



2007 REFLECTIONS

David Rodger, communications manager at AREG looks back on a busy 2007 and looks forward to the year ahead.....



Proposed EFC front Elevation

This has been an important year for AREG with activity on a range of exciting projects including Aberdeen Offshore Windfarm, the Energy Futures Centre, Offshore Europe 07 and the ever growing All Energy show.

Across Scotland we have seen growing activity and interest in the development of renewable energy projects at domestic, community and industry level - bringing both environmental and economic benefit. Having already achieved the 2010 target of 18% the country is now working towards the challenging target of supplying 40% of its electricity through renewables by 2020.

On the planned Aberdeen Offshore Windfarm, environmental and geophysical studies have been undertaken on the proposed site. The project received a fair amount of media coverage back in July as it was revealed that the survey work could reveal some interesting insights into the past of the Aberdeen Bay area - including medieval vessels and unexploded WWII bombs! A further round of public consultation will take place in 2008 prior to submission of planning application which is anticipated towards the end of that year.

This year we have also released concept sketches of the proposed beach front Energy Futures Centre - a state of the art building with a focus to drive the energy industries of the future. With partner support of £100,000 from Aberdeen City, council officers are now working with AREG to develop detailed business case options for delivering the project.

In February in Edinburgh the Scottish Final of

Shell Springboard took place. The competition encourages SME's to devise and develop innovative products or services which will lead to greenhouse gas reductions. Aberdeen based Environmental Building Partnership Ltd (EBP) were among the winners with a groundbreaking product that replaces conventional thermal insulation in buildings and could revolutionise building construction globally.

March saw the opening of the biomass boiler at Aboynne Academy which has cut the school's greenhouse gas emissions by 600 tonnes a year and significantly reduced energy costs. The fuel source for the boiler is wood chips, chosen because of the school's proximity to two sawmills - this in turn has provided a welcome boost to the local economy.



AREG Stand at OE 2007 L-R: Neil Lindsay, David Rodger, Debbie Ashworth, First Minister, Alex Salmond and Iain Todd

In May the annual All-Energy show saw around 4,000 UK & international visitors to the Aberdeen Exhibition & Conference Centre. This record tally was about 40% higher than last year. Some 350 exhibitors from a variety of countries had stands at the event - this figure was also a record, being more than 50% ahead of 2006. All-Energy is now the UK's biggest renewables show.

The industry watched with great interest this July as Talisman established the second of their groundbreaking demonstrator (5MW) turbines in the Moray Firth Beatrice field - moving the project to its operational phase and flagging to the rest of the world a possible new industry for large deep water offshore windfarms.

In August we saw the launch of Renewables Connection in Aberdeen - which offers householders, small businesses and public sector organisations free expert advice and information on the renewable technologies that could meet their home-energy needs.



Offshore Windfarm Survey Boat

In September AREG exhibited at Offshore Europe 07 welcoming many visitors and briefing the oil and gas industry on key projects and opportunities for diversification. First Minister Alex Salmond also visited the stand to hear about the ambitions of the group.

October saw the official opening of the Tidal test site at the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) in Orkney. The development of EMEC and continued Scottish Government support for innovative wave and tidal devices help Scotland as it moves to become a new "powerhouse" of marine energy.

As the industry gathers in Edinburgh in December for the annual SRF Green Energy awards we hope that there will be further recognition for the part the North East of Scotland is playing in this fast growing global renewable energy sector.

Also, it's not too late to enter the AREG Photographic Competition which closes on 31st January 2008.... We are looking for renewable energy related photographs and there is a chance to win four cash prizes of £400, plus a number of £30 "highly commended" prizes and an overall winners trophy.

For further details please have a look at our website- www.aberdeenrenewables.com

That completes a brief review of what has been a very busy year and leaves me to wish all readers a very enjoyable festive break and a successful 2008 ... ■