CLAIMS

1. A transverse axis fluid turbine for use in a working fluid flow comprising:

- a rotor having four blades and an axis defining a turbine axis about which the rotor rotates, each blade having a pressure surface and being spaced from the axis of the rotor such that there is a gap between the axis and an inner edge of each blade through which fluid can flow, and the inner edge and an outer edge of each blade lying in and defining a blade plane and wherein the blade plane passes through the blade between the inner and outer edges of each blade, and each blade being offset from the axis of the rotor such that the axis does not lie in the blade plane, wherein the blade planes of adjacent blades are substantially perpendicular to each other and wherein the blade plane of a first one of the blades is substantially perpendicular to the pressure surface of a second, adjacent one of the blades, and the blade plane of a first one of the blades is positioned between an end of the second adjacent one of the blades and a midway point of the second, adjacent one of the blades, wherein angles between the blades are such that part of the fluid flow within the inlet section may be deflected by a pressure surface of a first one of the blades through said gap between the axis and the blade inner edge and onto the pressure surface of an adjacent and substantially perpendicular second one of the blades;

- an inlet section comprising a casing partially surrounding the rotor, the casing having an inlet to permit a portion of the working fluid flow to enter the casing to drive the rotor; and

- an exhaust region at an axial end of the inlet section, such that fluid flow through the inlet section is from the inlet to the exhaust region, the exhaust region being axially offset from the inlet.

2. A fluid turbine as claimed in claim 1, wherein an angle between each blade plane and a plane containing the rotor axis and the blade inner edge blade can be adjusted, with an angle between blade planes of adjacent blades remaining constant.

3. A fluid turbine as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, further comprising a rotor cap disposed proximate an end of the blades, the rotor cap having a radial dimension up to half the swept radius of the rotor, and the rotor cap being arranged to at least partially restrict a flow of fluid from a region beyond the end of the blades into a central region of the rotor including the gap between the turbine axis and the inner edge of each blade.

4. A fluid turbine as claimed in any preceding claim further comprising a drive shaft coaxial with the turbine axis.

5. A fluid turbine as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the inlet section comprises a guide panel extending outwardly from the casing at an edge of the inlet, the guide panel extending generally in a direction opposite the working fluid flow direction and the guide panel being arranged to guide a portion of the working fluid flow into the casing through the inlet.

6. A fluid turbine as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the inlet section comprises a guide panel, wherein the guide panel is a return side guide panel extending outwardly from the casing proximate an edge of the inlet proximate a return side of the rotor, the return side guide panel extending generally in the direction opposite the working fluid flow direction and being arranged to guide the portion of the working fluid flow into the casing through the inlet.

7. A fluid turbine as claimed in claim 6, wherein, during rotation of the rotor, each blade passes through a forward position at which the blade is proximate the inlet and the blade plane is parallel to but offset from a plane of the return side guide panel.

8. A fluid turbine as claimed in any of Claims 1 to 5 and 7, wherein the inlet section comprises a guide panel, wherein the guide panel is a drive side guide panel extending outwardly from the casing proximate an edge of the inlet furthest from the return side of the rotor, the drive side guide panel extending generally in the direction

opposite the working fluid flow direction and being arranged to guide the portion of the working fluid flow into the casing through the inlet.

9. A fluid turbine as claimed in Claim 6, wherein the inlet section comprises a guide panel, wherein the guide panel is a drive side guide panel extending outwardly from the casing proximate an edge of the inlet furthest from the return side of the rotor, the drive side guide panel extending generally in the direction opposite the working fluid flow direction and being arranged to guide the portion of the working fluid flow into the casing through the inlet.

10. A fluid turbine as claimed in claim 9, wherein the return side and drive side guide panels diverge in the direction opposite the working fluid flow direction.

11. A fluid turbine as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5 and 8 to 10, wherein the inlet section comprises an inlet baffle that partially blocks the inlet of the casing, the inlet baffle extending from a side of the inlet proximate the return side of the rotor and obscuring a part of a drive side of the rotor, and the inlet baffle being configured to obstruct a portion of the working fluid flow such that a region of reduced pressure is formed at the rear of the inlet baffle to create a suction force on a returning blade as the returning blade passes or approaches the inlet baffle.

12. A fluid turbine as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the inlet section comprises an inlet baffle that partially blocks the inlet of the casing, the inlet baffle extending from a side of the inlet proximate the return side of the rotor and obscuring a part of a drive side of the rotor, and the inlet baffle being configured to obstruct a portion of the working fluid flow such that a region of reduced pressure is formed at the rear of the inlet baffle to create a suction force on a returning blade as the returning blade passes or approaches the inlet baffle.

13. A fluid turbine as claimed in claim 11, wherein the inlet baffle is moveable to alter the degree to which the inlet baffle obscures the drive side of the rotor.

14. A fluid turbine as claimed in claim 12, wherein the inlet baffle is moveable to alter the degree to which the inlet baffle obscures the drive side of the rotor.

15. A fluid turbine as claimed in claim 14, wherein an edge of the inlet baffle can be set to lie substantially in the same plane as the blade in the forward position.

16. A method of generating electricity using a fluid turbine according to any one of claims 1 to 15, the method comprising connecting a drive shaft of the fluid turbine directly or indirectly to a generator.

17. A method of using a fluid turbine according to any one of claims 1 to 15 as a rotor assembly for pumping or generating propulsion, the method comprising connecting a drive shaft of the fluid turbine directly or indirectly to a motor.