

Detectronic and Northumbrian Water - a partnership of three decades

PERFORMANCE AND FUTURE ENGINEERING FOR TRUNK SEWER AT AUSTRALIA'S MANLY BEACH



Back in 1983, Alistair Fimister started work in the Hydrometrics Department at Northumbrian Water. Six years later, he began purchasing Detectronic's 3510 Flow Monitors to carry out flow survey work within the company's sewer network.

In 2008, when Detectronic completed development of its new remote-reporting flow monitor - the MSFM - Alistair was one of the first 'former' customers Steve Woods, Managing Director of Detectronic, visited. A deal was struck to part-exchange the old Detectronic 3510 meters against purchase by Northumbrian Water of new MSFM meters and Alistair has never looked back.

Today, Northumbrian Water has 38 of Detectronic's units in place. What's more, Alistair is clear that the MSFM is his unit of choice based on cost and reliability.

Explains Alistair, now Hydrometrics Team Leader for Northumbrian Water: "Having looked through some of my old diaries, I discovered that our first contact with Detectronic was on 5th April 1989. My boss at the time, Rit Walton and I had a meeting with a representative; there's no mention of who that actually was but I imagine it was Steve or his colleague, Gerry Burby.

We took delivery of our very first Detectronic monitors on 30th November 1989 and I have a note in my diary stating 'New loggers from Detectronic - playing with new toys!'

It was the quality and reliability of those 'new toys' that led us to have purchased and installed 150 Detectronic flow monitors by October 1992. At the time, we utilised Husky Hunter retrievers to collect data manually and the data processing software was called Float. We were still utilising some of these original monitors in 2006 - the reliability and robust data each monitor delivered to us, day in day out, was irrefutable.

This leads me to mention our highly successful joint venture with Detectronic, commissioned by the Sydney Water Authority in Australia in 1991. This is when I first met Dave Walker, a Technical Support Engineer for Detectronic at the time.

The project was to investigate the performance and future engineering requirements for the trunk sewer running along Manly Beach. The team recall it being a challenging job which involved the installation of 42 flow monitors, with many of the sites having egg-shaped sewers filled with cockroaches. They also tell me that Dave had the best job as he was responsible for instrumentation failure and nothing ever failed so he was always on the beach, sunbathing!

The survey had a profound effect on two members of the original survey team as they both emigrated to Sydney!"

Dave Walker, now Commercial Director at Detectronic, adds: "I recall that prior to this joint venture over in Sydney, Total Flow Surveys (TFS) the flow surveys arm of Northumbrian Water had been using our Sewer Flow Survey Monitors for a number of years within their sewer network catchments.

During the 1990s and into the second millennium, the Detec 3510 was the sewer flow monitor name recognised throughout the flow survey industry. It was, quite simply, a workhorse. Many of these 3510 units are still working for a living today and in operation with several flow survey operators in the UK and overseas.

Building on this wholly reliable, high quality piece of monitoring equipment, with the advancements in signal processing technology and the evolution

of the cellular communications network throughout the globe since the early part of 2000s, we were able to use our expertise and over 30 years of experience to launch the new ATEX and IECEx certified MSFM range of flow meters in 2008.

With even more reliability and the very real benefit of remote data communication, another key advancement was the development of the ATEX and IECEx approved rechargeable lithium-ion battery pack. This runs for up to ten months on a single charge! Historically the battery packs were four times larger and heavier, and would only run the 3510 for three or four weeks on a single charge."

Highlights Alistair: "We became aware of the MSFM range of monitors in 2008 in our meeting with Steve and, after a bit of negotiation, traded in our depleted stock - including all the damaged old stuff - for four brand new monitors! We have since increased that number to 38 MSFM monitors operating in our networks.

So, after over 30 years of collaborative working it's safe to say that Detectronic is a partner that we trust and rely on. After all, when you're 10,512 miles from home working on a key project in Sydney, having a company on your side that you have the utmost faith in is an absolute must."

For more information about Detectronic, their Data Monitoring, Flood and Pollution Prevention systems, please call: **01282 449 124** or email: sales@detectronic.org



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