

## Congress of The International Committee on the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage

Dr Miles Oglethorpe presented a paper entitled 'Capturing the Energy: Records of the UK Offshore Oil & Gas Industries' to delegates attending the three-day TICCIH Conference. TICCIH is the international organisation for industrial archaeology and the industrial heritage. Its aim is to study, protect, conserve and explain the remains of industrialisation.



During the session 'Knowledge, Recording Cataloguing, Documenting', Dr Oglethorpe explained that the North Sea offshore oil and gas industries are entering a new phase, during which the first fields are reaching exhaustion and being shut down, others are having their lives extended by new technologies, and new fields are being opened as exploration finds fresh reserves.

Comparisons were drawn with major UK industries such as coal mining, which rapidly changed and then disappeared, with most of their records being lost in the process. The oil and gas industries are potentially even more transient, being visible only to a small proportion of the population that works in the sector, much of the activity occurring offshore.

No industry has previously been so well documented, resulting in a wealth of information available. It will require a huge amount of work to select the most important archives. Equally, it will take a lot of effort to persuade the oil companies that it is worth retaining historical archive material. The ultimate aim is to establish a sustainable central repository into which oil and gas operators can routinely deposit archive material. Some of the greatest challenges will be to oversee the transition between conventional and digital archive media, and to tackle sensitive issues such as access, security and intellectual property.