



Renewables update

Happy 1st Birthday!

A year after the successful installation of the world's first commercial scale tidal stream turbine, SeaGen, developed by Marine Current Turbines and installed in Strangford Lough, featured in a recent edition of Countryfile on BBC1 (May 24). The presenters highlighted the technology and interviewed researchers on the extensive environmental impact research which has been commissioned for the first five years of operation. The area has many protected species, including colonies of grey and common seals. Although the research has only been carried out since installation, researchers are pleased to say there has been no detrimental impact on the environment so far. In fact, it would seem that the seals can anticipate the position of the turbine, and avoid it.



**Guernsey
Electricity**

News in Brief



Wind Farm powering ahead

After 10 years of planning and three of construction, Whitelee, Europe's largest onshore wind farm, just outside Glasgow, is about to become fully operational.

Whitelee is one of the few areas in the UK that fits the bill perfectly as a wind farm: close to a major city it is easy to connect to the national grid, but because of its isolated location there were only 32 letters of opposition during the public consultation. And it is certainly very windy!

Areas of commercially planted conifers are being removed around the site to allow the area to return to bog land. This has a positive environmental effect, especially for birds, says David MacArthur, Whitelee's ecologist.

The surprisingly quiet Siemens turbines are very impressive. When the final array is connected to the grid later this week, there will be 140 turbines generating 322 megawatts of electricity. This is enough to power 180,000 homes.

B&Q withdraw home wind turbines

'Windsave', the micro wind turbine offered for sale to the public last year by B&Q, has been withdrawn "temporarily" from the shelves following a report by consultancy firm Encraft, which questioned the domestic, urbanised environment targeted as one where they would least likely perform well. B&Q have now commissioned their own study with Southampton University and in conjunction with the Energy Saving Trust. They have stated that it was "awaiting the report from this study, at which point we will make the decision on the future of our micro-wind turbine line". B&Q are attempting to contact customers who purchased the £1,900 Windsave turbine, to see if they are happy with its performance.



And they're off!

Thirty eight companies and consortia have expressed an interest to lease sites in the Pentland Firth for the development of marine energy projects. The land owner, the Crown Estates, has been pleased with the response, and is reviewing the bids before awarding later this year. No infrastructure in terms of cable connections on land have been installed yet, and the earliest date in which export of electricity is expected is 2016?



Ofgem renewables' will boom

OFGEM, the electricity and gas regulator in the UK, have indicated that they expect massive growth in the offshore renewables power sector. They have appointed financial advisors to help run the tendering if licences to build, own and maintain the new power networks required to link offshore windfarms to the mainland grid. It places a conservative value of £10 billion on the works.

By encouraging more firms into the industry OFGEM hope to encourage innovation and reduce regulation costs. The first tenders are expected this summer.

It is expected that by 2020 – if all goes to plan –the UK could be relying on offshore wind farms for one third of its electricity, an ambitious technical and economic programme.



China launches green power revolution to catch up on west

China is planning a vast increase in its use of wind and solar power over the next decade and believes it can match Europe by 2020, producing a fifth of its energy needs from renewable sources.

Zhang Xiaoqiang, vice-chairman of China's national development and reform commission, predicted that Beijing would easily surpass current 2020 targets for the use of wind and solar power and was now contemplating targets that were more than three times higher.

In the current development plan, the goal for wind energy is 30GW. The new goal could be 100GW by 2020.

China also believes that their price reforms taking place in its economic recovery programme will lead to more efficient use of resources and an increased demand for renewable energy - they plan to install 100m energy-efficient light bulbs in the next 12 months alone for example.

"Similarly, by 2020 the total installed capacity for solar power will be at least three times that of the original target [3GW]," Zhang said in a recent interview in London. China generates only 120 MW of its electricity from solar power, so the goal represents a 75-fold expansion in just over a decade.

Zhang was speaking in London on a day China came under increased pressure from Washington to do more to cut its emissions.

"China can and will need to do much more if the world is going to have any hope of containing climate change," said David Sandalow, the US assistant secretary of energy.





Aliens are innocent

Recent newspaper reports that aliens in UFO's were responsible for high profile wind turbine failures at Conisholme windfarm were shown to be wildly exaggerated. Initial results from Ecotricity showed classic signs of metal fatigue on ring bolts holding on the blade. Other reasons for failure including ball lightning or plasma as the original cause have also been ruled out.

<http://www.louth1stleader.co.uk/news/UPDATE-PLUS-VIDEO-FOOTAGE-Tentacle.4847433.jp>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/jan/08/wind-turbine-ufo-lincolnshire-the-sun>

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