

## **£½ MILLION WELDING MACHINERY INVESTMENT INCREASES ARC ENERGY'S PRODUCTIVITY AND VERSATILITY IN THE OIL & GAS INDUSTRY**

Gloucestershire-based weld overlay cladding specialist Arc Energy Resources has invested £500,000 in two new Rotating Head welding machines to increase productivity and extend the size and scope of work the company can handle.

Commenting on the investment, Arc Energy managing director Alan Robinson says success in winning several new contracts prompted a review of the company's capacity to handle orders for cladding large and/or complex components.

"Currently our work stations apply overlay cladding by moving components around a fixed welding torch. However, increasingly in the oil & gas, marine and defence sectors we are winning contracts that require us to handle or mount components that are either very heavy or have complex geometries, which makes it difficult and time consuming to manipulate them around a fixed weld head."

In fact, using existing production equipment, all the new contracts would either require up to 8 metres of free space around the work stations or very large rotating equipment and complicated fixturing. However, the new Rotating Head machines use automated control technology to manipulate the welding torch around a fixed component, accurately positioning it to apply the overlay while working close to the component's footprint.

Only a handful of companies around the world manufacture equipment that could meet Arc Energy's specification, but following a review of machines from the USA and a number of European countries, the company was able to source the machines from a UK manufacturer.

Says Alan Robinson: "We opted for the machines that offered us the best capabilities, and exceeded our initial requirements. On top of this, the opportunity to buy British and have service and technical support just two hours away made the buying decision an easy one."

Both machines are designed to integrate immediately with Arc Energy's production system and are capable of handling components that would normally be considered difficult to weld clad. Both machines will provide greater flexibility, allowing Arc Energy to carry out MIG, TIG, Hot Wire, Twin Wire TIG and Twin-Head, enabling four wires to be clad simultaneously. Sophisticated software allows the machines to be pre-programmed to self-centre on holes and internal bores, which makes them easy to set-up and operate.

Says Arc Energy technical director Neil Cook: "The new machines enable us to further develop the use of MIG cladding as a robust production process and a more efficient alternative to TIG and Hot Wire TIG welding. The investment expands and enhances our ability to handle complicated component geometries for the full or partial cladding and fabrication of a huge range of component sizes weighing up to 15 tonnes."

This £½ million investment follows the recent in-house development of an innovative pipe manipulation system that is also designed to increase the efficiency and quality of Arc Energy's corrosion resistant coating services to the oil and gas industry. The pipe manipulation system is one of a number of developments resulting from an engineering programme at the company's Centre of Excellence at its Eastington factory in Gloucestershire.

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