

By David Rodger communications manager AREG



***This month I caught up with Henning von Barsewisch who is the MD of REpower UK who have made eye catching progress in the fast moving world of wind turbines. Established in September 2003 and with headquarters in Edinburgh the firm is a joint venture between Peter Brotherhood Ltd and leading German Wind Energy company REpower Systems AG.***



Henning von Barsewisch

**In 50 words or less what can you tell me what it is that you do?**

I manage REpower UK and have the great pleasure of leading this rapidly growing company of currently 45 people. What we do in the UK is to sell wind turbines, install them and service them.

**What is the most exciting project you have been involved in ?**

The biggest and most exciting project is probably starting up REpower UK. I joined the company 5 years ago and at that stage the group had only 3% of international turnover - very much a German company, a German player, compared to today, where the Group has around 70% of international turnover. So, starting from scratch, going to the UK, looking for a joint venture partner and getting to the point of selling the first project was a great challenge.

There was a great deal of negotiation and the nitty gritty of organising the finance and legal side.

It has been an amazing experience and extremely exciting to have a good team to work with and to deliver customer expectation. Within 3 years, REpower UK was already the third largest turbine supplier and now have close to 200MW in operation. Our efforts were recognised in the 2007 Green Energy Awards, winning the best new business award.

**It was announced by the UK Government last December that up to 7,000 new wind turbines could be built around the British coastline to provide enough energy to power every home in the UK by 2020 – what is your view ?**

I really welcome the vision of the government although some people may say this a bit wild - a bit crazy - but if you do not have that vision you are certainly not going to get anywhere. With Renewables I believe there are 3 key drivers: one is Climate Change, then dependency on imports and lastly increasing energy prices. There is a very strong foundation for renewables to grow and wind is the most cost effective to deliver green energy. Granted it takes an ambitious vision to say we will be installing giga-watts of offshore wind when we are at a relatively early stage of industry.

Whether we achieve 20 or 30 GW this is where we are going. It will provide opportunities in the UK and in Scotland - particularly building on the offshore oil and gas experience. With high worldwide demand for wind turbines we recognise the challenge and the huge potential for us to supply a growing UK market.

**A few years ago I visited the REpower 5MW onshore demonstrator turbine in NW Germany. I was impressed by the sheer scale and the engineering involved - where do you see future changes in wind turbine technology ?**

Yes, the first time I climbed inside the nacelle of the "5M" prototype the impression you get is not that you are inside a wind turbine but inside a machine hall with huge pieces – the nacelle is 6m high, 6m wide and 20m long – you really get the impression you are in an industrial environment.

On the technology side we are working on the 5M machine to upgrade it to a 6MW using fundamentally the same design. We do not



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necessarily think it is about making the machines massively bigger but making them better – taking out glitches, finding out what the operational issues are and putting a lot of attention to the detail. So 6MW will be a reality soon but I think that as we look to the future it is time to listen to feedback from the experience of onshore and offshore turbines right now – and to make the new breed even more reliable and robust and fully adapt to the offshore environment.

**What has your experience been attracting people into Renewables ?**

This is a fast growing, hungry industry and there are some great opportunities for green energy careers. We have recruited people from a wide range of industries including oil and gas, defence and automotive. The key is attracting people with the right attitude and thinking. Renewables should help to re-energise interest in engineering making it more sexy.

It is important for the industry to strategically promote the fact there are attractive engineering careers within the industry and its service base. There is an appetite from people wishing to work towards the benefit of the environment and a sustainable future. This page is entitled "alternative view" it is my view that if renewables is to be globally relevant it will move in the near future from being a small player to the mainstream..... ■