

# Moving with the times

A flexible, ocean-going carrier with a well-earned reputation in the wind industry, BBC Chartering operates more than 120 multipurpose vessels from a global administrative coverage of 24 local offices. The company is equipped to serve even the smallest of ports – perfect for the remote locations where wind turbines are employed – and as the largest turbine carrier in the world, it continues to offer a superior level of commitment to the sector. In this issue of PES, we catch-up once again with Jens Meilvang, Executive Chartering Officer Division Windpower.



**PES:** Welcome back to PES magazine. How has business been since we last caught-up with you? And have there been any major company developments that you'd like to share with us?

**Jens Meilvang:** Both South and North America remain strong markets for us and Europe is still solid. In all, there are no big changes to report, although the Far East is difficult. We have the market very well covered, but it is in that particular region that we face challenges. There is volume over there, but the freight levels in terms of competition are very strong. However, because BBC has so many satellite offices in the Far East, we are able to keep the ships busy.

We have a newbuilding coming in about every month and a fleet which is growing, so now we have a total of around 135 vessels – a lot to cope with. Nevertheless, that is indicative of our growth and it's part of our strategy. It's our future too.

**PES:** Does the US continue to provide the company with strong growth with regard to the wind market?

**JM:** North America is still a very important and a very strong market for BBC that's for sure. Wind turbines are about 10 per cent of the turnover of BBC, so there is still a lot of other volume that is still very important for BBC. In North America we see that there's been a delay on the local production of the wind turbine components, so there are still a lot of imports from the Far East and from Europe to the North American market.

All of these factors have presented us with a

much more solid 2011 than expected, and the signs are looking good for strong continued trading as we go through the year.

**PES:** Can you tell us a little about your recent link-up with Teras Cargo Transport?

**JM:** It's an ongoing process, certainly. We now have the first ship that has been flagged in Houston, we will have the next one in one or two months' time and we will just have to follow that market. It will, for the time being, be a niche market for BBC.

However, we will have two to four vessels in 2011 being flagged to the American market. And, it's worth noting that it's a very interesting market. It is a market where we can support existing clients – which is what we do with our liner service – and we can also offer all kinds of other services to clients with our American flag vessels.

**PES:** The company is a global leader in providing bespoke shipping solutions for the wind industry, but what other opportunities are open to you right now – and do you have plans to capitalise on these?

**JM:** We have wind turbines which, as I said, provide 10 per cent of our turnover, but we also need to focus on all the other markets. So, we have to be creative about how we can move volumes, especially in relation to covering a certain percentage of our business with contracts that will take us to capacity.

However, we are not in a position to make big changes – we still want to have our satellite

offices around the world and to strengthen these, we will want to take on more contracts.

We aim for 30 per cent of our capacity through contracts. And by capitalising on the experience we have with wind turbines, we will continue following that industry and servicing it through the changing trade lanes. We are sure the wind turbine industry will continue to have a need for a flexible carrier like BBC. Ultimately, it is our flexibility that enables us to follow the industry and to follow the trade lanes.

BBC has been moving components for the wind turbine industry now for the last 10 years. Every year since we started there have been changes and we are committed to following and capitalising upon these changes – that's the way that we can go on servicing the industry.

**PES:** The world is getting smaller, and communication channels are always improving, but heavy lift shipping is a carefully-planned business that takes time. Do you find yourselves under pressure from time-stressed clients?

**JM:** Most of our clients are pretty sympathetic towards the challenges that we might encounter on their behalf, so they'll already be equipped with the necessary foresight and understanding. They'll know that there will be some details that need to be thought through afterwards and they'll know that we at BBC have the manpower and expertise to take care of these details.

I guess though, ultimately, if there's a job to be done, we can take care of it. The clients are confident that we can do the job, and we



are similarly confident – and so, the job gets done, and it gets done well!

**PES:** What’s next for BBC Chartering? Do you feel optimistic about the next few years?

**JM:** The market is what it is and while we will definitely face some challenges over the next few years, we are strong enough to face-up to whatever the market presents us with. We have satellite offices worldwide, with particularly capable and strong offices in Houston, Singapore and Germany, and this has been the right set-up for us. It has served us well through the good times when the market has been strong, and also through the past couple of years when the market has been tougher.

So yes, we are optimistic. Who knows what the market will bring, but we have improved our ships over the last half year and we are in a good position. Let’s see what the rest of 2011 brings for us – and by the way, if you know someone who can predict what will happen this year, we would really like to listen to them!

Seriously though, we are concentrating on what we do best every day, which is project shipping. We are very flexible when it comes to adjusting our service to the needs of the customers and the market requirements.

**PES:** When we last spoke, you were taking delivery of a number of newbuildings. Have these all been delivered?

**JM:** This is an ongoing programme that we are very proud of, and yes, around one ship a month is being delivered. This programme

will continue for the foreseeable future and the results of which can be checked on our website ([www.bbc-chartering.com](http://www.bbc-chartering.com)). It is here that you can see a breakdown of every ship, with its cubic capacity, crane and lifting capacity, draft, etc.

**PES:** You told us previously about the vertical transportation of wind components – was this innovation a success? Is it now a regular part of your service offering?

**JM:** This was something that we pioneered for the Greater Gabbard wind farm in Suffolk, UK. We moved around 140 turbines in one and a half years for this project and the vertical transportation of the bottom sections was a proven success. As a result, this transportation design can now be offered as a regular service.

**PES:** The loading and unloading of wind components is a major concern for wind farm operators – how do you accommodate this?

**JM:** I would say that whereas perhaps this was once a challenge, the know-how and technology has developed to such an extent that it is a routine operation. Sure, there are minor daily challenges with loading and discharging, but on the whole it is not a problem. BBC still considers wind turbines as project cargo, but we handle them more like unitized cargo with regard to handling.

We are trying to simplify the process – the turbines are changing and we just have to adapt to these changes.

For more information, please visit: [www.bbc-chartering.com](http://www.bbc-chartering.com)