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New English Channel Bunkers-Only Service

Cockett Marine Oil is to start a bunkers-only service for shipping operators transiting the English Channel from September in a move that will transform the availability of bunkering in the area.

Until now Cockett Marine Oil has been known as a specialist marine oil trader based in London with a network of international offices. Its new service will be operated from three anchorages in the Thames Estuary in an area controlled by the Port of London Authority (PLA), with whom Cockett has worked closely to develop the service.

The new service by Cockett Marine, draws on the resources of a number of businesses with Cockett's South African parent company The Grindrod Group, including Unicorn Shipping and Rotterdam-based Associated Bunker Oil Contractors.

Sitting on one of the world's busiest trading routes, and located approximately on 51deg 28min North/1 deg 20 mins East, the Cockett Marine anchorage will offer cost-effective bunkers-only services from anchorage positions off the English Channel shipping lanes.

Cockett Marine Oil is predicting that it will supply at least 1m tonnes of marine fuels, including low and high sulphur fuel variants, as well as gasoil.

The new facilities will be able to host deep draft vessels of all types. By supplying fuel oils delivered by barge from Rotterdam and enabling customers to avoid time-consuming and costly diversions from the main shipping lanes, it will compete head-to-head with other major international bunkers-only supply centres as well as facilities in the English Channel.

The new service will take advantage of being closer to the traffic separation schemes in the English Channel and require a diversion of only 1-2 hours from the shipping lanes, in contrast to the diversions required to reach other bunkering facilities in the English Channel.

Robert Thompson, General Manager Supply at Cockett Marine Oil, said: “This is all about providing a bunkers-only service in the right place at the right price and thanks to the combined forces of the Grindrod Group – the right people. Until now the English Channel has suffered from a lack of competitiveness which has hindered its development as a serious bunker hub. Our new operation will remedy this situation.

“We believe the commercial advantage of its location and ability to take advantage of cheaper fuel prices from Rotterdam makes the case a compelling one for owners and operators, especially in the current economic climate.

Karl Beeson, Group Managing Director at Cockett Marine Oil, said: “As a team we are all very excited by this project which is another step in the expansion of our global physical supply strategy. The new Cockett Marine service shows the synergy delivered by The Grindrod Group for the benefit of shipping operators. We can secure excellent prices through our years of back-to-back trading experience, combined with the barging expertise of our colleagues at Unicorn Shipping and utilising the procurement skills of Associated Bunker Oil Contractors in Rotterdam.

“Operating two barges initially through Unicorn, each able to transport 5,500 tonnes of fuel oils, we will be able to provide ship owners and operators with a cost-effective and quicker service than other ports within the Emissions Control Area.”

Cockett Marine will place a strong emphasis on quality control and reliability. The PLA will provide oversight of the operation from its London Port Control Centre and as part of risk control measures is putting in place enhanced oil spill response capabilities based at Ramsgate.

Details of the new Cockett Marine bunkers-only can be obtained by visiting:

www.cockettgroup.com

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