium mines in Gabon and more recently in a 1.3km deep iron ore mine in Kiruna, Sweden. For Kiruna it took the engineers over half an hour to drive down the spiral vehicle access route before reaching the borehole site deep in the mountain.

Logging can be conducted from the surface or from existing underground adits, with boreholes often angled to intersect anticipated faults and beds. Some boreholes may be drilled with several daughter boreholes diverted from the main borehole by the use of wedges. The bottoms of these wedges are a potential hazard for retrieving probes, especially in angled boreholes, further compounded if there is a disturbance directly beneath the wedge.

Given the generally small diameter of mineral boreholes (typically 76-122mm) and the fact that the rocks can be extremely hard it is always a major challenge to ensure that probes do not get stuck in the boreholes. In fractured or drilling disturbed sections it is all too easy for broken rock to fall into the borehole above the probes and cause problems.

In all cases an uncentralised 3-Arm Caliper can be run to show areas where the borehole wall has broken down. The probe has a narrow diameter, 38mm, which allows small pieces of loose rock to drop past the probe. This can be repeated several times if necessary and the traces overlaid to see if there are any changes to the diameter, indicating instability.

Robertson Geo Services has a 100% record for not losing probes over the past 12 years, but have had probes temporarily stuck on several occasions. Robertson Geo fishing tools are always available for remedial action and furthermore the Robertson Geo engineering department can custom make retrieval equipment should the problem escalate.

Water and Environmental

Logging services are provided to the water and environmental sector for location of water tables, to characterise aquifers and aquitards, to establish potential water yields and for the routine inspection of water wells and casing condition.

Inspection of water wells and old mine shafts forms a significant part of Robertson Geo Services business in
First line support for any issues that arise or for queries on data and parameter setting is provided. A QC function on client data is also provided whereby clients can feel assured that the data they are collecting conforms to standards.

Assistance with arranging for shipping and the temporary import of equipment will be provided by the shipping department who have expertise shipping to over 150 counties globally.

**Training Services**

Clients renting equipment who are experienced loggers may simply need additional probes or systems and have little need for additional training as the manuals and online help available through the www.robertson-geo.com portal is sufficient. For less experienced clients renting equipment they will often require training either at the Robertson Geo base in Deganwy or at the clients own site.

The training can comprise everything from basic logging technique, through probe specific training to data processing. The availability of a test borehole (as at Deganwy) means the clients can get hands-on practice in a real world situation.

**Data Services and 3rd Party Data Processing**

Robertson Geo maintain a database of over 7,000 borehole logs collected from 2001 to the present day, categorised by log type, location, depth, quality etc. This probably represents the largest collection of quality UK borehole logs available anywhere.

The data has been used by clients who want historical data from specific sites where the original data has not been retained, often through changes of ownership or responsibility for the site.

A client recently requested all temperature logs taken from disused mine shafts in order to assist in a feasibility study for geothermal energy generation. In many cases there were multiple logs from the same borehole/shaft taken over an extended time period allowing temperature trends to be evaluated.

For rental customers Robertson Geo Services offer a full data processing service to its clients. This service is most commonly adopted for the more complex data arising from sonic probes and in particular the PS Logger.

**Equipment Rental Services**

Equipment for rental is available including probes, winches and ancillary equipment all maintained to the same high standards as the borehole logging systems utilised by Robertson Geo Services. All rental probes are supplied with a current conformance certificate and will have undergone full system testing prior to despatch.

In cases where time delays would be critical (most cases for overseas clients) Robertson Geo Services can provide spare probes and spares kits to eliminate potential downtime from having to re-ship replacements.

Rental equipment is available globally to clients in UK and Europe, N & S America, the Middle East, the Far East and Africa, predominantly to the renewables sector but also for mining and geotechnical applications.

Graham Comber
Logging Services Manager, Robertson Geo
PARYS MOUNTAIN WAS the largest copper mine in the world at its peak of operations in the 1700’s. The mine is located just outside the town of Amlwch in North Anglesey, Wales. It featured a vast open cast pit and a network of shafts and underground workings, all mined by hand.

Anglesey Mining plc is carrying out development and exploration work at its 100% owned Parys Mountain polymetallic deposit. Permission was granted (thanks Bill Hooley and Don McCallum) for access to the site and for Robertson Geo logging tools to be tested in the water filled Morris shaft, below the main headframe.

The shaft was known to be around 300m deep, 5m diameter, concrete lined and with the water level at around 22m below ground surface. A borehole camera was run to check for obstructions in the shaft. Multiple runs of a caliper tool were run at different depths and under different line strain conditions to evaluate the effects on the dimensional measurements. The Morris shaft is ideal for this type of field testing with known dimensions and static borehole fluid conditions.

Robertson Geo has recently been involved in a project of detailed ground investigation on the seawall and surrounding area of Chesil Cove, Portland, Dorset, England; this for Southwest Geotechnical.

THE OBJECTIVE WAS to gather detailed subsurface information to create an informed ground model to help ensure the integrity of the existing seawall.

Downhole logging was used to successfully identify any key marker beds in the Kimmeridge clay and to locate basal shear surface and gauge the rate of any ground movement. The dip angle of the bedding was determined and groundwater conditions were assessed.

Tools run included High Resolution Optical and Acoustic Televiewers, 3-Arm Caliper with natural gamma, Formation Density, Neutron Porosity and the PS Logger. All probes were deployed from one of the Robertson Geo fleet of purpose built logging vehicles using a 4-core 2,000m winch and Micrologger2 system.

Beside the seaside, beside the sea...

Portland, England
THE GUANYIN OFFSHORE wind farm project is planned two kilometers off the coast of the Taoyuan district in the north of the island state, with commissioning planned for 2021/2022.

Robertson Geo was contracted by Horizon Geosciences for the logging of multiple boreholes of 35m depth. The nine week project at the site of the 350MW wind farm was for the deployment of the PS Logger probe via a 2000m marine winch.

The seabed geology proved to be 0-10/20m conglomerate with 10/20m-35m of sand and clays. For the logging operation between the mud line and 10/20m below (this varied between boreholes) the layer of conglomerate (gravels and cobbles) frequently caused the borehole to collapse. To minimise this and in an effort to obtain as much data as possible the casing string was removed/pulled in 0.5m sections (this would typically be done in 6m sections) with the actual logging duration taking up to 12-15 hours on some boreholes. This approach was rewarded with the hole staying open for longer than expected in the conglomerate zone.

The acquired data was successfully processed on site by the Robertson Geo engineer, producing small strain moduli when combined with the density values given by the onboard lab on the jackup vessel.
Introducing Stephen Stroud
He joins us as Technical Sales Manager - Americas

We are pleased to announce that Stephen Stroud has joined Robertson Geo from the 23rd March in the position of Technical Sales Manager - Americas, focusing on our North & South American markets. Over his career he has gained extensive skills and expertise in logging operations, commercial management, sales and business development. Stephen graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Geological Sciences from Arizona State University. He has ten years of experience in borehole geophysics, including geophysical logging in exploration, mining, environmental, and groundwater applications.

Along with his experience in borehole geophysics, he has over four years in marketing and sales. He was responsible for the management and coordination of geophysical logging for various large-scale projects, such as the Harbor Bridge project in Corpus Christi, Texas. Stephen’s goals are to create new opportunities, relationships, and to educate clientele in the Americas by introducing our new and improved geophysical technologies and providing outstanding customer service.

Stephen can be contacted at: sstroud@robertson-geo.com

Our New YouTube Channel

We’ve added a YouTube Channel to help promote and illustrate our geophysical logging solutions and software through tutorials and helpful workbox videos. Please subscribe to our channel, and share any videos that you feel others may be interested in. Check back often, as new videos will be added regularly.

Check out our new Robertson Geo YouTube channel on www.youtube.com/channel/UCzfOFgrxktb1yFZ_6J83gw/featured

Robertson Geo - Events Update

Please continue to check our events page on www.robertson-geo.com/events

With the current circumstances there have been a number of postponements and cancellations of events we had expected to be part of.
The city is projected to grow to more than 5 million by the year 2030 and DAWASA continues to implement the longstanding project “development of New Water Sources for Dar es Salaam” to investigate groundwater resources.

Borehole geophysical logging is viable method of determining the water quality and hydrogeological parameters of aquifers. The project was conducted to define the formation water profile below the land surface of the Kimbiji coastal aquifer located 40km south of Dar es Salaam on the coastal plain of Tanzania. Data was acquired from boreholes down to a depth of 600m and Robertson Geo subsurface probes and surface delivery systems with data interface were used to capture the data.

Geophysical probes successfully deployed for this application:

3-Arm Caliper: Provides a single continuous log of borehole diameter as recorded by three mechanically coupled arms in contact with the borehole wall, a useful first log to determine the borehole conditions before running more costly probes

Electric Log: The classic water-well combination probe combining shallow, medium and deep penetrating resistivity measurements

Full Waveform Sonic: Uses a dual-transmitter dual-receiver array to provide high quality formation acoustic-velocity data

Temperature Conductivity: Provides a continuous, depth-based measurement of fluid temperature and conductivity