

Published in LNG Unlimited on 23rd July 2010.

## South Hook residents all ears for noise test

Silencer upgrade on the Tembek to get a run-out at Welsh terminal

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Residents plagued by noise from ship operations at the South Hook LNG receiving terminal in the UK are awaiting the arrival of an LNG carrier with more interest than usual this weekend.

Electronic data show the

217,000-cbm Q-Flex Tembek (built 2007) is due to arrive at the South Wales facility tomorrow.

Tembek shipped in the commissioning cargo in March 2009. At the time locals described the noise from the vessel as being like "a droning helicopter".

South Hook issued an apology, saying the sound was caused by the reliquefaction plant compressors on the vessel while the ship waited to offload its cargo.

The silencers on all five of

Tembek's generator sets have since been upgraded and the latest visit marks the first opportunity to assess their effectiveness.

Members of the South Hook LNG Noise pressure group have been complaining about low frequency sounds from the new Q-Flex and Q-Max LNG carriers that have been offloading at the terminal for more than a year now.

Group members speak of a throbbing of the air pressure inside their homes with the vibration felt on window panes.

Their complaints have been supported by the Pembrokeshire County Council Port Health Authority, which has registered statutory nuisances against several of the vessels.

In response, operator South Hook LNG, working in partnership with producer and vessel charterer Qatargas, said this month that a "phased upgrading of silencers" on eight Q-Flex and six Q-Max vessels would be completed by mid-July.

The pressure group, whose members say they have no objection to LNG imports, identified the worst

offenders as Samsung Heavy Industry-built Q-Max ships.

Residents recount that they can tell the difference between a Samsung-built Q-Max and one built by Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering simply by the noise emanating from the ship.

However, vessels from both yards have caused problems.

Despite the statutory nuisance notices, several of these vessels have been scheduled to return to the terminal.

It also appears that some of the youngest ships, which had improved silencers retrofitted at the yard, also caused problems. Group members said they experienced a much quicker-paced thumping noise from these ships.

However, not all the Qatari giants have proved troublesome.

The Samsung-built 215,000-cbm Q-Flex Al Gharrafa (built 2008), which South Hook identified as one of the ships that has had its silencers upgraded, seemed almost totally silent when at the berth, the group reported.