

Demolition Engineer Winter 2012

Twenty years in the demolition fast lane

Richard Vann FIDE

Specialist decommissioning consultancy RVA Group is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. Here managing director and past IDE president Richard Vann reflects upon his journey...



2012 doesn't just represent a significant milestone for the Queen and the UK's hosting of the Olympics – it is also the year that RVA Group celebrates 20 successful years of business.

In 1992, having worked in the demolition industry for over 10 years, I founded the company to offer specialist and independent advice to operators facing large scale industrial site closures.

It was apparent that when designing and building new plant, site owners and operators could benefit from a variety of professional industry expertise. However when it came to decommissioning, decontaminating, dismantling and demolishing sites, organisations usually had to step into the unknown, which was simply unacceptable.

I was keen to improve the reputation that our engineering discipline had at the time, and I was confident that something could be done to improve demolition safety records, avoid commercial disputes, ensure more efficient project scheduling, achieve cost-effective project deliveries and better protect the environment. RVA was therefore established to provide a focused, value-adding service within this niche marketplace.

Having started out as Richard Vann Associates, a sole trader entity, RVA Group now employs a large multi-disciplined team of hard-working and highly trained professionals. Over the past two decades our experience has grown, with us having worked on some of the largest and most prestigious decommissioning projects in Europe. This has affirmed RVA's reputation as one of the leading engineering consultancies in our exciting sector, in the UK and beyond.

As the need for our highly-specialised advice increases, so too does the number of organisations claiming to offer decommissioning consultancy advice. However this is invariably an off-shoot of their

core areas of competence, whereas RVA has remained true to the ethos upon which the company was founded. I think this is one of the key reasons why we have remained robust and have continued to grow, even during turbulent economic times.

We have concentrated on what we do best, whilst rigidly remaining totally independent from the supply chain. We cover virtually all areas of the decommissioning cycle but tend to be able to add maximum value on large-scale, complex and high hazard industrial sites. This is where our specialist guidance and experience is most sought.

Our expertise spans the chemical, petrochemical, pharmaceutical, manufacturing, energy oil and gas industries, and because of this, we have an impressive portfolio of blue-chip clients from across the globe.

As RVA's reputation has grown so too has the number of overseas opportunities for us. We acknowledged from an early stage that our suite of specialised services was not available in many international locations.

So whilst working hard to maintain a solid UK presence, we also began marketing our services to organisations in Europe. At the same time we worked on a number of complex UK assets owned by multinational corporations.

Praise for RVA soon spread due to the strong relationships we started to develop, and the standard with which our projects were completed. We have now established a number of partnerships around the world and will tirelessly to safeguard and expand upon these.

When asked what truly makes RVA different, one client David Pullan (Nufarm Limited's Group Executive – Operations) said: "We selected RVA because of their experience in our specific field, their clear understanding of the issues involved, and their industry specific track record. We were not disappointed."

"Decommissioning and demolition in the process industries, and especially in chemicals, carries many potential hazards which are not encountered elsewhere, and in-depth experience of this industry is of paramount importance in monitoring and controlling such works. In our experience RVA delivered this through a team

of first rate people and effective administrative systems for technical and commercial management of the contracts involved."

We have never rested on our laurels and we recognise the importance of continued professional development. I am pleased that industry bodies such as the Institute of Demolition Engineers support this approach, and I believe the IDE will play an integral part in the continued raising of sector-wide standards going forward.

Our whole team is incredibly proud of RVA's achievements over the past 20 years, and we now look forward to maintaining our careful expansion and sharing our expertise with a greater number of clients in Europe and further afield.

The 20th anniversary celebrations will commence at the Institute of Demolition Engineers' AGM and luncheon at Lord's Cricket Ground.

