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New year, new challenges, new opportunities...

It's tempting to start this article by reflecting on the many good things that happened last year. After all, boiler sales reached a ten year high and the price of kerosene has remained at a level that keeps us cheaper than any of our competitors – see page 42 for a detailed fuel price comparison.



But businesses need to look forward, not backwards. Marking time isn't enough if you want to thrive in a changing and competitive marketplace. This is particularly true for OFTEC and this year we will be working harder than ever to understand what you, as our customer, need from us and making sure our services fully match your requirements and expectations. We will also be making important improvements to our online systems to make it easier for you to access our services, and for potential customers to find and contact you. We also want to make sure that homeowners are in no doubt about the benefits of using OFTEC registered businesses, so we will look for every opportunity to get the message out.

Moving forward also means we need to innovate because the heating industry doesn't stand still and governments, quite rightly, are demanding ever higher standards of emission control to minimise pollution and tackle the problem of climate change. It's great to see OFTEC members leading the way on this and you can read about the development of the new generation of burners on page 33. The need to innovate must continue into the 2020s and beyond if liquid fuels are to retain a place in the heating mix. The recent government consultation on the future of heat in buildings shows a willingness to consider a range of options and we, as an industry, need to have answers that show we can meet the challenge of carbon reduction. OFTEC is committed to meeting that challenge and we are actively seeking solutions to the need for a green alternative to fossil-based heating fuels.

Paul Rose

Chief Executive Officer

OFTEC

OFTEC registration updates



OFTEC's registration director
Adrian Lightwood

Prices frozen for 2017

The most important and no doubt welcome news for technicians is that OFTEC has announced that its registration fees will be frozen for 2017.

Commenting on the news, OFTEC's registration director Adrian Lightwood said: "We are committed to providing the best value that we can for registered technicians and, because the number of registrations has been rising, and by keeping a tight control on our operating costs, we've been able to freeze our registration fees this year at the 2016 level."

Solid fuel registrations top 100

In January OFTEC's solid fuel CPS scheme gained its 100th registration and the number of businesses taking out registration is continuing to grow with new applications coming in every week.

Adrian Lightwood commented: "As word gets out about the excellent value of our solid fuel competent person scheme, so more and more applications are coming in and I expect the number of technicians joining us to increase rapidly during 2017."

"The scheme is particularly good value for businesses that already hold OFTEC registration. We also offer biomass registration without MCS accreditation for businesses that want to offer a full range of solid fuel heating services."

For those looking to update their skills or expand their business offering, OFTEC solid fuel training is now available at nine training centres with more expected to offer the course during this year. Feedback on the training course, and OFTEC's solid fuel technical book, has been overwhelmingly positive.

Details of the solid fuel registration and training options can be found on the Join OFTEC website while the technical book can be purchased from OFTEC Direct.

Are your technical books up to date?

A couple of OFTEC accredited training centres have mentioned that technicians attending for re-assessments have arrived with out of date books and, as a result, are unable to answer the questions.

This is obviously very frustrating for the technician concerned and can easily be avoided simply by downloading the relevant updates from the technician area of OFTEC's website.

The updates are available to download free of charge for all technicians and notifications of new updates are announced in the OFTEC E-news each time one is added.

OFTEC events in 2017

OFTEC's event plan was still being finalised as *Oil Installer* was going to print, so please visit the technician area of the OFTEC website and look out for updates in the monthly E-News for details.

New website nears completion

OFTEC's new website is nearing completion and, providing final testing goes well, it should be available to use just a few weeks after you receive this edition of *Oil Installer*.

The aim of the project is to make the website more user-friendly and improve the way it displays on tablets and smart phones. Another key improvement will see logging in made much simpler.

Once the new site goes live, a single password will give users access to the secure area of the main OFTEC website and the OFTEC Direct shop. By the end of this year OFTEC also plans to integrate the OFTEC online website into

the new system, so that the same password will give access to all OFTEC's online services.

Commenting on the new project, Malcolm Farrow, OFTEC's marketing and communications manager, said: "Our goal is to provide the best possible service for registered technicians and improvements to our website are overdue because it was designed before tablets and smartphones became popular tools for surfing the net.

"It's taken a bit longer than we hoped to get the new site finished, but I'm confident that it will be worth it. Not only does it look better, but it's easier to

navigate around and also takes a lot of the hassle out of logging in to use OFTEC's online services, which currently requires registered technicians to remember up to three different passwords.

"Once the new site goes live, registered technicians will only need to create one password when they first log in to the new site. OFTEC will contact technicians once the site is available and explain the simple registration process, which only takes a few moments to complete. This won't affect the login arrangements for making work notifications or renewing your registration which will continue as normal."



Malcolm Farrow,
OFTEC's marketing and
communications manager

Staff changes at OFTEC

There have been several recent staff changes at OFTEC with some new faces joining the team and other staff moving to new roles within the organisation.

Matt Northcott has moved from the technical team following his appointment as registration services manager, where he will oversee the busy day-to-day operations of OFTEC's registration and inspection team.

Replacing Matt as technical manager is **Steve Webster**, who joins OFTEC after a long career, including ten years running a heating and renewables business.

In December OFTEC welcomed **Andy Peirson** as office manager, a role he is taking over from Jane Corbett who has now left the company. **Paul Hennon**, who was previously part of the technical team, has taken on a new role, moving to become IT and marketing support technician.

Gemma Bones has also joined the registration services administration team - and it will be Gemma who will be contacting you to give helpful reminders when it is time to renew your registration!



New faces, new roles... Andy Peirson, Steve Webster, Gemma Bones,
Paul Hennon, and Matt Northcott

Boiler sales reach ten year high

OFTEC has revealed that sales of oil boilers during 2016 were up a remarkable 15% on 2015 and 25% on 2014, with last year's reported sales the highest since 2006.

Sales were particularly strong through the autumn period, with the number of units sold between September and November up 17% on the same period in 2015. The low oil prices since 2013 have been a key factor in the resurgence and while sales in 2015 were also excellent, they are now eclipsed by the outstanding results of 2016.

Funding for oil boilers through the government's Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme is also likely to be a factor with many heating businesses signing up with OFTEC specifically to undertake this work.

The boiler sales results are excellent news for installers and manufacturers, and also benefits the industry as a whole, providing servicing work for many years to come.

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OFTEC responds to BEIS and Bonfield consultations

With the government's preoccupied with the UK's impending exit from Europe, and the creation of the new Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), there were less opportunities than usual last year to engage with decision makers around the future of the heating industry.

This finally changed in December when BEIS announced a consultation on its future policies for the use of heat in domestic buildings. This was followed by the publication of the long-awaited Bonfield review of consumer advice, protection, standards and enforcement for energy efficiency and renewable energy, which finally appeared just before Christmas. OFTEC has responded to both documents.

The BEIS heat consultation posed questions about a range of heating measures designed 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.

"Oil users may be being targeted unfairly"

While many of the ideas seem sensible, OFTEC is concerned about proposals to reduce the use of oil and other non-renewable heating in the off-grid sector. This seems at odds with their approach in gas-heated homes and suggests oil users may be being targeted unfairly.

It's widely accepted now that the cost of retrofitting renewables can be very expensive. This is particularly true in Britain's older off-grid homes, which are some of the least energy-efficient in Europe.

With around 400,000 standard efficiency oil boilers still in use in Great Britain, OFTEC thinks that, in the short term, there is more to be gained by upgrading them, rather than changing the technology. OFTEC has calculated that for the same amount of government financial support, incentivising homeowners to replace standard efficiency boilers with condensing models is five times more effective at reducing carbon emissions than converting them to renewables via the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive.

Upgrading a boiler also helps to cut the owner's energy bills while avoiding the need for major home renovation. OFTEC believes that such a move could be a stepping stone to the later adoption of a 100% renewable replacement for kerosene, which from a technical perspective could be a realistic possibility.

OFTEC has responded to the consultation, making these points, and is already looking carefully at the potential of alternative renewable liquid fuels that are already being marketed or tested.

The Bonfield review, called 'Each Home Counts', contains 27 recommendations but its key proposal is to establish a new 'quality mark' for all energy efficiency and renewable energy measures. This, claims the authors, will solve the confusion caused by the many different schemes, brands, certification bodies and organisations operating across the energy efficiency and renewable energy sector. Under their proposal, companies that wish to display the quality mark will need to show that they hold the necessary technical competence, work to a high standard and conduct their business in line with customer expectations.

The obvious concern is that it may impose yet more bureaucracy and cost on to heating businesses and just confuse consumers even more. OFTEC and other CPS operators received a presentation from Alison Oliver from the 'Each Home Counts' team in January. OFTEC was pleased



Dr. Peter Bonfield

to hear that the new quality mark will complement, rather than replace, the arrangements already in place.

"The Bonfield Review – bureaucracy, cost and confusion"

However, although the quality mark requirements will drive a higher minimum standard, where required, to protect consumers, there are still many unanswered questions as to how it will operate and what the new scheme will look like. More details are also needed on how this new scheme will operate in regards to some existing schemes like MCS, ECO and PAS2030.

December also saw BEIS publish its response to its RHI consultation. There's actually very little to report as the scheme is being "tweaked" rather than transformed.

The government claims the changes will help the RHI to focus on long term decarbonisation by promoting deployment of the right technologies for the right uses, offering better value for money and consumer protection, and supporting supply chain growth.



Insurance – a special report

Are you properly protected?

by Judy Hadden

Many heating businesses are trading without adequate insurance and don't fully understand the different types of policies that are available and why they are important.

In this article, Judy Hadden, an ACII Chartered Insurance Broker and managing director of Oil Spill Insurance Brokers – a member of OFTEC's trade association – explains the basics about employer's liability, products liability, and professional indemnity insurance cover and why you need them...

Many oil technicians and tank installers who I talk to and work with mistakenly believe that their public liability insurance will provide them with all the cover needed to protect themselves from claims made against them by third parties in connection with their business activities.

Unfortunately, this isn't the case and, by not having the correct cover, they could be putting their business at risk.

Public liability insurance will provide cover for compensation that you are liable to pay, and/or the legal costs in defending a claim against you, in the event that you cause physical loss or damage to a third party in the course of your business – for example, if a member of the public or a customer's employee trips over your tools and injures themselves, or you damage a customer's property whilst working in their home or garden.

If your business designs, manufactures, or simply supplies a physical product, e.g. boiler, oil tank, spare parts, etc., that is sold or even given away for free, you could be held legally responsible for third party injury or damage to property caused by a faulty product, even if you are not the manufacturer.

You may be able to make a recovery against the manufacturer or designer, subject to terms and conditions of trade, record keeping and not having amended the faulty products in any way, but the initial solicitor's letter will be to you.

The amount of cover must reflect the work you carry out, i.e. if you only

work in domestic properties then £2M (€2.8) may be sufficient. However if you undertake much larger work, such as non-domestic installations, then you should seek advice on the appropriate level of cover for your business. *The minimum requirement that needs to be held for OFTEC registration is £2M (€2.8).*

Products liability insurance covers you against the cost of compensation to third parties in this scenario but there are, as always, limitations to the cover provided and, for instance, financial losses to a third party caused by the faulty product would usually be excluded.

Professional indemnity insurance provides cover for compensation you are liable to pay to a third party suffering financial loss as a result of your negligent advice, poor work or design and/or the legal costs in defending such a claim against you.

Mistakes do happen and even though unintentional, if they cause a customer to suffer a financial loss, you, as the 'expert', are likely to be held liable to compensate them for any costs incurred or losses suffered. Solicitors are almost always involved in such incidents and legal defence costs are high even in relatively small incidents.

Particularly if you're involved in design or advice work, for example specifying, or undertaking tank and boiler inspections, professional indemnity insurance is essential. In the event of such an incident occurring, it could be the difference between your business surviving or not.

Employer's liability insurance

protects you as an employer against the costs and compensation you are liable for if an employee has an accident at work or is injured as a result of working for you. Most employers (even family businesses that are limited companies with more than one employee) are required by law to have employer's liability insurance with a minimum limit of £5,000,000.

Because of the type of work you do as a heating technician, having the right insurance is vitally important. Here are a few recommendations from me for 2017 and beyond:

- Always use the services of an insurance broker that understands your industry/business, and regularly review your cover with their assistance to ensure that your insurance cover meets your needs;
- In view of the nature of your business, please ensure that you are aware of restrictions within any of your insurance covers relating to pollution and contamination and, where possible, negotiate for these to be removed;
- Always work under robust terms and conditions with your customers and suppliers.

On a final note, insurance policies are not all created equal and like most things in life you do tend to get what you pay for!

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Grant joins OFTEC as Charlotte's sponsor

Grant UK has announced it is sponsoring the kit of promising young hockey player, Charlotte Kilby, who is also sponsored by OFTEC.

Charlotte has been playing for Cirencester Ladies and is beginning her fifth season with the club. After her second year in goal she was selected to represent Gloucestershire at county level and went on to play for the South West of England with national trials, which included specialist goalkeeper coaching with the England ladies XI coach.

"We are delighted to be sponsoring Charlotte's goalkeeping kit, which should help with her promising hockey career," explains Anna Wakefield, marketing and communications manager for Grant UK. "The hockey kit can be expensive and as she moves forward to university she will have to supply her own. Grant will join OFTEC on her shirt and we wish her all the best for the future."

www.grantuk.com.



Charlotte Kilby in her Grant UK and OFTEC sponsored hockey kit

Government proposals "a wake-up call" for the industry

The inclusion of heat emitters in a government consultation into proposals to improve the efficiency of central heating systems in England has been hailed as a "wake-up call" for the industry by David Kerr, CEO at British manufacturer QRL Radiator Group.

Announced by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the proposals include a call for evidence on return water temperatures and the sizing of radiators to improve heating performance in domestic properties.

David told *Oil Installer*: "The publication of the Heat in Buildings consultation marks an important shift in consciousness that we hope to see spread across the heating industry in the coming months and years. It makes no sense at all to invest in fitting high-end condensing boilers, renewable heating technologies or advanced controls, only to pair them with inefficient and outdated radiators.

"For too long, heat emitters have



David Kerr, CEO, QRL Radiator Group

been left out of the efficiency equation – so to see them included in this consultation is a wake-up call for the industry.

"Now that the issue is firmly on the government's agenda, we at QRL would like to see even more progress.

"An efficient radiator will respond faster to a property's heat demand, using less energy to provide the same heat output (or better) than inefficient models. It will also work more

effectively at lower flow and return temperatures. This not only means a smaller carbon footprint, but makes for lower bills.

Huge impact

"Scaling up these individual household savings to a mass market level is proven to deliver results – and with tens of millions of outdated and inefficient radiators installed in existing housing stock, it's easy to see the huge impact a widespread rollout of more efficient models could have."

He added: "At QRL, we are already campaigning for further research on the benefits of replacing old radiators, and for action on energy labelling to help consumers make an informed decision.

"We look forward to working closely with BEIS as part of its call for evidence under the Heat in Buildings consultation, and to seeing radiators fulfil their true potential in boosting the efficiency and performance of UK heating systems as a whole."
www.qrl-radiators.com

Industry comes together to combat counterfeit oil level monitors

Dunraven Systems and Kingspan Environmental - two of the oil industry's largest oil monitoring suppliers - have issued warnings over the danger of counterfeit products entering the UK and Irish markets.

The warnings come after it was discovered that counterfeit products were being offered for sale both online and offline using both companies' brand names. Tests on the counterfeit products revealed a number of serious electrical safety failings, with the potential to cause serious damage and injury. Claims of compliance with European and international safety standards have also turned out to be false.

Prioritising safety

At Kingspan Sensor, supplier of oil tank monitoring and telemetry equipment under the Watchman brand, director David Anderson said: "At Kingspan, we prioritise the safety of our customers above all else and all Watchman products have been independently tested to ensure they exceed all applicable safety standards.

"As a responsible supplier, we are concerned that counterfeit product, with such serious shortcomings is readily available. We are committed to working with responsible industry partners to address what is potentially not only a risk to consumer safety, but a risk to the success and reputation of our industry."

Michael McCaughley, business manager from oil monitoring and telemetry specialist Dunraven Systems, which produces Apollo monitoring products said: "We invest considerable time, expertise and effort developing and supplying products which aren't just fit for purpose, but which are engineered from the outset to exceed the most demanding UK, Irish, European and global regulations.

"The availability of counterfeit product, seemingly manufactured to no standards whatsoever and posing a very real risk of serious injury is a matter of grave concern to us.

"We are working with stakeholders across the industry to help combat what we believe is a clear threat to the safety of British and Irish heating oil users and technicians.

"The issue of counterfeit product is not just a matter for manufacturers and suppliers," added Michael. "Instead, it's an industry wide issue. Responsibility for the safe specification and installation of oil equipment exists throughout the supply chain.



"I would urge technicians in particular to demonstrate caution and vigilance when fitting equipment. In the event of an incident or catastrophic failure, they may find themselves liable if it's proven they had reason to believe a fitted part or component was sub-standard or counterfeit."

Combating the counterfeiters

Separately both Michael and David commented that this is not the first time that counterfeit plumbing and heating equipment has appeared on the market and helpfully offer the following advice for technicians:

Be suspicious of parts and equipment at unusually low prices. If it seems too good to be true, it almost certainly is:

- *Request confirmation in writing from merchants and distributors that the products they supply are compliant with applicable standards. Responsible suppliers will gladly provide this;*
- *If you are in doubt as to the fitness for purpose of any product, simply don't fit it;*
- *If you order a product which upon delivery is different to the product you ordered, return it. By law, you are entitled to a refund for goods which are not as described;*
- *Buy only from responsible and reputable merchants. On many internet auction websites, you are not dealing with UK or Irish suppliers. You cannot be certain of the quality or suitability of the products offered for sale.*

Both Kingspan and Dunraven urge anyone wishing to confirm whether any product offered for sale is legitimate, they should contact the manufacturer directly. www.kingspanenviro.com
www.dunravensystems.com

Elmhurst launches software app for iOS

Elmhurst Energy has released a new iOS-optimised version of its time-saving Reduced data Standard Assessment Procedure (RdSAP) GO software. The app enables domestic energy assessors using iPhones or iPads to carry out calculations on existing dwellings and produce precise energy performance certificates (EPC) and energy performance reports (ERPs) onsite or on the move.

Available to all Elmhurst certified energy assessors free of charge, RdSAP GO can be used offline, allowing assessors to enter survey data and instantly calculate results remotely, even when an internet connection is not available.

"RdSAP GO for iOS combines simple navigation with flexible data inputs and image capture to provide an all-in-solution for domestic energy assessors to use onsite," explains Martyn Reed, managing director of Elmhurst Energy. "It complements the android and desktop versions so that every energy assessor can use the app, no matter what mobile or tablet platform he or she uses."

www.elmhurstenergy.co.uk

And the winner is...

In the last issue of Oil Installer, OFTEC Direct ran a competition to find Ollie. The eagle-eyed reader who spotted him and was the first name out of the hat was Richard Goldstraw of Stoke on Trent. Richard has been OFTEC registered since 2005 and is now the owner of the Testo 310 printer kit – congratulations Richard!

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Grant makes its charity choice for 2017

Grant UK has announced that Julia's House is its chosen charity for 2017. A variety of fundraising activities will be organised by the Devizes-based company throughout the year to help support the work of this local charity, which supports seriously ill children in Wiltshire and Dorset who do not have access to the level of care and support that they need.

This year Julia's House will also be opening a new hospice in Devizes, the first of its kind in the county.

"The new hospice is based close to our headquarters, so it was an instinctive decision for Grant UK to become a headline sponsor," explains Anna Wakefield, marketing and communications manager for Grant UK.

Grant UK's announcement follows a range of fundraising activities in December 2016 for the charity. Grant staff helped raise £500 with an indulgent hot chocolate event, a festive jumper day and 'Chilli Tuesday', when a hot lunch was laid on, all in return for donations. The major fundraising activity for the month was a special raffle with Kindle Fires, iPod shuffles, luxury chocolates and food hampers on offer as prizes.

"Everyone at Grant UK are delighted to be supporting Julia's House in 2017, which is going to make such a difference for seriously ill children and their families in and around Devizes," adds Anna Wakefield.

www.juliashouse.org
www.grantuk.com



Grant UK has chosen Julia's House as its charity for 2017

New system streamlines parts service

Offering an efficient advantage to its customers, Heating World of Spares (HWOS) has become the first independent merchant to fully embed the market leading parts identification software, PartsArena - developed by Infomill Ltd - into its new e-commerce website.

Infomill Ltd has been supplying its TradeCounter software to HWOS in County Durham for many years, helping the team to identify the correct heating parts for its customers, resulting in fewer parts errors when engineers work to fix and service heating boilers.

The embedding of PartsArena into the HWOS e-commerce website goes several steps further. Customers can now use PartsArena to identify the correct parts to fix the fault, understand stock availability and order directly from HWOS via the e-commerce website.

Aaron Scott, HWOS managing director, comments: "We are always looking to improve our services to trade customers, to be at the forefront. We therefore believed that giving our customers the advantage, by having direct access to the industry leading parts database, PartsArena - even when out in the field - would make the task of accurate parts identification and ordering a great deal quicker and easier for them. We



believe that PartsArena will become an essential tool for all heating service engineers."

The PartsArena system includes information and exploded diagrams for 110 brands, over 15,000 appliances and more than 150,000 unique original parts. It is available on all operating systems including iOS, Android and Windows.

Infomill has also worked with field service management system provider Aeromark and Plumb and Parts Center to create a parts service management system. By using the PartsArena solution, Aeromark has now achieved a logistical parts ordering process in partnership with Plumb and Parts Center, for use by Swale Heating Ltd.

With a team of 280 engineers, Swale Heating has used a stand-alone version of PartsArena since 2007 and already considers it "essential to our daily operation, playing a huge part in us delivering great service to all of our customers."

www.infomill.info

Grant heads for Frankfurt

Grant Engineering will be heading to Frankfurt in March to exhibit at ISH, one of the world's largest trade exhibitions for water and energy technologies. ISH 2017 is taking place from 14th to 18th March and than 2,400 exhibitors will be unveiling their new product innovations in the water and energy sector.

The Grant VortexAir Hybrid will be one of the products on display. Bringing together a VortexBlue oil-fired boiler with an Aeronas³ air source heat pump, the Grant VortexAir bridges the gap between renewables and traditional heating technologies. Grant will also be unveiling new products which will be launched in the UK during 2017.

"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 marketing and communications manager Anna Wakefield. "For over four decades, Grant has been introducing highly efficient heating appliances to the market and ISH 2017 will be the ideal platform for the company to share their innovative, sustainable heating solutions with international audiences."

Grant Engineering's exhibition stand will be located in hall 9.1, stand F72. For more details about ISH, visit: www.ish.messefrankfurt.com.

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email: envirostore@yahoo.co.uk

Do you specify tank installations? Make sure you consider fuel deliveries...

When specifying oil tank installations, there are a number of important considerations such as fire protection, environmental protection, bases and supports, etc., to be taken into account. An equally important factor is how the tank is going to be filled and what provisions are in place to ensure this can be done safely. This includes, but is not limited to, taking the following into account:

- Where will the delivery tanker park?
- How far away is the parking area from the tank? Will a remote fill pipe be required?
- Is there clear access to run the delivery hose to the filling point?
- Will the filling point be at a height to allow a safe connection to be made? (i.e. not exceeding 1200mm from ground level or from the level of a secure filling point stand).
- Is the area where the connection will be made well lit if deliveries are to be undertaken in darkness?
- Does the filling point comprise a threaded connection with a cap?

If you have concerns about whether fuel deliveries can be made easily, it might be worth talking to the client's existing fuel supplier to find out if they have any delivery requirements or procedures that would affect the specification of the installation.

OFTEC is currently working with the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers (FPS) to develop further guidance on this subject. In the meantime, if you would like to discuss any of the points raised above in greater detail, the technical team can be contacted on 01473 626 298 (UK) or 01-864 5771 (ROI).

EOGB celebrates a successful year...

Burner manufacturer and distributor EOGB Energy Products Ltd has reported another successful year of continued growth in 2016, with total burner sales up by 23%.

Supported by a buoyant industry, the company saw a particular increase in the sale of commercial gas burners, closely followed by oil burners for domestic applications.

Training also continued to flourish, with a wider range of courses available and a 21% increase in the number of engineers completing oil training at the EOGB training facility in Cambridgeshire.

Paul Barritt, managing director at EOGB, said: "We believe that our success is not only down to the industry as a whole but as a result of our investment in good people with strong technical knowledge of our products and the wider industry, as well as providing excellent customer and technical support. We have exciting plans for 2017 and it promises to be another strong year for EOGB."

www.eogb.co.uk



Paul Barritt, managing director at EOGB

Diesel van? Act now to avoid city centre charges

A High Court ruling on the government's failure to tackle air pollution is predicted to bring about a sudden shift in the light commercial vehicle sector.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra) air quality plan, which proposes the introduction of urban "clean air zones" from 2020, was labelled legally flawed and "too optimistic" by judge Mr Justice Garnham, who called for their introduction to be brought forward.

He said: "The evidence demonstrates

clearly that clean air zones, the measure identified in the plan as the primary means of reducing nitrogen dioxide emissions, could be introduced more quickly than 2020."

The decision means that commercial fleets could face a new set of charges to operate in city centres from as early as this year in London, with cities around the country adopting them soon after.

Nitrogen dioxide levels in towns and cities are thought to have been at illegal levels in 90% of the country's air quality zones since 2010.

Will Putter, commercial director of Alternattech, specialists in alternative fuel solutions, commented: "The time to act on this is now. The High Court ruling means that anyone who operates a diesel or petrol fleet has to decide now how they go forward.

"They need an immediately available solution, such as LPG conversion technology. It is a tried and tested method of effectively reducing CO2 and NOx emissions."

www.alternattech.co.uk

Regional events in training centres

OFTEC Ireland held an open night to complement the opening of a new training centre in Ballymena during December.

The event was attended by several OFTEC manufacturing companies and members including ADEY, Firebird, Grant Engineering, Mi Flues, Kingspan Titan and Warmflow who were on hand to discuss oil-fired heating technology with the technicians and college staff.

Northern Regional College (NRC) is based in Ballymena and has started to offer the OFTEC suite of oil courses and provides an excellent location for aspiring technicians in the north east of the province.

Upgrading skills...

David Blevings, OFTEC Ireland manager, said: "A new centre offering oil courses in Ballymena is very welcome and will offer easy access to those technicians seeking training or reassessment outside the Belfast area. The centre is fully equipped and available for anyone wishing to upgrade their skills and demonstrate their competence to consumers that they are OFTEC registered.

"Other regional events are planned at training centres throughout Ireland in 2017 and registrants will receive information on dates and locations via OFTEC's e-news and personal email," added David.

Technicians interested in finding out about courses on offer at NRC should contact Brian George on tel: 028 25636271 or email: brian.george@nrc.ac.uk or OFTEC training Manager, David Knipe, email: dknipe@oftec.org



Abbey Scott of Kingspan Titan speaks with attendees at the Ballymena open evening



William McCaw and Stephen Leacock who both completed their OFTEC course at NRC pictured with Norman Armstrong, OFTEC regional inspector

Strength in numbers to retain oil customers

Northern Ireland has a very strong oil market share. About 65% of the c.760,000 homes are heated by oil. That's almost 500,000 oil users, so oil certainly dominates the local home heat scene.

However, it is changing. Natural gas arrived in Northern Ireland in 1996 and the number of consumers switching is increasing. Recognising that consumers are being targeted to switch to alternative fuel, OFTEC and its Ireland members have been spurred into action to promote the benefits of oil to local consumers in a bid to retain the market share. In 2016 a decision was made to establish a marketing committee with a view to introducing a pro-oil campaign aimed specifically at oil user retention.



Following several meetings, it was decided to target Ballygowan just outside Belfast as this was the next area in Northern Ireland to receive a natural gas main. Ballygowan is a village and rural community in County Down and has a core population of about 3,000 (2011 census).

The Oil Heating for Life concept was developed and as a result will see three A5 postcards delivered to around 4,500 homes in Ballygowan and the surrounding areas during the early months of 2017.

The thrust of the campaign is to get consumers to stay with oil when presented with the option of natural gas or other fuels.

The campaign will be supported with a website directing consumers to 'find a technician' page and giving advice on upgrading oil boilers and tanks/ancillary equipment.

The campaign identifies the various options available for maximising savings, including replacing elderly oil boilers with a new condensing version.

This type of campaign is cost effective and can be used in any area being targeted by alternative fuels. For more information visit: www.oilheatingforlife.com

Taking up the challenge of solid fuel in Ireland

With more than 50,000 solid fuel stoves and oil boilers being installed each year in Ireland, there is clearly a need for a body to provide advice and guidance on installation and servicing standards.

OFTEC was involved with the annual Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week, which brought together representatives of the main fuel sources to promote awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide, but there is no group currently representing the solid fuel sector.

The promotion of CO awareness is very important as every year carbon monoxide poisoning causes the death of up to six people and makes many more ill in Ireland.

OFTEC recognised that the standards of solid fuel stove installation varied greatly, from the DIY enthusiast putting a focal-point stove into the living room, to the professional installer fitting solid fuel boilers and stoves providing space heating and hot water to homes.

OFTEC has found that the majority of stoves are installed by builders and DIY installers with little regard to local building regulations.

Many stoves have been installed with poor or no room ventilation and poor or questionable flueing. This has been backed up by information received from local fire officers who are regularly asked to advise on solid fuel installations, sadly after fires or CO alerts.

Solid fuel operatives

As a result of its research, OFTEC has now written its own solid fuel course and assessment recognising the requirements of this market.

The course was launched in 2016 and OFTEC is currently registering technicians as solid fuel operatives.

As a result of its move into solid fuel, OFTEC was asked to meet with the Gas Networks Safety Committee who operate a 24 hour CO incident line responding to CO alarms. In 2016 they found that over 50% of their calls were to non-gas appliances.

As a result OFTEC now offers a facility where registered technicians

will respond to non-gas related CO incidents.

Test case

As a test case OFTEC asked one of its solid fuel registrants in Nenagh to visit a home to which gas networks had responded to a CO alarm alert and where no gas appliances were present.

On attendance the technician reported that he could smell smoke immediately on entering the house. Further investigation found a freestanding back boiler stove of unknown make with no data plate and a flue connection straight up to the chimney run.

The following faults were logged:

- Stove flue connection loose and not sealed
- Combustion air supply/room ventilation not found
- Leaks between blocks of chimney in attic area
- Stove door seals perished
- Stove door glass cracked
- Carbon monoxide detector located in wrong location

The technician then reviewed the oil installation at the property and found further faults which he discussed with the homeowner.

Health and safety

The moral of both the story and the investigation are two-fold... Firstly, from a health and safety point of view, this appliance was deemed unsafe and the homeowner was told not to use it until the faults were rectified. Obviously, consumers' safety is paramount in any health and safety related incident.

Secondly, the technician who attended the scene was asked to rectify the solid fuel installation faults



The result of a chimney fire - hence the staining on the chimney breast and flue damage in the loft

and the oil faults – a good result for the technician involved.

OFTEC now believes that Gas Networks will recommend that all non-gas related CO incidents (oil and solid fuel) are handled by OFTEC registered technicians. OFTEC is currently building up a solid fuel database to provide technician details to Gas Networks for future incident response.

The solid fuel training course is currently available at Micon Distribution LTD in Northern Ireland and METAC in the Republic of Ireland, with other centres planning to offer the course during 2017. If you have a current valid solid fuel qualification and are already OFTEC registered call the registration team on 01 864 5771 (Rol) or 01473 626 298 (NI) to extend your scope of registration.

Complaint upheld over misleading promotion

OFTEC Ireland has welcomed a decision by the complaints committee of the Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland (ASAI) to uphold a complaint regarding misleading energy savings claims made by Saturn Heating in its latest promotional advertisement.

OFTEC was compelled to lodge the complaint against Saturn Heating on the energy efficiency of its boiler following concerns that householders are being potentially misled into making home energy decisions using incorrect information.

ASAI ruled that "in the interest of clarity for consumers" Saturn Heating should not use the misleading advertising in the same format again.

The company stated in its advertisement that the Saturn boiler had a "condensing efficiency of 101%", but OFTEC raised the alarm that this was misleading for consumers as all boilers should be rated using a "seasonal efficiency" rating. All manufacturers within the industry previously agreed to abide by this common practice to enable consumers to make clear informed decisions.

David Blevings, OFTEC Ireland manager commented: "We believe it's in the best interests of consumers and the industry that all energy companies behave responsibly and are brought to account when they do not.

"This is a small but important victory for householders across Ireland who are often marketed heavily with energy saving claims that are contrary to the independent data available."

The recent complaint reiterates OFTEC's commitment to protecting consumers as previous objections lodged by the industry body against Calor Gas in 2013 and 2014 were also upheld. The complaints committee of the ASAI found the Calor Gas advertisements to be misleading and "exploited the lack of consumer knowledge."

With approximately 600,000 homes in Ireland using heating oil as their primary heating source, OFTEC Ireland is constantly keen to assist homeowners in making educated decisions on their energy choices. The industry body will shortly be launching a campaign across Ireland to clearly guide oil users on long-term energy options and outline verified energy savings.

A full copy of the ASAI judgement is available from: http://www.oftec.org/news_and_press_releases/asai-uphold-misleading-advertising-complaint-against-saturn-heating

Noble signs deal with Teddington

One of Ireland's leading agents for the home heating sector has signed a deal with engineering specialist Teddington.

Noble Distribution Ireland (NDi) will now be responsible for supplying Teddington's products across both the Republic of and Northern Ireland.

Partner Norman McNaught said: "We're delighted to have signed this agreement with Teddington. As a family run business, it's important for us to partner with companies that share our ethos and have the same high values as ourselves."

NDi will be responsible for supplying several Teddington products, including the KBB fire valve, KBT 1000 fire valve

tester, OFV oil filter valve and CombiSave.

NDi started life in 1982 as heating and plumbing installers and contractors, later expanding to include solid fuel, oil, LPG and natural gas. The company then switched to distribution before becoming agents for manufacturers in 2007/8.

James Henderson, managing director of Teddington Group, said: "It's great to have Norman and the rest of the NDi team on board. They are a very proactive company and we're confident they will help us to grow our market share and promote our products to a wider audience."

<http://nobledi.com>

A positive note amid turbulent times...

The Renewable Heat Initiative (RHI) has been seen as the catalyst that broke up the Northern Ireland government recently. The scheme, which is no longer accepting applications, has been open to much criticism.

Initially the RHI, which offered a financial incentive for businesses and other non-domestic users, was an attempt by the Northern Ireland government to help increase heat generated from renewable sources such as biomass boilers, solar thermal and heat pumps. The plan was that 4% of heat would come from renewables by 2015 with a further target of 10% by 2020.

In February 2016 a whistle blower alleged the scheme was being abused and that at least one farmer would make £1m from heating an empty shed with one boiler over a 20-year period. One of the RHI's serious flaws was that there was 'no upper limit on the amount of energy that would be paid for'.

"We expect the impact to be a positive one," said Anthony

Boyd, e-marketing executive at ValueOils.com when asked about the impact of the above on the oil industry. On the back of the RHI fall out, many people could switch back to oil, particularly as it's what they know.

"As consumers increasingly search for the best value, any uncertainty or change in oil prices brings more traffic to online price comparison sites such as valueoils.com which sees over 60,000 visitors per month.

"It's important for all companies to have a strong web presence, although many oil businesses haven't fully tapped into this market.

"There are certainly turbulent times ahead in 2017 - Brexit remains a concern to the industry along with the uncertainty around oil price volatility and the value of the British pound. We could even see customers revert to ordering smaller quantities of oil again as they did in 2010 when an order for 300 litres was common..."

www.valueoils.com

Firebird technology exceeds ErP requirements

Firebird's cutting edge blue flame technology has been used to develop the most efficient range of domestic condensing oil boilers in Europe. The Firebird Blue Supreme range exceeds stringent ErP legislation requirements to reduce NOx emissions which come into force from September 2018.

Available in two fixed outputs of 20kW and 25kW, the Firebird Blue Supreme range incorporates the very latest German blue flame technology and utilises a patented, pioneering heat recovery system. The extra efficiency is made possible by way of a third heat exchanger which extracts more energy from the combustion gases. This is achieved by recycling and re-using lost heat to pre-warm the air for the ignition of the blue flame. In addition, the clean burning blue flame also facilitates soot free combustion.



Featuring multiple tapping points and multi directional flue options for ease of installation, all Firebird Blue Supreme boilers come with a free five year warranty as standard. Providing a low maintenance option due to the long life of serviceable components, Firebird Blue Supreme boilers are available in a range of kitchen, boilerhouse and external heatpact models.

The extensive Firebird Blue Supreme range offers customers the benefit of even greater fuel efficiency and a significant saving on annual heating costs when compared with conventional boilers. An anti-short cycle feature is also included across the range to provide further fuel savings.

www.firebird.uk.com

£2.5m branch stock investment

Plumb and Parts Center is ensuring that installers have immediate access to the parts they need thanks to an additional £2.5m investment into branch stock. The investment means availability of 200 of the fastest moving parts in every branch with a further 65,000 products available for next day delivery.

It is expected that 20% of all UK household boilers fail during the colder months so Plumb and Parts Center has carried out detailed analysis into the most frequently ordered and required parts across the UK. The 200 includes parts from all leading brands including Baxi, Honeywell, Ideal, Potterton, Alpha, Ravenheat, Vaillant, Vokera and Worcester Bosch.

The investment comes as part of a wider strategy to make sure installers have everything they need, whenever they need it.

The business also wants to ensure that installers don't feel compelled to constantly carry large quantities of stock on their van.

Installers can also access all of the stock through PartsArena, an industry leading parts identification tool which allows engineers to access 2,700 models, 20,000 exploded diagrams, 10,000 images, and 500,000 unique parts online or from their mobile.

www.plumbcenter.co.uk
www.partscenter.co.uk

Warmflow introduces extended warranty

Following the successful launch of the UK and Ireland's first double A rated combi boiler, which delivers efficiency benefits of up to 20% more than other leading brands, Warmflow has introduced a new seven year warranty, available on all Warmflow boilers purchased in 2017.

"Ensuring our customers receive the highest level of service and support after they have purchased our products is of the utmost importance," said Warmflow's head of sales, Oliver Cormican. "Our customers, especially those who have invested a considerable sum in a new boiler, want the extra protection of an extended warranty period."

Warmflow's extended warranty prolongs the standard warranty period to a maximum total warranty period of five years for parts and labour and seven years for the heat exchanger.

In addition to offering a new seven year extended warranty, all new Warmflow boilers in the 2017 range now come with an improved 5mm steel shell.

For more information about the Warmflow warranty service and pricing, visit: www.Warmflow.co.uk

Knipex launches 250 page catalogue

Pliers specialist Knipex has launched its 250-page 2017 product catalogue, featuring around 1,300 pliers.

A 'quick finder' feature makes searching for the right article much easier in the product section, which is classified according to groups of pliers.

In addition to technical tables and brief descriptions, the product pages focus on images to show the applications of the pliers.

A digital version of the new catalogue can be downloaded from: www.knipex.de

www.knipex.com

Plumb and Parts Centers get smarter...

Plumb and Parts Center's network of more than 500 branches are set to become "smart controls hubs" and, to kick-start the initiative, Honeywell and Nest have toured the country to offer hands-on training in every branch.

The Centers recently hosted trade mornings where installers could ask the experts about new technologies as well as receive advice on how to upsell and introduce the features to their own customers.

As part of its commitment to having the most knowledgeable staff in the industry, Plumb and Parts Center also trained staff during the tour. Branch staff completed

12 training modules before being given a working smart controls demo for customers to trial in their local branch.

Simon Allan, category director for smart controls at Plumb and Parts Center said: "The popularity of smart controls is set to continue to grow, opening up a striking market opportunity in the heating sector. Installers already own the skills to capitalise on this shift, they just need the support to go out and sell. We're leading the way by becoming the only merchant to offer a full portfolio of smart controls and expert knowledge in more than 500 branches UK-wide."

www.plumbcenter.co.uk

Grant VortexBlue takes home innovation gold!

The Grant VortexBlue condensing oil-fired boiler range has been awarded the *Most Innovative New Product of 2016* at the 41st Wolseley Annual Supplier Event.

Wolseley's managing director, Patrick Headon, and England rugby legend, Matt Dawson, presented the award to Grant UK's managing director, Paul Wakefield.

"It is very rewarding to have the Grant VortexBlue recognised for its innovative technology," comments Paul Wakefield.

"Incorporating the latest clean burning blue flame burner with the award-winning, patented Vortex oil boiler, the VortexBlue is the result of over two years of collaborative product development between Grant and Riello's R&D Teams."

The Grant VortexBlue was launched in

March 2016 and the range consists of 15 boilers with outputs from 15kW to 36kW.

With internal, external, combi and system models available, the VortexBlue delivers high efficiency levels with low NOx emissions.

The VortexBlue is available with a 10 year guarantee when it is installed by a member of Grant's G-One Accredited Installer Network.

"The 10 year guarantee available on the Grant VortexBlue boiler reflects our confidence in this product," continues Paul. "Installer feedback has been incredibly positive and this award from Wolseley further acknowledges the exciting potential that this new technology offers."

www.grantuk.com



Grant UK's managing director, Paul Wakefield, with Matt Dawson and Patrick Headon, Wolseley's managing director

Worcester releases new supportive videos

Worcester, Bosch Group has released a collection of new technical videos on its YouTube channel which offer further assistance for heating engineers.

Created with the help of its technical support department, the series of supportive content provides installers guidance on some of Worcester's most popular products.

With content available for both gas and oil boilers – as well as accessories and controls – the new videos present a detailed look into best practice in installation and maintenance. The additions include advice on commissioning a Greenstar Danesmoor oil boiler and the correct procedure when wiring a Worcester control to a Greenstar gas boiler.

Martyn Bridges, director of marketing and technical support at Worcester, Bosch Group, commented: "This host of exclusive online content, created by our expert team in technical support, is just another way that we are striving to reach our audience in an increasingly online age.

"Whilst our training sessions prove to be a popular way for customers to get hands-on with our products, these videos presents another way for installers to educate and empower themselves, even if they are not be able to attend a training course.

"So, whether you're at home or on the go, you can be sure that extra guidance is always to hand."

To view Worcester's collection of technical support videos, visit <https://www.youtube.com/WorcesterBoschGroup>.



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Life on Worcester's production line... Neil and Peter build their boilers

A lucky installer and a representative of *Oil Installer* have been given a feel for life on the production line at the Worcester Bosch Group's specialist oil boiler factory in Clay Cross, Derbyshire – both taking home a brand new appliance built on the day.

Cambridge-based installer Neil Pleasants of The Heating Company was invited to test his skills on the production line having taken top prize in the oil installation category of Worcester's Environment 2020 Awards for his year-long transformation of a farmhouse heating system in Cambridgeshire. He was accompanied by Peter Clayton, deputy editor of *Oil Installer*.

Neil and Peter were both given a full tour of the factory's press shop, paint shop and weld area, before being put to work on the oil boiler track where the manufacturer's Which? Best Buy award winning boilers are made.

After assisting in the construction and welding of the primary heat exchanger and the secondary condensing heat exchanger, the two "apprentices" were put to work tightening their individual boiler's burner flange, fitting the condensate trap, and securing the side panels and burner. Then it was over to testing to ensure that their Greenstar Danesmoor condensing boilers passed Worcester's rigorous standards before being packaged ready to be installed.

Farmhouse project

The project for which Neil won his Build a Boiler experience was far from being a typical domestic installation. He was approached by the owners of an extended farmhouse

in Cambridgeshire who wanted to transform their property from a four bedroom house into a five bedroom property with adjoining eight bedroom bed and breakfast accommodation.

Neil and his team took into account the planned hot water demand of the property's new layout and decided to fit a floor-standing Greenstar Utility 50/70 oil-fired boiler with a 300l Greenstore unvented cylinder in a brand new plant room. With the added benefit of a Greenskies Solar-Lux 6 mounted on the property's roof, underfloor heating throughout, and zoned control, the system's performance is kept as efficient as possible.

"The project was certainly one of the most interesting installations I've been tasked with, and it was great to be given completely free reign by the owners of the property right from the start.

"Having only fitted Worcester boilers for the last five years, I knew straight away that the Greenstar Utility boiler was perfectly suited," said Neil.

"The owners of the house couldn't be happier with their new system and we're sure the paying customers who stay in their new bed and breakfast will agree!"

Commenting on his Build a Boiler Day experience, Neil added: "My company's work split has gone from being around 30% oil to more like 60%, so it was fantastic to get a feel for what goes into the boilers before we get our hands on them. We're hoping to give the boiler itself away to one of our elderly customers this winter, so I'm sure it will be very much appreciated once we've found an installation that it is suited to."



Neil fits the side panels to his boiler



Peter Clayton of *Oil Installer* with the result of his "Build a Boiler" day at Clay Cross



Neil with his completed Greenstar Danesmoor boiler – boxed and ready for delivery

Hand-crafted

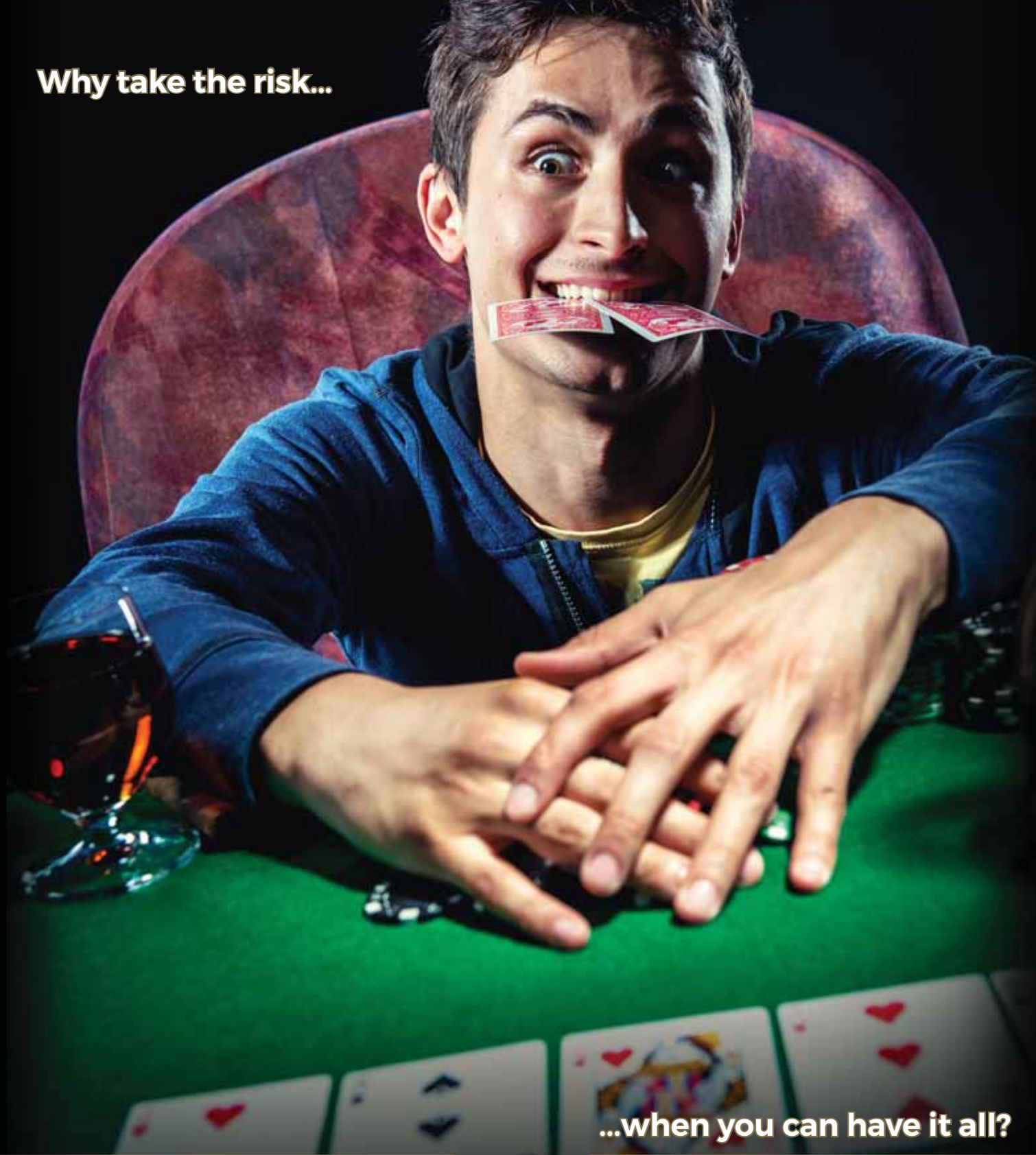
Peter also donated his completed boiler for Neil to install for one of his elderly customers. He commented: "Neil and I both thoroughly enjoyed our day at Clay Cross. I have been writing about Worcester oil boilers for a long time, so it was particularly interesting for me to see exactly how they are made and how each boiler is, in effect, hand-crafted to ensure the quality which has earned Worcester its enviable reputation."

Jon Watson, plant director at Worcester's Clay Cross factory, commented:

"We're extremely proud of the boilers we make, and with our entire range of Greenstar oil boilers having recently received a Which? Best Buy award for the very first time, this was a great opportunity to show off all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes."

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk

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Managing oil burners – digitally

Digital controls for oil burners are introducing significant features and benefits for both installers and end users, so installers need to be aware of the differences between these and the more familiar analogue controls.

For the benefit of *Oil Installer* readers, Brett Hale of Riello explains...

For many years oil burners have been supplied with a standard analogue control box and these boxes, such as those supplied with Riello RDB oil burners, will be familiar to most readers of *Oil Installer*.

Nowadays, though, there are more variations in control options, including digital control boxes (DCBs). These digital burner management controllers work in a very similar way to the analogue control box but there are some important differences, features and benefits to be aware of. These are exemplified by the new DCBs that have been introduced alongside the latest generation of RDB burners.

In addition to the standard electrical supply, motor, photocell and coil connections there is an extra terminal. Depending on the application, this may offer a remote lock out reset (marked "reset") or a post-purge facility (marked "heat demand"). The remote reset requires the addition of a remote momentary switch, normally as part of the boiler control, to activate the function. If no connection is made to the terminal all other functions are still active.

The post-purge requires the burner to be supplied not only with a switched live but also with a permanent live. If no connection is made to this terminal, the box will not operate. The box requires 230V at both terminals in order to operate. The post purge function is programmable via the reset

push button to allow the fan to run on after shutdown for 10-240 seconds.

Other features found on Riello DCBs include:

- **Light diagnostics:** indicates the flame signal strength or the photocell sensitivity.
- **Fan motor check:** automatically detects the presence of the fan motor. If there is a failure, the DCB will give the relevant LED flash code.
- **Oil valve circuit check:** detects if there is a failure in the oil valve circuit and gives the relevant LED flash code.
- **Mains voltage check:** monitors the incoming mains to ensure that it remains within allowable voltage limits. If there is an error the DCB will give the relevant LED flash code.
- **Mains frequency check:** monitors the incoming mains to ensure that it remains within allowable frequency limits. If there is an error the DCB will give the relevant LED flash code.
- **Recycle and limit operations:** allows a recycle (i.e. complete repetition of the start-up sequence for up to three attempts) in the event of flame failure during operation. If flame



The Riello digital control box

failure occurs four times during operation, this will cause the burner to lock out.

As oil burners continue to evolve to deliver better performance with lower emissions, installers will see additional control functionality added to the digital control boxes they are working with. For instance, the DCB supplied with the RDB BLU blue flame burner will incorporate features such as UV flame detection.

In order to help installers keep abreast of the latest developments in digital oil burner control, Riello will be providing training courses throughout 2017, incorporating the latest DCBs, as will a number of oil boiler manufacturers.

For further information about Riello training courses, visit: www.rielloburners.co.uk/training

Riello updates UK website

Riello Ltd has updated its UK website with improved navigation, enhanced compatibility with mobile devices and instant access to social media links.

As well as product information, the site includes a burner selection function, enabling specifiers to match a burner to a chosen appliance, and a 'fast find' feature for sourcing spares using the burner name, burner code or spares code.

Also featured on the site are details of training courses, together with technical information on the

company's ranges of burners and gas boosters.

"In re-designing the site, we have put considerable emphasis on making it easier for visitors to find the information they need, be it product specifications, CIBSE CPD or installer training courses, or downloadable knowledge base items," explains sales and marketing director, Paul Sharp.

"We have also recognised that the site is accessed through a range of devices, and configured it accordingly. Ease of use is assured by the clear,



intuitive navigation structure that enables visitors to quickly drill down to the information they need.

"All of the pages include a range of contact options for further information or to book training courses."

www.rielloburners.co.uk

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Firebird sponsors local team against soccer giants!

Firebird Products Ltd sponsored local team, Plymouth Argyle, as they took on premier ship giants, Liverpool, in the FA Cup third round replay recently. Although Plymouth narrowly lost by one goal, the closely fought game at Home Park kept everyone on the edge of their seats until the final whistle!

To celebrate the occasion, Firebird invited a group of customers to join them for an evening of football and hospitality, which also included a tour of the ground and changing rooms. The visit to Plymouth also provided the opportunity to view



Dave Hall, UK director of Firebird Products Ltd presenting Plymouth's man of the match, Graham Carey, with a bottle of champagne

Firebird's new showroom and training facility. Featuring an array of fully

working oil-fired boilers, biomass boilers, air source heat pumps and range

cookers, the showroom enables installers to see all the products in action, and to spend time working and training on each appliance.

Commenting on the sponsorship of Plymouth Argyle, David Hall, UK director of Firebird Products Ltd said: 'This is a great occasion for Plymouth and as a local employer we think it is important to support our local team.

"In addition to ground advertising, Firebird are also looking at further sponsorship opportunities for next season.'

www.firebird.uk.com

Teddington achieves major fire valve milestone

Engineering specialists Teddington has reached a major milestone in the production of its industry leading fire safety valve. The three millionth KBB recently rolled off the production line at its facility in St Austell, Cornwall, and orders for the unit have also risen by almost 25% compared to this time last year.

The KBB provides protection for properties using oil fired boilers – snapping shut if a set temperature is exceeded, stopping the flow of oil and protecting homes against the risk of fire.

James Henderson, Teddington Group managing director, said: "The KBB has been the industry standard for more than 50 years – providing essential protection for property owners across the UK. In that time, it has undergone continual improvements and modifications to ensure it complies with the latest legislation.

"To have now made three million is quite an achievement. Every valve is subject to a thorough and robust testing process, ensuring the highest standards and attention to detail.

"Although only small and low cost, the peace of mind and comfort it can give – knowing that your property will be protected should the worst happen – is priceless.

"OFTEC requires all new oil burners



James Henderson of Teddington with a set of KBB fire valves. Three million have now been made

are fitted with a fire valve but for those boilers older than 10 years, that may not necessarily be the case.

"We would urge all installers and heating engineers who are doing routine maintenance and servicing to ensure a fire valve is fitted and, if one is, that it is checked at least once a year."

The KBB, which comes with a three-year warranty, is installed in the oil supply pipeline close to the oil tank with the sensor mounted inside the boiler above the burner. The valve will snap shut if the temperature at the sensor exceeds the set value (65C or 90C).

www.kbbfirevalve.co.uk

New online spares store for Mistral Boilers

Oil-fired boiler manufacturer Mistral has unveiled a new online boiler spares centre.

Available at www.mistralboilers.com the 'shop' contains a comprehensive range of parts including burners, heat exchangers and other spares allowing customers to access a range of replacement components for their Mistral products.

Based in Telford, Shropshire, Mistral is one of the top five oil-fired boiler manufacturers in the UK.

The venture into e-commerce was a natural progression for Mistral which is experiencing an increasing demand for its condensing and non-condensing heating systems, both in the UK and overseas.

The oil fired boiler sector in the UK is currently enjoying a resurgence with sales up eight to 10% in the last year and Mistral managing director, Jim Wright, says the firm is experiencing a surge of interest from global customers, thanks to continuing low oil prices.

www.mistralboilers.com



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OFTEC rolls out commercial assessment course to meet demand

OFTEC's new commercial assessment course, which covers the servicing and commissioning of multi stage burners used in many light and medium commercial heating systems, is now available in training centres across the UK and Republic of Ireland, with more centres expected to launch the offering soon.

OFT 10-201 is proving popular both with technicians moving into commercial work for the first time, and those who are already working in non-domestic environments. As a result of this high demand, the course will be rolled out across further locations over the coming months to enable more technicians to benefit from the expert training and assessment on offer.

Providing theory and practical-based assessments for two and three stage pressure jet burners connected to space and water heating appliances, the course covers areas including health and safety, fire valve installation, regional requirements, safe electrical isolation, OFTEC procedures, knowledge of oil storage and supply and also appliance installation.

OFTEC training manager David Knipe said: "Feedback from technicians on the OFT 10-201 course has been extremely positive. Experienced commercial technicians are finding the details on commercial oil storage, risk assessment and procedures particularly useful, whilst those who are new to multi-stage burners are equipped with the confidence to work on commercial appliances, expanding their business opportunities.

OFTEC's commercial assessment course is available at the following locations:

Blackburn College, Blackburn
Boilerserve.com Ltd, Burslem, Stoke on Trent
Complete Construction Training Services, Belfast
Flixborough Training and Assessment, Scunthorpe
METAC, Mountrath, Republic of Ireland
Nationwide Training Services, Livingston
South West Assessment and Training (SWAAT), Liskeard
South West Peninsular Training, Langport
Specialist Gas Assessment Services, Blackpool
TC Training, Birmingham

OFTEC's David Knipe adds: "By extending our assessment offering into the commercial sector, we are able to further increase our support for OFTEC registered technicians and their businesses. As OFTEC continues to evolve, so too will our offering to provide the best, progressive services and guidance to meet the changing needs of our industry."

Purpose-designed centre at TC Training

TC Training has extended its scope of OFTEC courses to include Solid Fuel OFT15-108D/W and Commercial OFT10-201 which are certificated by UK Certification.

The company's new training and assessment centre in Tile Cross, Birmingham 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

Training to meet low NOx requirements

With significant regulatory changes relating to oil-fired burners in the pipeline, Riello is encouraging installers to take advantage of available training opportunities to ensure they are up to speed with the latest requirements.

Riello sales and marketing director, Paul Sharp, explained: "A sustained drive to reduce NOx emissions, which is likely to continue post-Brexit, is leading to major re-development of oil-fired burner designs. As manufacturers we have a responsibility to ensure our products are compliant, and also to assist installers through both training and product design."

From September 2018 NOx emissions from oil boilers should not exceed 120 mg/kWh, with further reductions expected from 2022. Meeting these requirements will require blue flame burners with re-designed combustion heads, combined with the latest digital control technology.

"Whilst we will retain as many familiar components and installer-friendly features as possible, there are inevitable changes coming that installers will need to understand," Paul Sharp continued. "We would therefore urge installers to take advantage of the training courses we are making available, to help them provide the best solution for their customers.

www.rielloburners.co.uk/training

EOGB introduces OFTEC 201 training

Burner manufacturer and distributor EOGB Energy Products Ltd has introduced the new OFTEC 201 commercial assessment course at its training facility in St Neots, Cambridgeshire.

Aimed at giving oil technicians a greater knowledge of the commissioning and servicing of multi-stage commercial burners, OFTEC 201 provides an opportunity for engineers to upskill and discover potential new business opportunities. For further information email: training@eogb.co.uk

New solid fuel courses from HETAS

Following feedback from various industry events in 2016, HETAS has developed a bespoke "Changeover" course to help engineers meet the increasing demand for wood burning, biomass and solid fuel appliances.

The three-day course covers practical considerations for chimney and flue provision, ventilation, distances to combustible materials, the characteristics of fuels and regulatory requirements. The course bridges the skills gap in relation to biomass and solid fuel appliance installations and is now available throughout HETAS training centres across UK and Ireland.

HETAS has also launched a service and maintenance course for solid fuel appliances. The two-day practical course is aimed at businesses that don't wish to undertake installation work, such as professional chimney sweeps, maintenance operatives and local authorities with housing stock using solid fuel as a primary heat source.

Consumer awareness

More consumers are becoming aware of the benefits of using quality wood fuel in their stoves, which has led to a rise in popularity of the HETAS' H008 Pellet Stove Installation course. The one day practical course covers the differences between appliances, chimney requirements, service and maintenance. Installers must have already completed the H003 Dry Installer Competency course before signing up for H008.

Helping HETAS approved retailers educate consumers about the benefits of using approved appliances, fuels and services, the Approved Retailer course ensures that showrooms will have at least one HETAS trained member of staff on duty at all times.

Other HETAS courses include:
H001 - Introduction to solid fuel;
H002 - Solid fuel regulations and standards;
H003 - Dry appliance installer;
H004 - Wet appliance installer;
H005DE - Biomass appliance installer;
H006 - System chimney.

For more information on HETAS' training courses and dates visit the HETAS website: www.hetas.co.uk

Engineers benefit from burner training in Italy

Burner solutions provider EOGB Energy Products Ltd has reported another successful summer of burner training in Italy.

EOGB's commercial burner training course, which is held at the Baltur research and development facility in Bologna, covers burners with outputs from 50kW to 2,000kW as well as commissioning, gas valve set up, modulating controls, burner matching and fault finding.

Training at Baltur allows engineers to get first-hand practical experience on large commercial burners, giving them essential experience and advanced technical knowledge.

Martin Cooke, technical director at EOGB, said: "Well done to all the engineers who attended the commercial burner courses during 2016 - we were really impressed by the



Candidates work on a commercial burner at the Baltur facility

amount of enthusiasm and hard work. I encourage anyone who would like to attend in 2017 to add their name to our list now as the courses are always over-subscribed and offered on a first-come, first-served basis."

The next Italy training trip will be in July 2017. For more details, telephone: 01480 477066 or email: training@eogb.co.uk

Top marks for Worcester's training academies

Worcester, Bosch Group's state-of-the-art training facilities have been awarded Approved Training Centre status by the Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering (CIPHE).

Located in Worcester, Clay Cross, Wakefield and West Thurrock, the training academies are designed, in partnership with CIPHE, to promote excellence within the industry. Worcester was awarded the status in recognition of the high standard of training achieved in its UK-wide training academies and the exceptional facilities offered to installers undertaking important industry training.

Paul Harmer, technical director at the CIPHE, commented: "The high quality of training opportunities, such as those offered by Worcester, can only help to benefit the safety of the public."

Nick Fothergill, training manager at Worcester, added: "This accreditation recognises the outstanding resources we have across all of our academies as well as our commitment to making sure our installers are up to date on the latest legislations and product procedures."

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk/training



CIPHE technical director Paul Harmer, Worcester training manager Nick Fothergill, and Paul Williams president of CIPHE

New burners light the way to the future...

According to OFTEC, the oil heating industry is keeping ahead of the game and, following manufacturer innovations, should be ready to comply with the new lower NOx emission legislation on a range of appliances before the September 2018 deadline.



Paul Rose, OFTEC CEO

New requirements on flue gas emissions, covered by the Energy Related Products (ErP) Directive, state that from September 2018, NOx emissions from oil boilers must not exceed 120mg/kWh.

To meet these new levels, burner manufacturers such as Ecoflam, EOGB and Riello have developed a range of low NOx burners.

Riello has developed their RDB BX burner which allows for the recirculation of combustion gases within the flame tube, creating lower NOx and CO emissions. One key benefit is that the combustion head is a proven Riello design and has been re-engineered to simply fit into existing high efficiency boilers.

Ahead of time, Riello has also produced the RDB BLU, a blue flame burner which meets the more stringent NOx levels expected in 2022.

New components include UV flame detection and a high-spec digital control box featuring fault diagnostics and status indications.

At the same time Ecoflam, part of the burners division of the Ariston Thermo Group, has low NOx and blue flame ultra low NOx burners ready for ERP 2018 and the more stringent emission requirements expected, with reliable combustion heads for soot free running and compact design with high ventilation performances.

Other technology innovations such as fully modulating burners within the Ecoflam range confirm the attention paid also to low consumption and energy savings.

Also UK burner distributor and manufacturer EOGB has a range of commercial burners meeting the new targets and has also developed a fully modulating low NOx blue flame burner for domestic applications with an operating range of 10-30Kw, which will be officially launched next year. The new burner is likely to already meet more challenging NOx reduction levels expected in 2022.

OFTEC CEO, Paul Rose, said: "Innovation throughout the oil heating industry remains strong with improved performance condensing boilers, better controls, wireless fuel monitoring and importantly, with the new ErP legislation looming, the development of low NOx burners and boilers.

"Manufacturers such as Riello, Ecoflam and EOGB have risen to the challenge and not only produced burners which meet the new 2018 standards, but also developed models in anticipation of the next round of ErP regulations in 2022 which are expected to enforce even lower NOx levels. Although of course, how these standards affect the UK will be governed by our relationship with the EU in six years' time."

In 2014, OFTEC helped secure a major win for the industry, challenging an EU standard which would have required oil heating appliances to meet NOx levels as low as 92mg/kWh by 2018. This level can only be achieved with a blue flame burner rather than the yellow flame burners currently in use.

EOGB to launch blue flame burner

Ahead of new regulations on flue gas emissions which come into force in September 2018, EOGB Energy Products Ltd has announced the launch of its first blue flame domestic oil burner.

Due to be officially introduced to the market this spring, the new low NOx burner not only satisfies the required standards set by the Energy Related Products (ERP) Directive, but also meets lower requirements due to come into force in 2022 well ahead of time.

Martin Cooke, technical director at EOGB said: "The oil industry is having to undergo a big change to comply with forthcoming NOx reductions.

"Our fully-modulating low NOx burner will provide the perfect 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/

Inspection of concealed flues

OFTEC wishes to remind technicians that new or replacement flue installations must be provided with a means of access to allow for visual inspection and to confirm the integrity of the installation upon completion and future service visits.

Where access points are provided, they should measure no less than 300mm square and be arranged to allow inspection throughout the length of the flue, ensuring flue joints are no greater than 1.5m away. Access points should not compromise the requirements of a buildings fire safety, thermal insulation and sound resistance.

With regard to existing installations, OFTEC recommends that equipment owners are advised to provide access where possible. Further information can be found in OFTEC Technical Book 4 (oil fired appliance and system installation requirements), section 1.5.9.

...Nozzle sizing field calculation

OFTEC's technical team is often the first port of call for a technician who has attended site to service an appliance, only to find that the boiler was obsolete, and there was no original manufacturer's commissioning literature.

For the benefit of registered technicians, OFTEC continues to expand its library of obsolete boiler manuals, so it's worth calling the technical helpline if you find yourself in this situation as we may be able to help. If service technicians wish to donate any obsolete equipment manuals to OFTEC for the benefit of others, they would be gratefully received.

Where no information exists at all, technicians are advised to calculate the correct nozzle size and oil pump pressure based upon the desired boiler output, the fuel type and estimated efficiency. A manual calculation, including a worked example, is given in the OFTEC Oil Heating Pocket Guide and OFTEC Technical Book 2 – available from OFTEC Direct on 01473 626 298 (UK), 01-864 5771 (ROI), or via: www.oftecdirect.com.

As an example, let's take a 25kW oil boiler running on kerosene with an estimated efficiency of 80%.

Step 1: Calculate the calorific value of 1 kg of kerosene

Calorific value is best remembered as the amount of heat produced by a unit or quantity of fuel when it is completely burned.

One litre of kerosene has a calorific

value of 10.35 kWh and a specific density of 0.79 kg – both these values must be known.

To calculate the calorific value of 1 kg of kerosene we must divide 10.35 (kWh per litre) by 0.79 (specific density per litre). Therefore, 1 kg of kerosene provides us with 13.10 kW/kg – (10.35/0.79).

Step 2: Calculate the burner output

To do this we simply take the boiler output and divide that by its efficiency. The result is then multiplied by 100. Continuing with the example above the equation would be (25/80) x 100 to give a burner output of 31.25kW.

Step 3: Calculate the burner throughput

Not to be confused with step one above, we are now calculating how much oil must pass through the burner to give us 31.25kW of heat.

To do this we must divide the burner output by the calorific value of 1 kg of kerosene. The equation would be 31.25/13.10. This gives a throughput of 2.39 kg/h for our nozzle. The nozzle size available in practice and selected should be as near as possible to the calculated throughput. In this scenario we should consider using a 2.25 kg/h nozzle.

Step 4: Calculate the pump pressure needed

Prior to performing a nozzle pump pressure calculation, the nozzle

calibration pressure needs to be ascertained. A quick reference table is provided in OFTEC's Oil Heating Pocket Guide and OFTEC Technical Book 2. For the purposes of continuing the example we use 8.0 bar.

To calculate the pump pressure needed we must divide the nozzle throughput by the nozzle size available/selected and square the result (x2). We then multiply this by the nozzle calibration pressure, which in this example is 8.0 bar.

So, (2.39/2.25)² multiplied by 8 (bar) gives us 9.0 bar pump pressure.

Is there an easier method?

To simplify the task, a quick and easy-to-use "Nozzle sizing and throughput pressures" calculator is available for OFTEC registered technicians to download from the password-protected area of the OFTEC website: <http://www.oftec.org/technicians/calculation-tools>.

OFTEC would like to take this opportunity to remind technicians of the following calculation tools also available to them from the OFTEC website:

- A guide to condensing oil boiler installation exemption
- A guide to oil appliance air supply requirements
- A guide to sub-gravity oil supply pipe sizing
- A guide to oil storage tank fire protection.

New and updated technical notices

Since the last edition of *Oil Installer*, OFTEC has published a new technical notice (Technical Notice 021) to inform technicians of industry concerns surrounding the sale of counterfeit oil level monitoring equipment. Tests on the counterfeit products has revealed a number of serious electrical safety failings, with the potential to cause serious damage and injury.

OFTEC have also updated technical notices on the reclassification of flammable liquids - in the UK, Technical Notice 016; and in the Republic of Ireland, Technical Notice 017. These updated notices (Issue 2, November 2016) now include the agreed position from the Health and Safety Executive on the storage of gas oil and kerosene in relation to HSG 176, with information which could be used to enable technicians to make informed decisions.

Both the new and updated technical notices are available for OFTEC registered technicians to download from the password-protected area of the OFTEC website: www.oftec.org/technicians/technical-notice-board



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Visit www.joinoftec.com or contact our registration team today on

T: 01473 626 298 (UK) T: 01 864 5771 (RoI) E: registration@oftec.org

¹) With or without MCS.

Hybrids bridge the gap between oil and renewables

Anna Wakefield, marketing and corporate communications manager of Grant UK, explains how hybrid heating products offer installers an opportunity in off-gas areas

There are around four million UK homes without access to mains gas, with over a quarter of these using oil (kerosene) as their main heating fuel. Each year many of these oil boilers are updated or changed, most often as distress purchases where the house is suddenly without heat and requires a quick solution.

The speed with which householders need a replacement means the opportunity to offer a more sustainable heating solution, such as a renewable technology, is extremely difficult. This is mainly due to the additional work involved to update a heating system and also the length of time this would take. Householders do not want any further disruption and need their heating system to operate as soon as possible. Understandably, therefore, the idea of a lengthy installation period is off-putting and often discourages the adoption of other technologies.

Alternative heating solutions

However, that has changed with the development of hybrid products, which open the door to alternative heating solutions when a distress purchase occurs. A hybrid is a combination of two or more efficient heating technologies, such as a fossil fuel boiler and a renewable appliance like an air source heat pump. These are packaged together to function as one unit, maximising system efficiency for the end user, whatever the weather.

A hybrid, such as the Grant VortexAir combines an oil boiler with a heat

pump. It is specifically a unit that couples together a VortexBlue blue flame oil-fired condensing boiler with an Aeron3 inverter driven air source heat pump (ASHP), in either one compact casing with just a single flow and return connection into the house, or as two separate units, with the boiler section installed internally.

This combination allows the oil boiler to be fitted first as a stand-alone unit, replacing an old appliance and providing immediate heat and hot water for the householder. The heat pump can be fitted externally at a later date, giving householders an option to tap into renewable energy and the benefits it can present. This flexibility and added value brings opportunity for the installer together with sustainability and cost savings in the long run for the householder. It is also a chance for installers who are used to fitting oil boilers, to enter the renewables market using familiar technologies.

There were positive responses from heating and plumbing installers when the hybrid was showcased during the off-gas installer evenings and the feedback on the hybrid concept and product was extremely encouraging. They liked the fact the blue flame oil boiler could be fitted first and the heat pump added later on, meaning it catered for those 'distress purchase' situations. A number of installers also expressed their desire for a slightly larger output (originally it was only available as a 16kW), so Grant now has two models available, 15 to 21kW and 21 to 26kW.



The Grant VortexAir – a hybrid combining all the benefits of an oil boiler with a heat pump

Joint initiative

Blue flame boilers incorporate the very latest oil burner technology. For more than two years both Grant and Riello's R&D teams have been working on a joint initiative to develop a compact blue flame burner and match this to Grant's Vortex condensing oil boiler range. The principle of combustion differs from that of a yellow flame burner in that the combustion gasses are re-circulated through a specially designed blast tube, allowing them to mix with atomised droplets of fuel and fresh air (oxygen) drawn in through the burner, to produce a clean blue flame with far lower NOx emissions.

Hybrid products, such as the Grant VortexAir, have advanced controls that

automatically monitor system temperatures, and the unit will seamlessly switch to the most cost effective heating method. Working in this way, the heat pump is able to contribute to the heat requirement of the house for longer, thereby reducing running costs and maximizing potential RHI payments for the metered, eligible renewable heat generated.

In conclusion, hybrid appliances offer a neat way to solve the immediate issue of boiler replacement while still offering the value and flexibility of a renewable system. With installer training and technical support available, hybrids look set to be an increasingly popular heating solution in the coming years.

www.grantuk.com.

Industry acclaim for Kensa heat pump project

Cornish manufacturer Kensa Heat Pumps and Coastline Housing have received industry acclaim with an award for their recent renewable heating upgrade project in Constantine, the first of its kind in Cornwall.

The collaboration which featured Kensa manufactured ground source heat pumps was named 'Best Renewable Energy Scheme of the Year' at the Regen SW Green Energy Awards held in Bath.

Living up to its Cornish name ('Kensa' comes from a Cornish word meaning 'first'), the project delivered the county's first 'micro ground source heat network' project, reducing the annual energy bills of 12 homes by 50% and CO2 emissions by 65%.

The micro ground source heat network system, pioneered by Kensa, features an individual ground source heat pump in each property linked to

communal borehole pipework. The pipes absorb heat from the ground and transfer it into a heat pump which then upgrades this heat from the ground to deliver heating and hot water to the home.

Simon Lomax, managing director of Kensa Heat Pumps commented: "We are pleased to receive further recognition for our innovative heating solution which dramatically reduces the running costs and carbon emissions at social properties.

"This particular project enabled Coastline customers to benefit from a warmer, more comfortable home and a far lower heating bill compared to their less efficient night storage heating. Better still, Coastline received generous subsidy support which covered their entire installation cost and are now embarking on further projects."

www.kensaheatpumps.com



The Kensa Heat Pumps and Coastline Housing teams receiving their "Best Renewable Energy Scheme of the Year" award

Elmhurst delivers university workshop

Energy performance measurement specialists, Elmhurst Energy, has delivered a presentation and practical workshop to MSc energy and sustainable building design/development students at De Montfort University.

"We are extremely passionate about energy efficiency and delighted to be working with universities to help in any way we can," says Amarpal Sihra, Elmhurst Energy's head of commercial.

The workshop content covered SBEM (Simplified Building Energy Model), which is a methodology used for the production of Part L compliance and Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) for non-domestic buildings.

"This workshop is very popular with our students as it gives them the opportunity to explore up-to-date energy assessment tools in a hands-on session. We find that working with industry partners, such as Elmhurst Energy, is a good way to link teaching theory with practice," explains Dr Birgit Painter, senior research fellow at De Montfort University.

www.elmhurstenergy.co.uk

Schiedel's new website

Schiedel Chimney Systems has launched a new website which, says the company, provides a more user friendly platform for its customers and a better showcase for its brand.

Responsive to all internet enabled devices, the new website allows installers to check products and information "on the go", with downloadable technical and brochure information available at the touch of a button. Schiedel says that navigation has improved and content updated, to create a useful tool incorporating logical sections allowing visitors to find the information they want easily and quickly.

www.schiedel.co.uk

Elmhurst welcomes Bonfield Report, but...

Elmhurst Energy has welcomed the publication of the long-awaited "Each Home Matters" report by Peter Bonfield, but has expressed disappointment at some omissions.

Despite having the scope of reviewing 'consumer advice, protection, standards and enforcement for energy efficiency and renewable energy', Elmhurst Energy has pointed out that the report avoids a detailed analysis of why Green Deal was not well received by consumers.



Martyn Reed, Elmhurst Energy's managing director

"We commend the Bonfield team on a well presented report," comments Elmhurst Energy's managing director Martyn Reed. "Unfortunately there is no analysis of the low take up of Green Deal plans and it is unclear why the new proposition would be more attractive. However, an expectation that 'new private investors' will be entering the market could be exciting. There is also no indication as to whether the role of Green Deal advisers and assessors will change in the future, but it is reassuring that assessments are to remain as a important tool. We look forward to working with BRE and the implementation team to help make this scheme a success."

To read the full report visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/each-home-counts-review-of-consumer-advice-protection-standards-and-enforcement-for-energy-efficiency-and-renewable-energy>

www.elmhurstenergy.co.uk

Understanding wood fuel moisture...

To help installers, retailers and consumers, Woodsure – the UK's only wood fuel quality assurance scheme – has put together a comprehensive report detailing the moisture content in different types of woodfuel and what this means for different appliances.

"Moisture content is one of the key parameters used to classify wood fuel, as it directly influences the calorific value, or energy, within wood," explains Woodsure. "Any water within wood fuel has to evaporate before it will burn, which will reduce the net energy released as useful heat. Any appliance that is not designed to burn wetter fuel may take longer to heat up and may never reach optimum efficiency.

"While wood with high moisture content will release a lot of steam, this is not heat that can be felt in the home or other buildings.

"Logs that aren't dry when burnt will also cause a fire that smoulders and creates lots of tars and smoke. If left unattended, this can cause chimney fires and so you will be required to have your chimney swept more regularly."

Woodsure's moisture report includes details about the ideal moisture content for different appliances and shares tips for seasoning wood correctly for optimum performance.

www.woodsurre.co.uk

Sonnen partner CCL to expand UK coverage

Sonnen GmbH, a market leader for residential battery storage in Europe, is expanding their reach in the UK and have partnered with CCL Components Ltd, one of the largest distributors of solar and storage solutions for private and commercial customers.

CCL and Sonnen are offering the latest storage technology to enable homeowners and businesses to use their solar electricity day and night, whilst also enabling them to change the way that they manage and control their energy. CCL have specialised in offering full technical support in the grid-tied and off-grid markets for many years and continue to offer solutions to minimise energy costs and enable system owners to contribute to the protection of the environment.

"Our new partnership with Sonnen will provide our customers with a perfect energy storage solution which is expandable over time depending on the customer's budget or energy requirements," commented Paul Brooks, director at CCL Components Ltd. We believe this is a perfect solution for the UK domestic market and some smaller scale commercial applications."

CCL and Sonnen invite UK installers to attend product training on the Sonnen Batterie systems at venues throughout the UK. To register interest in attending, contact: sales@cclcomponents.com.

www.cclcomponents.com/manufacturers/sonnenbatterie

BSRIA joins the sweeps...

The Building Services Research and Information Association – BSRIA – has become an Associate Member of the National Association of Chimney Sweeps (NACS).

The two associations have mutually beneficial business interests, delivering improvement in the built environment, chimney performance and maintenance, as well as solid fuel stoves, including requirements for

smoke controlled areas.

BSRIA test house manager, Tom Garrigan, said: "I am delighted that BSRIA has become an associate member of this prestigious organisation. We will certainly have a lot to gain in doing so, especially with the many and varied legislative changes on the radar for the coming years."

www.bsria.co.uk

Just when you think you have seen it all...

Once again, Oil Installer readers have come up trumps with a rogue's gallery of photographs featuring odd, disturbing and often dangerous installations! And they all have one thing in common – they make any sensible person ask why anyone would consider such a job to be adequate!

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



Send your photographs to jane@oilinstaller.co.uk



Matt Wetherill, managing director and chief engineer at Warrington-based Osprey Heating Services, came across the most "impressively tired" boiler he had ever seen recently, and soon found that the burner was firmly corroded in place! He declined to service it and suggested to the homeowners that they should seriously consider replacing it in the very near future! He also suggested that they shouldn't leave their dustbins so close to the flue discharge...



Heating engineer Tony Diponio, of AD Oil Servicing in Dolgellau Gwynedd, wrote to *Oil Installer*, saying: "I regularly receive *Oil Installer* magazine, and I'm always surprised at the pictures of the terrible tank and boiler installations. So when I came across this one, I had to take a picture!" Tony says that he stumbled upon the oil storage tank as he was passing and had to stop to get a photograph. "Then I noticed the oil line next to the flue... unbelievable!"

Tony repairs, services, installs and commissions oil boilers and storage tanks and is Worcester-Bosch accredited. "I've had a few different jobs in my life but being a heating engineer is by far the best job I've had - and the most rewarding," he says.



When self-employed oil technician Mark Brazendale spotted these condensing baffles he immediately concluded that they were the worst he had ever seen! Working in Salisbury in Wiltshire, Mark has been servicing and repairing oil boilers since 2005 and before that he looked after gas installations for 25 years... so he has come across quite a few odd sights! "It took about half an hour to wash the baffles in soapy water, but they had good combustion readings after that!" he told *Oil Installer*.



Last year, when oil technician Nuno Santos serviced an installation for one of his regular customers he was not surprised to see the usual 2,000 litre metal oil tank at the premises. But when he arrived for this year's service, he went out to check the tank and found that it had been replaced. "When I checked the new installation I was shocked with it – two banded 1,000L tanks side by side, with no gap between them and with pipework connecting the two using copper with soldered joints," he told *Oil Installer*. He immediately advised his customer to contact whoever had installed the tanks to rectify the faults. "I still don't understand the idea behind two 1,000L tanks to replace one 2,000L!" he added.



Letters to the Editor...



Dear Editor,

Having read *Oil Installer's* winter 2016 magazine, I note that you have asked for Readers' Letters, so here I am...

Firstly I would like to point out this magazine is very welcome and I look forward to its arrival.

However, the magazine is called *Oil Installer*. I'm sure it's not called Biomass Installer or Solid Fuel Installer or Air Source Pump Installer. We are a niche specialist market, so can we please keep it that way? If it's to do with needing to expand into other areas for financial reasons then OFTEC has obviously become too big.

Anyway, another day and another service on a new boiler installed by an OFTEC engineer that does not comply. Wednesday saw me go back to a job where I had previously told the customer the new installation and tank did not comply. Unbelievably they did something about it!! They fitted a new banded tank and got a building inspector to check it. He passed it. It's not close to complying. It's a complete mess... but he passed it, so it's ok!

A few little pointers you might like to print.

Braided flexible fuel pipes... If any service engineer sees them, replace them - they are a leak waiting to happen. Some don't even last a year and it's impossible to check the rubber under the braid. If the customer won't change them, get them to sign your invoice stating it must be changed. This has saved me twice!

And secondly, never pressure test an underground oil pipe that you did not install. You are just asking for trouble - and a big bill if there is a leak which you would have caused.

Sorry I forgot another gripe ... Why does OFTEC allow boiler manufactures to fit expansion vessels to their boilers that are totally unsuitable? What then happens is the installer sees a vessel and thinks that will do! Ban all vessels in boilers then only the correct ones will be fitted.

I'm sure none of this will see print but I can always live in hope...

Ben Clarke (OFTEC registered over 20 years)

After consultation with OFTEC, the editor will respond to the issues raised by this reader in the next edition of *Oil Installer*

Dear Editor,

With regard to Clive King's article in the winter 2016 edition of *Oil Installer* (page 13)... Clive has been in the industry for many years with a number of those spent with OFTEC. I know the written word can come over quite differently than the spoken word so I'd like to think Clive's comments on technicians fitting the least expensive equipment as quickly as possible to make the most profit was not intended to infer that technicians are profiteering unduly from their work and efforts.

Martyn Bridges,

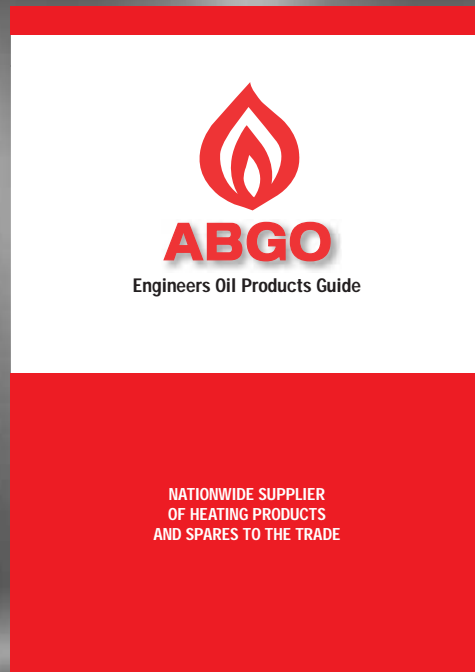
Director of marketing & technical support,

Worcester-Bosch Group

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

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Pricing page

Heating oil prices rise steeply as winter bites

During the last three months the price of oil heating has risen quite steeply with the average annual cost in Great Britain for a three bedroomed semi with a condensing boiler now around £950 (£818 in October). There is considerable variation across the regions. South West England has the lowest kerosene prices, with annual average costs for a three bedroomed home of just £883, while the same homeowner in Scotland could expect to pay around £1027 – quite a dramatic difference.

The annual cost of heating with oil has now risen for three successive quarters in Great Britain, but it still remains the cheapest major heating fuel and the current price is

still lower than the prices in 2010. It's also worth noting that the price of competing fuels, such as mains gas and LPG, are also increasing, which helps to retain oil's competitive edge.

The situation in Ireland is broadly similar, but while prices in the north have risen steadily over the last three quarters, in the Republic they have crept up only slowly following a steep rise in the spring of 2016.

Since the autumn OPEC countries have been making a concerted effort to restrict supply. This has led to a spike in crude oil prices as the market adjusts to the new trading situation. The barrel price has now levelled off at around \$55 and most commentators predict that the price will stay in the mid-fifties for the rest of this year or possibly even fall.

This is a particularly important figure - it's at around this price that America's shale oil starts to become economic to produce. So while OPEC's recent strategy of pushing the price down has worked in the short term, now that they've reduced production in a bid to increase profits again, it may have the effect of allowing their biggest competitors back into the market... which could cause prices to fall again.

The Trump effect

A further factor in the oil price equation is the recent election of President Trump in America. He's got a reputation for being very pro-fossil fuel, so we may well see action that will support oil production in the US, though the global impact of this is again very hard to predict.

Comparative space and water heating costs for a three bedroom house

GREAT BRITAIN

	Jan-13	Jan-17	Price change	% Difference
Anthracite Grains	1094	1146	52	4.77%
Electricity	1432	1635	203	14.18%
Gas (British Gas)	1055	967	-88	-8.38%
LPG	2461	1771	-690	-28.03%
LPG (Condensing)	2020	1460	-560	-27.72%
Oil	1680	1161	-519	-30.88%
Oil (Condensing)	1373	952	-421	-30.66%
Wood Pellets	1251	1281	30	2.43%
Air Source Heat Pump Radiators	1346	1491	145	10.79%

NORTHERN IRELAND

	Jan-13	Jan-17	Price change	% Difference
Anthracite Grains	1015	953	-62	-6.11%
Electricity	1498	1437	-61	-4.07%
Gas (Phoenix)	1008	825	-183	-18.15%
LPG	2542	2173	-369	-14.52%
LPG (Condensing)	2085	1785	-300	-14.39%
Oil	1615	1043	-572	-35.42%
Oil (Condensing)	1321	857	-464	-35.12%
Wood Pellets	1010	1143	133	13.17%
Air Source Heat Pump Radiators	1390	1384	-6	-0.43%

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	Jan-13	Jan-17	Price change	% Difference
Anthracite Grains	1297	1510	213	16.42%
Electricity	2086	1953	-133	-6.38%
Gas	1346	1291	-55	-4.09%
LPG	3410	2380	-1030	-30.21%
LPG (Condensing)	2797	1962	-835	-29.85%
Oil	2278	1499	-779	-34.20%
Oil (Condensing)	1856	1228	-628	-33.84%
Wood Pellets	1165	1293	128	10.99%
Air Source Heat Pump Radiators	1766	1766	-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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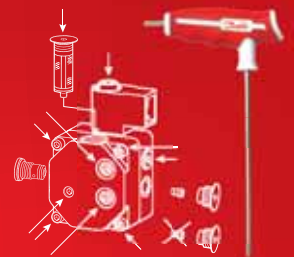
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INSIDE



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