

A new era in peat generation for Midlands



The Minister for Finance, Brian Cowen T.D., addressing the gathering at the opening of Lough Ree Power in Longford.

By Bernie Healy

THE Minister for Finance, Brian Cowen TD, officially opened the new Lough Ree Power Station in Lanesboro, County Longford on Thursday, 21st April last. The new peat powered station has been in commercial operation since December last at "a steady 100 megawatts", according to Plant Manager, Pat Treanor. Construction of the plant began in 2002.

The power station represents an investment of more than €200M by ESB Power Generation. The plant employs 41 staff in a state of the art facility which replaces the Lanesboro station that operated on the site since 1958. The new fluidised bed technology in operation at Lough Ree Power is more environmentally friendly, producing fewer emissions than the previous plant.

Welcoming the invited guests on the day, Pat Treanor said it marked the beginning of a new era for Lanesboro and ESB in the Midlands. "We have been waiting 5 years for this moment," he said. Pat thanked the various groups including the Chairman, Chief Executive and Board of ESB, Senior Power Generation Management, Trade Unions, Government Departments, CER and all who gave massive support from the beginning. "The plant is running so sweetly this morning you would hardly notice," he remarked.

ESB Chairman, Tadhg O'Donoghue, in welcoming those present, said it was appropriate that the name Lough Ree be given to the plant, given its association with the area. "This is the earliest example of successful partnership," he said. "ESB is proud to continue its partnership and association with the local community of Lanesboro which goes back half a century. It is appropriate, desirable and necessary to exploit our natural domestic resources in any way possible. Peat is and remains an essential part of those resources. The diversity of fuels used in electricity generation is of national importance, particularly with oil and gas prices reaching record levels."

The Chairman went on to say that "ESB is fortunate to have engineers, management and staff to explore these resources resulting in the state of the art, environmentally plant that we see here today". He also acknowledged the support of Minister Brian Cowen, "without his support I don't think we could have overcome the hurdles," he said. He also thanked the Trade Unions and staff on negotiating agreements which have resulted in making the plant so efficient.

Bud Cherry, Chief Executive of Foster Wheeler, spoke on behalf of the Company and said "we promised it would be a state of the art showcase and there is nothing we like better



Pictured at the unveiling ceremony are (l-r) Michael McNicholas, Executive Director, Power Generation & Supply, Pat Treanor, Station Manager, Lough Ree Power, Tadhg O'Donoghue, ESB Chairman, Minister Brian Cowen T.D., Raymond J. Milcovich, Chairman Foster Wheeler, Padraig McManus, ESB Chief Executive and Bud Cherry, CEO Foster Wheeler. Photography by Alan Murphy.

than having happy customers". He recognised the men and women who built the plant and said their good work was reflected and evident at the plant. "We had to meet the very high standards ESB set for us. I want to pay tribute to ESB and ESBi for the way they conducted the partnership, it was rewarding for Foster Wheeler to work with people of that quality in representing the interests of ESB and Ireland."

Speaking at the opening, Minister Cowen said the project represents continued growth for the midlands economy. "This power plant ensures continuity of employment for staff in the midlands, not just in ESB but also in Bord na Mona providing the fuel for the plant. The Minister outlined the importance of peat fired generation and paid tribute to the vision, effort and work of people in both companies. "We have changed the economics and effectiveness of this industry with a new generation of peat fired stations in the Midlands, a prospect that was dim 20 years ago. It is a pleasure for me to come in the after-

math of all that change." The Minister paid tribute to Senator Mary O'Rourke who had done so much work in that area during her time as Minister.

The building of the new peat fired station arose following a tripartite review between Government, ESB and ESB Group of Unions in 2000 which examined a range of issues including the future of the existing peat portfolio. That review made the decision to replace the existing ESB peat station at Lanesboro with a new plant, Lough Ree Power, as part of wider peat programme.

Under the Tripartite Agreement, ESB undertook to close its six peat fired generation stations; Bellacorick in Mayo 40MW; Cahirciveen in Kerry 5MW; Ferbane in Offaly 90MW; Lanesboro in Longford 85MW; Rhode in Offaly 80MW; Shannonbridge in Offaly 125MW and construct two new plants in the Midlands at Lanesboro and Shannonbridge. The new stations combined provide 250 megawatts of power, enough to power more than 200,000 homes.



The Minister pictured with Padraig McManus and Tadhg O'Donoghue at the viewing room at Lough Ree Power.



Georgina Kenny, ESB Board Member, Padraig McManus, Senator Mary O'Rourke and Derry O'Donovan, ESB Board Member at the opening.



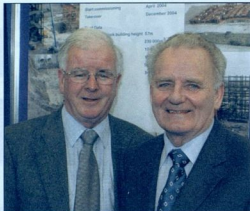
(l-r) Maura Kilbride-Harkin, Mayor of Longford, Jim Flanagan, Principal, Lanesboro Community College, Denis Naughton, T.D. and Peggy Nolan, Chairperson, Longford County Council.



John W Hanly, Operations Team, Lough Ree Power Station shows Brian Cowen, Minister for Finance, Tadhg O'Donoghue (standing centre) Chairman of ESB and Padraig McManus, Chief Executive, ESB how the Control Room staff monitor the plant at the new Lough Ree Power Station, Lanesboro, Co. Longford.



(l-r) Canon A.W. Kingston, Fr Frank Garvey, Tony Hunt, Pat Treanor, Liam Doyle and Fr Michael Breslin at the official opening.



Michael Connaughton and PJ Quinn.



Councillor Larry Bannon and Denis Connerton, Principal Fermoy N.S.



(l-r) John Hourican, MD, Bord na Mona, Ronan McCoy, Project Manager, New Stations and Sean Grogan, Director of Peat, Bord na Mona.



Pictured above Pat Treanor, (left) Station Manager, Lough Ree Power, and ESB Chief Executive, Padraig McManus with Lanesboro Station Managers past and present Harry McGann, Brendan Tanham, Bernardine Maloney, and Paul Cullen. Missing from photograph is Jerry McKenna.



Kevin Madden leads off a tour of the Lough Ree Power Station.

Meet the staff at Lough Ree Power



Maintenance staff at Lough Ree (l to r) Liam Doyle, P.J. Tymon, Tony Hunt, Diane Mulooly, Johnny Goldrick, and (back l to r) Kevin Madden, John Sorohan, Pat Tighe, Noel Gavigan, Joe McGrath, Louis Rathigan, Kevin Burrett and Pat Lane.



John Noonan, Seamus Finn and Brian Flynn - Technical services.



Eimear Dennehy and Dr Joe Lyons, Chemical/Environmental Manager.



Geraldine Brudell and Pauline Casey.



Brian Kennelly on duty on the day.



James Scally at the new plant.



Richard Shea carrying out a valve adjustment.



(l-r) Peter Duffy, John Noonan and Michael Gilroy.



Michael McNicholas, Executive Director Power Generation and Supply with Tom Reeves, CER.



John W Hanley, Joe Kilbride and Martin Crowley in the Control Room.