Rezatec's peatland Earth Observation satellite techniques assist Scottish Water

Rezatec is working with Scottish Water to help assess peatland integrity across remote parts of their catchments to help protect and improve the quality of their source water. High-resolution Earth Observation (EO) data has been calibrated with spatial land cover and peat depth data to provide an accurate picture of peatland structure and integrity. "This not only helps to protect the environment but it will potentially reduce the cost of providing a clear fresh public water supply." said **Zoë Frogbrook, Technical lead for Catchment Management, Scottish Water**. Rezatec's landscape intelligence platform offers a cost-effective way of measuring peat extent and how intact it is over wide and potentially remote areas that are otherwise expensive to measure or inaccessible from the ground. **www.rezatec.com**

Landmark awarded OS contract to maintain MasterMap® digital mapping database

Landmark Solutions has been selected as one of four companies that will maintain **Ordnance Survey's** flagship **MasterMap®** digital mapping database, over the next four years. OS MasterMap® is Great Britain's most accurate and comprehensive geographic record containing over 450 million real-world features including individual addresses to roads and buildings. It contains a suite of different layers, each of which provides a different aspect of valuable mapping data for use in a Geographic Information system (GIS). The continually updated database underpins Ordnance Survey's full range of digital mapping products. As part of the contract, Landmark has formed a specialist team of personnel to handle all requirements. **www.landmark.co.uk**.

OS Partners with Abu Dhabi Environment Agency with new GIS Roadmap

Abu Dhabi Environment Agency (EAD) is closer to establishing itself as a leader within the global environmental community through the development of a partnership with **Ordnance Survey International** and the creation of a new **GIS Roadmap**. EAD is committed to significantly improving the environmental sustainability of the Emirate and becoming a global advocate for environmental protection and sustainable living. To achieve this vision, EAD embarked on a comprehensive geospatial transformation programme. OS International submitted a proposal for this strategic project and was selected to develop the new Roadmap in partnership with EAD and its stakeholders. The new Roadmap was created in accordance with the 'GIS Roadmap Framework' and was developed, delivered and completed on 15 April 2015. **www.os.uk/eadgisroadmap**

ABPmer develops good practice for Scottish shellfish aquaculture planning

ABPmer has been commissioned by **SARF** to review all aspects of shellfish farm planning considerations and related decision making processes in Scotland to help ensure a consistent approach to sustainable development of the industry. The expansion of shellfish aquaculture is recognised as having the potential to contribute to food security as well as providing a healthy source of protein. The shellfish aquaculture industry in Scotland is aiming to double production volumes by 2020 compared to 2012, a target which is alluded to in Scotland's National Marine Plan. This requires consistent and effective regulation of shellfish aquaculture to protect the marine environment but which does not unnecessarily constrain expansion. **www.abpmer.co.uk**

Peter Fitzgibbon, Editor

Drones: what goes up ...

... could risk a hard landing. Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) have been catapulted, quite literally, into the limelight of late, not least in this current issue. No less than three dedicated trade shows are being staged in the UK to promote airframes, control systems, payloads and services, and with the likes of Amazon, Google and Sony intent on exploiting the technology, the future looks bright.

Indeed, a recent House of Lords report reckons that the potential for jobs from drones could be as many as 150,000 by the year 2050. Even so, Baroness O'Cathain, sounded a note of caution. "But there's also a risk — public understanding of how to use drones safely may not keep pace with people's appetite to fly them. It would just take one disastrous accident to destroy public confidence and set the whole industry back."

Much depends on regulation of platforms that range from consumer toys to highly sophisticated systems. In the UK, a constant drip feed of concerns over security, safety and privacy has provided ammunition for campaigners. Most recently, the Government has been forced to publish a list of drones use by Whitehall departments, release summaries of meetings held by the somewhat reclusive Cross-Government Working Group responsible for drone policy, and establish an "oversight board" to make drone policy more transparent.

The Civil Aviation Authority has also weighed-in with a new drone awareness initiative that highlights the risk of collision with commercial aircraft. For Tim Johnson, CAA Director of Policy, the initiative "... sets out the simple rules that all drone users should follow to ensure they comply with the law and support the safety of all airspace. If they do this they can avoid prosecution and a possible jail term or fine." Few of the 300 organisations in the UK that are licensed to use drones for commercial or government purposes will need reminding of this. But what of the growing army of individuals and groups that aren't? It could be a bumpy ride.