Alba Ultrasound awarded Queen’s Award for Innovation

Alba Ultrasound Limited is delighted to announce that it has received a prestigious Queen’s Award for Innovation. The Company, which is based in the West of Scotland Science Park, has received the award for its outstanding innovations in the field of ultrasonic array transducers.

These are multiple sensor devices which generate and detect ultrasonic energy - which is sound energy with a pitch beyond the audible range of the human ear. Each array contains many individual transducers which can be manipulated under electronic control to steer the ultrasonic beam in different directions, thereby forming an accurate image or pictorial representation of the target space. Alba array products are at the heart of many ultrasonic imaging systems and can provide clearer image pictures in for example, testing of materials, underwater surveying and biomedical diagnosis.

The Company was formed in 2000 and commenced manufacture with 2 employees in the Port Dundas Business Park. Under the leadership of its two Directors, Vic Murray (MD) and Gordon Hayward (Chairman) the business has grown to over 40 people, housed within a specialist manufacturing unit containing state of the art equipment with customised R&D and specialist testing facilities. Throughout this period Alba has maintained a very close working relationship with the University of Strathclyde, where much of the early research was performed. The Company also obtains active support from the Scottish Government through Scottish Enterprise and other agencies, all of which has served to facilitate the growth of Alba through provision of financial, training and business advisory assistance.

Vic Murray (MD) Gordon Hayward (Chairman)

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Scottish Enterprise account manager Graeme Clark said: “My sincere congratulations to Alba Ultrasound on winning this prestigious award. Fighting off stiff competition from companies right across the UK is a tremendous achievement and one which the company should be extremely proud of. “Over the last seven years we’ve worked closely with Alba Ultrasound through our account management approach, helping deliver its ambitious growth plans. “Alba Ultrasound is an extremely forward thinking and innovative company and I look forward to continuing to work closely with its leadership team to support their long term ambitions.”

The main market area for the Company is in underwater sonar and since its inception, Alba has created a diverse range of transducer products for underwater applications, spanning mine counter measures, underwater surveying and seabed mapping, intruder detection security systems and guidance of underwater vehicles. Alba also designed and manufactured the sonar array suite for the UK mine hunting fleet. The arrays not only had to meet an extremely demanding acoustic design specification but also have to function for several years within the harshest of environments. It is testimony to the Company and its manufacturing technology that, after seven years of exposure, the arrays are still performing to the highest level.

Alba’s products directly benefit the environment by enabling underwater tasks to be carried out more safely and with minimal damage to the affected areas. This is achieved through the provision of much more detailed images in sub sea surveying; for more accurate classification of structures such as shipwrecks, harbour installations and pipelines; rapid detection of gas and oil leakages and more accurate mapping of the ocean floor topology. Alba wideband arrays are used also in a diverse range of security applications including protection of harbours, cruise liners, yachts and offshore oil and gas installations. The Company has a worldwide market for its products and the current growth is anticipated to continue apace.

In many instances Alba’s products have been inspired by the natural world, where creatures such as bats and dolphins possess unsurpassed sonar capabilities in air and water respectively. The resultant linkages between mathematics, physics, biology and engineering have been exploited by Alba staff to promote awareness of engineering as a career within schools. This is part of the Scottish Government’s Science and Engineering Action Plan and the Company has been involved actively in a series of vodcasts to be distributed to every primary school in the country.