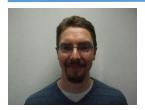# Thomas Brightwell – Senior Software Engineer

My journey with Guidance Marine so far:

I joined Guidance on Friday the 2nd January 2015, which meant an unusual first day, with only a handful of staff in. Still I soon settled in, and had my first software application ready by the end of the month. I'd come from a smaller company so it was an interesting change to see how a larger entity like Guidance operated. For starters, they sent me out on the North Sea to gather some data. The scenery out there gets a little repetitive, but the food on Norwegian ships is great, and it's awe-inspiring to stand on the deck beneath a rig or wind turbine; witnessing human ingenuity in action. Take your own tea bags though.
In the intervening years we've survived the oil price crash, diversifying our outputs to reach new markets and civilisations. I've had the opportunity to develop software across our whole range of sensors, and I look forward to seeing where the next few years will take us.

My typical day:

I'll start the day early, by checking that none of our overnight software tests have failed (and if I caused the fault, quickly putting in a fix before anyone notices). Then I move onto the day's business. We work in a fairly agile manner here, with a couple of projects on the go at once and tasks to be done for each one. With all the active projects, the work is quite varied. One week I might be designing a new communications protocol for our sensors; another might involve writing a new simulator, or a third could see us going out to test our new prototypes in the field.

Normally I'll aim to get the big tasks done up front, leaving the little ones for the end of the day or tail-end of our two week sprints of activity. We also have a team testing our software, so the afternoons often include working closely with them and with other departments on various issues. I like to leave the office thinking that I've accomplished something each day. Whether that's true or not is down to those overnight tests!

The best thing about working for Guidance Marine:

The best thing about working for Guidance Marine is working on products from start to finish, and seeing them go out the door, and onto vessels around the world. Software engineering often involves creating intangible products, which only exist inside a computer or on the web. So being able to create something physical, with a real world presence is very rewarding. That wouldn't be possible without the team we have here of course.