At the end of June there were four E&A wells active on the UKCS; one month on there are now six E&A wells drilling concurrently, split into four exploration and two appraisal, with all six constituting original holes rather than sidetrack operations. To date, 2016 has seen 10 E&A spuds, along with one appraisal sidetrack well.

**West of Shetlands**

In the West of Shetlands, Hurricane has now spudded its Lancaster appraisal Well 205/21a-7 with the Transocean Spitsbergen, where it is aiming to refine current resources in Lancaster; a sidetrack to the initial bore is planned. Meanwhile, JX Nippon’s Palaeocene Loanan exploration well in Block 214/23 is reported as continuing operations with the Deepsea Stavanger, where we consider that the well should now be in reservoir, however a result has yet to be reported; operations are expected to be wrapping-up as of mid-late July.

**Northern North Sea**

As suggested last month, Apache slipped in just before month-end with its Beryl Field area Storr exploration well, 9/19b-19, which spudded on 30 June, and is currently drilling ahead to an Upper Jurassic target with Awilco’s WilPhoenix. Meanwhile, IOG commenced (23 July) its Skipper appraisal Well 9/21a-3 where it is appraising the Palaeocene Beauly sands before then targeting slightly deeper exploration potential also in the Palaeocene; the Sedco 704 is being utilised here.

**Central North Sea**

EnQuest has now completed operations with its Eagle exploration well, announcing a small oil discovery, with resources of 6 mmbbls versus the 35 mmbbls pre-drill estimate; the Stena Spey was off location as of mid-month. Zennor has also completed operations, on 20 July, with its Finlaggan appraisal programme – the well was successfully flow tested and an optimum development scenario is now being considered. The rig, Sedco 704, has since mobilised to the Northern North Sea where it has spudded IOG’s Skipper appraisal well. Premier has finally spudded its Bagpuss exploration-cum-appraisal well, having been waiting on the rig (Ocean Valiant) coming from its Solan development – spudding on 18 July, the well is targeting the Lower Cretaceous – a quick turnaround is expected on this shallow well, with results by mid-August.

**Southern North Sea**

Wintershall is still drilling ahead at its Carboniferous Winchelsea Prospect with Well 44/23g-14, located immediately west of its Wingate Field, with the Paragon HZ1. The well spudded on 26 May.

In terms of activity, this month has been rather busy, with three new spuds since the last report, along with one discovery reported, and operations on two further wells having completed. With only 11 mmbbls found, or at least reported, to date this year through exploration, albeit from only three completed exploration wells, there is hope for Apache’s Storr Prospect, with this probably the most likely to see material resources added, although it’s neck and neck between JX Nippon’s Loanan and Wintershall’s Winchelsea wells as to who will report the first gas discovery of the year? Or have they both drilled dusters?

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