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Spirotech vacuum degassers helping Scotland's oldest university with ambition to become 'carbon neutral' for its energy usage

Highly efficient Spirotech vacuum degassers are helping Scotland's oldest university with its ambition to become carbon neutral for its energy usage.

The units have been installed in the former 19th century Guardbridge Paper Mill, now transformed into an ultra-modern energy centre serving the North Haugh campus of the University of St Andrews in Fife.

The degassers remove dissolved gasses in the system's installation fluid by temporarily subjecting a portion of the water to underpressure, or vacuum.

The released air is then separated and expelled. By continuously repeating the process 99.9% of the gases are released and removed.

If left to circulate the air would adversely affect the system's efficiency, impacting on flow rates and causing corrosion. In turn, this could lead to dirt build-up, maintenance problems and higher energy costs. In the long-term even system breakdown.

The energy centre is at the heart of the £25 million University of St Andrews Biomass District Heating Project, which was designed, built and is operated by energy generation and district heating specialists Vital Energi.

A key element in the university's ambition to be the UK's first carbon neutral university for its energy usage, the energy centre generates hot water in a 10-metre high 6.5MW boiler.

The water is then distributed through a network to the campus where it provides low-carbon heat and hot water.

The energy centre is capable of pumping hot water through a 10.6km district heating network serving 35 buildings.

Spirotech vacuum degassers are designed for use in large commercial systems with many branches and low flow rates, where 'ordinary' dearators are not sufficient.

Rob Jacques, Spirotech's National Key Accounts and Technical Sales Manager, said: "When specifying for a heating, or cooling, system it is important to remember the conditioning of the water is a critical factor in the final efficiency, effectiveness and lifespan of the installation.

"It's very rewarding to know our vacuum degassers are making a contribution to one of the largest biomass and district heating schemes in Scotland at one of the country's leading research institutions."

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