Aquamarine Power founder awarded Saltire Prize Medal

Aquamarine Power founder Allan Thomson has been awarded the Saltire Prize Medal for his outstanding contribution to the ocean energy industry at a ceremony in Edinburgh this evening.

Allan founded Aquamarine Power in 2005 with the goal of commercialising Oyster wave energy technology. The company has now successfully installed and operated two full-scale Oyster machines at the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney.

Prior to this Allan founded Wavegen – the world's first wave energy company to successfully develop a grid-connected wave power device, the LIMPET, which was installed on Islay in 2000.

The Saltire Prize Medal – presented under the auspices of Scotland's £10 million Saltire Prize Challenge – aims to recognise outstanding contributions by individuals and groups to the development of wave and/or tidal power generation.

Presenting the medal at the Scottish Renewables Annual Conference Dinner which was held at the Mansfield Traquair, Edinburgh, Minister for Energy and Climate Change, Paul Wheelhouse MSP, said:

"I am delighted to present the Saltire Prize medal to Allan Thomson. As one of the early pioneers with over 25 years of dedicated service to the industry, his commitment to the wave energy sector is unsurpassed. He founded Scotland's first wave energy company, Wavegen, in 1990 and went on to create Aquamarine Power, one of our Saltire Prize competitors, bringing Oyster wave power technology to the commercial market. Still active in the sector today, it is fitting that

he is recognised for his great achievements in this area.

“The Scottish Government is firmly committed to the development of a successful marine renewable energy industry in Scotland and the Saltire Prize is an excellent catalyst for creativity in the sector, which it is hoped will help Scotland capitalise on our extraordinary wave and tidal stream resources. Bringing further innovative green energy solutions on stream will bolster our ability to generate electricity from renewable sources in the future.”

Allan was unable to attend the award ceremony in person, but in a pre-prepared speech he said:

“I have been privileged to work with some brilliant engineers and scientists during my career in wave energy. Even today the commitment to innovative and creative problem-solving at Aquamarine Power has made the Oyster concept possible. It is really these people I am representing tonight.

“At Aquamarine Power they have made tremendous progress, and have proven the survivability of two full scale Oyster devices over numerous winters at sea. I’d like to thank their whole team who continue to tackle with passion and imagination the challenges a new technology brings.”

The medal, which was designed by Orkney-based jewellers, Ortak, was accepted on Allan’s behalf by Martin McAdam, Chief Executive Officer of Aquamarine Power, who said:

“Allan has been a true pioneer in wave energy, working alongside the late Professor Alan Wells and Professor Trevor Whittaker from Queen’s University Belfast to take the best ideas out of the laboratory and into the water. His vision has been instrumental in the establishment of our industry and he continues to make a valued contribution as technical advisor to Aquamarine Power’s research and development team.”

Congratulating Allan on his award, Niall Stuart, Chief

Executive of Scottish Renewables, said:

“Scotland’s world lead in the development of technologies to harness wave and tidal power is down to the vision and ambition of a handful of individuals like Allan Thomson.

“Allan is another worthy winner of this unique accolade, with the outputs of his work there for all to see with Aquamarine Power one of the leaders in the race to harness the power of the seas to generate renewable electricity.”

The Saltire Prize Medal is in its four year with previous winners being Prof Stephen Salter, Richard Yemm and Peter Fraenkel.