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Tank campaign will help us all...

Welcome to the latest issue of *Oil Installer* which contains two important announcements.

Firstly, OFTEC and the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers (FPS) have joined forces to tell homeowners about the need to make sure their oil tanks are checked regularly. As many tanks are at or beyond their intended design life, the need for this campaign should be obvious to anyone in our industry. I'm sure you've all seen some terrible tank installations and, with each passing year, the chance that these will become a major embarrassment to our industry becomes more likely.

It is up to us to ensure that consumers understand their responsibilities as tank owners, and avoid the potential financial and environmental problems that can result from a tank failure. You can read more about this important campaign on page 36 and OFTEC's technical manager, Steve Webster, has provided some timely tank care tips on page 29.

Tackling the problem of dodgy tanks will be a big step forward for our industry. Another would be to convince government that liquid fuels deserve a share of the future energy mix. We know that some government advisers believe that oil should be eradicated within the next ten years, so the stakes could hardly be higher. We must convince these decision-makers that we can meet the need to decarbonise our industry, or we risk going the same way as the dinosaurs.

I'm pleased to say that OFTEC is working hard on behalf of everyone in the industry to show that liquid fuel heating can meet this challenge. I use the words 'liquid fuels' deliberately because our future probably depends on finding a low carbon replacement for kerosene. With the government currently rethinking their strategy, now is the time to put forward a convincing alternative vision for the future – and that's exactly what OFTEC is doing. You can read about it on page 8.

Finally, with the price of kerosene still low and customer enthusiasm for oil heating high, I hope your business is enjoying a successful year so far.

Nick Hawkins

Chairman, OFTEC



Bonfield review update...

Following the publication of 'Each Home Counts', otherwise known as the 'Bonfield review', shortly before Christmas, the project is now in the implementation planning stage prior to any proposals being rolled out.

Readers of the last issue of *Oil Installer* may remember that the review made a large number of recommendations, with the establishment of a new quality mark for the domestic retrofit sector the chief amongst them. It is clear that some sectors of the energy efficiency industry are less well-regulated than heating and, for these, a new quality mark focussed on technical competence, quality performance and customer service may help to boost both standards and consumer confidence.

However, for sectors where standards are already high, and customer awareness and trust of registration bodies such as Gas Safe and OFTEC are already good, the new quality mark may cause confusion. There is also the very real concern that a new scheme may just add to business costs and bureaucracy, without providing much in the way of benefits.

OFTEC is monitoring developments carefully. While we're keen to be positive and constructive, we will also keep the interests of registered businesses firmly in mind and oppose any proposals that will add to the burden already on them.

A copy of the review can be downloaded at: www.eachhomecounts.com/about/

OFTEC on YouTube

In March, OFTEC launched new YouTube channels for Great Britain and Ireland. A number of short videos have already been created, covering topics including 'How to choose the best heating technician', 'Looking after your oil tank' and 'Why your oil fired heating system should be serviced regularly'.

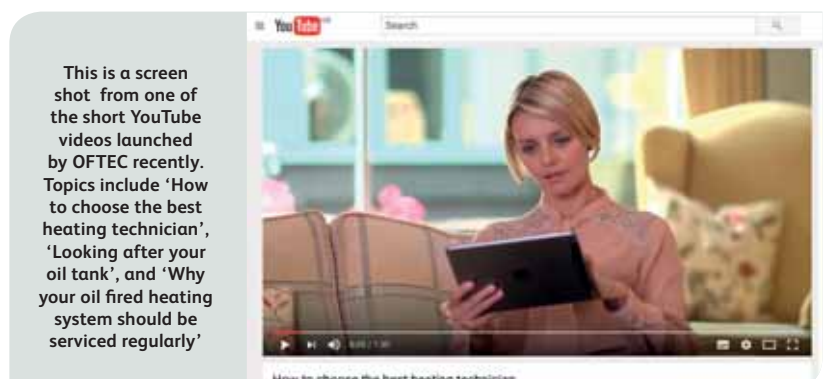
The aim of these videos is to provide oil heating customers with useful information and help them to understand the benefits of using an OFTEC registered technician – which we hope will generate more work for you!

OFTEC is also releasing two films aimed at the trade. These

focus on the benefits of OFTEC training and registration, and some simple marketing tips for technicians.

OFTEC aim to publish more films in the coming months and would welcome any suggestions readers have for topics they think should be covered.

You can help OFTEC to boost the film's search ranking – which will make them easier for oil heating customers to find – simply by watching them yourself and forwarding the links to anyone you think might be interested. To view the channel, visit: <https://youtu.be/EfZ3TLqOUuU>



This is a screen shot from one of the short YouTube videos launched by OFTEC recently. Topics include 'How to choose the best heating technician', 'Looking after your oil tank', and 'Why your oil fired heating system should be serviced regularly'

How to choose the best heating technician

Compliance team put the heat on logo misusers

One of the biggest frustrations for OFTEC registered businesses is that they are competing against those who claim to be OFTEC registered when they actually are not. The good news is that OFTEC is becoming increasingly successful at tackling this problem by using the enforcement muscle provided by local trading standards.

If initial contact with a business that falsely claims to be registered fails, OFTEC knows that escalating the problem to the local trading standards department in the relevant area will usually have the desired effect – few businesses want to run the risk of a prosecution.

So far this year OFTEC compliance has been working with trading standards offices in the Isle of Man, Pembrokeshire, Belfast and Hertfordshire. In most instances trading standards get results by making contact with the business or technician, advising them of the logo misuse complaint and issue a warning letter which remains on file.

Should the misuse of a logo occur again it can result in stronger action being taken by trading standards.

OFTEC's registration director, Adrian Lightwood said: "The fact that non-registered businesses like to use the OFTEC logo emphasises its value when it comes to winning contracts. But make no mistake, the risk of getting caught is now greater than ever before.

Deliberate aim to mislead

"We receive new reports about possible logo misuse every week and take action in every case. Often there is an innocent explanation, such as a business has allowed their registration to lapse and forgotten to remove our logo from their van, Facebook page or stationery. In most cases the business will quickly comply with our request to either remove them or re-register. However, in the more serious cases where there is a deliberate aim to mislead customers, escalating the problem to the local trading standards is really helpful in achieving the outcome we want."

If you think a business is wrongly displaying the logo, you can report your concern to OFTEC by calling our compliance team on 01473 626298 or by email to: compliance@oftec.org. It is crucial to provide supporting

evidence, such as a link to their website, a copy of an advert, or a photograph (preferably with a date) of their van showing the logo. OFTEC's compliance team will investigate and will also let you know the outcome.



OFTEC is currently recruiting a full time manager for the compliance department to undertake this and other important work. For more information or to request a job description, contact Andy Peirson on 01473 618552.



OFTEC's registration director, Adrian Lightwood

Racking up the miles? Then a fuel card might help...

Transport can be a major cost for mobile businesses such as heating companies and, with the price of fuel creeping up, it is likely to get worse. OFTEC is keen to add extra benefits to its registration service and, following an approach from The Fuelcard People, decided to make their service available to all its registered technicians.

How the fuel card scheme works

Through the scheme, registered technicians can receive a discount fuel card which will provide savings of up to 5p per litre at the local garage of their choice, or up to 10p per litre at motorway pumps. Instead of paying each time you refuel, the bills are settled monthly and an itemised breakdown is provided, making it easier to calculate transport costs for tax returns.

The Fuelcard People offer a wide range of cards valid at 7000+ pumps nationwide, including BP, Shell, Esso, Texaco and Tesco forecourts, as well as the Diesel Direct (Keyfuels) and UK Fuels networks.

The scheme costs OFTEC nothing and we don't benefit from the arrangement, but we hope that some registered businesses will find it useful. The scheme is entirely voluntary and can be tried for an initial trial period free of charge, and thereafter for a small annual fee.

For information about the fuel card scheme, call 0844 808 2097, or visit the fuel card website: www.discountfuelcards.co.uk/association/oftec/

OFTEC registration also provides a number of additional benefits, including technical support and updates, marketing materials and access to discounted website design and business insurance.

FTA advise on mobile phones

Throughout 2017, the Freight Transport Association's Van Excellence scheme is exploring topics and sharing advice and legislative information. As penalties for using mobile phones while driving have recently doubled, the FTA is looking at the law surrounding mobile phones.

Using a mobile phone while driving now carries six penalty points and a £200 fine. Text, Facebook, email, streaming – using a mobile phone for any reason while driving is against the law. If it's in the driver's hand, it's illegal.

Drivers who use mobile phones are now also liable to prosecution for the more serious offences of careless or dangerous driving if it can be proved that an offence was caused by failure to have proper control of the vehicle due to distraction. Penalties for careless and dangerous driving are substantially higher than for the specific mobile phone offence. www.vanexcellence.co.uk

Which boiler?





All of them.

Every Worcester Greenstar gas and oil boiler has been awarded Which? Best Buy status.

OFTEC's vision for the future of off-grid domestic heating

OFTEC is committed to fighting for the future of the oil heating industry and in this article Malcolm Farrow explains how OFTEC is meeting this challenge

In the last issue of *Oil Installer*, OFTEC reported on its response to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's (BEIS) consultation on the future of heat in domestic buildings. The government is currently reviewing the responses and we hope and expect an update to be published in the near future.

But rather than waiting for this to happen, and to further influence their thinking, OFTEC has developed a more fully formed vision for the future of our industry, which we published in June. OFTEC's vision is designed to meet the four key objectives that BEIS identified in their consultation which are to:

- Keep energy bills as low as possible
- Ensure the UK has a secure and resilient energy system
- Reduce carbon emissions cost-effectively at home
- Avoid unreasonable upfront costs for consumers which could discourage home improvements

Our view is that this is best achieved by a two stage approach: first upgrading the majority of standard efficiency boilers to more efficient condensing models, then introducing a low carbon fuel to replace kerosene in the mid-2020s. A copy of OFTEC's vision document can be downloaded from our website. We have sent copies to every MP who has a rural constituency and to a wide range of other individuals and groups who influence government policy.



OFTEC believes the government should encourage homeowners to replace their old boilers with condensing appliances, and then switch to biofuels

Why is this important?

OFTEC has taken up this challenge because we need to change the government's approach to off-grid domestic heat. Recent energy policy has focussed on encouraging off-grid homes to use heat pumps, which the government sees as the early step on a path to completely decarbonising the domestic heating sector, which must be completed by 2050. So far this strategy hasn't gone well but, unless we can offer a credible alternative, it is likely that BEIS will continue to incentivise consumers to switch – as the recent increase to the RHI tariff for heat pumps shows – or consider other more radical options.

OFTEC is 100% behind the government's aim of decarbonising domestic heat, and we support the installation of heat pumps in homes where they will be effective. However, there is now overwhelming evidence that they are a poor choice for the majority

of existing rural homes. Worse still, the money spent on the RHI could actually be used more effectively, such as by incentivising boiler replacement which we've calculated would be five times better at reducing carbon emissions.

Avoiding the example of Europe

Another reason for taking action is because the government will need another plan if the RHI continues to perform poorly, and may look to Europe for its inspiration. This could get very nasty for our industry because many governments across the EU see oil heating users as an easy target and are not afraid to deploy radical solutions. For example, in July last year Denmark imposed a ban on new oil heating installations in most regions. Norway is also consulting on proposals to completely ban fossil fuel-based oil heating from 2020, with existing users compelled to replace oil heating systems or switch to 100% biofuels. Austria's largest federal state is proposing to ban the installation of oil heating in new buildings from 2019 and other states are expected to follow. Local restrictions on oil use have also been introduced in parts of Italy and Germany, while in Switzerland, France, Belgium and Spain, other measures including carbon taxes, CO2 emission limits and regional bans are being actively considered.

Our alternative solution is the answer

Faced with these threats – which in some cases would make life very difficult for

our customers – we must take action and it's essential that our industry unites behind OFTEC's vision for the future. The first task must be to convince government that we can offer a credible alternative. Once that is achieved, our focus can shift to delivering the solution. This will involve identifying the best low carbon fuel, then working with manufacturers and fuel suppliers to make its use and availability a reality.

While there's no guarantee that we will succeed, it's no exaggeration to say that the future of our industry, and potentially thousands of jobs, may depend upon us achieving these goals.

Make sure the election candidates know your views

Your vote matters and with preparations for the general election now in full swing, it's the perfect time to ask your local candidates about their heat policy plans and what they will do to support small businesses.



Malcolm Farrow, OFTEC's marketing and communications manager

Homeowners support 'smart home revolution'

As the heating industry gears up for a 'smart home revolution' in years to come, new research suggests there is a significant level of interest in 'connected' products among UK homeowners.

In a survey carried out by Worcester, Bosch Group, one in four owners of its flagship Wave control stated they were already planning the next purchase of internet-enabled products for their homes. More than 70% also cited the ability to remotely operate their heating system as the main reason for their investment.

The news should come as no surprise to heating engineers, who have no doubt seen an increase in enthusiasm for remotely-controlled devices in recent years. However, the study revealed further areas of interest, suggesting that a 'smart home' revolution really could be underway. Smart lightbulbs appealed to around 60% of respondents; internet-connected security systems were of interest to 50%; and 30% homeowners would even consider an oven that

could be controlled from a mobile phone or tablet.

Important role

The research also highlighted the important role installers play in recommending smart heating controls. In light of the vast range of accessories available on the market, more than half of respondents had first heard about their device from a heating engineer – suggesting that despite a glut of online information, homeowners remain keen to source the opinion of respected tradesmen.

On the findings, Worcester's director of technical communication and product management, Martyn Bridges, commented: "There has been a huge increase in the coverage of topics such as smart homes and the Internet of Things within the media, and clearly this is filtering through to homeowners when it comes to the choices they make for their heating systems.

"With so many products on offer,



The Wave app allows remote adjustment of heating and hot water performance

though, it is key that homeowners recognise the devices that are not just internet-connected, but which use this capacity to make our homes more comfortable and efficient. What is most encouraging is that installers remain a vital support in the decision-making process, meaning they can continue to help homeowners make the right choices when called upon."

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk/professional

BSRIA welcomes Bonfield review

The Building Services Research and Information Association (BSRIA) has welcomed the independent and long-awaited review lead by Dr Peter Bonfield OBE, into domestic energy efficiency which has called for a government-backed single quality mark for all energy efficiency and renewable energy measures, including green home improvements to safeguard homeowners

Lynne Ceeney, technical director, BSRIA, said: "The review sets out 27 recommendations to boost uptake of energy efficiency measures.

"It focuses on providing a simple, consumer focused framework for home energy efficiency measures – akin to retrofit.

"It is certainly encouraging to see that there is lots of emphasis throughout the document on reducing duplication and avoiding bureaucracy which is always welcome among the myriad of government green and eco schemes."

www.bsria.co.uk/

Extra points and more rewards for Worcester installers

Worcester, Bosch is helping more installers benefit from its popular Greenstar Rewards programme by extending both the range of products from which they can earn points, and the range of rewards they can claim.

The manufacturer is now allowing installers to collect even more points on every installation, having made a range of its popular accessories eligible for the promotion. Engineers can now collect five points for every Wave control and Greenstar System Filter installed.

Worcester has also made points available on its Greenstore Danesmoor oil boilers – worth an extra 20 points – while ten points are on offer when installing a Greenstore cylinder.

The range of available rewards now includes Bosch cordless combi drills and Bosch cordless hammer drills.

Martyn Bridges, director of technical communication and product management, commented: "Since launching the Greenstar Rewards last year, the promotion has been proven to be very popular amongst our installers. With so many heating professionals signed up so far, there has already been a large number of rewards claimed.

"To give even more installers opportunities to collect points, we've extended the range of eligible products – meaning that our customers who work more with oil than gas can now benefit from this promotion too."

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk/professional/greenstar-rewards

Work safe, think electricity

Come into contact with electricity and life can be lost within seconds or terrible life-changing burns inflicted. UK Power Networks are urging trades people to Work Safe, Stay Safe and Think Electricity.

"Our Work Safe Think Electricity initiative is a rolling programme," says Emma Palmer, education and engagement adviser at UK Power Networks. "We are keen to continue getting our important safety messages out to the public.

"It can be all too easy for busy trades people to be in a hurry, get distracted or not bother to check for service cables when working on site. Electricity service cables are not always visible, they can be hidden or out of sight. The simple step of accurately locating service cables buried underground, hidden behind walls or under floorboards before starting work can mean you return home safe to your families at the end of each working day.

"Many trade associations and bodies across various industries are supporting us and keeping safety at the forefront of their members minds."

UK Power Networks distributes more than a quarter of the UK's electricity through its networks of substations, underground cables and overhead lines making sure the lights stay on across London, the South East and the East of England.

www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/

Concerns over apprenticeship levy

As the apprenticeship levy comes into force for all employers turning over more than £3 million a year, apprehensions still exist over whether the scheme will be able to supply the "first-rate" training that both industry and apprentices need.

More than 900 firms in the UK construction industry are to be charged the levy which will help fund the government's target of creating three million apprenticeships by 2020.

Julia Evans, chief executive of the Building Services Research and Information Association (BSRIA), commented: "BSRIA welcomes the government's emphasis on increasing investment in apprenticeships and the industry is ready to stimulate more training and apprenticeships. However, quality is essential over quantity and BSRIA is keen to see long-term success for the scheme.

"Apprenticeships provide the backbone for a career in engineering for many employees and no compromises should be made regarding them. In essence, the levy must meet industry and apprenticeship needs."

The BSRIA has highlighted many of the concerns voiced by the construction industry which include a lack of accessible information for employers about the government's list of approved providers and their quality of training, and ineffective careers guidance in schools about available apprenticeship options.

www.bsria.co.uk

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Wolseley opens graduate recruitment scheme



The leading distributor of plumbing and heating products is seeking to welcome a new influx of graduates

Wolseley UK has announced that it is opening its 2017 graduate scheme to fill 15 positions. The FTSE 100 company is looking to recruit a group of talented and ambitious graduates to join three separate programmes – finance leadership, operations leadership and commercial leadership.

The graduate programme immerses individuals into the Wolseley UK business and its brands such as Plumb Center and Pipe Center. It offers industry leading training as well as practical experience within in-branch operations.

Sarah Gore, head of resourcing at Wolseley UK, comments: "It's an exciting time to be joining Wolseley. In September 2016, we announced a major programme to transform the way we serve our customers, following a wide-ranging review of our plumbing

and heating operations. We're now in the process of bringing our plumbing and heating businesses together under our Wolseley banner.

"We're delighted to be opening our graduate scheme to the next wave of business leaders and this year we are doubling the positions available to 15.

"Each year we are blown away by the high quality of applicants. We pride ourselves on our graduates and ensure that the new starters get the chance to meet and spend time with those completing their first year with us as well as senior team members. Wolseley UK is dedicated to investing in its staff and creating an enjoyable working environment that both supports and challenges all individual staff."

Successful candidates will embark on a two-year scheme that will put them at

the heart of the business. The scheme has been designed to grow the next generation of leaders by giving the practical experience needed to take on a leadership role within the company.

Throughout the two years graduates will undertake four rotations, each lasting for a period of six months, which will provide them with a comprehensive overview of business operations.

From day one, graduates will be hands-on working with customers and operations in busy branches to understand how Wolseley UK conducts its business. The graduates will spend time in the field or head office, developing professional skills alongside Wolseley UK industry leading employees.

www.wolseley.co.uk/

The new way to finish around waste pipes...

Snug Solutions Ltd has launched PipeSnug, an innovative product which makes installing waste pipes easier and replaces the need to point mortar around pipes where they exit the wall.

Manufactured in the UK, PipeSnug is patent pending and designed so that any plumber or builder can use it to seal the hole where a pipe exits a wall, traditionally done by pointing or sealing the hole with mortar, silicone or expanding foam.

Quicker, cheaper, and cleaner than all these

methods, PipeSnug can be used in all weathers on any plumbing or construction project, including new builds, extensions, loft conversions and kitchen or bathroom installations.

The product's snug fit also means that PipeSnug helps to maintain the energy efficiency of the property, helping installers to comply with Part L of Building Regulations and keeps the risk of heat escaping from a building to a minimum.

PipeSnug is the evolution of an idea by Chris Burdett, a builder and bricklayer with over 25 years'

experience in the trade. "The PipeSnug concept came to me out on site one day when I was preparing to point mortar around a



PipeSnug replaces traditional methods of installing waste pipes

waste pipe for what seemed like the millionth time," he explains. "I realised a simple fitting would save so much time compared to mixing mortar or applying silicone around the pipe, as well as blending into the fabric of the building visually."

Forming Snug Solutions with business partner Alex Lever to launch PipeSnug, it is the first product Chris and Alex have brought to market. The company intends to launch a wider choice of PipeSnug sizes in coming months.

<http://pipesnug.co.uk/>

Grant makes a successful debut at ISH 2017



The Grant Engineering exhibition stand at ISH, Frankfurt

Grant Engineering made a successful debut at ISH, Frankfurt, one of the world's largest trade exhibitions for water and energy technologies.

Taking place between 14th to 18th March, ISH 2017 featured 2,482 exhibitors who shared their new product innovations with 200,000 visitors over the course of the five day event.

A range of renewable heating products and oil boilers were available to see on the Grant trade stand, including the Vecta biomass boiler, Grant's latest condensing wood pellet boiler available in internal and external models, and the Aeron³ inverter driven air source heat pump, Grant's third generation of heat pumps. The innovative Grant VortexAir Hybrid was also on the stand, a product which combines the attributes of a VortexBlue oil-fired boiler with the green energy of an Aeron³ heat pump.

New products were also revealed by Grant at ISH. Launching into the European market this year will be two new condensing oil boiler ranges, featuring both high-temperature and low-temperature models. In addition, a new smart heating control and fan convector were unveiled, product lines which will make their debut in the UK later this year

"At the heart of Grant's product designs are the pioneering concepts of the company's founder Stephen Grant and the R&D team," explains Anna Wakefield, marketing and corporate communications manager for Grant. "For four decades, Grant has been introducing highly efficient heating appliances to the market and ISH 2017 was the ideal platform for the company to share its innovative, sustainable heating solutions with international audiences."

www.grantuk.com

Best fuel for heating homes...

"Oil is the best fuel for heating homes in the UK, yet it faces continual hostility from environmentalists," says Atkinson Equipment's Peter Carter.

"Today's oil burners are clean and efficient and have many advantages over rival fuel appliances. To protect the future of oil heating I believe that as an industry we need to demonstrate that we comply to best practise, as laid out in the Environmental Agency's recommendations on bunded tanks, top fill and top outlet with anti-syphon valve. This would remove any possible criticism that could be laid at our door."

Atkinson Equipment has developed and manufactures the TankTop – an all in one top offtake system complete with anti-syphon valve.

www.atkinsonequipment.com



The Atkinson Tanktop system

Oil boiler ban lifted in Italy

A ban on installing oil heating boilers which had been approved for the Italian region of Lazio around Rome, has now been withdrawn following strong representations from the public and industry.

A ban proposed for Lower Austria has also been amended so that it only applies to new build and not to replacement boilers, and a strenuous lobbying campaign organised by Eurofuel member, IWO Austria, may delay its introduction. The aim in Austria is to boost the wood heating sector.



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Martin warms up with the Grant VortexBlue range...

When television and radio property expert and author Martin Roberts needed a new heating solution, he turned to Grant UK and its VortexBlue range.

"My previous Grant oil fired boiler had given me many years of reliable service, so when it came to replacing it, as far as I was concerned, there was only one choice," explains Martin.

Martin's new Grant VortexBlue 36kW internal combi was fitted with minimal disruption, by G-One approved installer Ford Fuel Oils Ltd.

"I'm told that the improvements in technology and efficiency



Martin Roberts and his partner Kirsty enjoy their new VortexBlue boiler

that have occurred, plus Grant's state of the art design, mean that I'll notice significant savings in heating fuel used," continues Martin. "The fact I've been given a reassuring 10 year guarantee provides peace of mind for many winters to come."

www.grantuk.com.

New sales manager joins the UK team

Grant UK has appointed Alan Brooke as the company's area sales manager in the south east of England.

Alan is now the main contact at Grant for installers, merchants and homeowners in Hampshire, Surrey, West Sussex, East Sussex, South London, Kent and the Isle of Wight.

Alan has twenty-five years' installation experience in the heating industry, including more than two decades working with oil boilers. During the past ten years, he has been involved in the renewable heating sector. He therefore joins Grant with a wealth of experience of both oil and renewable heating appliances, from the Vortex oil fired boiler range through to Grant's biomass boilers, air source heat pumps, solar thermal systems, and hybrid products.

Alan is already on the road,

introducing himself to local merchants and installers and has confirmed technical mornings with merchants in the south east, details of which can be found on Grant UK's 'events diary' on the company website.

www.grantuk.com



Alan Brooke, Grant UK's new area sales manager

New "how to powerflush" video from Sentinel

It is common knowledge that dirty central heating systems are more likely to break down, require premature component replacements, and cost homeowners more on their energy bills. To avoid these scenarios, Sentinel Performance Solutions Ltd has created a step-by-step powerflushing video for installers.

The two-part video goes through all of the essential stages of a best practice powerflush and shows installers how to demonstrate the benefits of powerflushing to homeowners for maximum customer satisfaction.

The first part of the video addresses the topics of how to tell if a system needs a clean and how to set up a powerflushing machine. This is followed by a second video which is a comprehensive guide to conducting a powerflush, from the first time the machine is switched on, through cleaning each radiator effectively, to the final flush.

To help installers make the most of their time with customers, whether at quoting stage or during the powerflush itself, Sentinel has included a number of practical ideas that can help to win customer confidence. This includes tips on how to use visual aids, such as infrared thermometers and Sentinel's homeowner leaflets, through to advice on how best to talk to customers about water treatment.

When used as part of Sentinel's best practice approach of 'clean, protect, maintain', powerflushing can help to deliver lifetime protection from corrosion and limescale, says the company. The Sentinel video also includes instructions on how to dose Sentinel X100 inhibitor into the system using the powerflushing machine, as well as how to use a Sentinel X100 quick test kit to check system protection. The video features Sentinel's new high performance JetFlush Rapid machine.

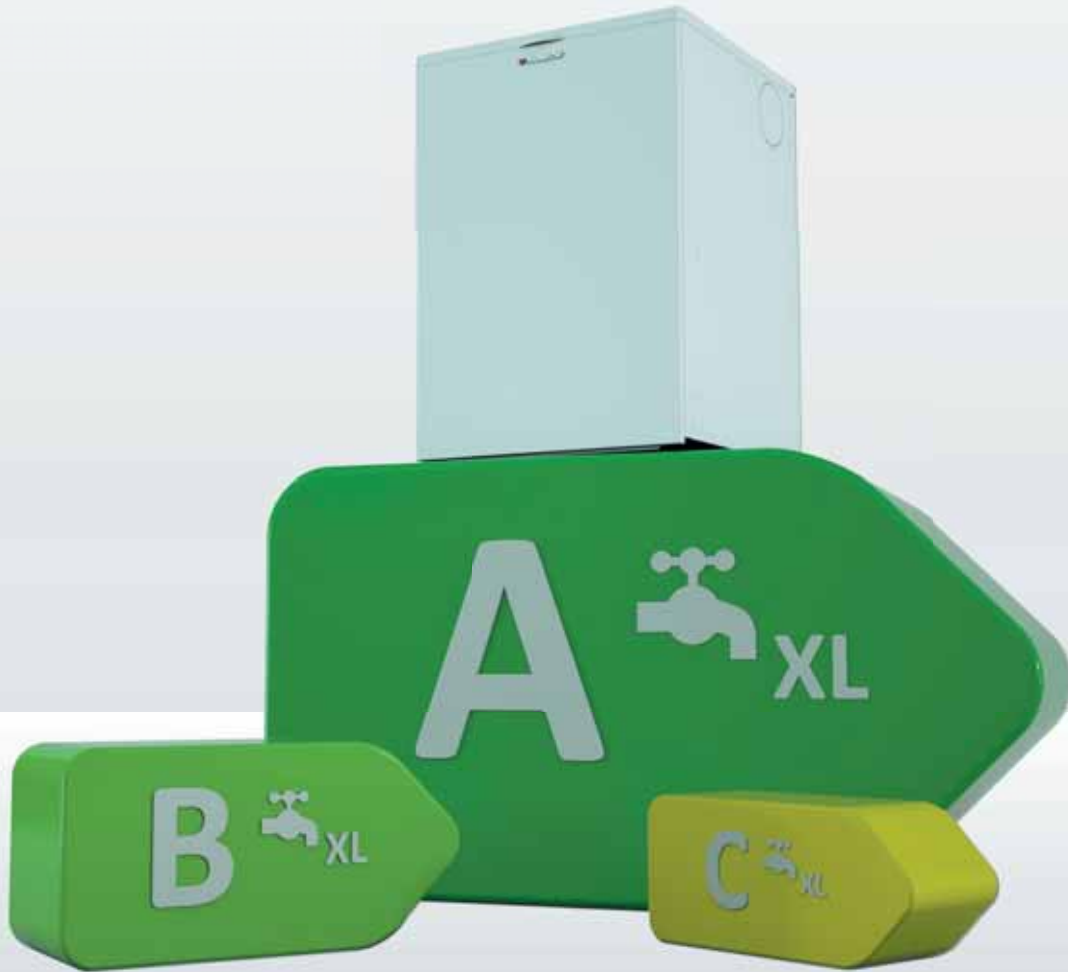
Installers can watch the new video, alongside many other how-to and step-by-step guides, by visiting Sentinel's YouTube channel at: www.youtube.com/user/sentinelperform



Installers can watch Sentinel's new step-by-step powerflushing video on the company's YouTube channel

WARMFLOW

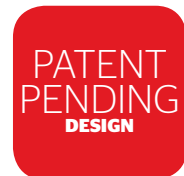
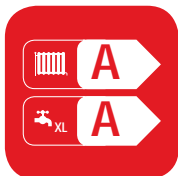
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Efficient heat emitters – the missing link in improving energy performance

David Kerr, chief executive officer at QRL Radiator Group, has welcomed an announcement by the EHI, the association of the European Heating Industry, stressing the need for efficient heat emitters – radiators, convectors and surface heating and cooling – to improve the overall efficiency of Europe's old building stock.

"As members of the Association of the European Heating Industry, it's very encouraging to see it highlight such a crucial industry issue – one that we at QRL are helping push to top of the agenda with our 'Don't Omit Emitters' campaign," says David Kerr.

"We are working hard to communicate the importance of emitters as part of a 'whole system' approach to heating efficiency, and we're delighted to have an industry body with as wide a reach as the EHI recognise these as the 'missing link' in improving energy efficiency.

"With millions of UK households

still relying on outdated, inefficient radiator technology to heat their homes – at extra cost – there is still a long way to go. However, the issue is undeniably gaining traction amongst industry peers and we welcome the EHI'S 'Heat emitters: The forgotten part of the energy efficiency equation' paper.

"Ultimately, it's about improving performance, reducing emissions and cutting bills for end-users, and we will continue to fight to keep the emitter efficiency discussion front of mind."

For EHI, a wider penetration of efficient heat emitters needs to be an integral part of Europe's ambition to achieve 30% energy efficiency gains by 2030. With millions of inefficient heating appliances installed in Europe's buildings today, the focus must be to improve the situation by adopting the whole heating system in the approach.

"Improving the energy performance of a building will involve a modernisation



David Kerr, chief executive officer at QRL Radiator Group

of the whole heating system, which must include the heat emitters. In doing so, this will also achieve the desired comfort for the user," says Klaus Rogetzer, group managing director, Central Rettig ICC.

The EHI paper "Heat emitters: The forgotten part of the energy efficiency equation" is available at: www.ghi.eu/event/3153

Installers warned over non-approved flue systems

Installers have been urged to take extra caution over their choice of boiler components and accessories, amidst a growing number of controls and flue systems being sold on the internet as compatible with certain manufacturers' boiler models.

The warning comes from Martyn Bridges, director of technical communication and product management at Worcester, Bosch Group, who believes installers could run the risk of compromising their customers' safety by fitting flue plume redirection kits which haven't been tested, approved or certified for use with their boiler.

Martyn commented: "We're seeing a growing number of suppliers sell generic heating accessories such as flue kits that they claim are compatible with a given manufacturer's boiler, but have never actually been tested to the required standards.

"While these products may match the physical size and dimensions of the manufacturer's flue, it is important for

installers to realise that the absence of a CE mark means there is no proof that they meet the UK's safety, health and environmental requirements. Worse still, with no testing having taken place, there is no evidence or guarantee that the flue kit won't be susceptible to damage such as freezing, cracking, or degrading in the sun."

Martyn believes the rise in the number of generic, third-party boiler accessories available means installers need to be extra cautious with their product selection.

He added: "There is a plethora of replica boiler accessories being launched into the market and we've seen issues where installers and homeowners have been caught out by third-party timers and controls which are not covered by the boiler manufacturer's warranty. This in turn places much greater emphasis on the need for installers to be vigilant when selecting the most suitable appliances and accessories for their customer's property." www.worcester-bosch.co.uk

Enhanced range at competitive prices

Plumb, Parts and Drain Center has enhanced its range of Center Brand copper fittings and now offers customers competitive prices and a simplified ordering process in branches.

The change comes as part of a wider initiative to provide customers with more choice by expanding all of its exclusive own brands including Nabis, Saracen and Swan.

To further simplify its fittings offer, Plumb Center has also discontinued the Tradefix brand of end-feed fittings to focus on a single and compatible range that customers can rely on and understand.

Phil Viner, category director for PVF at Plumb Parts and Drain Center, said: "By focussing on one exclusive own brand we can now ensure that we are offering customers great quality products at competitively low prices across the board."

www.plumbcenter.co.uk/branch

Barge restoration cruises to completion, thanks to Mistral

An oil-fired boiler manufacturer is charting new waters after supplying one of its products for an unusual restoration project.

Midlands based Mistral Boilers has seen one of its non condensing combination systems installed on a refurbished 100ft former Dutch barge that will provide a new home and cruising base for retired boat restorer Geoff Mellor. This is the first time a Mistral Boiler has been used in a marine setting.

Geoff, from Suffolk, has spent two years bringing the 107-year-old barge, called Elisabeth, which was previously used as his floating workshop and office, back to life as a new home to enjoy in his retirement. He will moor Elisabeth in London in the shadow

of Tower Bridge for part of the year and cruise the canals of the east of England and the continent for the remainder.

Geoff said the Mistral combination boiler had been the only product he could find that met his specific needs.

"I was looking for a system that would supply heat and water throughout the boat but it needed to run on red diesel, which also powers the barge, so I only need to have one form of fuel on board," said Geoff.

"It was also very important that the boiler was easy for me to maintain and repair as it's not easy to call a boiler technician to come and help you when you're out on the water in the middle of nowhere!



The Mistral non condensing boiler installed in the engine room of the restored barge



Geoff Mellor on his restored barge Elisabeth that has been fitted with a Mistral non condensing boiler

"I discovered Mistral Boilers on the internet and were impressed by their products. They upgraded the burner to meet my specifications and it has been installed in the engine room and is already working perfectly," he added.

Mistral managing director, Jim Wright, said he was delighted the firm could help Geoff. "We were happy to work with Geoff to adapt our non condensing boiler to run on red diesel and it's great that he now has a fully operational system in place.

"This is the first time we know of where a Mistral boiler has been used in a marine setting so it opens up a new market for us," he said.

www.mistralboilers.com

VortexBlue guarantee is here to stay!

Grant UK has announced that the 10-year guarantee on its award-winning VortexBlue oil fired boiler is to continue.

Since its launch in 2016, the VortexBlue range has been extended, with outputs now ranging from 15kW up to 36kW.

Consisting of 15 models, including internal, external and combi boilers, the VortexBlue offers the latest clean-burning technology within the familiar housing of the Grant Vortex oil

boiler. Consequently, the VortexBlue provides reliable, high efficiency heating while also delivering the all-important low NOx emissions which comply with forthcoming legislation, says the company.

All VortexBlue models have the same dimensions as their Vortex yellow-flame equivalent, so this latest range of oil boilers from Grant can be incorporated into existing spaces housing older heating appliances.

"The 10-year guarantee demonstrates

our belief in the VortexBlue's revolutionary technology, while also delivering added peace of mind to homeowners and end-users," explains Anna Wakefield, marketing and corporate communications manager for Grant UK.

The 10-year guarantee available on the VortexBlue range is exclusively available to Grant's G-One accredited installer network and is subject to terms and conditions.

www.grantuk.com

"So you want to buy a gramophone then grandad?"

– a glimpse into the future
by Alan Black...

Man walks up to a counter and says:
"I'd like to buy a gramophone please."

The assistant behind the counter says:
"A gramophone!?"

Man: "Yes"

Assistant: "And what sort of
gramophone would you like to buy?"

Man: "An oil fired single stage, fixed
output, on/off, package gramophone,
please."

Assistant: "I'm sorry grandad, but they
were legislated out of existence years
ago!"

Man: "Really? Why?"

Assistant: "Well you know your old 78
controls that just let the gramophone
run at full speed whenever you turned
it on? Well there were also 45 and
33 control systems which the gas
gramophones could use to consume
less energy and get even better quality
output – they called them modulating
record players and they could use
modulating motors to pump the music
around the house as well."

Man: "Oh. So why didn't the oil
gramophone manufacturers use 45 and
33 control systems?"

Assistant: "Good question. Well, as far
as we can tell, they were so busy trying
to keep their old gramophone design
that they even bolted them into electric
heaters and/or fridges and sometimes
tried to get record player suppliers
to sell electric heaters and fridges to
their customers. Oh, and you won't
believe this, but some oil gramophone
manufacturers even suggested that we
should start cutting down trees and
burning them instead of selling the
customer the oil record player that they
could afford and actually wanted!"

Man: "Silly beggars!"

Assistant: "Yep, and because they
insisted on trying to keep to their
old ineffective and inefficient 78s
and ignored the 45s and 33s, the
music police legislated them out of
existence!"

Food for thought, and a light hearted overview of hopefully an imaginary future for the domestic oil heating industry...or is it?

This could have been a real potential future for the domestic oil heating industry had I not seen the new Sapphire, blue flame modulating domestic oil burner running and in operation in the lab at EOGB Energy Products Ltd premises near St Neots.

If this burner is adopted by domestic oil boiler manufacturers with its fully modulating blueflame 'Opentherm' protocol operating system (as gas boilers have done for the last 10-15 years) industry could:

- Reduce fuel consumption for customers in excess of that already achieved with condensing boilers;
- Improve comfort levels in domestic dwellings which run on oil;
- Enable the compliant installation of oil combination boilers which could at last actually be set so that the burner can fire at different outputs to match hot water, as well as heating full and part load demands instead of the all too common overfiring at hot water rates when running for heating only;
- Reduce running costs for fuel poor properties off the gas grid;
- Enable the use of the higher efficiency equivalent modulating system controls (ErPD);
- Enable the compliant use of modulating circulating pumps (i.e. not have to override the modulation of the circulating pump back to fixed speed to maintain flow rates) saving money and energy for customers;
- Enable oil boilers to actually only burn the amounts of fuel necessary to satisfy demand;
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Provide a lower capital cost option replacement appliance than the use of bio-mass or hybrid technology appliances.

You never know, such an incentive and progress in technology might even enable government to consider fiscal support for the industry once again!

As ever there is always an alternative – if oil fired appliance manufacturers do not wish to adopt and embrace such technology, then at least if the fitment of new oil boilers is legislated out in the UK (as other continental countries have already done) then the service engineer may in the future be able to make an honest shilling or two keeping his customers' old boilers running by replacing the existing burners with this new technology.

Former technical director of OFTEC, Alan Black has more than 35 years of experience of the domestic and light commercial oil and bio-liquid heating industry. Alan is now principal consultant for Oil Heating Consultancy Services Ltd in Peterborough.



Alan Black

See page 22 – "EOGB responds to upcoming NOx emission legislation"



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Unlock the benefits of renewable energy for your off-gas customers with the new Grant VortexAir. This unique hybrid combines the trusted attributes of a Grant VortexBlue blue flame oil boiler with the green advantage of an Aerona³ inverter driven heat pump. Offer your customers a sustainable alternative to boiler replacements with minimal disruption to the home. Install the VortexAir.

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Oil Boiler



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Atkinson adds Fuelstop to the product family

Atkinson Equipment Ltd has announced the acquisition of the Fuelstop Fire Valve business. The Fuelstop is being manufactured in Westbury, Wiltshire, alongside Atkinson's Tankmaster, Tanktop and Filstop.

"We are now able to offer a complete Atkinson family of products from oil tank to boiler," says Giles Atkinson, sales and development manager.

"Atkinson Equipment has always strived to produce quality and environmentally sensitive products for the oil heating industry. With the addition of Fuelstop we are now offering a product that not only matches our quality and environmental requirement, but also fire safety," he adds.

All oil-fired heating and cooking systems are required to have a fire safety valve fitted at point of entry to the building, with the sensor positioned over the burner. A fire safety valve is designed to shut off the oil supply outside the building if there is a fire in the area of the burner, or the temperature around the burner exceeds the safety valves set range. Whilst not necessarily being able to stop a fire starting, by the valve shutting off the oil supply, it ensures that oil cannot add fuel to any fire that is already alight.

Peace of mind

"The peace of mind that the fire safety valve gives is well worth the small additional cost of the valve," continues Giles.

"The Fuelstop has some important qualities over its rivals," he explains. "Firstly, the capillary tube and sensor are liquid filled making the valve action more positive in all weather conditions, and less likely to nuisance trip."

Valves are available with capillary lengths up to 35m and the 3/8 bodied valves are supplied with nuts, 10mm olive and 10mm soft copper support tubes. The Fuelstop is also available in 1/2 BSP threaded port for high flow applications. All Fuelstops are available in both 66-72 degree and 86-96 degree temperature ranges.

The Fuelstop has a re-set button that can also be used to isolate the burner when servicing. OFTEC requires that the fire valve is tested as part of the burner service.

Fuelstop Fire Valves comply with BS 5410 and are tested to OFS E101 being OFCERT certificated.

www.fuelstop.co.uk



Grant releases video to mark four decades of innovation

To mark nearly four decades of being involved in the heating industry, Grant Engineering has released a video timeline which follows the company's history and product innovations over the past forty years.

The video, which was unveiled at the ISH exhibition in Frankfurt at the beginning of March, showcases the range of Grant's award-winning products which have been heating homes for generations. Founded in 1978 by Stephen Grant, Grant Engineering's range of products have evolved and expanded over the years, establishing the company as a market leader in the off-gas heating industry.

The video explains that, from its earliest products launched in the late 1970s through to its latest product offerings, Grant Engineering has always striven to produce reliable heating appliances which are easy for engineers to install and maintain, and simple for homeowners to use. The timeline follows Grant's product developments, from the early Euroflame slimline oil boilers through to the Vortex range, the first condensing oil boilers launched in the UK and Ireland years ahead of any mandatory legislation.

Renewables

In addition to oil boilers, the video also follows Grant's development in the renewables market – launching its range of solar thermal products in 2006, its first generation of Aerona air source heat pumps in 2010, and its condensing wood pellet boiler range which debuted the following year. These product ranges expanded over the subsequent years, establishing Grant as a trusted brand in the renewable sector.

The timeline concludes by summarising the array of products that Grant Engineering has introduced over the past eighteen months, including the VortexBlue oil boiler range, the Aerona³ inverter driven air source heat pumps, and the VortexAir oil boiler/air source heat pump hybrid, the first of its kind in the UK and Ireland.

This succession of product launches is not set to stop either with Grant Engineering's manufacturing plant in Ireland currently undergoing further expansion. As hinted at within the video, UK, Irish and European markets will see new additions join Grant's product portfolio over the coming year.

The video can be viewed on Grant UK's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/MyGrantUK

EOGB responds to upcoming NOx emission legislation

The domestic oil heating market is going to change dramatically over the next few years with new legislation which will limit the amount of NOx emissions permitted from oil fired boilers, says EOGB Energy Products Ltd, a UK manufacturer and distributor of oil, gas and dual fuel burners.

Therefore, burner manufacturers have had to focus on developing blue flame models which are able to achieve these new levels by using a special high pressure diffuser plate and a recirculating blast tube. Not only does this achieve a blue flame reaction, it also produces low NOx, lower CO and very low soot production.

Established in 1993, EOGB manufactures and distributes oil, gas and dual fuel burners from 10Kw to 45MW. The company has been producing its XSeries range of domestic oil burners for over a decade and is also a provider of state-of-the-art Baltur burners for commercial and industrial applications.

Research and development is a key focus area and EOGB engineers are passionate about innovation and producing the very best in heating technology, says the company.

Ahead of the new regulations which come into force in September 2018, EOGB has launched 'Sapphire', its first fully-modulating blue flame domestic oil burner.

The Sapphire burner has been designed to bring about a step-change improvement in domestic heating performance and not only meets the new 2018 ErP Directive NOx emission standard, claims EOGB, but also the more stringent requirements expected in 2022. At the same time,



The new Sapphire burner



The EOGB team at the company's St Neots headquarters in Cambridgeshire

says the company, the burner's fully-modulating operation delivers the best in energy efficiency and carbon emission reduction of any domestic oil burner on the market today.

Key features of the Sapphire burner include:

- 10 – 30kW firing range
- Full electronic control of fuel and air management
- UV flame scanner with diagnostic plugin capabilities
- Unique burner management system to meet different manufacturers' heat exchangers
- Advance fault code diagnosis

Technical features

- Suitable for kerosene
- Suitable for gas and bio oil blends
- Flame detection diagnosis
- Up to 15 modulating set points if required
- In-built fault history log

The burner is run by a control system that offers a range of operating modes including fully modulating, two stage and on/off. A third stage hot water mode allows operation with a combination boiler.

In modulating mode, EOGB claims that Sapphire's precision load tracking and optimum efficiency across the firing range delivers industry-leading energy performance for low running costs and reduced carbon emissions.

Alan Black, principal consultant at Oil Heating Consultancy Services Ltd, comments: "If the Sapphire burner is adopted by domestic oil boiler manufacturers with its fully modulating blueflame 'Opentherm' operating system, the industry stands to benefit significantly."

He adds: "Key benefits include reduced fuel consumption for customers in excess of that already achieved with condensing boilers, reduced greenhouse emissions, and a lower capital cost option replacement appliance, certainly compared to bio-mass or hybrid technology appliances."

Looking to the future

To meet new applications, and changing requirements, EOGB operates a continuous development policy to satisfy future demands.

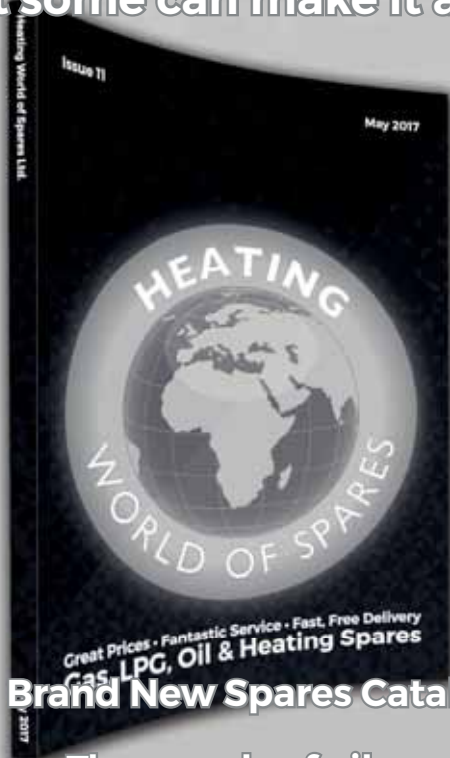
"EOGB's Sapphire burner is designed to be easily incorporated into the majority of modern boiler designs and can be used as a new boiler product as well as a replacement for existing domestic installations," says the company.

"Sapphire is the first of its kind in the industry and will provide a genuine future-proof solution for boiler manufacturers who want to meet energy saving targets without the need to redesign the entire boiler."

www.eogb.co.uk/low-nox-burners

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– What's best for Ireland's off-gas grid homes?

OFTEC's Ireland manager, David Blevings weighs up the options

If we look at the progress of the Renewable Heating Initiatives (RHI) in the UK, we learn that despite conservative targets of 10% (NI) and 15% (GB) set by 2020, and significant government investment in recent years, currently 6% of NI heating requirements are now met by renewable heat and in GB, it stands at 8%.

The RHI scheme in NI ran into difficulties when it became over-subscribed and was closed suddenly, after the government seriously overspent through its commitments to existing installations. In the UK, tariffs for ASHP, GSHP and biomass actually increased from the start of this year, but annual heat demand limits and a requirement for electricity metering were also introduced.

In the Republic of Ireland the government has recently consulted on an RHI programme for consumers in Ireland and the rationale behind such subsidies is laudable. Governments believe it can provide sufficient stimulus for both innovation and widespread implementation of the renewable technologies.

While consumers may welcome the initial subsidy (often payable over seven years), the reality is that new energy technologies must at some stage be able to compete with conventional alternatives on both a cost and performance basis without relying on government mandates. At some stage, the taxpayers and the voters will react.

What happens after the subsidy runs out? Look at Germany. Their renewables levy has risen fivefold since 2009, and the typical domestic consumer's bill by almost 30% – is that what will happen to Irish

consumers when the subsidy for renewable heat expires?

Consumers are being targeted to 'switch' to air source heat pumps (ASHP) in existing properties that may not be suitable for this technology. As the Energy Savings Trust (EST) points out, ASHP works well in a house that is well insulated and works better with underfloor heating (as the temperature of the water is lower). How many homes are installing ASHP using existing radiators and not upgrading their insulation? These properties will have problems in the colder weather – fact. Another fact consumers find it hard to get their heads round is that with ASHP technology the heating is on all the time and regulated with thermostatic controls – this ensures the system runs efficiently and correctly, but I suspect in a country used to switching heating on and off and minimising use to save cash, this will take a bit of getting used to.

Don't get me wrong, a properly installed ASHP in a new build, well insulated house with underfloor heating is probably a good bet – but the retro fitting of an ASHP into a 1970's semi-detached with 100mm of loft insulation and standard radiators is a disaster waiting to happen.

According to the EST, installing a typical system costs around £7,000 to £11,000. Running costs will vary depending on a number of factors including the size of your home, how well insulated it is and what room temperatures you are aiming to achieve.

But is it cheaper to run than a new condensing oil boiler? According to independent energy experts, Sutherland, the answer is NO. In January 2017, the cost of providing hot water and heating for a 1980's 3 bed house in

Northern Ireland using an air source heat pump is £1,384pa for radiators and £1,045 for underfloor. In the Republic this is €1,718 for radiators and €1,362 for underfloor. When you compare this to condensing oil the numbers are: NI – £857pa and ROI – €1,228, both significantly cheaper than the ASHP.

Even in new build, without the subsidy oil is cheaper to run than ASHP. While many promoters of renewable technology will argue that oil prices are unpredictable and will increase over time, making ASHP the smart choice, the consensus of experts today is that it will settle in the \$40 -\$60 range for the short to medium term.

"A heating solution with an oil condensing boiler is a no-brainer"

Adding expensive renewable technology will also push up the building cost, making new homes more expensive and unnecessarily pushing up mortgage debt for potential buyers. Given the figures above, the consumer will be faced with higher running and servicing costs, while a perfectly good alternative – a heating system solution with an oil condensing boiler (with much lower capital and running cost) – is a no brainer.

OFTEC is not against ASHP per say. If the new house is well insulated and has underfloor heating, ASHP may well be a good option. For retro fit, the cost of installing larger radiators and increasing insulation will price most homeowners out of the ASHP market compared to an oil boiler upgrade option.



David Blevings, OFTEC's Ireland manager

A more practical solution (and low cost) would be to offer an incentive to replace older, less efficient boilers with modern condensing appliances giving efficiencies in excess of 90%. A nationwide boiler replacement scheme, similar to the scheme in Northern Ireland, would see a significant reduction in oil use, a reduction in consumers' fuel bills and emissions.

Even those who support subsidies on the grounds that scaling up the production of renewable technologies might move them down the cost curve, acknowledge that the more significant problem is that these cost curves are still much higher than those of fossil fuel alternatives (given the oil cost mentioned above).

The incremental improvements of deploying technologies at a massive scale will not lead to breakthroughs in cost or performance competitiveness. In other words, they will not lead to new and cheaper cost curves compared to hydrocarbon alternatives. Put simply, the widespread subsidisation of the introduction of heat pump technology is not the quick fix as many proponents claim.

So, what is the answer? Well, it depends on your house type, age, insulation, lifestyle, preference and grant availability. For me, oil does what it says on the tin: it's tried, tested, reliable and I can choose my supplier and have product with me the same day. Oil first choice, every time!

OFTEC leads the campaign for mandatory registration

by David Blevings, OFTEC Ireland manager

OFTEC is leading the charge to get mandatory registration for stove installers in Ireland. We are working with CER, Gas Networks, RGI and ILPGA to provide a carbon monoxide response service to solid fuel and oil consumers and have recently investigated and reported on several stove installs that have caused problems.

We are working with the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government and preparing a list of 'competent installers' that will be circulated to all local councils and, in our opinion, paves the way for a mandatory registration scheme.



OFTEC has recently investigated and reported on several stove installations that have caused problems

Thousands of solid fuel stoves have already been installed in Ireland and many are non-compliant and present a real threat to life and buildings from poor flueing, air ventilation and other serious issues.

A recent installation in Cork makes this point. It came to our attention when the householder reported smoke coming into the room continuously following a new stove install. The stove was installed by a local unregistered installer who did initially come back to the job and adjusted the flue each time (charging for each visit) but to no avail; the problems persisted.

Referred to OFTEC

The customer visited her local stove

shop and asked for help. She was referred to OFTEC and our regional representative in Ireland, Sean McBride, made contact by phone and discovered that she has no data plate, no CO alarm fitted and, worse still, no ventilation!

Sean advised her not to light the stove and arranged to visit the site with a local technician holding the 108 registration. On arrival a site report was prepared for the customer listing the faults and non-compliances.

The customer reported that the installer advised that the install did not require a vent or CO alarm fitted – this is incorrect. In addition, the flue was too low and the lack of vent and incorrect flue length combined to cause the problem.

The customer was advised to contact her local authority and spoke with a senior building officer in Cork Council based in Mallow. His advice was: "Sorry, as it's not a new build we have no power to act and can't ask the installer to return and make the install compliant with Part J."

Legal redress

His advice was to seek legal redress and this is an issue we have taken up with the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government and asked them to clarify what powers, if any, the local authority has to investigate non-compliant stove and oil installations. It seems harsh to resort to legal action in the first instance – a call and instruction to rectify from the local council seeking compliance would be much easier than legal redress and would create a partnership with installers and improve install compliance rates.

The homeowner then contacted her solicitor and they issued proceedings against the original installer. When approaching the time for the court hearing, the legal team asked for an independent report on the failings and what it would cost to make the installation compliant.

Again, an OFTEC registered technician with the 108 scope visited the house concerned and prepared a report with costings. This was submitted to the court and the case was heard on the 6th March 2017. The installer did not attend and the good

news is that the judge found against him and awarded full costs to the house owner. They are now employing a registered technician to make good the installation and compliant with Part J of the building regulations.

While this is encouraging, OFTEC's concern is that there are still hundreds, if not thousands of stoves that have been installed in Ireland that do not comply with building regulations. These will need repair/replacement in the next few years – while this will present opportunities for good registered stove installers, the concern is how many people will be poisoned/killed by carbon monoxide from leaking, non-compliant stoves/flues and buildings damaged from fires in the meantime.

It is seriously worrying that government has taken so long to recognise the threat posed by poorly installed stoves and the slow uptake on the proposed mandatory registration of solid fuel operatives to protect consumers.

As we progress our relationship with local councils and the department, we are hopeful that all partners will be recommending that oil and solid fuel installs are carried out by OFTEC registered technicians. This will be positive for OFTEC registered technicians and a huge benefit for consumers who will receive a building regulation compliant install.

There is work out there for technicians holding the 108 scope. If you have a current valid solid fuel qualification and are already OFTEC registered, you can add the solid fuel competence from only £50/€65 and we would encourage you to make contact so we can increase our solid fuel database which we are actively promoting to local councils and SEAI.



Sean McBride, OFTEC's Ireland representative, assists stove owner to get a compliant install

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OFTEC

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The importance of an often-forgotten safety device...

Industry standards necessitate the fitting of remote acting fire safety valves as a fundamental part of any oil boiler installation. They also state that testing should be carried out at least once a year to ensure the valve is operating correctly.

Kenneth Maxwell, sales manager at Teddington Appliance Controls, which manufactures the KBB fire valve, explains more

A fire safety valve may be a relatively simple and straightforward component – but failure to fit one, correctly install or carry out regular maintenance checks can have a potentially devastating impact and put lives at risk.

Regional building regulations require all oil-fired boilers to be fitted with a fire safety valve. Insurers will also often look for fire valves as a key safety device on an oil-fired system.

It is therefore essential that technicians performing new boiler installs or replacement work ensure a properly fitted fire valve is in place.

Installation

The fire valve needs to be installed in the oil supply pipeline outside the building, a minimum of 50mm from the ground and close to the point where the pipeline enters the building, with the sensor mounted firmly inside the appliance casing above the burner in accordance with the appliance manufacturer's instructions. It is important to check correct operation of the valve before fitting.

Those with a capillary tube connecting the sensor to the valve – such as the KBB – should run in a protected position without over-sharp bends, particularly near to the sensor.

When the temperature at the sensor exceeds the set value (between 85 to 100°C or 60 to 75°C if using a KBB) the valve will snap closed, cutting off the flow of oil to the property.

Whatever type of valve is used, the valve manufacturer's advice should always be taken regarding the maximum acceptable activation temperature.

The valve will remain in the shut-off position until the appropriate action has been taken to restore normal operating conditions and the reset button has been pressed.

When installing a fire valve, it's important to consider the following:

- The valve should be installed in the oil supply line outside the property
- If an external boiler is used, then the valve should be installed in accordance with the boiler manufacturer's instructions
- If installed in any orientation other than horizontal, then it must be protected from the weather to prevent water ingress
- Do not cut, crimp or compress the capillary tube and avoid tight bends
- Failure due to any water ingress – because of incorrect fitting – will often invalidate any warranty
- If running the capillary under a concrete floor use a suitably sized conduit to aid replacement of the valve in case of damage or failure

OFTEC's OFT-10-600A and OFT10-105E training courses cover the installation of fuel supply systems and the installation of fire safety valves.

Maintenance

British Standard 5410-1:2014 sets out the code of practice for oil fired appliances up to 45kW output used for heating and hot water supply purposes.

Section 16.4 on the Oil Supply System makes clear that oil supply fire valves should be inspected and checked for proper operation, including testing their reset function where appropriate, at least once a year. Where leakage is suspected from an oil supply line, pressure testing should also be carried out.

Field testing procedures for both mechanical and electrically operated remote acting fire valves are given in OFTEC Technical Books 2 and 5 along with further advice on oil line testing procedures and replacing flexible oil lines in OFTEC Technical Book 2.

Technicians are advised to visually inspect the valve for signs of damage and/or oil leakage at joints with the oil supply pipe. The sensor capillary tube should be checked throughout its length for any kinks or damage and to ensure that it is adequately supported and protected.

Due to the high risk of scalding open to technicians, OFTEC no longer supports the once common method of using boiling water as a test to prove the operation of fire valves.

Instead, the correct operation of the fire valve should be checked using appropriate electronic test equipment. Teddington's KBT1000, for example, checks that the operation to close the fire valve takes place at a specified temperature as well as ensuring that the valve can be manually reset once the sensor temperature has reduced to a normal operating level.

As industry guidelines make clear, fire safety valves should not be overlooked. Although it may never be needed, they perform a crucial and often unknown role, safeguarding properties against the risk of fire and potentially saving lives...

www.kbbfirevalve.co.uk



Kenneth Maxwell, sales manager at Teddington Appliance Controls



Job opportunities at OFTEC

Compliance Manager

Full-time 37½ hours p/w - Salary £27,000 - £31,000 DOE

Based in Ipswich, OFTEC compliance manager is the liaison point for dispute resolution between registered technicians and the consumers who use their services and rely on their expertise. The post-holder also leads on action to safeguard the OFTEC brand and work closely with regional trading standards when misuse of our trademark occurs.

Candidates should be knowledgeable of the heating industry but also have awareness of consumer matters and the disputes that sometimes arise with tradespeople. Patience, good listening and communication skills are a must along with the satisfaction of resolving a consumer grievance.

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You will also investigate complaints and could represent OFTEC at trade events and meetings with other industry bodies. Knowledge of oil industry legislation is essential and previous auditing or assessing experience would be desirable. Computer literacy and exceptional customer skills are required for these roles.

The closing date for both roles is 9th June 2017

To request an application form and job description for either role, please contact Andrew Peirson (Office and HR Manager) on 01473 618552 or apeirson@oftec.org

OFTEC is the Oil Firing Technical Association. OFTEC represents and promotes the domestic oil heating and cooking industry in the UK and Republic of Ireland and is the provider of a Competent Persons Scheme. For more information, visit www.oftec.org



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2) Existing OFTEC registered businesses. Other fees apply for new applications.



www.joinoftec.com

Oil tanks... all safe and sound

Oil storage tanks are often the forgotten and unloved, yet vitally important, part of a safe oil fired heating system. Homeowners perhaps only tend to consider them when they run out of oil or when their condition is mentioned by the friendly registered technician who is inspecting them as part of the annual boiler service.

Although oil tanks can have a service life in excess of 20 years, like all things, they do have a finite life and homeowners need to be aware of the need for future replacement. The actual service life will depend on the installation and maintenance conditions experienced by the oil tank, such as correct support of the tank base, long term exposure to the sun and the maintenance regime applied during its life.

Single skinned oil tanks that are over 10 years old or overgrown with vegetation may also be at risk. Particularly close inspection of a tank is required if it is not correctly supported, if surface discolouration, staining or hairline cracks are visible, if corrosion is apparent or deformation noticed. Should oil tanks be identified in such condition then the homeowner must be notified, a warning sticker placed on the tank and a warning noticed issued.

Clean-up costs

It is important that the homeowner is made aware of the seriousness of an oil tank that leaks from both an environmental perspective and the costs of any clean up – in both financial terms and from a disruption perspective.

When the need for a replacement oil tank arises, a number of points need to be considered to ensure a compliant and safe installation is achieved:

- A T/133D (or T/133ND for non-domestic) oil storage and fire risk assessment for all above ground oil tanks should be completed (implementation variations may exist from region to region and also from domestic to non-domestic installations). The installer must also notify the installation;
- Where possible oil tanks should be installed at ground level on a correctly sized and constructed base to improve the safe access to the filling point for delivery technicians;
- Oil tanks located within buildings are feasible but there are specific installation requirements that need to be followed, specifically in relation to fire protection;
- Where vapourising appliances are installed, other options such as the use of an oil lifter should be considered rather than using an oil tank on a raised platform;
- Similarly, where pressure jet appliances are present, de-aeration devices should be considered as an alternative to a



- tank on a raised platform;
- Where de-aeration devices are used consideration needs to be given to supply pipework sizing and the need for conversion to a two pipe system at the de-aerator to the oil fired appliance;
- Oil tank installations should be thoroughly visually inspected annually.

Further technical articles on some of the points raised above will appear in future editions of *Oil Installer*. However, guidance on the above points can also be found in OFTEC Technical Book 3 and this should be followed. Should you have any specific enquiries then the OFTEC technical help line is here to assist: Tel: 01473 626298 option 3, email: technical@oftec.org



Heating system expansion vessels...

Size does matter!

Traditional open vented heating systems utilising feed and expansion vessels are gradually being converted or replaced with sealed pressurised heating systems.

There are a number of advantages to sealed heating systems including no longer requiring the feed and expansion cistern, noise reduction and the virtual elimination of corrosion since there should be no possibility of air ingress.

Unsurprisingly, the functions of the feed and expansion cistern are to provide a positive head pressure to the heating system and to accommodate the increased volume in system water as the water is heated to its maximum operating temperature. In a sealed system this important function is undertaken by the expansion vessel which contains a flexible rubber membrane within a steel vessel, i.e. an inflated balloon in a tin can. The gas side (usually a nitrogen rich air mixture) is typically pressurised to a value slightly below that of the cold static water pressure of the heating system.

By its very nature a sealed system has an initial fixed volume of water within a fixed system volume (boiler, radiators, pipework, etc.). The effects of increasing the temperature of the water in a fixed volume will result in an increase in the pressure within

the system due to the expansion and incompressibility of the water. The air in an expansion vessel, being compressible, allows the membrane to be pushed back in to the metal casing, as the system water pressure increases due to heating, the reduced volume on the air side of the vessel results in a corresponding increase in the air pressure within the vessel.

The flexing of the membrane within

the vessel provides additional volume to the system and helps maintain a relatively constant system pressure.

Pressure relief valve

Without an expansion vessel, or where the existing expansion vessel is undersized, under-inflated or has failed, the system pressure will rise as the temperature increases until it reaches a value whereby a safety



The respective component water volumes are as follows:

Component	Total Length, m	Water volume per m	Component water volume, L
Boiler			20
Hot water cylinder			3
Double panel convector radiators	11.4	6.6	75.24
Single panel convector radiators	3.3	3.2	10.56
22mm copper pipework	35	0.32	11.2
15mm copper pipework	80	0.145	11.6
		Sub-Total	131.6
Safety margin (10% total component volume)			
		Total Volume	144.76 (145L)



pressure relief valve operates. The accompanying discharge from the pressure relief valve and loss of water gives rise to a reduced volume of water in the system which, on the cooling of the heating system, results in a drop in static pressure shown on the system pressure gauge.

Discharge from the pressure relief valve inevitably means a consequential loss of corrosion inhibitor chemical, re-pressurisation of the system and further dilution of the remaining corrosion inhibitor. This reduces one of the benefits of having a sealed system, namely the virtual elimination of corrosion as continual re-pressurisation may be required until the issue is rectified.

The most important factor in the correct sizing of an expansion vessel is understanding the total heating system water volume which, for existing systems in particular, can be a challenge to deduce due to hidden pipework runs, etc. For optimal sizing, the water content of boilers, radiators and cylinder coils can be determined from manufacturer's data. Estimates of the water volume of the various pipework lengths for the pipe diameters present in the system can

be made using table 16.2 given in the CIBSE Domestic Heating Design Guide (2016) and the corresponding water content calculated. When added together these volumes form the total system volume.

Once the total system volume has been determined and the initial system pressure, vessel air pressure and safety pressure relief valve rating are known, then a minimum value of expansion vessel can be determined from table 16.3 of the Domestic Heating Design Guide.

As an example, if we assume a typical 20kW heat-only appliance being installed to an existing system that is being converted to a sealed system where the system volume is unknown. The maximum system pressure will be 2.5 Bar (determined by safety pressure relief valve setting) and the static system water pressure will be 1 Bar.

From table 16.3 in the Domestic Heating Design Guide, based on the 2.5 Bar safety pressure relief valve and system pressure of 1Bar, we can select a total expansion capacity based on the system volume. Where the calculated system volume is not shown in the table we can use the multiplying

factor given in the bottom row of the table (0.134), in our example 145L is not shown so: required total expansion capacity = $145L \times 0.134 = 19.43L$. The closest standard sized expansion vessel would be 24L.

Supplementary vessel

Consideration needs to be given to the location and fixing of the vessel to ensure it is securely mounted as the weight of the vessel may increase considerably as the system heats up and the vessel takes up the expanding water. If the boiler contained an internal expansion vessel, for example 12L, then a supplementary vessel of 12L capacity would need to be installed external to the boiler to give the correct total expansion capacity. Any additional guidance given in the boiler manufacturer's instructions will also need to be adhered to.

Many expansion vessel manufacturers provide calculation tools for the selection of expansion vessels which can result in differences in the resultant selected sizes when compared to the calculation method used above. These differences are due to the use of differing safety factors.

Life expectancy

The life expectancy of expansion vessels depends on operating conditions such as water temperature, location within the system and correct sizing. The expansion vessel should be located on the return side of the system pipework where the system water will be cooler. Under sizing of the expansion capacity gives rise to a faster thinning of the membrane over time and an increased rate of air diffusion through the membrane in to the system water. This results in a loss of air pressure and consequently an apparent drop in the system water pressure shown on the system pressure gauge. This, in turn, requires system re-pressurisation with the effect of more water entering the expansion vessel, reduction in the expansion volume and higher system pressure at the operating temperature.

Even with correctly sized expansion vessels it is important to check the air pressure on the expansion vessel in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, typically once a year as part of the annual boiler service. The checking of the air pressure must be done with the heating system water cold and the pressure at or near zero Bar to ensure a correct air pressure reading and hence air charge within the vessel.

Specflue expands its range of training

Specflue, a leading UK supplier of flue and chimney products for oil, solid fuel and gas systems, is expanding its range of training to include HETAS's new dry solid fuel appliance service and maintenance course.

The two-day practical course – H009: Service and Maintenance – is aimed at engineers who do not want to undertake installation work, such as professional chimney sweeps, maintenance operatives and local authority operatives responsible for housing stock using solid fuel as a primary heat source.

Specflue is offering places on the course at its training facility in Sudbury, Suffolk. The company also offers all course participants free accommodation, no matter how far they travel.

The new course was developed in close collaboration with the three HETAS-approved associations – the Association of Professional Independent Chimney Sweeps, the Guild of Master Chimney Sweeps and National Association of Chimney Sweeps.

Jenna Bartholomew, training co-ordinator at Specflue, said: "Focusing on practical activities throughout the majority of the course, attendees are assessed on service and maintenance procedures through observation while carrying out a variety of related tasks. A multiple choice 18-question paper concludes the assessment.

"Successfully completing the course entitles participants to a training certificate enabling them to apply for registration with HETAS on the competent person registration scheme (CPS) for servicing and maintaining appliances."

Introducing the new course, HETAS said: "Solid fuel appliances are well known for their high quality, robust construction and durability. However, like any product in continuous use they do require attention by the user and routine servicing by an engineer. HETAS recommends that appliances are serviced at least once a year or according to the manufacturer's instructions."

www.specfluetraining.com

TC offers OFTEC course at new facility



TC Training has extended its scope of OFTEC courses to include Solid Fuel and Commercial Oil. The courses are held at the company's new training and assessment centre in Tile Cross, Birmingham, which has been purposely designed to facilitate the many requests from engineers to have a training and assessment centre in the West Midlands area for OFTEC solid fuel, commercial, domestic oil and associated electrical courses. www.tctraininglimited.co.uk

Industry leaders establish skills partnership

Three of the plumbing industry's leading organisations – the Association of Plumbing and Heating Contractors (APHC), high-profile provider of qualifications and assessments BPEC, and the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers Federation (SNIPEF) – have collaborated to establish the Plumbing and Heating Skills Partnership (PHSP).

This new skills partnership has a UK focus and is led by employers from the plumbing and heating industry. The partnership took over responsibility for the skills needs of the industry as from 1st April 2017. The PHSP plans to work closely with other industry and government organisations that have a keen interest in skills to help meet the needs of the industry.

Andrew Beaumont, chairman of the APHC, commented: "We are very much looking forward to the plumbing and heating industry taking full responsibility for meeting the education and training needs of those who work in the industry."

The Plumbing and Heating Skills Partnership has been established as a result of the imminent closure of SummitSkills and the APHC, BPEC and SNIPEF acknowledge the invaluable work of SummitSkills' personnel carried out over many years.

More information about the PHSP will be available soon. In the meantime further details are available by contacting: APHC, John Thompson: info@aphc.co.uk; BPEC, Paul Johnson: info@bpec.org.uk; or SNIPEF, Duncan Wilson: phsp@snipef.org.



Specflue training now includes the HETAS dry solid fuel appliance service and maintenance course

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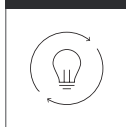


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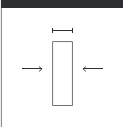
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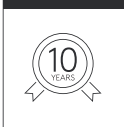
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Five gold stars in every category for tank specialists!

In an official Safe Trader Scheme operated by Lancashire County Council Trading Standards Service, Preston-based oil tank specialists, J.Seed & Company, have scored top marks in everything they do – earning many enviable customer comments and reviews along the way!

The Safe Trader Scheme assists residents of Lancashire to find reputable traders for property repairs, home improvements, gardening services, mobility aids and other services around the home. Businesses registered with the scheme have all demonstrated their commitment to fair and honest trading and have pledged to deliver good customer service.

Since April of last year, J.Seed has received around 40 customer reviews which, between them have earned the company the maximum of five gold stars in each category – for customer service, quality of work, and punctuality/efficiency.

Customers also have the opportunity to leave comments about the service received, and the following review, left on March 2nd this year, is typical of all feedback left: *“Excellent service from start to finish. Helpful on the phone, visited to price job. Great guys completed the work when they said they would and to price quoted. Couldn’t have been better.”*

Proud of feedback

Wendi Whittle, sales manager for J.Seed since 2001, told *Oil Installer*: *“We are all very proud of the feedback we have received! After every domestic install we do, we send out a questionnaire for the householder to complete and send*

back to Lancashire County Council with feedback about how we have performed.

“As a business we find the scheme invaluable as every time we send a quote out we also send details out of the scheme, inviting prospective customers to read what our existing customers think of us – and our acceptance rate on quotes is very high!

“Customers have also told us that they have gone on to use the scheme to find trade people for other work they’ve needed doing, with the confidence they are using someone vetted and verified by an independent party.”

Other feedback comments about J.Seed & Company left on the Safe Trader Scheme website include: *“Excellent service. Initial advice on the survey and work was beyond the call of duty by the installation team”* and *“This was the best customer experience I’ve had for many years. From the first telephone contact to completion – they provided superb customer service and care.”*

J.Seed is a family-run business with more than 50 years of experience in the manufacture and installation of oil tanks for both domestic and commercial use. The company was started by Joseph Seed in 1957 making gates and railings, but progressed into the manufacture of oil tanks a few years later. Within a very short time, J.Seed & Company had built up a well respected reputation in Lancashire and beyond for the manufacture of high quality oil tanks – a reputation which, according to the Safe Trader Scheme, continues to this day. www.jseed.co.uk

Opportunity to become involved in HomeSpill inspection network

Oil Spill Insurance has recently launched a new and unique online insurance policy, HomeSpill.

The policy provides specialist environmental services including an annual tank system inspection and 24/7 emergency spill response in the event of a leak or spill, together with insurance cover to clean up resultant land and water pollution.

OFTEC’s network of oil tank specialists provides the initial and thereafter annual oil tank system inspection for insurers and we are now looking for suitably qualified OFTEC members in England, Scotland and Wales to add to this network.

There is a significant opportunity for OFTEC members involved in this initiative, in both carrying out the inspections and any resultant remedial work. OFTEC is looking to work with those who will understand the long term opportunity and the need for professionalism, treating customers fairly and avoiding any conflicts of interest.

There are various criteria that insurers have stipulated for those carrying out the inspections, including:

- The firm or individual should be a current OFTEC member
- Individuals carrying out the inspection should hold a current OFTEC OFT 600a qualification (in some circumstances OFT 101)
- The firm or individual should hold public/products liability and professional indemnity insurance cover to at least the minimum level suggested by OFTEC. i.e. £2m public/products liability and £250,000 professional indemnity insurance

This is an exciting opportunity to be involved in an initiative that OFTEC believes will bring about much needed change and improvement in the industry and, in addition, help to protect the environment.

If you are interested in joining the HomeSpill™ inspection network or want more information, please contact Judy Hadden at Oil Spill Insurance – email: Judy@oilspillinsurance.co.uk; tel: 07818 225 585.



It's time to talk about tanks...

It's probably fair to say that fuel storage is not the most exciting topic, even within the heating industry, so it's not surprising that the tank is often the most neglected part of an oil heating system.

That needs to change and OFTEC has joined forces with the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers (FPS) to launch a new tank awareness campaign, aimed at helping consumers understand their responsibilities as tank owners and encouraging them to get their tank checked and, if necessary, replaced.

Leaks from heating oil tanks are mercifully rare, but their reliability can easily lead to complacency. It is important that homeowners understand the need to take action before a leak occurs, because even a small spill can prove costly and have serious impacts on the environment. Like all heating products a tank will not last forever, and OFTEC and FPS have become increasingly concerned about the threat that life-expired tanks could pose to the reputation of the industry. There is also a possibility that insurers may refuse to include tanks within household policies unless there is evidence that we as an industry are taking action.

Regular checks

The campaign includes information in local newspapers, online resources available from the Oilsave website and a simple animated video that explains that the best way to avoid problems is to have the tank checked regularly by an OFTEC registered technician as part of a boiler service.



OFTEC and FPS launch the Tanks Safe campaign. Left to right: OFTEC chairman Nick Hawkins, director commercial operations at Kingspan Environmental; OFTEC CEO Paul Rose; FPS training & technical manager, Tony Brown; FPS marketing & events manager Dawn Shakespeare; and FPS president, Duncan Grant

It also describes some simple checks homeowners can do and the warning signs they should look out for.

The information stresses that the checks are particularly important for single skinned tanks that are more than twenty years old. OFTEC can also supply information leaflets, such as our domestic oil storage and domestic oil supply pipe home guides, for you to give out to your customers.

Malcolm Farrow, OFTEC's marketing and communications manager said: "We realise that homeowners will be reluctant to spend out on a new tank but, as an industry, we need to

help them understand the risks of not taking action. Installing a new tank before a problem occurs is clearly preferable to dealing with the difficulties and cost associated with a major leak.

"With the oil price still low, we hope that home owners will be receptive to this message and feel a new tank is a worthwhile investment. Regular checks also have other benefits, such as preventing the build-up of sludge or water, which can both affect system reliability and performance."

To view the tank awareness video, visit: <https://youtu.be/igk6JbKbV3M>



Firebird launches new range of high-efficiency heat pumps

Firebird's new range of Enviroair air source heat pumps are taking heating to another level, claims the company. The MCS approved Enviroair range not only boasts ultra-quiet operation, but the COP can produce 4kW of energy for every kW of energy used to power the heat pump.

These high levels of efficiency, says Firebird, not only reduce fuel bills for the homeowner, but can also save up to 60% in running costs when compared to other air source heat pumps.

Available in single phase outputs from 7.5 kW to 16kW, the Enviroair range provides a compact and space saving solution as a single monobloc unit installed outside the property.

Following changes to the domestic RHI (Renewable Heat Incentive) which came into effect from 1st April 2017, homeowners installing an air source heat pump will now be eligible to receive increased tariffs of 10.02p/kWh

(previously 7.5p/kWh) for seven years.

"The outstanding energy efficiency of the Enviroair range of air source heat pumps is achieved by utilising cutting-edge DC inverter technology," explains the company. "This technology keeps temperature fluctuations to a minimum and ensures heat output matches the heating load of the property – saving up to 40% of energy compared to systems without this technology."

Room temperatures are controlled with an intuitive, wireless programmable thermostat, which can be operated remotely. The system controller automatically runs the entire heating system, including controlling any pre-existing boilers and has a built-in weather compensation control.

Commenting on the launch of the Enviroair range of air source heat pumps, David Hall, UK director of Firebird Products Ltd said: "These are very exciting times for Firebird as the

addition of the Enviroair range firmly positions Firebird as a total heating solutions supplier.

"The benefit to the homeowner is twofold as installing an Enviroair air source heat pump can significantly reduce heating costs and at the same time allow full advantage to be taken of increased RHI payments."

www.firebird.uk.com



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Emerging “disruptive trends and technologies” top UK energy agenda

A new survey, released by the World Energy Council, highlights shifting priorities in the energy sector with an increasing impetus towards a lower carbon future.

“Disruptive technologies”, including renewable energies and energy efficiency, are said to be seriously affecting top action priorities for energy leaders globally in 2017.

Renewables ranked high in impact within every region identified in a survey of more than 1,200 energy leaders in 95 countries. Solar has seen immense growth in installed capacity, reaching 227GW by the end of 2015, while global wind power generation capacity increased at a rate of 17.2% in 2015.

The UK’s commitment to decarbonisation, aided by one of the best wind resource and tidal potential in Europe, has led to a substantial growth in renewable energy. In 2015 the UK’s GHG emissions fell below 500 million tonnes for the first time as renewables hit a record

25% of electricity generation due to increased renewable capacity.

In its eighth year, World Energy Issues Monitor 2017: ‘Exposing the New Energy Realities’, published by the World Energy Council, provides a snapshot of the current priorities facing global energy leaders.

Dr Christoph Frei, secretary general of the World Energy Council, said: “Our survey shows that energy leaders face and acknowledge disruptive change. The Issues Monitor illustrates that innovation issues such as digitalisation, decentralisation, innovative market design or electric storage rapidly gain traction, while a more difficult growth context and new physical and digital risks are posing ever greater threats to the energy sector.”

Findings in 2017 include:


- New physical and virtual risks – cyber-attacks are posing ever greater threats to the energy sector. If a critical attack was

to occur on the electricity distribution network of London and the South and East of England, between 9 million and 13 million electricity consumers could be affected with economic losses ranging from £11.6 billion to £85.5 billion

- Commodity price volatility remains number one critical uncertainty. Compared to 2015, the issue of commodity prices in 2016 and 2017 is seen as less uncertain but higher in impact, by UK energy leaders


The World Energy Council is the principal impartial network of energy leaders and practitioners promoting an affordable, stable and environmentally sensitive energy system for the greatest benefit of all. Formed in 1923, the council is the UN-accredited global energy body, representing the entire energy spectrum, with over 3,000 member organisations in over 90 countries.

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Kensa project wins top retrofit award

An innovative energy switching project, completed by Kensa Heat Pumps and Hanover Housing Association, has won the title 'Most Innovative Retrofit Scheme' at the Housing Innovation Awards.

Celebrating the 'leading lights' in the housing sector with 'pioneering spirit and inventive and original schemes and services', the Housing Innovation Awards honoured Hanover and Kensa's first joint project at a ceremony in Covent Garden.

The 'Most Innovative Retrofit Scheme' was the outcome of a commitment to improve Hanover's residents' wellbeing and help reduce fuel poverty by an energy switching programme in 22 flats in Ipswich. The two storey project comprised the replacement of electric storage heaters with more

efficient Kensa ground source heat pumps, which were connected to twelve shared 'micro district' ground arrays.

The micro district design avoided the need for a plant room, and provides complete heating independence to the tenants who are free to switch energy providers. Each resident also received a new hot water cylinder and radiators in place of the old night storage units.

Awards judge John O'Brien, Director of BRE Innovation Park, praised the retrofit project's contribution to combatting fuel poverty: "The heat pump solution tackled a number of issues with retrofit, namely for properties off the gas network or what we call hard-to-treat, but also trying to make sure it's affordable as well, and the payback periods are good.

"Fuel poverty is a huge issue and if we are going to be able to make sure we have the right retrofit solutions, especially around heating, then this is an opportunity to show that we've addressed a very difficult area of the problem."

Simon Lomax, managing director at Kensa Heat Pumps said: "We are delighted that the success

of Hanover's Ashfield Court project with Kensa has been recognised with this award. Increasingly, social landlords are discovering that ground source heat pumps not only provide plentiful, reliable and low cost heating for their tenants but also generate an attractive financial return via the government's Renewable Heat Incentive."

www.kensaheatpumps.com



The Kensa-Hanover Housing team with their Housing Innovation Award

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Is this No. 1 in our rogue's gallery to date?

As we said in the last edition, just when you think you have seen it all, something else – even more frightening – crops up! But can the disturbing photograph of the “dustbin oil tank” featured below be beaten?

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



When Ross Adam of RMY Oil Solutions in Aberdeenshire was called out to a breakdown, he was shocked to see what confronted him. The “oil tank” was a dustbin sited directly on top of the boiler! “I advised the customer that I would not be carrying out any repair until a suitable tank was fitted and that he should isolate the boiler in the meantime,” Ross explained to Oil Installer. However, the customer responded by insisting that the setup was perfectly safe and that he would get someone else to repair his boiler...

RMY Oil Solutions are OFTEC registered engineers providing oil boiler servicing and maintenance in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, and throughout north east Scotland.

Andy Challenor, proprietor of Royale Boiler Services in Barlaston Stoke-on-Trent, was called out to a holiday let recently after the owner had reported thick black smoke being emitted from the oil-fired boiler. “Probably just a quick job,” he was told... But after stripping down the offending boiler, it turned out to be anything but quick, as can be seen from his series of photographs!

OFTEC-registered Andy has more than 20 years of experience under his belt in boiler servicing, heat fault diagnosis, installations and upgrades having worked for the armed forces, Baxi and British Gas. Royale Boiler Services was established in 2014 to undertake oil and gas boiler work throughout Staffordshire.



Letters to the Editor...



Dear Editor,

Martin Bridges is quite right (Readers' Letters, Oil Installer, Spring edition). The written and spoken word can appear to change in meaning when transposed to paper, but I have never made any adverse comment about the vast majority of fine domestic/commercial heating engineers employed by our over-regulated industry.

A well trained and organised technician who has the correct mindset to carry out the best work for his customer would never compromise his installation. He/she knows that this is the quick way to destroy their reputations.

Unfortunately our industry is peppered with people whose only issue is to line their pockets at the expense of the public. The trade press frequently mention the distress caused to customers by the actions of these uncaring and mostly untrained people.

As mentioned previously and as a back-up to Peter Thom's recent open letter to the Prime Minister, our industry is probably the most over-regulated section of the construction industry. However regulated the trade is, there are always some unscrupulous persons willing and able to duck under the wire. These are the people to whom I was referring in my previous article (Oil Installer, Winter 2016 edition) – not our vast number of fine, responsible and caring men and women in the trade in which I have been fortunately employed for many years.

Clive King, FIDHEE
Oil Heating Consultant,
Exeter, Devon

Dear Editor,

Reading Oil Installer (Spring 2017 volume 11), I came to the readers' letters and read a letter from Ben Clarke. That letter was spot on. He said all that is wrong with OFTEC and building inspectors. I am looking forward to the response in the summer edition.

Stephen Hill (OFTEC Registered)
Stephen Hill Engineering
Jersey

An evolving heating world...

The Editor responds to the last edition's letter from Ben Clarke

We are always very happy to receive comments and opinions voiced by Oil Installer readers. The magazine is, of course, produced specifically for registered members of OFTEC who are trained in all aspects of oil heating installation and maintenance. However, when fuel oil was at the top end of the price scale, many of these professional and highly competent installers began to seriously consider diversifying into other heating disciplines – predominantly involving renewable resources such as solid fuel, biomass, heat pumps, etc., etc.

This diversification was recognised by OFTEC who themselves began to support such business initiatives by their members. In a small way, Oil Installer therefore began to feature complementary methods of heating which are frequently practiced by OFTEC members. Oil Installer offers this as a service to readers, and in no way promotes non-oil heating as a total substitute to oil heating – which, as we all know, is one of the cheapest and most efficient forms of heating currently available.

Regarding the point about expansion vessels, OFTEC would remind technicians of the importance of referring to the manufacturer's instructions, and encourage readers to see the article on page 30. Free technical advice for registered technicians is also available via the helpline.

Oil Installer is celebrating its 10th anniversary later this year. Even at the very beginning – a decade ago – it was not uncommon for OFTEC members to be installing non-oil heating solutions. But rest assured, we have no plans to rename the publication... although, as it states under the main page one title, we will continue to publish "news and views from an evolving heating world."

Editor

Editor's note: Oil Installer reserves the right to edit readers' letters to ensure that what is printed is legal, honest and decent. Neither Oil Installer nor OFTEC necessarily agrees with the opinions expressed within readers' letters. However, all correspondence is welcome whether it is highlighting a new subject, commenting on articles within Oil Installer, or responding to a previous reader's letter.

Share your thoughts, tips and experiences now. Email: jane@oilinstaller.co.uk

Pricing page

Oil users are the fuel price winners again

The latest comparative average heating price figures below cover the three months up to the end of April. The change compared to April 2013 – just four years earlier – is very striking and has been hugely beneficial for our industry. The beginning of 2013 marked a significant turning point because the cost of kerosene peaked during February at 62.83ppl in the UK, and since then has, for the most part, tumbled. Looking more recently, compared to the previous quarter, fuel prices in the UK have experienced both positive and negative fluctuations, depending on the fuel type. By contrast, in the Republic of Ireland, the majority of prices have

remained static while oil has seen a decrease in price.

For oil heating users in the UK, the good news is that the cost has decreased slightly this quarter for most areas, ranging from 1-3%. The exceptions are Scotland and Northern Ireland, where costs have risen by approximately 2% and 5% respectively. Regional variations can be quite significant and prices are usually highest in Scotland, where transport costs are a bigger factor. The best news comes from the Republic of Ireland where the average cost of home heating using oil has decreased by almost 8% compared to last quarter, which is excellent news for homeowners and oil heating businesses alike.

Homeowners with other types of heating have not all been so lucky. Over the last quarter, the biggest heating cost losers have been consumers of LPG and electricity in all UK regions. In Great Britain, consumers of LPG have experienced a price increase of approximately 5%, while in Northern Ireland LPG costs have risen by almost 8%. In Republic of Ireland, the cost of using LPG has remained static.

Consumers using electric heating in Great Britain have also seen an increase in costs, whereas in Northern and Southern Ireland prices have remained static. The natural gas price has remained static except in Northern Ireland where it has increased by over 2%.

Comparative space and water heating costs for a three bedroom house

GREAT BRITAIN

	Apr-13	Apr-17	Price change	% Difference
Anthracite Grains	1094	1114	20	1.85%
Electricity	1456	1744	289	19.82%
Gas (British Gas)	1079	967	-113	-10.43%
LPG	2461	1863	-597	-24.27%
LPG (Condensing)	2020	1535	-484	-23.98%
Oil	1751	1148	-603	-34.41%
Oil (Condensing)	1431	942	-489	-34.16%
Wood Pellets	1246	1284	38	3.07%
Air Source Heat Pump Radiators	1360	1576	215	15.84%

NORTHERN IRELAND

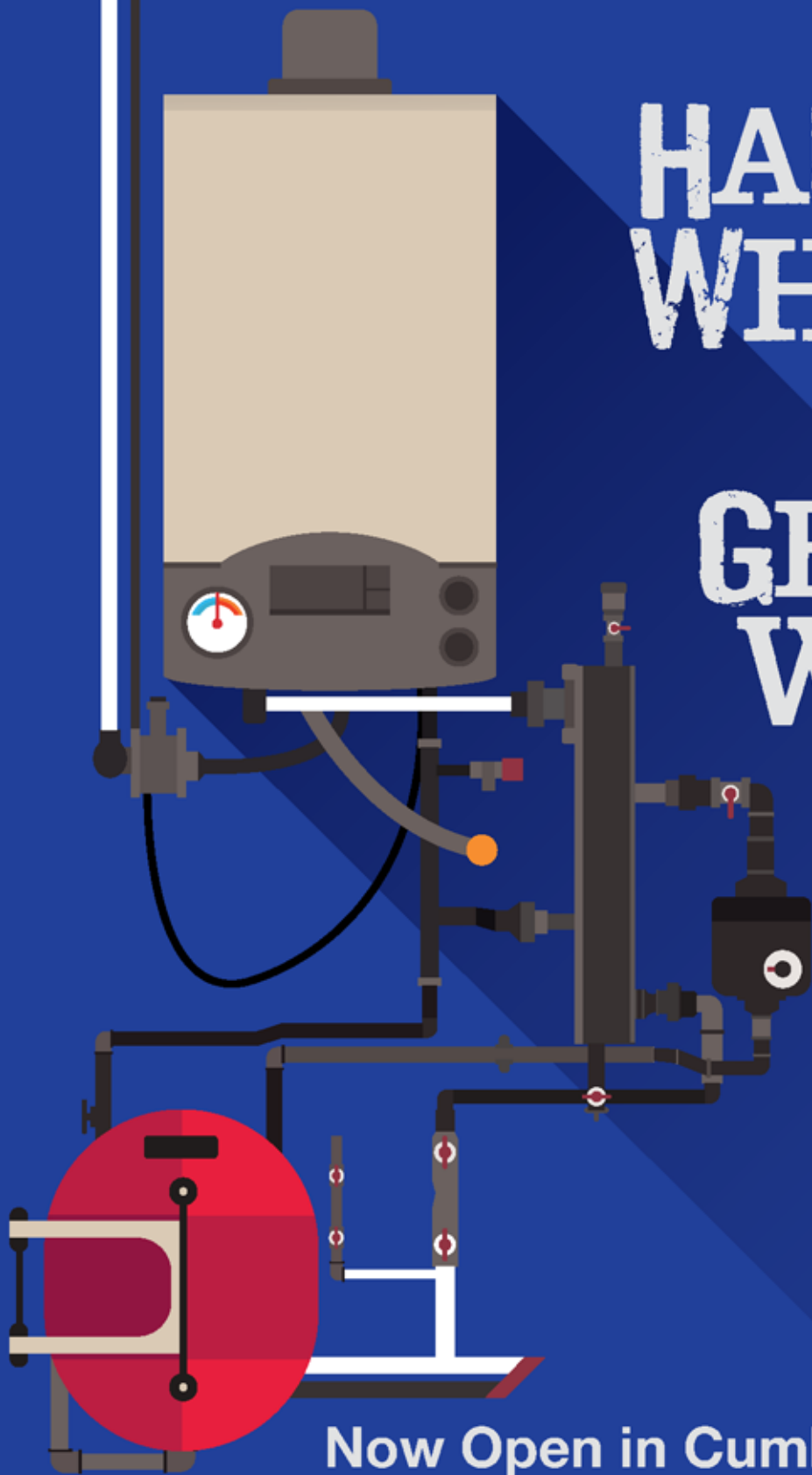
	Apr-13	Apr-17	Price change	% Difference
Anthracite Grains	1033	953	-80	-7.74%
Electricity	1498	1437	-61	-4.07%
Gas (Phoenix)	1036	845	-191	-18.44%
LPG	2542	2345	-197	-7.75%
LPG (Condensing)	2085	1925	-160	-7.67%
Oil	1668	1097	-571	-34.23%
Oil (Condensing)	1364	901	-463	-33.94%
Wood Pellets	1038	1124	86	8.29%
Air Source Heat Pump Radiators	1390	1384	-6	-0.43%

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	Apr-13	Apr-17	Price change	% Difference
Anthracite Grains	1297	1510	213	16.42%
Electricity	2086	1953	-133	-6.38%
Gas	1346	1291	-55	-4.09%
LPG	3479	2380	-1099	-31.59%
LPG (Condensing)	2853	1962	-891	-31.23%
Oil	2211	1383	-828	-37.45%
Oil (Condensing)	1804	1134	-670	-37.14%
Wood Pellets	1166	1310	144	12.35%
Air Source Heat Pump Radiators	1766	1718	-48	-2.72%

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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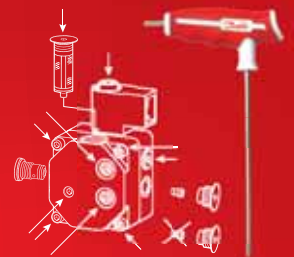
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