

Oil installer

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OFTEC Comment & Industry News
4-7, 10-12, 15



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Promoting high standards

After celebrating Oil Installer's 10th anniversary in the last issue, it is now the turn of OFTEC's competent person scheme to mark a significant milestone – its 15th year of operation.

OFTEC was among the first registration schemes to be licensed by government and its long-term commitment to promoting high standards within the servicing and installation industry is something of which everyone involved should rightly be proud.



It is worth thinking for a moment what our industry would be like if OFTEC's scheme did not exist. Would oil heating enjoy the same enviable record of reliability and customer confidence that it does today? As a manufacturer, I know that our reputation depends in no small part on installers doing a good job. While a few may begrudge paying the subscription, it is unthinkable that our industry could thrive without the standards developed by OFTEC and instilled through its technical books and programme of training and inspection.

On the topic of training, I'm delighted to see the feature on page 31. The fact that new centres are offering oil for the first time, while others are upgrading their facilities, demonstrates the current high demand for oil heating and the buoyant state of the market. For new entrants to our industry, obtaining good quality training and experience 'on the tools' is vital. Thanks to the excellent partnerships OFTEC has formed with training providers and assessors, the first is easy to achieve, but the lack of apprenticeships makes things difficult for new entrants. Once you have learned the ropes, keeping your skills up to date is equally vital. It is easy to think we know it all but the industry, and the regulations that underpin it, are constantly changing. For that reason, I'd recommend everyone to check out OFTEC's regular monthly e-newsletter for the latest updates – and to read Oil Installer of course!

This year has been good for our industry, with the low oil price and government grants schemes helping to boost sales. With the colder weather now upon us I wish you a very successful and busy heating season.

Niall Fay

Chairman, OFTEC

Strengthening the OFTEC team

OFTEC has strengthened its compliance team with the appointment of Colin Aldridge as compliance manager.

Colin joins OFTEC with more than 10 years' experience 'on the tools', having worked for the past decade as an employed heating engineer in the Suffolk area. Prior to this, Colin served in the Army for 23 years with the Royal Logistics Corp where he was responsible for supply chain management, compliance and training.

OFTEC has also appointed two new inspectors. Colin Jones will cover south and mid Wales while Gary Stronach takes over in Scotland.

Both bring considerable heating industry experience to their new roles. Colin ran his own successful heating business for over 10 years, while Gary has amassed 34 years' experience in a range of roles that included running his own business.

In a further change to the inspection team, Jennifer Durrant has re-joined OFTEC as inspection services coordinator. Jenny worked previously as part of the OFTEC Direct team.



OFTEC compliance manager Colin Aldridge



An inspector calls: Colin Jones



New Scottish inspector Gary Stronach



OFTEC welcomes back Jenny Durrant

Registrations hit four year high as CPS celebrates 15th anniversary

OFTEC has marked the 15th anniversary of its industry recognised Competent Persons Scheme with the news that registration numbers have hit the highest level since 2013.

Competent Persons Schemes were introduced by the government in 2002 to provide officially recognised installer schemes for a range of building trades.

All schemes are authorised by The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Welsh Government, which enable registered businesses to self-certify that their work complies with Building Regulations.

Over the past 15 years OFTEC's Competent Persons Scheme has expanded beyond its oil roots to also offer registration services to technicians and businesses working in solid fuel, renewable and electrical trades.

As a result, and boosted by a buoyant domestic oil heating market, registration numbers for individual technicians have reached a four-year high, standing at 9,058. OFTEC has also recently welcomed its 150th solid fuel technician, underlining the increasing popularity of this registration option.

Excellent growth

OFTEC registrations director Adrian Lightwood comments: "OFTEC's Competent Persons Scheme was one of the original schemes receiving government recognition back in 2002 and has grown to become a recognised benchmark of quality, providing consumers with the reassurance that heating technicians have undergone professional training and are competent in their work.

"Encouraged by the ongoing low price of heating oil, the market is experiencing a strong upsurge in fortunes with sales

of oil boilers increasing by 15% last year, building on the excellent growth seen in 2015. As consumers continue to stick with oil, there are increased business opportunities for oil technicians which is reflected in our rising registrations.



Adrian Lightwood, OFTEC registrations director

"But we recognise that the domestic heating market is gradually evolving and over recent years we have expanded the range of specialised support on offer to technicians, who can now take advantage of our complete off-gas registration service, covering both renewable and traditional heating technologies."

OFTEC is also looking to the long-term future and in support of government aims to reduce carbon emissions from off-grid domestic heating, is currently investigating the viability of bringing to market a low carbon liquid biofuel as a direct replacement to kerosene by 2022.

"As an organisation, OFTEC will continue to listen and respond to the changing needs of registered technicians and members to ensure their interests are fully supported, both now and in the future", adds Adrian Lightwood.

Review of building regulations

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower, the government announced an independent review of building regulations and fire safety on 28 July 2017. The review, to be led by Dame Judith Hackitt, chair of Manufacturers' Organisation, EEF, will look at current building regulations and fire safety, with a particular focus on high-rise residential buildings. It will report jointly to the communities secretary, Sajid Javid and the home secretary, Amber Rudd and will examine:

- the regulatory system around the design, construction and on-going management of buildings in relation to fire safety
- related compliance and enforcement issues
- international regulation and experience in this area

As part of the review, Dame Judith will consult the Buildings Regulations Advisory Committee – which advises the government on changes to building regulations – as well as the construction and housing industry, the fire sector, international experts, MPs and the public. The review will also work closely with other governmental departments and the devolved administrations, and will consider the implications of changes to the regulatory system on other government objectives.

OFTEC will be submitting a paper illustrating the double standards in enforcement between LABC and competent persons schemes.

It is expected that the review will present an interim report before the end of the year and a final report no later than spring 2018.



Grenfell tower

Tanktop

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Wolseley to the rescue of tool theft victim

Wolseley's Plumb Center has donated a replacement toolbox full of essential plumbing products to a young professional after he fell victim to van theft. The merchant has also pledged to continue to help out victims across the UK, as and when these incidents are reported.

The Plymouth-based plumber lost up to £1,700 worth of tools and was almost forced to stop working after thieves raided his van recently.

Wolseley branch staff spotted his story in a local newspaper and rallied round to source replacement tools from various suppliers including John Guest, Rothenberger and Milwaukee. The plumber was gifted the tools at his local Plymouth Plumb Center by branch manager Keith Whitley.

The theft victim said: "I've had friends let me borrow tools but it's not the same. I'm trying to get back on my feet and buy the tools back, but I don't want to buy the cheapest – I need decent tools. I'm grateful to Wolseley for the kind donation and think it's important that industry leaders continue to raise awareness of this issue."

Increasing problem

Van theft is becoming an increasing problem for the trade, with recent statistics claiming it happens every 23 minutes in the UK. The research showed 22,749 tool thefts from vehicles happened in the last 12 months. (BBC 5 Live Investigates figures received from 30 UK police forces).

Keith Whitley, branch manager at Wolseley's Plymouth's Plymstock branch said: "This guy is a good customer of ours and it was infuriating to hear that he'd been victim to this selfish crime.

"When someone decides to take tools from a tradesperson, they're taking more than their property, they are also jeopardising their livelihood. I think it's vital that companies like Wolseley continue to support tradespeople with this issue and ultimately help put an end to it."

Keith added: "As the days shorten, van theft incidents typically rise. Opportunistic thieves will take advantage of vehicles with minimal protection and those that aren't labelled as having no tools left overnight within them."

www.plumbcenter.co.uk/branch

FPS applauds oil as the cheapest heating option

As autumn gets a firm hold, with winter nearly upon us, many homeowners across the UK have already turned on the heating for the first time in several months, and for those who use heating oil, the good news is that oil is the cheapest form of energy and has been since January 2015, reports heating oil trade association the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers (FPS).

Following the release of a recent energy comparison report from independent provider of comparative home heating costs, Sutherland Tables, (shown below) latest figures show that heating a typical three-bedroom home on oil, using a condensing boiler is now just £894 per annum. For those on LPG the average cost is £1529 per annum; electricity is £1910 per annum; and traditional gas heating £967 per annum. This means that an oil condensing boiler is also substantially cheaper to run than any renewable heating option with wood pellets costing £1280 per annum and air source heat pump radiators £1681 per annum.

Dawn Shakespeare from The Federation of Petroleum Suppliers says: "In the UK there are around 4 million homes off grid and not connected to mains gas. These are mainly rural households and approximately 1.5 million of those heat their homes using oil, so the latest figures will be welcomed especially as those on LPG, gas and electricity have seen prices rise in 2017."

Boiler replacement

The FPS has joined forces with other trade associations to lobby the government to introduce a nationwide boiler replacement programme to help the 400,000 households in Great Britain still relying on standard efficiency oil boilers to upgrade to high efficiency condensing models.

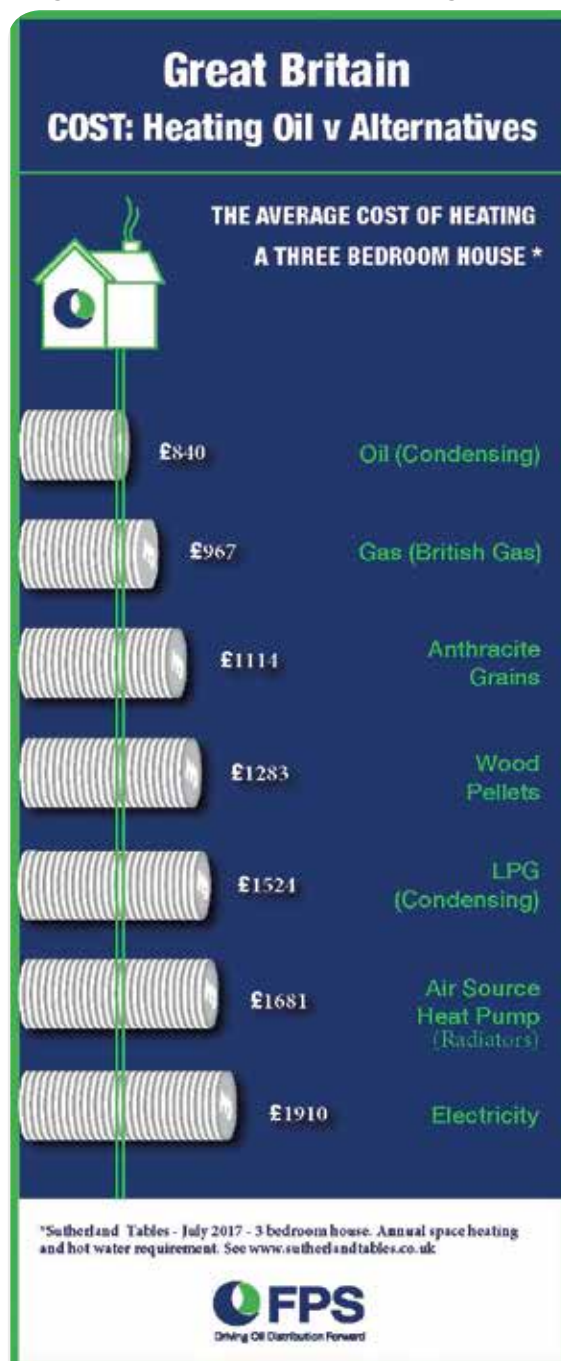
Apart from annual servicing, the FPS also recommends checking tanks, pipes and other equipment for leaks, damage and interference once a week, and recommends that any problems should be fixed as soon as possible by an OFTEC technician. The FPS is also keen for consumers to make the most of low oil prices by buying before the real winter weather begins.

The FPS has a dedicated area on the Oilsave website for finding the nearest FPS member oil suppliers and OFTEC registered boiler technicians, as well as an area for advice on keeping costs to a minimum.

www.oilsave.org.uk

www.fpsonline.co.uk

Oil Installer Winter 2017



Launch of the Plumbing & Heating Skills Partnership

The Plumbing and Heating Skills Partnership (PHSP) launched its business plan at an event held in Derby recently.

The UK-wide strategic group endorsed the plans for the remainder of the year and appointed George Thomson as chairman of the group.

A second-generation plumber, George has worked in the plumbing industry for over 50 years. He is currently the CEO of his family owned business called 'The Shower Doctor', based in Edinburgh.

At the event George Thomson said: "The skills agenda across the UK has changed dramatically over the last few years, putting the emphasis on the ownership of skills to the industry themselves.

"The PHSP was established to fill a void left by SummitSkills to ensure the skills needs of the UK plumbing and domestic heating industry are met."

He added: "The PHSP is a new skills partnership and aims to support essential skills development activity to ensure that appropriate and consistent standards, qualifications and apprenticeships continue to be available across the UK.

"The key priority for 2017 is to support the development activity of the Plumbing and Domestic Heating trailblazer apprenticeship for England."

The Plumbing and Heating Skills Partnership website will be available soon.

www.phsp.org.uk

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Grant supports Bath Rugby for a third season

Grant UK is a business partner of Bath Rugby for the 2017/18 season, supporting the boys in blue, black and white for the third year running.

Last year saw Bath Rugby finish fifth in the premiership, marking the end of a season which was filled with plenty of excitement on the pitch.

The 2017/18 season is set to be just as thrilling with new players joining the team and familiar faces, such as Jonathan Joseph and Anthony Watson, bringing their exceptional international game to the home of Bath Rugby at the Rec.

Grant UK first became a Bath Rugby business partner in 2015. Since then, the club has gone from strength to strength, welcoming new training management and rising up the premiership table.

Grant UK looks forward to what the new season has in store, supporting Bath at all its home fixtures during the season's matches.

To mark its third year as a business partner, Grant UK will be redesigning its hospitality area at the Rec. Guests



Anthony Watson of Bath Rugby – with Grant UK right behind him!

to the box will enjoy everything that the sport has to offer, taking in all of the action from the game while enjoying the comfort of corporate hospitality. In addition, the distinctive

Grant branding will also be on show with the iconic red display boards located pitch-side.

www.grantuk.com

Advertorial

EKL... a new generation of Low NOx and Blue Flame domestic oil burners from ELCO

Founded in 1928 and part of the Ariston Thermo Group ELCO is a specialist in the development of innovative burner solutions and a worldwide recognised leading brand, continuously setting the benchmark for the heating industry.

ELCO is glad to announce the launch of the EKL series, a new generation of domestic oil burners with cutting-edge Low NOx combustion technologies capitalising on more than 85 years of experience in the development of burners.

Available in LN (Low NOx) and BLUE (blue flame) versions, depending on the combustion technology equipped, this new burner series confirms ELCO's commitment in continuously developing its environmental program to offer efficient, reliable and technologically advanced solutions to the market.

EKL LN models are the right answer to meet the ErP Ecodesign Directive requirements in force from September with NOx emissions well below 120 mg/kWh.

EKL BLUE models are also available to comply with the most stringent emission requirements expected in 2022.

Smooth starts, extremely low CO emissions, smoke free burner running and ignition phases are characteristics of the EKL combustion



New EKL 2 LN single stage kerosene burner model

systems at, together with the most powerful fan structures, provide optimum performances within the complete firing range and allow a reliable operation, even in extremely windy weather conditions.

An excellent EKL design criteria assures all components are clearly positioned and accessible, including a separate servicing position. This allows ease of installation, adjustment and maintenance.

The EKL compact size offers a great compatibility with the smallest high efficiency oil domestic boilers.

Single stage models are available from 12 to 100 kW, suitable for the use with kerosene, gasoil and bio oil blends.

Two stage and fully modulating models are also available in the EKL series, which represent the most efficient and innovative options on the market.

elcoburners.uk@aristonthermo.com

“Brilliant installers” win Worcester awards...

Worcester, Bosch Group has revealed this year's winners of its annual Environment 2020 Awards.

Now in its 16th year, the awards recognise industry best practice and celebrate those who have demonstrated their commitment to recommending energy efficient heating and hot water technologies over the past 12 months.

With hundreds of first-class installations from across the country having been entered, the winners of the seven categories received their prizes at a prestigious ceremony at Spring Grove House in Worcestershire. Special guest Mike Foster, CEO, Energy and Utilities Alliance, and Martyn Bridges, director of technical communication and product management at Worcester, Bosch Group, were on hand to dish out the awards, with senior industry representatives from the CIPHE, IDHEE and OFTEC also in attendance to congratulate the recipients.

The full list of winners:

- Greenstar gas-fired boiler installation: Kevin Roughton, KR Plumbing and Heating, Buckinghamshire
- Greenstar oil-fired boiler installation: Vaughan Maule, Vaughan Maule Plumbing and Heating, Gloucestershire
- Solar installation: Scott Baker, Scott Baker Plumbing & Heating Ltd, Cheltenham
- Total system solution: Stephen Harris, Stephen Harris Plumbing Ltd, Dorset
- Ground source heat pump installation: Peter Carruthers, P A Carruthers Ltd, Wales
- Light commercial installation: Robert Heath Heating, Bromley

- Social Housing project: whg Housing Association, Walsall

Worcester's E2020 awards also take the opportunity to recognise the environmentally-conscious younger generation. Young people up to the age of 16 were invited to create a piece of art which has been inspired by energy efficiency and the fight against climate change.

This year's winners were Chloe Parker, aged 6 from Lancashire, Izarrah Hoque, aged 8 from London and Catherine Ritchie, aged 16 from West Sussex, who were each given £500 of shopping and leisure vouchers for their exciting creations.

Carl Arntzen, Worcester's CEO, commented: "As ever, it has been a pleasure for us to welcome so many brilliant installers to the awards. I extend my personal thanks to everybody who entered and congratulate all of our worthy winners.

"This year we've seen a number of proposals geared towards lowering the country's carbon footprint surface. At Worcester, however, we are well aware that many installers are already doing what they can to reinforce the industry's commitment to protecting our planet for years to come, and we are delighted to recognise those efforts."

Mike Foster, CEO of the Energy and Utilities Alliance added: "Improving the efficiency of homes across the country is crucial in helping reduce our carbon emissions, and the E2020 awards are a fantastic way to recognise the work of installers who are already helping us achieve this. This year's winners should be incredibly proud, and the work they have carried out are shining examples of the commitment to improving an already brilliant industry."

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk



Martyn Bridges from Worcester Bosch Group and Mike Foster from EUA, with this year's Environment 2020 winners

OFTEC registration news

Works notification changes

OFTEC has announced some changes to its works notification system. The system is currently available as part of the competent person scheme in England, Wales, the Channel isles and Isle of Man, where the self-certification scheme forms part of the building control process. Notification of installation work is set to top over 60,000 this year and being the highest-ever, shows the system is a key benefit of registration.

The notification scheme is due to be expanded to cover Scotland and Ireland too, as Adrian Lightwood, OFTEC's registration director explains: "There's no formal requirement to notify installation work in Scotland, Northern Ireland or the Republic at present. But that means homeowners are missing out on a very useful piece of documentation that shows that the installation was carried out compliantly by a competent heating professional.

"Our new service is purely voluntary

but is a good way for Scottish and Irish registered installers to ensure their service stands out from the crowd. Under the new scheme, whenever an installation is notified, OFTEC will send the homeowner a certificate confirming that the work complies with building regulations. As well as providing peace of mind for the owner, the certificate will be useful if they decide to move home."

OFTEC will back up the new service by promoting the benefits to home owners and estate agents – hopefully increasing the demand for OFTEC registered technicians.

Workmanship warranty

In England and Wales, home owners benefit from a free workmanship warranty when an installation is notified. The warranty lasts for six years and covers the owner should the installation be found not to have complied with building regulations and the original installer has ceased

trading. The scheme was first launched through an insurer and installers were asked to pay an annual fee for the service. OFTEC now manages the scheme in-house and the annual fee has been scrapped. However, the scheme, which it is a requirement for all competent person schemes to offer, still needs to be paid for. OFTEC has concluded that the fairest option is to add it to the cost of notifying work, and the fee for works notification will be increased by 30p to £2.80 plus VAT if you notify online.

Terms and conditions for the workmanship warranty in the past were sent out with the notification certificates, but as these were likely to be misplaced by the home owners we have now made them available in the consumers area of the OFTEC website. A useful leaflet that explains the benefits of the scheme is also available free for registered technicians to distribute to customers. Contact OFTEC's marketing team for details.

New sponsorship deal with Plymouth Argyle

Firebird have extended its support of local team Plymouth Argyle by becoming the football club's new back of shirt sponsor.

The sponsorship deal, which will see the Firebird name on all Argyle shirts over the next two seasons also includes a box for all home games and increased signage around the ground. This will enable Firebird to invite groups of customers to join them for football and hospitality, whilst cheering the home side on.

Commenting on the sponsorship, David Hall, Firebird's UK director said: "As a local employer, Firebird is proud to be supporting Plymouth Argyle as shirt sponsors. Following our joint success last year, with promotion for Argyle and record sales for Firebird, we are both looking forward to sharing an exciting new season together."

Plymouth Argyle's chief executive, Martyn Starnes, added: "We are delighted to welcome Firebird as our official back of shirt sponsor. The interest and support they have provided across the whole football club makes them a very attractive partner. We are excited to see their logo on the Argyle kits for the next two seasons."

Established in Ireland in 1980, Firebird Products is one of the UK and Ireland's leading manufacturers of high efficiency domestic oil-fired boilers and have made Plymouth their UK headquarters for over 25 years. To complement the range of oil-fired boilers, Firebird also offers a range of renewable products which include biomass boilers, air source heat pumps and solar thermal systems.

www.firebird.uk.com



Derek Adams, Plymouth Argyle's first team manager and David Hall, Firebird's UK director, unveil Firebird's back of shirt sponsorship for the next two seasons

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RDB
INSIDE

Government's "Clean Growth Strategy" targets oil heating

by Malcolm Farrow

In October the UK government unveiled its 'Clean Growth Strategy', an ambitious 163 page document that sets out the priorities that will need to be achieved to meet its 2032 decarbonisation target.

The strategy highlights that the pace of decarbonisation will need to accelerate if there is any chance that the green targets will be met. Much of it deals with two sectors, transport and industry, which collectively account for about half of all UK carbon emissions. However, homes are also a focus of the report as they account for around 13% of the total. Progress here has been relatively slow, particularly in dealing with emissions from heat.

One reason for the slow pace is that the government has seen energy efficiency and carbon reduction as two separate goals. Policies in one area have sometimes conflicted with those in another, undermining overall progress. And, while some schemes have been very successful, policies such as the Green Deal and Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), have been poorly thought out and implemented.

Primary target

The bad news for our industry is that the off-grid sector is seen by the government as a primary target in the war to reduce carbon. The reason for this isn't clear as it contributes less than 2% of the emissions. However, it may be a tacit admission that many of

the bigger challenges are very hard to tackle, whereas decarbonising the off-grid sector, while difficult, may just be manageable.

However, when it comes to achieving it, much of the government's thinking remains stuck in the past, with oil heating seen as 'the problem' and electric heating seen as 'the solution'. This has already led them to increase the tariffs for the domestic RHI scheme in a bid to boost demand for its preferred renewable technology, heat pumps, and, to a lesser extent, biomass boilers. Further policy measures are expected to follow, but it is very unlikely that the government will compel homeowners to switch from oil because the alternatives are much more expensive.

Aside from cost, one obvious problem with the government's plan is where all the decarbonised electricity will come from. With demand for electric vehicles also expected to grow, overall generation will need to increase substantially. Worse still, existing renewable electricity generation averages just 25%, so has a long way to go before even the heat pumps of today are truly renewable, let alone those that the government wants installed in the future.

Liquid fuel option

Perhaps not surprisingly, alternative proposals are emerging, including OFTEC's vision for decarbonising oil-using homes by upgrading boilers and then introducing a low carbon replacement for kerosene. This suggestion has been well-received but OFTEC will need to work hard to convince government that it deserves their support. With the current RHI set to run until 2021, we must work quickly to produce a credible liquid fuel option, ready for consideration as part of the future low carbon energy mix.

Several viable bio-liquid fuel options have already been reviewed by a German university. UK tests are expected to start this winter with our preferred product, which is called HVO, and our optimism is backed up by two influential recent reports that highlight the importance of pursuing all low carbon options, including bio-liquids, as part of the overall energy mix. This approach would help to ensure that there are a range of options for homeowners and healthy competition within the heating market, which is vital if low-carbon heating is to be accepted by consumers.

New UK distribution centre for ABGO

ABGO has relocated to a brand-new UK distribution centre and headquarters at the Bentley Bridge Business Park in Wolverhampton.

Now serving the domestic, commercial and industrial heating trade nationwide with its wide range of heating products and spares, the company's new home enables ABGO to carry a much greater depth of stock.

"This move will enable us to continuously improve the service offered to our ever-increasing customer base," explained general manager, Sean Fleming.

"We offer all the leading brands to be expected from a major distributor - all at competitive prices, when and where you need them.

"Call us on 01902 790900 or 0141 370 0333 for Scotland



ABGO's new UK distribution centre and headquarters

and one of our team will be very happy to help you."

See also page 40

www.abgo.co.uk

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Danfoss upgrades pump and doubles warranty

Danfoss has upgraded its range of BFP service pumps to give a superior quality that now allows the company to offer a double warranty of three years from date of manufacture.

"The Diamond-Like Carbon (DLC) technology that has been introduced means that the pump will now have ten times longer lifetime in critical applications and extra product power," says the company.

DLC technology is normally used in products exposed to high pressure conditions with low lubrication, and with some applications being subjected to such oils this is seen as a solution to any corrosion issues. For even greater protection, the cover plate has also been coated to seal the micro pores internally.

Danfoss has introduced its new T85 diamond coil to the entire range of service pumps, allowing them to withstand higher temperatures while operating within the burner chamber.

"This is a quite exciting development for the pumps," said Mark McElroy, key account manager for Danfoss. "This pump is over 25 years old and this is the biggest change we have ever made and the costliest development project we have undertaken to improve the product. We are always looking to improve our products and this shows that we are committed to protecting the end user."

For more information and for a chance to win a trip for two to Monaco at a great sporting event in the current Danfoss promotion, visit: www.diamond.danfoss.com



The new Danfoss pump - complete with Diamond-Like Carbon technology

"Best Buy" accolade for Grant boilers

Grant has been awarded a 2017 Best Buy accolade by consumer group, Which?, for its oil fired condensing boilers. The company was the only manufacturer to receive an Oil Boiler Best Buy this year, as part of the 63 Which? Best Buys boiler review.



Grant's extensive oil-fired condensing boiler range consists of Vortex and VortexBlue models, all of which achieved the Best Buy status from the consumer group.

The Vortex range consists of internal, wall-hung, boiler house and combi models, with sizes from 12kW UP TO 70 kW. Available with various system options, the range comes with a five-year guarantee, when installed by a Grant G-One Installer, subject to terms and conditions.

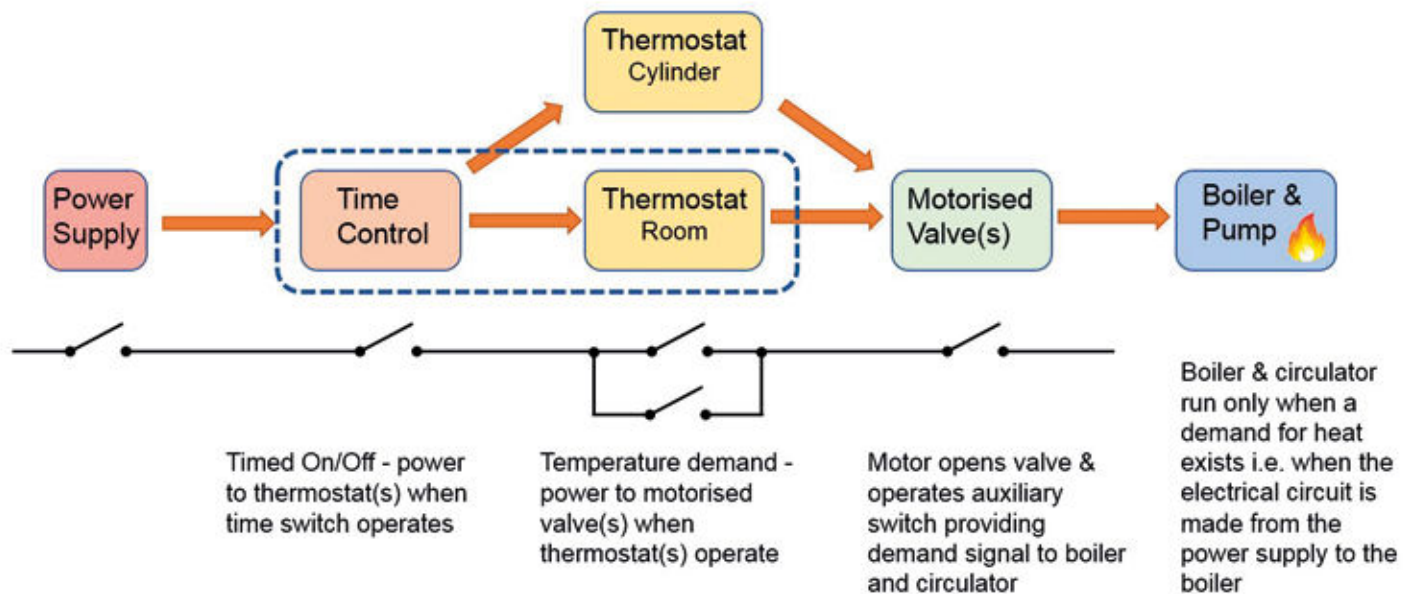
Designed with homeowners and installers in mind, the range is versatile and flexible and offers efficiencies of up to 93.3% (SAP:2009), helping end-users reduce their annual fuel bills. The Eco Utility 15-21 kW and the Pro-Combi XS 26 kW are just 348mm and 515mm wide respectively, ideal when space is at a premium. For installers, the boilers are user-friendly from installation through to servicing and maintenance.

Launched in 2016, the VortexBlue range, which includes 15 internal, external and combi models with outputs from 15kW up to 36kW, combines the latest Riello RDB BLU blue flame burner technology with the tried and tested attributes of a Vortex boiler. Available with a 10-year guarantee when installed by a G-One Installer, subject to T&Cs, the VortexBlue offers the same high efficiencies as other Grant appliances, while producing lower NOx emissions.

www.grantuk.com

The importance of being in control...

By Steve Webster



Steve Webster, OFTEC's technical manager, continues his series of articles on heating controls by looking at their impact on comfort and energy efficiency.

Current building regulations require a minimum set of controls that will provide for a boiler interlock and the independent time and temperature control of both space and water heating. The boiler interlock is not generally a physical device but an electrical wiring arrangement of various existing control devices that prevents the boiler firing when there is no demand for space heating or hot water. For homes where the total floor area exceeds 150m² - typically houses with four or more bedrooms - a minimum of two independently timed and temperature controlled space heating zones should be installed.

Traditionally the requirement for independent time and temperature control has been satisfied by using a twin channel programmer or timer, a room thermostat and a hot water cylinder thermostat. These are typically wired together in an S-plan, S-Plan plus - for larger properties where two or more heating zones are provided - or Y-plan configuration, in conjunction with the motorised valve(s), circulator and boiler. Y-plan configurations are typically used for smaller installations of less than four bedrooms.

The use of an S or Y plan configuration results in systems that are fully pumped for both hot water and space heating, improving overall system efficiency, controllability and comfort compared to earlier gravity fed systems.

Limited control

Gravity fed systems have limited control because there is no provision for independent timed control of both the hot water and space heating, and no form of electrical temperature control or boiler interlock to the hot water circuit. Whilst there are still many gravity-fed hot water systems installed in UK homes, they need to be upgraded to fully pumped systems when the boiler is replaced, in order to comply with Building Regulations guidance.

For combination boilers, where the hot water is heated and controlled on demand within the boiler, a timer - which could be integral to the boiler - with a separate room thermostat or a programmable room thermostat, would meet the requirements.

The room thermostat, which acts as the temperature reference control for the home, is typically located in the coolest heated space, with individual room temperature control being provided by thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs). It is important to ensure

that there are no TRVs in the space where the room thermostat is located as they could interfere with the control function of the room thermostat.

Many standard digital room thermostats are equipped with additional features that can improve the comfort and energy savings for home owners. Such features control the boiler's run duration as the room temperature approaches the desired set value, minimising the potential overshoot in room temperature.

Enhanced control

Programmable room thermostats provide enhanced control by incorporating the programmer and room thermostat in to a single unit. This provides several advantages in comfort control. Different temperature settings can be set for different periods of the day via the single control, whereas they are fixed for standard room thermostats unless there is home owner intervention. Programmable room thermostats allow the heating system to more accurately match the potential occupancy of the homeowner, improving both comfort and efficiency.

The more advanced programmable room thermostats also allow installers to set certain parameters, such as minimum run time and cycle rate, to enable a thermostat's control functions

to better match the type of heat source it is controlling.

Additional functions such as optimum start and stop, allow a thermostat to automatically optimise the start and stop times by learning the heating and cooling characteristics of the reference space. This takes the guesswork out of the when to turn the heating on or off to ensure the home is comfortable at the required times.

When considering the selection and use of any heating controls, particularly the more advanced variants, the needs and capabilities of the homeowner must be considered first. It is pointless installing controls with advanced energy saving functions if there are usability issues, with the homeowner resorting to using the control as an on-off switch and receiving none of the benefits of a well-controlled system.

With the introduction of the Energy-related Products Directive (ErP), boilers and heating controls have been allocated certain energy efficiency ratings. Heating controls are grouped in to various classes, each with percentages of system efficiency improvement. The inclusion of controls to a boiler installation increases the overall system's ErP rating, with the more advanced

controls having higher ratings. For example, a programmable room thermostat may be a Class 4 device, giving a 2% uplift to the system efficiency, while a control system that is fully zoned and controlling a modulating boiler could be a Class 8 device, giving a 5% uplift.

Therefore, a boiler with an ErP rating of 93% controlled by a class 8 device providing modulation control to the boiler, would add an additional 5% to the rating, yielding a system value of 98%, a combination that is A+ rated.

Legislation

Typically, only 50% of homes have a full set of heating controls with TRVs. This figure is considerably less for private rented accommodation. With forthcoming legislation on energy efficiency for private rented properties coming in to effect from 1 April 2018 in England and Wales (The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015), and similar legislation being proposed in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, there could be opportunities for technicians to suggest improvements in both comfort and energy saving to tenants and landlords.



Steve Webster, OFTEC's technical manager

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Worcester appoints new "controls & connectivity" team

Worcester, Bosch Group has strengthened its support for the emerging connected appliances market by appointing a dedicated controls & connectivity team within its award-winning technical support department.

The five-strong team of technical experts will be fully dedicated to responding to all manner of practical questions and queries relating to Worcester's growing range of smart and connected technologies, as well as those available via third-party manufacturers.

With the nature of technical queries relating to controls and connected products often concerning software as well as hardware, Worcester's new team has been selected for its knowledge and experience in the digital arena. As well as being able to address queries over the phone, the team will also have access to Worcester's video calling platforms to offer added visual guidance.

Rapidly growing market

Martyn Bridges, director of technical communication and product management at Worcester, commented: "The market for smart and connected technologies is growing rapidly, so we're keen to be the first manufacturer in the industry to ensure installers and their customers have a dedicated team of experts they can call upon, no matter how complex their query might be.

"The nature of technical queries in this area tend to be quite different to those concerning boilers and heating appliances, so it seems logical to have expertise in this area."

Installers wishing to speak to Worcester's new Controls & Connectivity team can do so by calling 0330 123 3641.

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk



Members of Worcester's newly appointed controls & connectivity team

Grant's new divisional sales manager



Kevin Ellis, Grant's new divisional sales manager, covering the South, Midlands and Wales

Grant UK has announced the appointment of Kevin Ellis as divisional sales manager, covering the South, Midlands and Wales.

Kevin started his 17 year career in the heating industry as an engineer, fitting Grant oil boilers for the Ministry of Defence. During this time, Kevin also gained experience with renewable technologies working with biomass, air source heat pumps, as well as solar thermal.

From here, Kevin became a merchant branch manager, predominantly focusing on the renewable sector and assisting with renewable projects from design through to product knowledge. Most recently, Kevin has been working for a manufacturer specialising in heat pumps, further developing his breadth of experience in the heating sector.

In-depth knowledge

With Grant UK, Kevin will be sharing his in-depth knowledge of both renewables and oil boilers with engineers, merchants and others, specifically working with the Grant Aeron³ inverter driven air source heat pump range.

Kevin joins the sales team of Stewart Ratcliff, Alan Brooke, Gareth Farr and John Morris on the road, visiting merchants and installers and assisting them with their off-gas heating needs.

www.grantuk.com

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Firebird and Happy Energy announce ECO partnership

Firebird and Happy Energy, major funders of Energy Company Obligation (ECO) schemes in the UK, have gone into partnership to supply oil-fired boilers to households on low incomes.

Under the scheme, Happy Energy will provide free and grant-funded Firebird replacement boilers together with financial assistance to offset the cost of the installation.

Energy Company Obligation is an energy-efficiency scheme set up by the government to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. As part of the scheme, obligated energy suppliers must provide funding to help families on low incomes by working with installers to replace unrepairable or old boilers with more energy-efficient models.

Energy-saving experts Happy Energy, works directly with the energy suppliers to help homeowners, landlords and tenants access the available grants. To apply for a grant, all applicants need to do is contact Happy Energy who will be able to confirm their eligibility.

Commenting on the partnership, Adrian Wright, CEO of Happy Energy said: "Our partnership with Firebird is a very positive one, with both organisations having a desire to develop and launch a range of new initiatives to help householders benefit from free and discounted Firebird oil-fired boilers. We are also helping small and medium-sized



Adrian Wright, CEO of Happy Energy and David Hall, UK director of Firebird Products announce their partnership to supply oil-fired boilers under ECO scheme

Firebird installers gain access to grant funding which will give them a competitive edge and make more sales."

David Hall, UK director of Firebird Products, added: "We are very proud to be working in partnership with energy-saving experts, Happy Energy. Through this partnership we will be able to provide Firebird installers with access to ECO funding which will safeguard their future business."

www.HappyEnergy.co.uk/Firebird

www.firebird.uk.com

Grant adds new models to its boiler house range

Grant UK has introduced new boiler house models into the Vortex oil boiler range, increasing the number of heating outputs on offer. With their distinctive new colour, Grant is confident that these boilers will be attention-grabbing in more than one way.

Boiler house models are suited to locations which are difficult to access, where a white cased version is not the most appropriate solution. Grant's existing Vortex Boiler House range consists of four blue range-rated units with heating outputs from 26kW up to 70kW. The new models cater for properties that need smaller boilers.

New sizes include 15/21kW and 21/26kW, with the remaining four having 26/35kW, 36/46kW, 46/58kW and 58/70kW outputs. The boilers will continue to be supplied with an externally mounted Riello RDB burner and thermostat, achieving seasonal efficiencies of up to 93.3% (SAP 2009).

The clear distinction between the

new boilers and the range's existing boiler house models is their striking appearance. Grant UK's brand colour of red is recognised throughout the heating industry and so the new Vortex boiler house models are entering the market with a red powder-coated casing and black snorkel tube. The new colourway gives these units a fresh look while the casing delivers durability.

The existing blue cased versions within the range will be discontinued. They will however remain available from merchants who have stock of the product. While their colour may differ, both the red and blue cased units consist of the same components to deliver matching high efficiencies and low running costs. Furthermore, like their blue counterparts, the red boiler house models are compatible with all of Grant's EZ-Fit flues.

Grant's oil boiler range now consists of more than sixty models.

www.grantuk.com



Firebird celebrates first anniversary at new UK headquarters



The Firebird management team celebrating a successful first year at the company's new Plymouth headquarters

Firebird is celebrating a successful first year at its new UK headquarters in Plymouth. The company's expansion across the UK, which has seen the addition of air source heat pumps and biomass boilers to its already extensive product range, has resulted in record sales for the company over the last year. With a recently launched new combi boiler range and a 10-year boiler warranty, the future for Firebird is promising.

The new premises, which include a state-of-the-art training facility, innovation centre and showroom, have provided a much-needed resource for the heating industry. Featuring an array of fully-working oil-fired boilers, biomass boilers, air source heat pumps and range cookers, the showroom not only enables installers to see all the products in action, but also to spend time working and training on each appliance. Also housed within the new building is Firebird's Technical Hub, which provides customers with a comprehensive technical support package, designed to make the specification and installation process as simple as possible.

Commenting on the success of the last year, David Hall, Firebird's UK director, said: "We are over the moon with the successes of the last year and look forward to exciting times ahead. With a presence firmly established in the UK, Firebird will continue to lead the way by developing market-leading technologies to drive the industry even further."

Firebird Products manufactures high-efficiency domestic oil-fired boilers and specialises in developing innovative heating solutions.

www.firebird.uk.com

Strong start to year as Teddington restructures

HVAC specialists Teddington has completed an overhaul of the business that caps a strong start to the first half of the 2017/18 financial year – including several new contract wins.

Teddington Electronics, Teddington Appliance Controls and Teddington Bemasam has now consolidated under a single trading name of Teddington Systems.

Managing director, James Henderson, said the move has been made in response to changing market demands, with clients wanting an integrated approach to design, development, prototyping and manufacturing that covers the entire product lifecycle and incorporates hardware, software and mechanical engineering.

The changes also include a complete rebrand of the company, with a fresh corporate logo, new website and corporate literature to support growth and meet clients' needs.

It represents a strong start to the 2017/18 financial year for the Cornwall-based manufacturer, which specialises in valves and control devices for the heating, plumbing and ventilation sector.

As well as significant investment in new equipment, the company has also secured several recent high-profile contract wins.

James Henderson said: "Despite political uncertainty in Europe and the continually challenging financial climate, the thirst for innovation has not diminished. We've seen a huge spike in demand for energy-saving products, control devices and monitoring and information gathering systems. At the same time, we felt it was an opportune moment to refresh our look – retaining Teddington's core values of quality and reliability while developing a new, modern identity."

www.teddingtonsystems.co.uk



James Henderson, managing director, Teddington

Guidelines published for rented accommodation in ROI

Guidelines advising minimum standards for rented houses in the Republic of Ireland (2017), have just been published, which reference the use of OFTEC registered technicians to demonstrate compliance.

"This is good news and is to be welcomed," said OFTEC Ireland manager, David Blevings.

A copy of the guidelines, which include CD11 and TI/133D, has been sent to every local council in the Republic of Ireland. Regulation 12 states that all gas, oil and electricity installations are to be maintained in good repair and safe working order.

In relation to oil, the guidelines state that a *current periodic inspection report from a suitably competent person (e.g. OFTEC registered technician) that the oil installation in the house is safe and in proper working order, may assist in assessing compliance.*

OFTEC is engaging with local councils, drawing their attention to the new regulations and promoting the use of registered technicians for public sector works.

If you would like a copy of the guidelines contact David Blevings, email: dblevings@oftec.org



New ROI guidelines are good news for OFTEC

MORE THAN JUST OIL

OFTEC, well known for its commitment to oil, also offers registration for solid fuel and renewable heating technicians.

OFTEC's competent person registration for heating technicians covers oil, solid fuel and renewables such as heat pumps, biomass and solar thermal. Join today, or extend your existing registration, and enjoy a range of useful business benefits.

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New oil training centres

OFTEC training is still very much in demand across Ireland. Two new oil training centres opened this autumn, one in Northern Ireland and another in the Republic.

The centre in Northern Ireland, previously known as CITB (Crumlin) has been taken over and refurbished by South Eastern Regional College (SERC). The new Professional Skills Centre SERC has been fitted with the latest appliances and is now offering 101,105E and 600A courses. For more information contact ahigginson@serc.ac.uk.

A new City of Dublin Education and Training Board centre has opened recently in Ballyfermot and is now offering a range of courses. See page 31 for more details.

Demand for solid fuel installation certificates is on the rise as Building Control (NI) is now seeking confirmation that works are compliant with regulations. Solid fuel training is also available at Micon in Ballinderry through SERC and at METAC, with a new centre opening in ROI in early 2018. Please contact the OFTEC Ireland team for more information on solid fuel registration. (email:dblevings@oftec.org)

Gas Networks Ireland update Notice of Hazard form

Gas Networks Ireland owns and operates the natural gas network in Ireland. As part of its operating licence, it must run a 24-hour carbon monoxide telephone helpline.

OFTEC has been working with its technical group to revamp the Notice of Hazard form used by natural and LPG gas technicians. This was done as a response to call outs to non-gas supplied homes where the CO alarm had been triggered by a solid fuel or oil-fired appliance.

The revamped form now recommends that consumers with oil and solid fuel should contact an OFTEC registered technician following a non-gas related CO incident. This is good news and means that gas engineers will be advising customers to use an OFTEC technician if a CO incident has been triggered by a solid fuel or oil installation.

OFTEC will be issuing a press release and associated publicity over the winter months to make consumers aware of this important change. If you would like a copy of the new proposed Notice of Hazard form, please contact OFTEC's Ireland team.

Ireland adopts OFTEC syllabus for oil training

SOLAS, the state organisation with responsibility for funding, planning and co-ordinating further education and training (FET) in Ireland is now using OFTEC oil assessments as part of the Phase 4 plumbing curriculum.

Candidates that achieve the plumbing apprenticeship will have achieved a nationally-recognised standard in the installation and maintenance of oil-fired boilers, and will be able to use their National Craft Certificate to apply for OFTEC registration in the Republic of Ireland.

Established in 2013 under the Further Education and Training Act, SOLAS is an agency of the Department of Education and Skills. As well as managing the national apprenticeship system, its functions include managing, co-ordinating and supporting the delivery of FET by the Education and Training Boards.

Credibility

Completion of the National Craft Certificate will enable OFTEC registration for up to five years from the date of completion. After this time registrants can undergo re-assessment at any OFTEC approved assessment centre of their choice.

Niall Elmes, development officer for SOLAS said: "We recognise the OFTEC standard and the credibility that goes with it. It was a natural progression for our course to adopt the OFTEC oil assessments into our programme."

David Blevings, OFTEC Ireland manager added: "With over 750,000 homes in Ireland using oil-fuelled appliances for heating, this will help to ensure that there are sufficient qualified and experienced technicians to install and maintain these appliances well into the future."



SOLAS development officer, Niall Elmes with OFTEC's Norman Armstrong and Sean McBride

Tank Safe campaign receives environmental boost

The Tank Safe campaign, which is a joint venture between OFTEC and FPS, received a welcome boost this autumn with the news that the Oil Care Campaign is to add its support.

The Oil Care Campaign is overseen by the Environment Agency and aims to provide comprehensive advice about the safe storage and disposal of oil-based products. OFTEC and FPS will work closely with their oil care colleagues to ensure that clear, consistent advice is available to both oil tank owners and those involved in installing, servicing and filling tanks.

The topic of oil storage is a key one for the industry, not least because of the need to protect consumers and the environment from the potential impact of leaks. Doing this will go a long way towards safeguarding our industry – both individually and collectively – from liability issues, with all the cost, bad publicity and reputational damage they can bring. Building greater awareness within our industry and among owners – who are ultimately responsible for their tank – of the need to check tanks regularly remains an important task, so plans are afoot for further campaign activity over the winter and spring. The importance of this issue was emphasised recently with the news that the environment minister, Michael Gove, was taking a personal interest in oil storage and would seek to strengthen the existing building regulations. With many old single-skinned tanks still in use it is essential that we, as an industry, play our part.

To find out more visit www.oilsave.org.uk

High-flying tanks!

Staffordshire-based Tuffa Tanks named this picture as its photograph of the month recently. It was sent to the long-established company by an installer in Kent whose only option to off-load and position a new Tuffa steel tank was to crane it over adjacent gardens, walls and buildings! But as the installer told Tuffa: "Deliveries of this nature, whereby positioning over walls/hedges/other is required, are increasingly requested by our clients and are simple enough for our reputable delivery company to undertake." Tuffa can provide liquid storage from 1,350 to 100,000 litres and is able to produce the largest rotomoulded tank on the market of 20,000 litres in a single unit.

www.tuffa.co.uk



Atkinson extends its range of oil heating products with the acquisition of the Fuelstop Fire Valves that is now manufactured in the Westbury facility alongside the Tankmaster, Tanktop and Filstop.



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Kingspan introduces new space-saving vertical tanks

Kingspan has extended its range of DieselPRO premium steel fuel tanks to include new space-saving vertical models.

DieselPRO tanks offer a versatile storage solution for the safe containment and monitoring of kerosene, diesel, gas oil and lubricants.

The tanks are all bunded and available in a wide variety of sizes from 5,000 to 62,000 litres, in a range of shapes and designs, and with storage or dispensing functionality.



The new DieselPRO space-saving vertical tank from Kingspan

The latest vertical models are designed particularly for premises with limited available room. They come in two sizes, 5,000 litre and 9,400 litre capacities, each with a reduced footprint of only 2.5m in diameter - arguably an industry-leading "capacity to footprint" ratio, says Kingspan.

Every DieselPRO tank is designed and engineered with security and strength in mind and their heavy-duty steel construction meets all necessary regulations for guaranteed environmental safety. As a result, they are suited to a wide range of applications including transport depots, commercial buildings, construction, farming and mission critical data centres.

There is a choice of two fuel dispensing options, both of which include state-of-the-art pump and fuel management systems with a range of available interfaces including USB, LAN, WLAN and GPRS.

Each tank also incorporates Kingspan Sensor TMS 300 monitoring systems as standard, offering functionality such as high and low level alerts, bund alarm and tank content data for better stock management, cost-saving bulk purchasing, user visibility and control.

The vertical tanks come with a guarantee of 10 years, while the rest of the range has a 15 year guarantee.

www.kingspanenviro.com/dieselpro

Let this be a warning...

Registered technicians can purchase warning stickers for as little as 32p from OFTEC Direct, so why did one sticker cost a service company's insurers £79,000? Alan Black describes a recent legal case that he helped to defend, where the absence of a warning sticker turned out to be very expensive indeed.

The cost resulted from a legal claim for £740,000 levied against an OFTEC registered company, which claimed the company had failed to adequately report concerns about equipment found on site. These were left unaddressed by the customer and consequently failed, leading to a substantial oil escape into a commercial plant room, adjoining offices and business facilities. This interrupted the business activities of the customer and resulted in heavy clean-up costs.

The defence team, which included Queen's Council, for the most part successfully challenged the negligence claims. The concerns had been reported to the responsible person on site and had been followed up in writing to the customer. However, as the attending engineers had not put a warning sticker on the item of concern, the warning was not immediately obvious to anyone entering the plant room, or within the immediate vicinity of the problem. So to all intents and purposes there was no indication that anything was amiss within the plant room.

The lack of a warning sticker was taken as negligence and although this claim may seem a little over the top, it is a real-life scenario that cost £79,000 to settle out of court.

What happens now between the OFTEC registered company and its insurers is another matter. This claim cost the insurers a lot more than just the settlement fee, as they were landed with large legal defence bill as well.

It is interesting to note that there is some justice in the legal system. It cost the claimant £226,000 in legal fees to pursue the claim and recover the £79,000 so do not assume that claims are not pursued if they are not cost effective.



It goes without saying that the best way to keep yourself out of court is to follow OFTEC procedures regarding warning stickers, as laid down in the technical books.

And as a final word of CYA (Cover Your Assets – clean version!) advice, when you do use warning stickers it is well worth taking two photographs for your records. Take one close up to show what you have recorded on the sticker and one from further away to show the sticker in-situ affixed to or near the item of concern.



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Increasing number of training centres demonstrates growing confidence in oil

"High demand for oil training has led to a steady increase in centres offering oil," says OFTEC training manager, David Knipe.

There is no such thing as a typical OFTEC oil training centre. Approved centres may be independent businesses, further education colleges, manufacturers such as EOGB, Grant and Worcester Bosch, fuel distribution companies and, in the Republic of Ireland, both independent businesses and education and training boards.

With the number of OFTEC approved training centres now at 86 and growing each year, Oil Installer looks at the reasons why centres choose to offer oil.

The City of Dublin Education and Training Board began delivering OFTEC oil qualifications at its **Ballyfermot Training Centre** in September 2017, in conjunction with the European Registration Scheme (ERS).

The training centre has a rich history of delivering apprenticeship and industrial programmes within the Republic of Ireland dating back to the 1970's. The diversity of programmes within the centre and its approach to learning has resulted in a range of international awards, including City and Guilds International Centre of Excellence for Europe, which sparked an invite to Buckingham Palace to meet HRH Princess Anne.

Manager, Paul Fennelly said, "It's exciting times in the centre, with the numbers of those entering apprenticeship programmes rising across the disciplines. With the inclusion of these new OFTEC programmes alongside our domestic gas safety programme, we are seen by many as one of the key providers of training nationally."

Dundee and Angus College opened a new state-of-the-art OFTEC-approved facility at the end of last year, based at its Kingsway Campus. Course leader, Andy Curtis commented: "Having been involved with the delivery of gas and renewable courses for a number of years, it was seen as the next stepping stone to keep up with industry demand. The new facility has proven to be beneficial for many engineers in and around



Ballyfermot Training Centre opened in September

the north east coast. As the facility gains more recognition this will in turn expand our client base."

It is not just new centres that are confident that oil training will be around for a while.

NGST (Newcastle) is a well-established oil training and assessment centre in Cramlington, just outside Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Centre manager, John Harvey states, "We've been running the OFTEC oil courses for many years at our centres in Cramlington and Leeds, and we're looking to extend even further by offering them at our centres in Hitchin and Scarborough. We've recently started to offer the OFT10-201 multi-stage burner course for our commercial customers at the Cramlington centre, as well as the OFTEC solid fuel courses."

Gold standard

Steve Willis Training has two centres in the south of England, at Portchester and Burgess Hill. Managing director, Steve Willis says: "We've had a longstanding and successful relationship with OFTEC, who are a vital support for the industry. Being an OFTEC oil centre allows us to offer training that is recognised as the gold standard by engineers and gives consumers confidence in the safety and quality of their work."

"We're finding that there has been strong demand for oil training over the last year, partly because more heating engineers are looking to add oil to their range of skills. Our confidence in the sector is illustrated by the new OFTEC oil training facility we recently opened at our Portchester training centre, in conjunction with Worcester Bosch."

Gas Assessment and Training Centre Ltd (GATC) is based near Pontypridd, South Wales. Director, John Forrest explains: "We decided to go into collaboration with OFTEC in 2013, following the retirement of an OFTEC centre nearby. We saw an opportunity to keep oil training and OFTEC certification local for our community of installers."

"At first we planned an OFTEC course every three months and had around three or four installers on each course. Now we run OFTEC oil courses every month and have between six and eight on every course. Oil has certainly grown as a relevant energy source and installers are quick to recognise the increasing demand in the oil market. For existing gas operatives, there is a natural transition into OFTEC training and certification. Any training and certification that enables a business to diversify and grow has to be worthwhile."

GATC is also more than happy to promote the OFTEC solid fuel registration scheme. "It is a credible alternative to HETAS, which is a very welcome option in the solid fuel industry," says John.

In addition to the training centres, the certification bodies form another important part of the assessment process. OFTEC prides itself on having a distinct separation between training and assessment. OFTEC works closely with seven different certification bodies, all of which are accredited to the European standard for certification of individuals. In this way OFTEC can be sure that their assessments are impartial, and that each centre meets the standards, both for training and assessment.



Award-winning training facilities at Ballyfermot Training Centre

New training academy for Worcester, Bosch Group

Worcester, Bosch Group has officially opened the doors to its flagship training academy following a £3.5 million redevelopment programme. The new facility will enable the company to offer an even wider training provision to a greater number of installers.

The revamped academy, which was opened by parliamentary under secretary (BEIS) Richard Harrington MP and parliamentary under secretary (DExEU), Robin Walker, is four times the size of its predecessor, with over 2,000m² of practical training areas and classrooms – an area equivalent to 10 tennis courts.

The state-of-the-art building boasts over 200 working boilers and heating appliances across its nine practical rooms, which will accommodate as many as 10,000 heating engineers each year.

With facilities to cater for appliances using gas, oil, and solid fuel, as well as renewable and commercial heating technologies, the refurbished academy will offer installers both hands-on product training and legal assessments. The increased space is also expected to accommodate expansion into growing areas of interest such as smart technologies and Bosch's connected home concept.

Nick Fothergill, Worcester's national training manager, commented: "The unveiling of our new flagship

training academy is a real landmark for Worcester, having been the result of the largest single investment in training in the company's history. As demand for professional development among installers grows, we want to ensure we continue to offer some of the industry's best training courses, at facilities engineers really enjoy using.

"The introduction of smarter, connected heating technologies is an exciting time for the industry, so it is vital that we play our part in enhancing installers' skillsets and help them to deliver reliable, efficient heating systems to homes around the country."

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk/training



Richard Harrington MP joined Robin Walker MP and Worcester's Carl Arntzen to officially reopen the company's flagship training academy

METAC offers full training package

For many years METAC Training has been delivering training in the oil, gas, electrical, solid fuel and renewable energy industries through Northern and the Republic of Ireland.

The company offers the OFTEC oil full package 4 in 1 course, to be certified to install and commission oil boilers. METAC also provides refresher and reassessment courses to update the candidates' competence to ensure they are able to work safely and re-register as an OFTEC registered technician having completed their assessment to ISO 17024 standards.

The dry solid fuel stove installer course is a five-day training course for construction professionals and aims to provide participants with the knowledge and understanding to enable them to install dry stoves to meet requirements of customers, building regulations and standards. On successful completion candidates receive an OFT15-108D certificate.

The wet solid fuel stove installer course is a further three days for plumbers with an OFT15-108W certificate. This course includes open and interlinking heating systems.

For more information on all courses available from METAC, telephone (ROI) 057 8756540 or (NI) 00353578756540; email info@metac.ie, or visit the website at www.metac.ie

EOGB supporting the next generation

Burner manufacturer and distributor, EOGB Energy Products has appointed 16-year-old Andrew Cooke on a three-year apprenticeship with the company.

Andrew will start his apprenticeship by completing a NVQ Level 2 in technical services, which will be built around day-to-day activities such as design, CAD and manufacturing processes. Alongside this he will learn combustion theory and the basics of oil/gas domestic and commercial heating.

His next step will be to move on to NVQ Level 3 and complete his required oil and gas qualifications.

Managing director, Paul Barritt,

told Oil Installer: "We're delighted to welcome Andrew to EOGB on an apprenticeship programme. Unfortunately, training for new entrants in the heating industry has gone into decline over the past decade, so we're pleased to be doing our bit to support the next generation of skilled engineers."

Commenting on his appointment, Andrew added: "I'm really excited to begin an apprenticeship at EOGB. The team is extremely knowledgeable and experienced and I know that training here will provide a very strong foundation for my future career in the industry."

Andrew will be the third apprentice

to train at the company, following technical and training support engineer, Reece Summerfield and trainee technical engineer, Harry Holmes. www.eogb.co.uk



Andrew Cooke embarks on an EOGB apprenticeship

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Grant UK expands its training offering in North Yorkshire

Grant UK's principal off-site training academy has been redeveloped to increase the range of courses that it can offer in North Yorkshire. Oil Installer got to look behind the scenes.



The newly redeveloped Grant UK training academy in Hawes, North Yorkshire

The GTEC centre in Hawes, North Yorkshire, with its purpose built facilities, has become an established off-site training venue for Grant UK. For over five years, Grant UK's training academy has been working with Griff Thomas, managing director of GTEC, building a partnership which delivers Grant product courses to installers based throughout the north. The redevelopment programme at Hawes has updated the existing products and introduced a number of new products to the centre, increasing both the oil boiler and renewable technology facilities available for engineers.

The range of oil boilers installed at Hawes has been increased with new models, such as a VortexBlue demonstration model and one of Grant's new Vortex boiler house boilers, joining products already installed. Some of the older boilers are being replaced with the latest versions in order to give installers a comprehensive offering of Grant's current oil range.

Not only will this updated and expanded selection of oil boilers enable installers attending the centre to gain experience with a wider variety of Vortex and VortexBlue models, the Grant training academy will now be able to offer OFTEC courses in Hawes.

OFTEC training courses

Grant UK's training facility at its HQ in Devizes has been an approved OFTEC training and assessment centre for almost 15 years, delivering OFTEC training courses to installers, the demand for which has increased

during 2017. With the expansion of the oil facilities at Hawes, Grant UK's training academy is now able to deliver OFTEC courses at GTEC, catering for the increased demand from engineers, especially those based further north.

In addition to the updated oil training facilities, the range of Grant renewable technologies has also been expanded at the centre. Previously, Grant UK could offer training on Grant solar thermal products, the Spira biomass boiler, and the current Aeronas³ air source heat pumps. Today, with all of Grant's renewable technologies installed, the Hawes centre can host the full range of Grant's product courses, on both oil and renewables.



In addition to the existing solar thermal training rigs, the GTEC premises now also have: the new Vecta internal biomass boiler and side store; a new Vecta external biomass boiler; one of the latest models of the Spira biomass boiler; two Aeronas³ air source heat pumps; the Grant VortexAir Hybrid; and a selection of cylinders and thermal stores. Most of these products are working models and there is also a display SpiraPod on site.



This redevelopment of the GTEC facilities will hopefully make Grant's product courses more accessible for engineers who cannot easily travel to Grant UK's HQ in Wiltshire. With

the entire range of Grant's products installed, the GTEC centre now replicates the facilities in Devizes allowing Grant UK's award-winning training academy to increase its reach amongst installers. There are also plans for Grant UK to work with other independent training centres in Wales, Scotland and South East England where Grant can offer product training on its oil boilers. Training has always been at the centre of Grant's ethos, equipping engineers with the knowledge they need to confidently work in the field, and this recent expansion of the Grant Training Academy reflects Grant's continued commitment to supporting installers.

Most popular

At its HQ, the Grant Training Academy has had a busy 2017 with both product and OFTEC courses. Interest in OFTEC training remains incredibly high with an increasing number of new applicants being trained and assessed. The Grant Vortex oil boiler installer courses remain the most popular, reflecting the strength of the oil boiler market, with the Aeronas³ air source heat pump courses coming in a close second, reflecting the growing interest in this renewable technology.

Feedback from installers who attend Grant training courses remains incredibly positive. One engineer recently commented: "All three days of courses were extremely enjoyable and I would recommend the Grant training academy to anyone." Meanwhile, another installer commented on the quality of training delivered: "The tuition from Steve Ellison, our instructor, was excellent; I was very impressed with the course content." The Grant Training Academy's success is based upon the team of experienced trainers who deliver the courses, trainers who are only too happy to assist installers with their queries and questions.

The Grant training academy was established in 2003 and its growth has reflected Grant's innovative product development in the off-gas heating market. The past fifteen years have been an exciting period for the training academy and, with its extensive facilities in both Devizes and Hawes, Grant hopes that the next fifteen years will be just as successful.

www.grantuk.com.

Installers reminded of building fabric impact on heating efficiency

Installers have been reminded of the impact improvements to the fabric of a building can have on the efficiency of a heating system.

Martyn Bridges, director of technical communication and product



Martyn Bridges, director of technical communication and product management at Worcester

management at Worcester, Bosch Group, is calling for heating engineers to consider the age of the entire heating system, and the heat loss of the property, when replacing a standard efficiency boiler with a modern, condensing appliance.

Martyn comments: "Given that around 80% of houses in the UK were built before 1960, the majority of our properties have been designed during a time where energy efficiency was not at the forefront of homeowners' minds. Modern improvements such as adding double-glazed windows and fibreglass roof insulation, significantly improve a property's heat loss, and this can have a knock-on effect for the most suitable water temperature inside the radiators.

Original heat loss

"When a heating system is first installed, the radiators in the property will be sized on the original heat loss of the property. However, as homes are improved to be more efficient, fewer kilowatts of energy are required to heat the building and the radiators

in place could then be considerably larger than actually required.

"With this in mind, the flow temperature of the boiler to, and return temperature from, the radiators can often be reduced accordingly – allowing the boiler to condense fully while still heating the living space to the desired comfort level."

Martyn concludes: "It's important for installers to remember to check the age of the system when changing a boiler in the property and if possible, trace back the history of heating system. In the event this isn't possible as the house has changed hands since the original heating system was specified, it would be advisable to undertake a full heat loss calculation for the property. From this new calculation, installers can determine whether the radiators are now larger than needed and if they are, can take the necessary steps to replace or run them at a lower temperature to ensure homeowners are provided with a highly efficient heating system."

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Asbestos awareness and responsibilities - "be vigilant" says OFTEC

When it comes to the potential risk of asbestos exposure, heating technicians, plumbers and electricians are a high-risk group. Lagging and insulation on plant and pipework, fabrication of water tanks, toilet seats and cisterns, insulation products such as fireproofing panels, asbestos cement roofing materials, Artex, rope seals and gaskets on boilers and vinyl floor tiles are all areas of concern.

Following the recent prosecution of a tradesman who incorrectly removed asbestos insulating board ceiling panels from a garage and was fined a considerable sum, OFTEC would like to remind technicians to be vigilant and aware of their responsibilities under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (UK), the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Exposure to Asbestos) Regulations, 2006 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 (ROI).

Asbestos is responsible for over 5,000 deaths every year. It can take between 15 and 60 years for the body to develop the symptoms associated with exposure to asbestos. The substance poses a risk to all those exposed, including technicians and their clients. It is extremely important to be aware of the risks and to know what to do if you suspect the presence of asbestos. Always undertake a risk assessment prior to starting any work and if you suspect

asbestos, contact a licensed contractor for specialist advice and subsequent removal.

The regulations set minimum standards for the protection of employees from the risks of exposure to asbestos. You should also take account of people not directly involved in the work that could be affected, including other workmen, people occupying the building and members of the public, etc.

OFTEC encourages all registered technicians to familiarise themselves with their legal obligations. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides useful information on the Regulations, an Approved Code of Practice and guidance which is available at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l143.htm. The Health and Safety Authority (ROI) also have guidance at www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Asbestos/

The HSE also provides a very comprehensive list of frequently asked questions at www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/faq.htm

General guidance on all areas of health and safety legislation affecting technicians is available in OFTEC Technical Book 1.

When to pressure test fuel supplies...

Oil heating businesses are rightly concerned about leaking fuel supply pipework. Not only is the loss of oil a severe environmental issue, but associated clean-up costs can be eye-wateringly expensive. Furthermore, the lengthy process of establishing liability and who will pay for the clean-up can run on for many years, causing expense, stress, and anxiety for all involved.

The regional Control of Pollution (oil storage) regulation documents in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland set out circumstances where oil supply pipework classed as 'non-domestic' must be pressure tested by law.

Whilst there are regional variations, the regulations all contain the same requirement – to pressure test all underground fill pipes and draw off pipes before their first use. If not fitted with a leakage detection device, they should subsequently be tested every five years if underground joints are fitted, or 10 years if there are no joints below ground. If fitted with a continually monitoring leakage detection device, this must be

regularly maintained and tested at appropriate intervals to ensure that it works properly. Records of tests need to be maintained.

Although control of pollution regulations require the same action, they apply in different circumstances, depending on region. The regulations apply to all non-domestic installations and also to domestic installations in the following circumstances:-

- Wales – any newly installed tank with capacity of 201 litres or more
- England – tank capacity 3500 litres or more
- Scotland – tank capacity 2501 litres or more
- Northern Ireland – tank capacity 3501 litres or more

The ROI currently has no specific control of pollution (oil storage) regulation document but refers to BS5410.

- Domestic as per BS 5410 pt 1, non-domestic as per BS 5410 pt 2

BS 5410 parts one and two provide further guidance on pressure testing of fuel supply pipework. They state that the complete pipework system - above and below ground - should be pressure tested after completion. OFTEC would highly recommend that pressure testing be carried out on all new installations or pipework alterations and where oil leakage is suspected.

It is also advised that, as best practice and a means of protecting against potential legal action, existing underground oil pipelines are tested prior to connecting any replacement oil fired appliances, so that technicians can be secure in the knowledge that the existing oil line is leak free. When testing existing underground oil lines, we suggest that the homeowner is made aware, preferably in writing, that the test may identify a fault in the oil line and the implications of such a discovery.

In future issues of Oil Installer we will review how to pressure test metal and plastic fuel pipework and how to document the work.

Horror installs and cowboy installers... the latest in our rogues' gallery!

The horror photographs sent in by OFTEC registered installers, taken during their routine daily work, never fail to shock. And in this edition of *Oil Installer*, our rogues' gallery is certainly up to its usual disturbing standards! As our contributors rightly say, they show some horror installs by some cowboy installers!

Keep your photographs coming so that we can share your experiences with all our readers! Send your photographs, together with a brief description of your business and where you came across the subject of your snap, to: jane@oilinstaller.co.uk



Send your photographs to jane@oilinstaller.co.uk



Tony Drury, mechanical services manager for Chester-based building company, Maxiflow, was called out on what he thought would be a routine maintenance job when an outside boiler would not fire. He was not expecting to discover the horrors which he captured on his camera and now shares with the readers of *Oil Installer*.

His pictures were taken at a property over-looking Ruthin in Denbighshire, North Wales. The owner, says Tony, was "a bit upset" when he condemned the whole system!

Maxiflow is a family-run business, specialising in building, roofing, heating, drainage, mechanical and electrical contracting, with more than 25 years' experience in the industry. Clients include Cheshire West Council, Chester Zoo and the MoD, together with domestic customers.



"This was next door to a job where I was carrying out an annual service," Myles Scrimshaw of Clearwater Plumbing & Heating in Swansea, South Wales, told *Oil Installer*. "The install was only completed a week or two before... you could see the back of the boiler through the vents! Unfortunately, the home owner was out so I couldn't advise her about it! Plenty of regulations broken with this one!"

Myles says that he comes across poor and dangerous installs on a weekly basis - both from non-registered installers and registered companies! "The oil industry needs a big shake up if it is to get its act together - even things like tanker drivers filling up tanks without carrying out checks for splits etc., and then not taking responsibility for them when they leak," he says. "And no prosecutions happening when they are reported is a scandal."

"If an OFTEC engineer was to do a service and not note defects down, we could lose our registration, get taken to court and fined. It needs to be better policed."

"But other than that, I really enjoy my time working in the sector and trying to put out the best quality installations that I can! Oh, and repairing as many boilers on the first visit as possible!"

Myles is passionate about his work. Because he operates in a rural area where households do not have the option of gas, he has a strong customer base and relies on word-of-mouth recommendation as the best way of filling his work diary. He offers a complete plumbing and heating service including installation, service, maintenance and commissioning, together with the installation of oil storage tanks.

"The main issue I see with the oil industry is that it is not compulsory to be registered," he adds. "So for many problems that we come across there is no real enforceable action that can be taken, unlike within the gas sector (although that is weak at times)."

"Trying to explain to farmers why their leaking oil tanks are a hazard can be vexing at times..."



When Northern Ireland-based technician Bryan Craig sent this photograph to *Oil Installer*, he entitled his message 'cowboy installers'! He discovered this flue installation during his first routine maintenance visit to a new customer at a property in Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh.

He told *Oil Installer*: "The flue served an oil fired air handling unit in a commercial retail property. It has since been repaired and terminates above the roof level of the property."

"The scary part was that many other local companies have serviced this unit - and ignored the flue!"

Bryan, who works for Vinci Facilities, started his career as a qualified refrigeration engineer (NVQ level 3) and has since achieved OFTEC (C11380) and Gas Safe qualifications. "I have worked in the oil industry for approximately one year and cover maintenance, repairs and modifications to mostly commercial oil fired heating systems. It's great work!"

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Firebird system transforms home

A homeowner in Shropshire is enjoying a significant reduction in heating bills following the installation of an MCS approved, 16kW Firebird Enviroair air source heat pump.

Installed by EGE Energy, the pump was added to existing gas-fired boiler and solar thermal panels to create a trivalent heating system. Designed to reduce running costs whilst achieving high levels of efficiency, the system maximises the use of renewable energy and minimises the use of the existing boiler.

The pump not only boasts ultra-quiet operation, but the excellent COP can produce in excess of 5kW of energy for every kW of energy used to power it. Ideal for both newbuild and refurbishment projects, the pump is easy to install and offers total flexibility as it can be retrofitted alongside an existing heating system or used as stand-alone.

Steve Webster, managing director, EGE Energy said: "Having already completed two retrofits with the pump we knew it would be trivalent ready with no additional hardware required.

"We also knew that the controller menu would deliver maximum gain from the renewable technologies, plus it would be easy for us to set up and more importantly, for the customer to understand. Having all wiring terminating at the heat pump clearly marked, avoided any mistakes being made when combining the three technologies."

The homeowner added: "We are over the moon with our new heating system. Our home is at a constant temperature throughout and to achieve this we are actually saving money on our heating bills."

www.firebird.uk.com



Firebird's Enviroair air source heat pump reduced fuel bills for a Shropshire homeowner

Kingspan launches rainwater harvesting system

Kingspan has launched a new 'shallow dig' domestic rainwater system, which joins the company's well-established portfolio of rainwater-recycling solutions.

The Gamma Rainwater range is a low-cost installation for self-build projects and residential developments. Its profile requires a shallower dig and less excavation than traditional rainwater harvesting systems as well as less backfill to secure it in place. It is also ideally suited to rocky strata conditions where deep digs are not possible.

Manufactured from tough polyethylene, Gamma's underground tank is robust and lightweight, making it easy to handle and install. Tank sizes range from 2,350 to 4,600 litres. It is fully compliant with all regulations and standards, having been tested in accordance with EN 12566 Part 1 and BS 8515:2009.

Dave Vincent, commercial director for Kingspan Water Management (GB and Ireland) said: "Rainwater harvesting has been gradually growing in popularity in the UK during the past 10 years or so. Limiting water usage is now a legal requirement in the UK for new build domestic properties. Building regulations require that water consumption is limited to 125 litres per person, per day. A rainwater harvesting system can halve the amount of water used by a homeowner."

www.kingspan.com



A cut-away illustration showing how the Kingspan Gamma tank can work

HETAS extends scheme across Ireland

HETAS has launched its installer registration scheme in Northern Ireland and The Republic of Ireland to ensure installers hold insurance and are assessed as competent in the areas of work they have been trained in.

www.hetas.co.uk

Pricing page

Heating prices underline the challenge for oil's competitors

One of the goals of the UK government's newly published Clean Growth Strategy is to move off-grid homes away from high carbon fossil fuel heating during the 2020s. A lot will need to change for this to happen and the latest set of heating cost data from independent analysts the Sutherland Tables underline the current scale of the challenge. Put simply, if you're already using the cheapest heating fuel, why would you undergo the cost and inconvenience of switching to something more expensive?

The figures show that even after some recent price rises, the annual cost of oil heating remains much cheaper than

any of its major off-grid competitors. To emphasise the point, for the same typical three bedroomed home in Great Britain, an oil condensing boiler costs almost 50% less to run than an air source heat pump, and over 40% less than an equivalent LPG system. That means much lower heating bills for oil using homeowners – in this example £787 and £635 respectively. Using electric storage heaters works out even worse, costing over twice as much as oil heating.

If homes with modern condensing boilers are too much of a challenge, what about those with older standard efficiency appliances? These are, after all, the key target for oil's competitors. Again, the numbers just don't stack up and the reality is that the only thing cheaper than a typical standard efficiency oil boiler is either a mains gas or oil condensing boiler.

The story is similar in Ireland where, whether you live north or south of the border, you're better off using oil than any alternative. LPG, in particular, is much more expensive in Ireland, being more than twice the price of oil. Even mains gas is uncompetitive.

Looking ahead, crude oil prices have been creeping up during the autumn, suggesting that the recent period of super low prices may be coming to an end. This is because the huge glut of oil on the market is now reduced, suggesting that more normal trading conditions are returning. So will we see a return of high prices? Probably not. The strengthening price will simply enable US shale oil production to increase again, pegging back prices which are likely to remain in the region of \$50 - \$70 dollars a barrel over the winter.

Comparative space and water heating costs for a three bedroom house

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	Oct-13	Oct-17	Price change	% Difference
Anthracite Grains	1094	1114	20	1.85%
Electricity	1456	1910	454	31.20%
Gas (British Gas - condensing)	1107	967	-140	-12.65%
LPG	2342	1855	-487	-20.81%
LPG (condensing)	1924	1529	-395	-20.52%
Oil	1598	1089	-509	-31.85%
Oil (condensing)	1307	894	-413	-31.59%
Wood Pellets	1259	1280	21	1.67%
Air Source Heat Pump (radiators)	1357	1681	324	23.84%

NORTHERN IRELAND

	Oct-13	Oct-17	Price change	% Difference
Anthracite Grains	1033	953	-80	-7.74%
Electricity (Economy 7)	1761	1464	-297	-16.87%
Gas (Phoenix - condensing)	1093	885	-208	-19.03%
LPG	2463	2530	67	2.72%
LPG (condensing)	2020	2075	55	2.72%
Oil	1573	1053	-520	-33.06%
Oil (condensing)	1287	865	-422	-32.79%
Wood Pellets	1055	1053	-2	-0.19%
Air Source Heat Pump (radiators)	1638	1409	-229	-13.98%

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

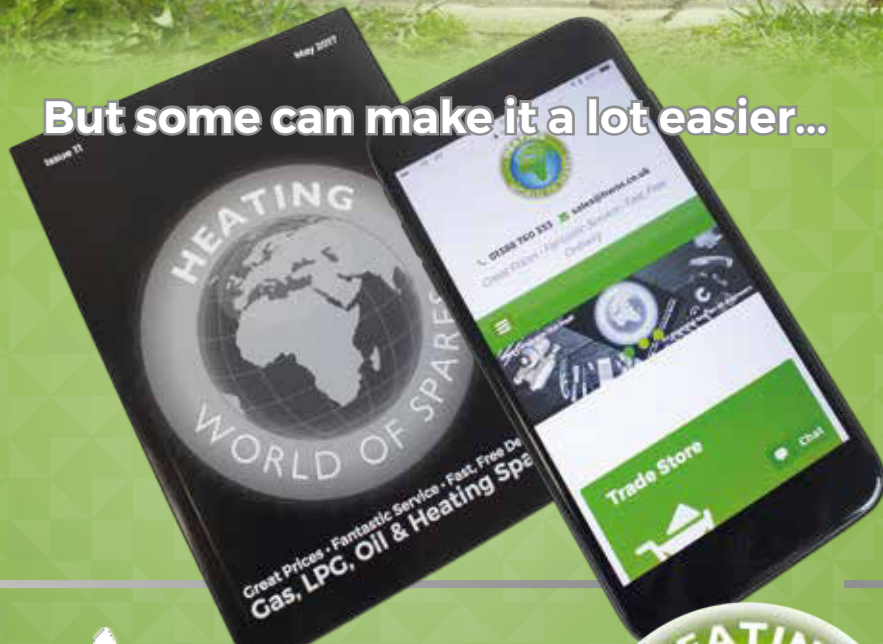
	Oct-13	Oct-17	Price change	% Difference
Anthracite Peas	1383	1510	127	9.18%
Electricity (Urban Night Saver)	2092	1961	-131	-6.26%
Gas (Bord Gais condensing)	1355	1291	-64	-4.72%
LPG	3444	2620	-824	-23.93%
LPG (condensing)	2825	2157	-668	-23.65%
Oil	2239	1230	-1009	-45.06%
Oil (condensing)	1828	1010	-818	-44.75%
Wood Pellets	1168	1302	134	11.47%
Air Source Heat Pump (radiators)	1772	1726	-46	-2.60%

The tables above show the average annual costs for a range of heating options. Prices are shown in pounds sterling (£) for Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Euros (€) for the Republic of Ireland. Figures are for a semi-detached three bedroom house, requiring 13,500 kWh space heating & 2,500 kWh DHW heating. Great Britain (Average) is calculated using South East, South West, Wales, Midlands, Northern England and Scotland. Data from the Sutherland Tables.

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