

New EPE chairman's comments in advance of EPE 99



I was very pleased, and consider it a great honour, to have been elected as Chairman of the EPE at the Executive Board meeting in January. As the first British and industrially-based Chairman I represent quite a departure from the norm, as all the previous Chairmen were academics. However, I shall strive to continue to maintain the same high standard of leadership which has been set before me in ensuring that the EPE Association in its turn continues to strive to achieve its stated aims.

It therefore gives me great pleasure to make a few comments in advance of EPE 99. This year's EPE Conference in Lausanne (7th to 9th September) could be the biggest and most successful Conference of the series yet, as we are expecting to break the 1000-participant barrier. We also expect the quality of the papers to be maintained or even surpass the normal high standards which have been achieved at past EPE Conferences.

It is an opportunity to consider in advance of the millennium not only how power electronics will progress technically in the future but also how it might effect the lives of people world-wide. Will the general populous know, or care, about a technology which is progressively becoming the means of electrical power control in their lives? Many of us would conclude that, as long as it works without any problems, probably not. But I would like to pose the question "should this be the case or should we, the power electronics professionals, be telling them via the media about the growing and continued contribution power electronics is making in using electrical power more efficiently?" After all, if we do not see a realistic reduction in the amount of carbon dioxide produced globally - and soon, we may all live to regret the fact that power electronics is not more widely used.

EPE 99 will again provide a forum for leading experts in the field, from Europe and the rest of the world, to have the opportunity to review, discuss, debate, and learn about recent developments in solid state motion control and power conversion. Users have the opportunity to identify short-comings in existing designs and equipment and make equipment manufacturers/installers aware of their future needs. It is also an opportunity to identify new areas in which progress might be expected in the future. I expect this Conference to be the premium technical event for power electronics specialists in Europe in 1999.

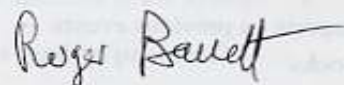
All engineers, scientists and technologists involved or interested in all aspects of powers electronics and variable speed drives from industry and from academic and research institutions should attend. This includes sub-system and component manufacturers as well as application specialists and academics active in these fields.

Personally, I wonder if there will be any predictions in discussion about silicon carbide and when it may become a viable technology to challenge silicon. Will the Power Electronics Building Block (PEBB) concept, which is popular with the US Navy, begin to find acceptance world-wide, and will this have the effect of seeing a major price reduction in the cost of equipment as the proponents believe? Alternatively is this already being achieved but not generally recognised by some drive suppliers? Will the matrix converter gradually find more promoters/supporters of the concept? Will pressure contact IGBTs become more popular?

I cannot imagine power electronics design engineers accepting any alternative to the IGBT which does not offer similar, simple gate control and the ability to control overload fault current. Therefore has the IGBT set a new standard of performance by which any new device has to be measured, no matter what other benefits it may bring e.g. higher voltage or higher current rating?

Will resonant converters become the answer to all applications etc. etc?

I look forward to seeing you at EPE 99 and hope you have a very constructive and fascinating three or more days in Lausanne.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Roger Bauett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.