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OFTEC Comment & News
4-5, 8-10, 12, 14



Irish News
15,17

**Table
of
Contents**



Tank News
18-19



Training News
21

**Fault-finding
tips – a special
report**
22-23



Boiler News
24, 26-27



Technical Topics
29, 31-32



Renewables
33-34



Gallery
36-37



Pricing Page
38



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Silver celebrations in a golden industry!

This year is our 25th anniversary – OFTEC was set up in April 1991 – so it's great to be able to celebrate this milestone at a time when the industry is thriving. The low oil price has been a major boost and, after a good 2015, boiler sales have remained buoyant through the first quarter of 2016. In fact it's been the best start to a year since 2008 and I hope that your business has been one of the many to benefit.



While the low oil price has naturally grabbed all the headlines, it's important to remember that not everyone can afford to heat their homes. OFTEC believes that a nationwide boiler replacement scheme, led by government with support from industry, would go a long way to tackling this problem and also reduce carbon emissions. To read more about this story and how you can add your voice to the campaign, go to page 5.

Old, single skinned oil tanks present a major challenge for our industry. It's vital that we raise awareness that tanks, just like other components in a heating system, will eventually reach the end of their working life and should be replaced before serious problems occur. The summer is the best time to do this and, with the oil price still low, homeowners may be more receptive to the idea of tank replacement. Find out how to get involved on page 12.

Finally, this summer will see Jeremy Hawksley retire after nine years as OFTEC's director general. He has made a very important contribution to our industry and I'm sure you will join me in wishing him well. Read his interview on pages 8/9.

Nick Hawkins

Chairman
OFTEC

OFTEC biomass registration now available

OFTEC has announced that biomass registration (OFT 505) is now available for installers. Like OFTEC's other renewable scopes, it enables installers to self-certify renewable technologies in accordance with building regulations in England, Wales, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands and also includes the option to add MCS registration.

Welcoming the announcement, OFTEC's registration director, Adrian Lightwood, said: "The new scope means that OFTEC now offers registration for the three most popular renewable heating options: heat pumps, solar thermal and biomass, completing our range of off-gas registration products.

"It also means that registered technicians can now benefit from a complete solid fuel registration service covering both traditional and renewable options. It's worth noting that anyone needing registration across multiple heating technologies can obtain a very significant discount on their additional scopes by joining OFTEC."

Technicians considering MCS biomass registration will need to hold an independent qualification mapped to the relevant Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) units or the new Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) units introduced in September 2015. Alternatively they can apply via the 'experienced worker route' providing they have demonstrable experience and manufacturers' training.

To apply, visit the joinoftec.com website or download a form to extend your scope from the technicians' area of the main OFTEC website. Alternatively, call OFTEC's registration team on: 01473 626 298.

"Excellent response" to app feedback request

If we needed evidence of how much smartphones and tablets have become part of our working lives, the recent OFTEC app survey provided it!

OFTEC would like to thank technicians following an excellent response to its request for feedback about its proposal to create a software application for registered technicians.

The responses clearly showed that a large majority of technicians now use smartphones or tablets as part of their everyday work and that android and Apple devices are almost equally popular. Not surprisingly there was widespread support for an OFTEC app and overwhelming support for a fully-featured solution, enabling technicians to complete and issue control documents and access technical books.

Paul Rose, OFTEC technical director, said: "This feedback will directly influence the way OFTEC develops the app and we are fully committed to completing this exciting project and making it available for both popular smart device platforms.

"The next stage will be the completion of a fully working version of the app, ready for beta testing, and I certainly expect that to happen before the summer. We will be looking for volunteers to test it, so look out for announcements in the OFTEC E-news and Oil Installer.

"If you would be interested in getting involved, contact: technical@oftec.org."

The case for a national boiler replacement scheme...

With the need to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency widely acknowledged, OFTEC's Malcolm Farrow suggests a national boiler replacement scheme should be high on the government's list of priorities.

Tackling these twin problems has proved a challenge for our government. Its decision to treat carbon reduction and energy efficiency as separate issues led to two very different 'solutions' – the ill-fated Green Deal to encourage energy efficiency, and the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) to reduce carbon emissions. To say that neither has been a success is putting it mildly!

With the Green Deal now history the RHI is the only game in town. If you have the funds to meet the high upfront installation costs of renewables, which can be as high as £15,000, then it's fine. But that excludes the majority of homeowners, particularly those who are already struggling to pay their fuel bills. So the impact of the RHI will always be limited.

"Most could never afford to go down the RHI route"

A bit of context is useful here. So far, since its launch in April 2014, there have been just 20,088 new RHI accreditations – a fraction of the

10,800 installations required each month to meet the government's initial target of 750,000 renewable heat installations by 2020. By contrast there are several million UK households using old, inefficient heating systems and living in draughty, hard to heat homes. Most could never afford to go down the RHI route. And even if they could, as a nation we couldn't afford the payments – typically around £5,000 per RHI application for an average home, paid over a seven year period.

Of course the RHI wasn't designed to fix the energy efficiency and fuel poverty issues, which is where the problem lies. What UK homeowners need is simple – affordable and practical ways to improve their energy efficiency AND reduce their heating costs. What's surprising is that it doesn't seem to have occurred to anyone in government that, if you help people to do that, you can greatly reduce carbon emissions too.

To explain this better, the table below compares the benefit from converting one home from a standard efficiency oil boiler to an air source heat pump or biomass boiler through the RHI, against using a similar amount of government money to help 12 homes upgrade to a new condensing oil boiler.

It's clear from these figures that a boiler replacement scheme would be between three and five times more effective at reducing carbon emissions than supporting renewables through

	RHI ASHP option	RHI biomass option	Oil boiler replacement
Government contribution	£4,970 over 7 years (£710pa)	£5,740 over 7 years (£820pa)	£4800 (12 up-front grants of £400 towards the capital cost)
Householder contribution	£7,000+	£9,000+	£1,600
Number of properties treated	1	1	12
Annual heating cost change	+£564	+£443	-£158
Total annual carbon emission saving (tonnes)	3.49	6.06	19.56
Total carbon emission saving over 7 years (tonnes)	24.43	42.42	136.92

Note: figures are based on a typical three bedroomed semi-detached home with an annual heat and hot water requirement of 16,000kwh. Values come from SAP 2012 and the Sutherland Tables.



Malcolm Farrow, marketing and communications manager, OFTEC

the RHI. Boiler replacement is cheaper for the homeowner and running costs are lower too, so take-up is likely to be much higher, particularly among those with limited savings or who struggle to pay their heating bills.

By making the same investment but spreading the benefit more widely, the government can help twelve households instead of one, so the impact on overall domestic energy efficiency is significantly greater. It will also help to reduce social blights such as fuel poverty and excess winter deaths, something the RHI would be unlikely to achieve.

Of course a boiler replacement scheme wouldn't solve all the problems that contribute to cold homes. However, it would be a significant step, particularly if the government were to combine it with other measures as part of a national infrastructure scheme, aimed at solving our home energy efficiency crisis. Green Deal mark two anyone?

What you can do to help
OFTEC is campaigning hard for a national boiler replacement scheme. The recent London scheme shows that some politicians now also understand the benefits, but much more needs to be done to get the message across.

If you would like to help us, the simplest way to voice your support is to write to your local MP - you can find their details on the UK Parliament website.

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Jeremy reflects on nine proactive years as he looks forward to retirement

After nine years at the helm of OFTEC, Jeremy Hawksley retires as the association's director general this summer. In this special interview with Oil Installer, Jeremy reflects on the successes, the frustrations and the changes he has experienced during his tenure... and offers some sage advice to his successor.



What do you consider to be your greatest achievement whilst at OFTEC?

"Since 2012 there has been a concerted attempt by the UK government to discredit heating with fossil fuels, and especially oil. Government official policy is to try to eliminate oil heating in Great Britain by 2025. A taxpayer funded 'Renewable Heat Incentive' (RHI), costing £4.4 billion up to 2020/21, has been put in place to achieve this.

"OFTEC has been steadfast in making the case that oil (or another liquid fuel) heating will remain important in rural areas well beyond 2050. Whilst acknowledging that decarbonisation of heat is a long-term goal, OFTEC has argued that no measures should be introduced which disadvantage oil heating users compared to those on mains gas.

"Our greatest achievement was to robustly defend oil heating and to point out the short comings of renewable heat in existing buildings, such as the high running costs of

heat pumps and the complexity for domestic users of applying for the RHI. Uptake of the domestic RHI since its launch in April 2014 has been disappointing with applications running at only around 910 each month compared to the monthly target of 10,000 – i.e. only 9.1% of target."

What has been your biggest frustration or disappointment during your tenure?

"The failure to persuade the Department of Energy and Climate Change to include a bio liquid called B30K in the RHI. This fuel blended 70% kerosene or gas-oil with 30% FAME biofuel.

"OFTEC, its members and the University of East Anglia mounted field trials from 2008-2010, which demonstrated that such blended fuels could run on existing boilers with minor modifications and a new storage tank. This initiative was at first encouraged by government but, after much delay, when the RHI (domestic) was formally launched in April 2014, bio liquids were excluded. This, we understand, was due to a questionable belief in government that heat pumps and biomass boilers would be the favoured options for most RHI applicants."

What noticeable changes have you seen in the oil heating industry?

"In the past nine years the price of kerosene has changed dramatically, reaching to a maximum of around 70p per litre before falling to about 31p per litre today.

Optimism has returned to the sector

"The fuel distributor companies have coalesced and there are now a very small number of large companies dominating the market in GB.

"There has also been a rationalisation of oil boiler manufacturers and there are now only four companies manufacturing oil boilers in large volumes. Despite the high price of fuel in some years and the persistent publicity from government and the NGOs being critical of oil heating, the amount of boilers sold and the number of OFTEC installing technicians has remained relatively stable and is now growing again. Optimism has returned to the sector.

"OFTEC's competent persons' scheme has changed and we are now aiming to be a 'one-stop-shop' for heating technicians in rural areas by offering registration for oil, solid fuel stoves, biomass boilers, heat pumps and solar thermal panels. MCS accreditation is also offered where appropriate. In the longer term we see most technicians being qualified to install a range of heating appliances.

"In Ireland we have helped provide better installation standards through the introduction of the 'Boiler Passport'. Also we were involved in brokering a mutual agreement between manufacturers about condensing boiler production. Both of these have helped reduce CO² emissions and improve customer service levels."

What is your prediction for the future of the oil heating industry?

"I believe that oil heating will continue in its present form for at least 10 years with about 2m homes using oil in the UK and Republic of Ireland. The limitations and high costs of the mass uptake of renewable heating in existing homes has now been demonstrated. For the present the political push for 100% renewable heating in the domestic sector has abated – both in the UK and RoI and in Europe – although in time this will probably reappear.

"The emerging heat policy from the Department of Energy and Climate Change is much more pragmatic than in the former coalition government. I believe that in the next year we will see the emergence of a policy much in line with OFTEC's own recommendations, which is:

- Go for the 'low hanging fruit' and especially encourage the replacement of standard efficiency boilers with condensing boilers, plus controls including weather compensators and better loft insulation;
- Accept that fossil fuel pricing will remain very competitive and that the immediate aim should be to reduce fuel consumption, through use of condensing boilers and modern controls and encourage the installation of hybrid systems (e.g. an oil condensing boiler working with an air source heat pump and/or a solar panel);
- Think about having a three stage programme to achieve low carbon heating in rural domestic properties over the next thirty years:
 - Stage One: go for maximum energy efficiency;
 - Stage Two: go for bio-liquids like B30K and/or hybrid heating (e.g. condensing oil boiler + heat pump);
 - Stage Three: go for 100% biofuel deployment replacing kerosene.

"In Ireland I believe that both the Republic and Northern Ireland governments will introduce measures to ensure that only competent people install boilers and tanks in the early 2020s, that the very large markets for oil heating (approx 1m properties in all of Ireland) will continue and that the extension of the mains gas network will be very slow."

What one piece of advice would you give to your successor?

"Ensure that OFTEC is customer focused and looks after the needs of the manufacturing members, the training centres and our OFTEC registrants, and continues to promote oil and liquid fuel heating."

What will you miss about OFTEC when you leave?

"The people! The OFTEC staff, members and all the many friends I have made in oil heating, including those in other trade associations, politicians and in the media. Also I will miss making the arguments and patiently explaining to policy makers why pragmatic solutions with small movements towards agreed goals is the best way to proceed."

How do you plan to spend your retirement?

"I hope to continue doing consultancy work in the oil heating and trade association sector, and I plan to spend time on hobbies, in the garden, and with the family."

Fax work notification to end

When was the last time you sent a fax? If you can't remember you're in good company! Use of these once-common business machines has been in steep decline since the widespread use of email and, in the face of falling demand for the service, OFTEC has decided to end works notification using fax.

If you previously used fax, you now have two options. Works notification can be done easily and cheaply online, using your own online account at: www.ofteconline.com. Alternatively, OFTEC can accept work notifications by telephone. The cost of completing an online notification is £2.50+VAT and £5.00+VAT for the telephone option. To submit a notification please have the full address and postcode of the property where the work was carried out, date of installation, together with details of the work carried out and which technician(s) was involved in the job.

To submit a notification by telephone or for further help or advice, contact OFTEC's registration team on tel: 01473 626298.

Plumb Center represents installers in new Welsh strategy

In response to the Welsh Government's first energy efficiency strategy, Plumb Center is urging officials to work alongside the heating and plumbing industry to create more consistency in the market.

The recently published document sets out the increasing need to recognise the benefits of energy efficiency and take action to reduce pressures on consumer bills; tackle fuel poverty; support the development of a sustainable energy efficiency supply chain; and improve the energy efficiency of housing stock.

As a major UK supplier of renewable technologies for the heating and plumbing market, Plumb Center has played an instrumental role in representing installers in the new

strategy. It advocates that successful delivery will depend on the Welsh Government encouraging its UK counterparts to stop altering targets and schemes that disrupt the market.

The Welsh government strategy outlines a need for improved information on the value of energy efficiency, the relative benefits of different measures and the support available. Tim Pollard, head of sustainability at Plumb Center, says: "It is our role as a supplier to help installers relay the broad range of measures available to their customers, especially those on a budget with a preconception of unaffordable expense. We are particularly supportive of the changes to ensure that suppliers deliver measures for those poorer households in off gas



Tim Pollard, head of sustainability for Plumb Center

and rural locations – like many areas in Wales."

The strategy outlines how increasing energy efficiency will make Wales a more prosperous nation by creating new jobs, skills and flourishing supply chain. It states that for every £1m spent on energy efficiency 23 jobs are directly supported in the energy efficiency industry.

For more information on the Welsh energy efficiency strategy, visit: www.gov.wales

The non-gas map – ideal for heating businesses

Most heating businesses know where their customers live but, if looking to expand, wouldn't it be useful to know the best areas to target?

There is now an online resource that removes some of the guess work and reveals, in considerable detail, where off-grid heating customers live and even, in some cases, the types of heating they use.

The new website is called "the non-gas map" – www.nongasmap.org.uk – and was developed on behalf of the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC).

By zooming in and clicking on the map, it is possible to reveal local data that could be useful to heating businesses. For each area selected, the site shows the total number of homes, how many are off grid and,

of those, how many are using oil, solid fuel and electric heating. Although homes using LPG are not listed, by reviewing the numbers, it is possible to make an approximation.

www.nongasmap.org.uk



Established technicians to be inspected less frequently

Experienced technicians can expect less frequent inspections – that's the message from OFTEC's registration team following some important changes to the rules that govern competent person schemes, agreed after a consultation by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) last year.

One amendment to these rules, which are called the 'conditions of authorisation', will see the frequency of inspection visits for registered oil businesses change from three years to five years. DCLG accepted OFTEC's view that inspections did not need to be so frequent because training and assessment is a pre-requisite to oil registration and is operated very successfully by certification bodies accredited by UKAS to a standard known as ISO 17024.

Another change that OFTEC is glad to see adopted is that new registrations can continue to be on a 'probationary' basis before moving to full registration once the initial evaluation of their business credentials are checked. This condition also recognises an operative's ISO 17024 personnel certification which in turn is seen as being a low risk area for non-

compliance when a new business starts out. After initial evaluation, follow-up checks will be made in the second and third year of registration to ensure new entrants into the industry are checked more often than established technicians who have a proven track record of competence.

The conditions of authorisation are set by DCLG in England but are also adopted by the Welsh government. OFTEC also applies these conditions in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man where the OFTEC self-certification scheme is recognised.

OFTEC believes the competent person scheme conditions have been improved, with new registrants checked more frequently and established technicians only inspected once every five years. However, the option to carry out more frequent inspections can be applied should OFTEC have concerns, for instance after a complaint has been upheld.

The full conditions of authorisation can be downloaded at: www.gov.uk/building-regulations-competent-person-schemes

Dedicated to the needs of customers...

Since its relatively humble launch in 2003, when OFTEC Direct was announced with a small leaflet offering a selection of 27 products, its main purpose has been to serve the needs of the oil heating community by offering a niche range of useful products.

From this modest start the product range has steadily increased, as has the way it reaches its customers. In 2005 OFTEC Direct attended its first trade show and by 2007 its enlarged product updates were going out twice a year. The OFTEC Direct website followed in 2008 and in 2009 the first major catalogue was issued.

Euro pricing was added in 2012, highlighting the importance of the Irish heating market. The product range has also steadily grown, reflecting both customer requests and a more diverse client base following OFTEC's expansion into renewables and solid fuel registration.

2016 holds the promise of further improvements. With a range now covering 183 products, including more solid fuel and consumable items, the OFTEC Direct website needs a complete redesign. The move reflects a determination to put the customer first, by making the site as easy and convenient to use as possible and offering a one-stop-shop for most technicians' equipment needs. Look out for more details soon.

Our next E-newsletter will feature some exciting new products. These include a magnetic marketing tool to keep your customers coming back, plus the relaunch of the Ultimate Liquid Suction pump, now with a five year warranty on most parts, plus lots more.

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Joint campaign to raise oil tank awareness

OFTEC, the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers and several prominent oil distributors are pioneering an oil storage tank awareness campaign to raise standards in the sector.

The campaign will focus on creating greater awareness amongst consumers of the need to look after their oil. It will highlight their responsibilities and the consequence of causing pollution, and emphasise the need to have their tank regularly inspected by an OFTEC registered technician.

Oil storage and supply enquiries account for approximately 50% of all technical enquiries received at OFTEC, with consumers appearing to be only concerned with what the tank will look like and how much room it will take up.

With low oil prices, consumers seem content to remain on oil as a primary heat source, and OFTEC and the FPS believe that the time is right to encourage home owners to take greater control of their oil stores and move away from the 'fit and forget' culture that permits tanks to become overgrown with plants, steel tanks rust, and plastic tanks to deteriorate... all of

which goes unnoticed until the boiler stops working because of blocked filters or water enters the oil supply.

Feedback from oil distributors, registered technicians and OFTEC inspectors suggests that there is still a high population of what appears to be aging single skin tanks in the domestic sectors and it is an objective of the campaign to educate customers that, like everything else, a tank has a design life and needs to be replaced in a managed way before it fails and becomes a distressed replacement.

Information is being developed which is specifically aimed at three groups – consumers, technicians, and oil distributors. Information in these areas will be factual, practical, and will cross support the messages to each group.

Commenting on the campaign, Paul Rose, OFTEC technical director, said: "We hope that this campaign will educate consumers to take more responsibility for their oil stores

and not question the motives of technicians when they quite rightly identify problems.

"The information being developed will clearly state good practice for oil storage, what consumers are expected to know and do to accommodate a safe oil delivery, and what the consumers should expect of a technician servicing an oil heating installation. This campaign aims to protect the consumer, heating technician, oil distributor and the wider environment."



An example of why a tank awareness campaign is necessary!

A technician's guide to dealing with substandard work

The issue of substandard work is something that nearly all technicians come across occasionally. In most cases they will have visited a customer's home and quickly realised that something is badly wrong with the heating installation. So what should they do?

First and foremost, as a professional technician, you have a duty of care to the owner and equipment user so you must make them aware of your concerns by following the OFTEC identifying risks procedure that you will find in the useful pocket guide. You should also complete the appropriate control documentation and, depending on the nature and severity of the issue, use warning notices and affix stickers as required.

Once you've done that, the homeowner can make an informed decision on the best course of action to remedy the problem. This will depend largely on the circumstances, on the nature of the problem

and the advice you've given them. In most cases of recent work, the homeowner will have the ability to seek legal redress under their contract of work by contacting the company responsible and giving them the chance to rectify the situation.

Complaints procedure

If the homeowner is unable to get the problem resolved with the original company and that company is OFTEC registered, OFTEC has a formal complaints procedure that covers such situations. Following a complaint by the owner, OFTEC will investigate and, if we uphold the complaint, we will require the original company to put things right. We can also

apply a range of sanctions, including implementing closer risk-based inspection, suspending their OFTEC registration or even expelling them. If the original installation was found to be non-compliant with building regulations and the company is no longer trading, then OFTEC's workmanship warranty may help with the rectification costs if a policy is in place.

If the work was carried out by a non-registered company then the customer has the same rights to expect redress under consumer law. If the customer experiences difficulty getting action from the non-registered company OFTEC can not

take action directly against a non-registered installer. However, we will make every effort to ensure that those with the power to take action do so. The important thing is to let us know and you can do that through our online reporting system which you will find it in the technician's password protected area. We will contact the relevant building control and trading standards office - we have a good success rate in making the authorities aware of 'cowboy' installers in their locality!

For more information or advice, contact our compliance officer by emailing: compliance@oftec.org or tel: 01473 626 298.

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Wholesaler wins accolade – for third time

Williams & Co, the southern based trade-only plumbing and heating wholesaler, has been identified by the London stock exchange (LSE) as one of the 1000 most inspiring companies in Britain for the third time, demonstrating 'positive growth in revenue' and 'significantly outperforming their sector peers'.

Only 40 companies managed to make the list for the third time running out of the 5.4 million small and medium size companies in Britain.

Williams & Co. managing director, Ray Stafford, said: "The whole team at Williams & Co are thrilled and elated at receiving this honour for the third successive year. It's their hard work and commitment, and the loyalty of our fantastic customers that has made this possible."

The company specialises in supplying self employed tradesmen and small independent businesses from 29 sites across the south east of England, and via its ecommerce platform at www.tradeonlyplumbing.co.uk

The company plans to open four more branches during 2016, starting with Romford last month and Harrow in June.



Located just off the A127, Williams & Co's new branch in Romford is the latest addition to the company's network. MD Ray Stafford said: "I am delighted to be able to bring our traditional, independent service to Romford and surrounding areas, offering transparent pricing on popular brands to the trade." Photographed at the official opening are (left to right) Daniel Jarvis, Terry Johnson (branch manager), Fran Hudspeth, and Vaidas Ostrovskis

Find Worcester on Facebook

Worcester, Bosch Group has launched a new Facebook page, increasing the number of different ways it can communicate with installers and their customers.

As well as putting installers just a few clicks away from its technical support team, the dedicated page will see news and pictures from its community of heating professionals shared each month. Exclusive competitions will also give followers of Worcester's installer profile the chance to win anything from workwear to appliances and accessories from across its Which? Best Buy accredited product range.

Meanwhile, Worcester has also launched a separate homeowner Facebook page to serve as a hub for everything related to heating and hot water comfort. Installers can direct their customers to the page with any questions or queries, as well as to discover tips and tricks on everything from saving on their energy bills to creating a cosy and comfortable home.

Martyn Bridges, director of marketing and technical support at Worcester, Bosch Group, commented: "We are committed to supporting the installers of our products in the most convenient way for them. Facebook is

an increasingly important medium for this, with many installers turning to the platform to publicise their business, engage with customers and keep up to date with industry news.

"Not only will Worcester's growing presence on social media allow us to communicate with heating engineers as and when we are needed but, in building our profile among homeowners, we hope it will also help installers to sell the benefits of owning a Worcester boiler in the long term."

To join Worcester's installer Facebook page, search 'Worcester Bosch Professional'; alternatively, to follow its homeowner page, search 'Worcester Bosch'.



Worcester, Bosch Group has launched a new Facebook page

New look planned for Plumb and Parts branches

Plumb Center and Parts Center have unveiled a fresh new look at a branch in Purley, London, to improve customers' in-branch experience. Purley joins the company's branch in Redhill, Surrey, in showcasing its new open plan design which is set to be replicated in more than 500 branches across the UK.

The design features a number of firsts for Plumb Center. Reducing the length of the trade counter removes physical barriers between customers and employees, to create a bright and open environment. The office areas have been integrated into the branch itself, making it easier for branch staff to greet and service customers.

Merchandising has also been introduced, with a range of fast-moving stock, trade essentials and seasonal items on immediate hand for self-selection.

Ian Herrett, branch director Plumb Center and Parts Center, said: "By overhauling the way our branches look and feel we are making life easier for all of our customers. We've created a welcoming and practical space as well as guaranteed stock availability on all essential products."

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



The new look Plumb Center and Parts Center recently unveiled in Purley

OFTEC launches solid fuel training at Micon

OFTEC's first approved centre in Northern Ireland to offer training and assessment for the association's solid fuel installation, servicing and commissioning (dry) certification, has now opened at Micon in Lisburn.

Micon Distribution Ltd is a distributor to the fireplace and stove industry throughout the UK and Ireland and is offering the new course to technicians to provide greater support for retailers and installers within the industry.

In conjunction with North West Regional College, the specialist course aims to provide candidates with the knowledge and understanding to install dry stoves which meet the requirements of building regulations and standards.

David Blevings, OFTEC Ireland manager, said: "We are delighted to welcome Micon as an OFTEC training centre in Northern Ireland. Their offering of the solid fuel course will complement the current oil courses being run by centres locally and fills a welcome gap in the solid fuel market along with METAC in the Republic of Ireland."

Micon will initially offer installers the OFT15-108(D) – installation, commissioning and servicing of solid fuel burning appliances (dry



Pictured (L-R) at the Micon launch is Nicola Curry, North West Regional College; David Knipe, training manager, OFTEC; Michael Farnon, managing director, Micon Distribution Ltd.; David Blevings, OFTEC, Ireland manager; and Christine Murphy, marketing manager, Micon Distribution Ltd.

space heating) – and propose to offer the OFT15-108(W) – installation, commissioning and servicing of solid fuel burning appliances (dry space heating and hot water heating) – later this year. This brings the number of centres offering solid fuel in Ireland to two with another planned for the north west of Northern

Ireland by September 2016.

For more details about solid fuel registration, visit the OFTEC website www.joinoftec.com. To register for a solid fuel course at Micon contact Kerry Hunter, tel: 028 7127 6170 or email: Kerry.hunter@nwrc.ac.uk.

OFTEC issues advice after oil tank fires

OFTEC has issued advice to householders following oil tank fires which, in two separate incidents, have destroyed a bungalow in Belvoir, Belfast, and gutted a two-storey house on the Coast Road outside Larne, Co.Antrim.

With nearly 70% of households in Northern Ireland using oil as their main heating source, the organisation is advising householders to ensure fire safety is given due consideration when it comes to installing and protecting oil tanks.

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) is currently investigating both fires, the first of which spread to the bungalow, situated in a row of terraced houses in Belvoir, and the second which destroyed the detached house near Larne and spread into a neighbour's garden, setting a second oil tank alight.

David Blevings, OFTEC Ireland

manager, said: "Oil is a very safe fuel, provided it is stored correctly. Tank fires have the potential to be extremely dangerous and, as sadly highlighted in these cases, to substantially damage properties. The best way to protect yourself and others is to make sure your oil tank and any oil burning appliances are inspected and serviced by an OFTEC registered technician at least once a year.



The bungalow in Belvoir, Belfast, destroyed by an oil tank fire

"Building control requires oil tanks to be placed with minimum separation distances from properties and boundaries; while these are not enforceable retrospectively, good practice would recommend they are met. If they can't be met, for example, in a small rear yard, the placement of fire safety panel(s) that provide a minimum 30 minute fire-resistant wall which extends at least 300mm above and beyond the ends of an oil tank can offer suitable protection. Should fire occur, the fitting of a fire panel can be instrumental in halting its spread. These particular fires highlight the very real threat of unprotected oil tanks and we are strongly urging householders to review the positioning of their oil tank and, if necessary, to take action."

OFTEC advises that householders should have their oil tank and fittings inspected by a suitably-qualified competent person at least once a year to check for leaks, damage or defects. www.oftec.org.uk



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1) Existing OFTEC registered businesses. Other fees apply for new applications. 2) In regions where applicable.

Training in Ireland – in greater demand?

After a long recession on the island of Ireland, are things starting to look up for the construction sector and does this mean an increase in demand for competent heating technicians?

According to one of the main banks which operates in both jurisdictions, things are improving: "The Irish construction sector continues to experience solid growth," according to respondents to the latest Ulster Bank Construction PMI survey.

What does this mean for the heating sector in general, given that oil prices are at a six year low, and do training centres envisage an increase in demand for training as the economy recovers?

OFTEC recently asked for comments from its Irish training centres through a series of questions:

Do you see an increase in training requirements at your centre in 2016?
Yes, we have currently classes booked until September 2016.

Are more installers looking for training/knowledge since the industry moved to condensing appliances?

A number of installers have identified a requirement for training in use of flue gas analysers.

Do you see the low price of oil increasing the demand for oil training?
I think it will steady the ship in relation to customers transferring to gas boilers, therefore making contractor training quite steady.

Where do you see demand for renewable training given the low oil price?
Our renewables training has been very slow in the past 2 years, and we consider oil and gas our 'bread and butter' courses, not renewables.

Do you envisage a demand for solid fuel training in your centre in 2016?
Yes, we are interested in setting up for solid fuel.

Do you think OFTEC registration and inspection complements the training?

Yes, it's always good to complete the link from a college/centre training to OFTEC inspectors.

Do you welcome the visit by OFTEC inspectors to your centre – does this complement training?
Yes, it creates a good opportunity for the installers to ask questions to the inspector.

So, according to our training partners, the future for oil – and solid fuel – looks bright. The OFTEC helpline would echo that with both inspectors reporting that installers are saying that things have picked up, and more consumers are aware of the beneficial price differential that oil has over competing fuels. More consumers are looking for competent persons which means OFTEC!

If you are need to refresh your training credentials or looking for a new scope see: www.joinoftec.com

Help to market oil in Ireland...

Ireland based manufacturing companies (boilers/tanks/ancillaries) which promoted the 'Choose Oil First' message through the Belfast Telegraph and trade press at the end of 2015, met again recently and agreed that there is a need for a sustained advertising campaign in 2016 that encourages oil home heating householders in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to stay with oil.

This is vitally important even though oil has a substantial price saving over its competitors. Major gas pipeline extensions are planned in Northern Ireland with work to install gas pipelines to connect Dungannon, Coalisland, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Omagh, Enniskillen, and Derrylin expected to commence in 2017, with the potential for around 40,000 consumers to be connected to gas in the towns as the local gas distribution networks are rolled out.

In addition, the Utility Regulator has granted a licence extension to Phoenix Natural Gas to provide new gas networks to 13 towns and villages in East Down. The aim is to commence pipe laying works during 2016, and connect potentially 27,000 energy consumers to gas in Hillsborough,

Ballygowan, Dromore, The Spa, Ballynahinch, Saintfield, Crossgar, Annahilt, Drumanness, Downpatrick, Dundrum, Castlewellan, and Newcastle.

Although these numbers are subjective and unlikely, given the favourable price of oil, the threat remains and we must encourage the oil consumer to stay with oil – if they switch fuels, they are lost to oil forever.

A campaign is currently being developed that will portray the positives about oil and encourage consumers to stay with oil when presented with an option to switch fuels. The campaign will probably feature direct mail, portraying the positives of oil (ahead of gas pipeline extensions) backed up by local radio and local press (subject to budget).

Watch out for the pro oil marketing later this year and get involved – remind your consumers that oil is the *cheapest home heating fuel on the island of Ireland (Sutherland February 2016) and encourage them to save more money by upgrading to a condensing boiler. If you need figures or marketing information please contact one of the Ireland team.*

Need help registering in Ireland?

We are keen to help technicians register in Ireland and have introduced a number of new initiatives to make the registration process seamless and easy.

Currently, the local OFTEC inspector makes a presentation about OFTEC at training centres and answers any questions candidates may have. The inspectors will now follow up with individual candidates after completion of assessment and reduce any lag between completion of training and certificate delivery, making it as easy as possible for candidates to join.

If you have completed your training and are waiting on your certificate or ready to complete your application to register, call Norman (NI) on 07872 436 534 and Sean (ROI) on 087241 7041.



Kingspan launches latest slimline tank

Kingspan Titan has unveiled its latest concept in slimline oil tanks.

The new ESSL2000 has been designed to offer safe and secure heating oil storage at premises where space is limited and access restrictions may apply. The totally enclosed, bunded tank has a total footprint of only 2m² and was developed following consultation with key industry partners including installer partners, oil distributors and heating oil consumers.

"The ESSL2000 has one of the highest storage to footprint ratio of any oil tank on the market so customers with limited space can now significantly increase the amount of oil they can store on-site," says Adrian Gatford, Kingspan Titan sales director GB.

"What's more, its slimline profile makes installation quick and simple, enabling contractors to manoeuvre and fit the tank into narrow spaces."

Titan EcoSafe tanks represent the most advanced range of integrally bunded oil storage systems available within Europe, claims the company. They are designed to satisfy

the needs of commercial facilities that require secure fuel storage and feature a lockable lid for extra security.

The ESSL2000 is the latest addition to the Titan EcoSafe slimline range, which currently includes the ESSL4000 and ESSL1400 tanks. All include the Watchman Alarm oil level monitor which is fitted as standard.

"The Watchman Alarm is a state of the art system which enables companies to better manage their supplies and will in turn give managers greater

control and visibility," adds Adrian. "It also offers a far more reliable solution than external oil gauges which can be prone to damage, vandalism or failure."

All Titan's plastic tanks are specifically designed to provide the user with full regulation and environmental compliance and all are CE marked in accordance with the mandatory Construction Products Regulation 2011 (CPR).

www.kingspantitan.com



The Kingspan Titan ESSL2000

Setting standards at Envirostore

Innovative and proactive in the safe storage of fuel, Envirostore UK was the only plastic tank manufacturer to support the Oil Care Campaign's 20th anniversary event in June last year.

"We're also the only plastic tank manufacturer to offer a 20-year life expectancy as required under the Control of Pollution Regulations, regulatory guidance which is now included in the revised BS5410 standards," says director Richard Marsh.

"This further demonstrates the confidence Envirostore has in its integrally bunded storage tanks with their unique spill tray and, equally important, access cover lid which is covered by our warranty. This lid prevents the ingress of water into the bund chamber, something which is posing a major problem with other tanks. Envirostore now offers a retrofit access cover that will fit most of these inferior tanks not covered by warranty by other manufacturers.

"Now in our 7th year of trading we will be launching further new products this year. As always we welcome opinions and comments to help us further improve our products."



Envirostore showed off their products at the recent FPS EXPO in Liverpool, and, as an added attraction, visitors to the company's stand had the opportunity to own a signed rugby ball. Shown here are Envirostore's Richard Marsh with Welsh rugby union player Shane Williams MBE and Andrew Lacey, both of Star Multifuels

The problems of underground storage...

From the perspective of a domestic oil user, the thought of being able to hide a heating oil tank underground can seem an attractive option. However, digging a little deeper into the standards for installation and oil delivery could be enough to convince most users to opt for conventional above ground storage instead.

During the last 18 months, OFTEC has noted a continuation of an issue whereby owners of new and existing underground oil storage tanks are experiencing difficulties in obtaining oil deliveries. In late 2012 a prominent UK independent oil distributor made a change to its delivery standards, requiring all underground oil tanks to be accompanied by a report from an OFTEC registered technician confirming the tank's condition prior to a delivery of oil.

The distributor said that the change was made because Environment Agency research showed that a large percentage of groundwater pollution incidents originated from failures to underground oil storage tanks.

Whilst OFTEC supports a move for increased vigilance when it comes to underground tanks, inspection should only be undertaken by someone with specialist knowledge of the equipment they are inspecting and the appropriate equipment to perform the work safely.

OFTEC has pointed this out to the distributor concerned and requested that reference to the use of OFTEC registered technicians for this work is removed from their delivery standards.

Moving forward, OFTEC would advise tank installers

considering underground storage options to consider a compliant above ground solution instead. This is consistent with regional building regulations which states that below ground oil storage is not recommended.

With the range of above ground tanks available, it is unlikely that an underground tank would be the only option. In exceptional circumstances where underground tanks are specified, two essential features of the tank design are: that it is of the double skin type (not to be confused with an integrally banded tank type); and it is provided with an interstitial leak detection monitoring system between the inner tank and outer skin to provide a warning if the inner tank leaks.

Further information is available from OFTEC Technical Book 3, section 1.7.3, and Environment Agency publication PPG 27, which can be downloaded via the following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/485216/pmho0402bgsh_e_e.pdf

OFTEC notes that whilst the document is watermarked "This document is out of date and was withdrawn 14/12/2015", it should still be applied as best practice in the absence of alternative guidance at this time.

In addition, technicians should advise the prospective owner of an underground tank of the need to contact their local planning office before the installation commences, as planning permission may be required, and to contact their building insurers to enquire if such an installation would be covered in the event of a pollution incident.



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INSIDE

Solid fuel training expands as demand grows

With demand growing for OFTEC's new solid fuel registration, the number of approved training and assessment centres offering OFTEC's solid fuel training courses is expanding rapidly.

There are currently three centres offering the courses, including two in Ireland, but it's expected that up to 12 could do so by the end of 2015. The practical emphasis of OFTEC's training and assessment package has drawn praise from both training centres and technicians alike.

The assessments include a mixture of multiple choice theory papers, practical worksheets, and a number of practical tasks that the candidate must carry out successfully. While OFTEC will accept qualifications from other providers, the OFTEC course offers considerable advantages for anyone wanting to maximise their competence.

There are two courses available, the first (OFT15-108D) covering the installation, commissioning and servicing of stoves and appliances used for space heating, and the second (OFT15-108W) covering appliances connected to wet central heating systems.

Each scope allows technicians to install, commission and service solid fuel fired stoves, room heaters, associated equipment and systems in accordance with manufacturers' instructions, industry practices and standards, and legislative requirements.

OFTEC's solid fuel technical book – the OFTEC Guide to Solid Fuel Installation, Commissioning and Servicing Work – is also proving popular.

The book is available from OFTEC Direct and contains all the technical information necessary for the experienced technician to correctly work on solid fuel appliances.

For details of centres offering the OFTEC courses, contact David Knipe, email: dknipe@oftec.org

Refresh your knowledge and stay safe...

As Schiedel Chimney systems approaches its fifth anniversary of delivering HETAS solid fuel courses, the chimney and flue manufacturer is urging installers to make sure they refresh their knowledge, to remain legal and safe.

"For installers who first undertook HETAS H003 training with us five years ago, 2016 will see that qualification expire," said Adrian Wood, training manager for Schiedel. "Keeping up to date with solid fuel training and changes in legislation is vital. HETAS installers who don't complete refresher training will be unable to self-certify installations, which could

affect Competent Person Scheme (CPS) registration, insurance and, more importantly, customer safety."

HETAS' H003 refresher course covers all changes to the building regulations, health and safety, BS EN standards legislation and technical standards within the last five years. The assessment comprises a choice of one and two day refresher courses, or the option to take the full H003 course again.

For information about Schiedel's HETAS training courses visit: www.schiedel.co.uk/training or email adrian.wood@schiedel.co.uk

Summer burner courses in Italy

Burner manufacturer and distributor, EOGB Energy Products Ltd, has announced a new series of commercial burner training courses to be held in Italy this summer.

The week-long courses, which are run from the world-renowned Baltur research and development facility in Bologna, cover single stage, two stage and fully modulating burners, oil, gas and dual-fuel and electronic and mechanical operations.

Each course is open to a maximum of 10 candidates and for the first time will run in both July and September to provide more opportunities for engineers to attend. The first course will run from the 11th–15th July and the second course from the 19th–23rd

September.

Martin Cooke, technical and training manager at EOGB said: "This is the eighth year that we have provided commercial burner training, which is essential for engineers in order to learn about the reality of working on commercial plants. The Baltur facility in Italy provides an excellent environment for engineers to improve their knowledge and gain skills through practical activity instead of just classroom-based learning."

Due to high demand, the July course is now fully booked. However, places are still available for the September intake. Email: training@eogb.co.uk or tel: 01480 477066 for more information.



Engineers get to grips with commercial burners during last year's course in Italy

Embroided by oil? Fault-finding tips from those “in the know”!

Chris Clancy, northern training supervisor for Worcester, Bosch Group, specialises in running advanced fault-finding courses for installers working with oil-fired boilers. Here, Chris shares his top trouble-shooting tips in response to some of the questions he is most frequently asked in the training room.

I have an oil vacuum gauge in my test kit but I have never used it. What is it used for?

A vacuum gauge is a very valuable tool to use in fault finding an intermittent locking out of the burner. If we consider the oil supply pipe from the tank to the burner, there are several valves and filters which may become blocked, faulty or simply close. Attach the vacuum gauge to the vacuum port on the pump – be very careful not to attach the gauge to the pressure port or you may damage the gauge. The vacuum port and pressure port are usually marked on the oil pump. Alternatively look in the manual for the pump diagram, the ports will be marked on there.

If the tank is higher than the burner, once the gauge is attached make a note of the location of the needle. As you turn on the burner the needle should stay in roughly the same place, it may move towards the negative side a little but not by much. If the needle starts to drift noticeably towards the negative as the burner runs, then there is a problem with the oil supply. You will need to check all the filters and valves in the oil pipe to the burner. If the valves and filters are clear, you will need to check the pump itself for damage.

If the oil tank is lower than the burner, then when the burner starts the gauge needle will move slightly towards negative and then settle fairly quickly. Again, the needle drifting is a sign of a problem with the oil supply pipe, filter or valve.

Finally, as long as the gauge needle is not drifting, the position of the needle during burner running can be anywhere between plus 0.35 bar and minus 0.4 bar. This is the normal range of oil supply to an oil boiler so if the gauge settles outside of these measurements, the oil supply should be checked against manufacturer's instructions as the tank could be too high above the burner (maximum 4 metres allowed) or too low (maximum 3.5 metres of lift).

I have a boiler oil supply connected through an external clear plastic deaerator device and it keeps locking out. What should I check?

Check the size of the oil pipe as per manufacturer's instructions. Most domestic oil boilers will operate with an 8mm oil supply pipe through a deaerator. We traditionally use 10mm pipe in the UK and this has been known to cause intermittent problems on deaerator systems. Check all the pipe



Installers on an advanced fault-finding course for oil boilers



Oil training at Worcester, Bosch Group

connections on the oil line, they should be of the flared manipulative type or olive, then insert the sleeve. The sleeve is very important as it keeps the soft, copper pipe rigid during tightening – without the sleeve the olive just squashes the pipe on tightening and can cause leaks in the future. As this type of leak will be on the suction side of the oil supply, it can cause loss of oil to the burner.

Finally, make sure any non-return valves in the oil supply pipe are removed – these are not required and can cause intermittent problems. If you have any doubts contact the deaerator manufacturer for guidance.

When I service a boiler, the manufacturer's instructions ask for a 0.5 60ES nozzle, I only have a 0.5 60S nozzle so can I use that instead?

Unfortunately not. A nozzle with the prefix ES has a different reference capacity to a nozzle with a prefix of just S. The 0.5 ES nozzle will pass approximately

0.5 US gallons an hour at 8 bar pressure whereas the 0.5 S nozzle will pass 0.5 US gallons per hour at 10 bar pressure. Always match the burner, nozzle, appliance and flue system to the specific nozzle quoted in the instructions, or the output and efficiency of the appliance cannot guarantee.

I have had a new boiler installed and I am getting a humming noise which seems to come from some of the radiators. The noise appears after around half an hour and comes and goes. I have fitted thermostatic radiator valves to most of the radiators in the house. What could be causing the noise?

This problem is most likely caused by a thermostatic valve or a bypass issue. An easy check for the thermostatic valves is to allow the heating to go cold, open up all the thermostatic valves to full – it's a good idea to write the valve setting number down so you can reset the valve later. When the flow



Installers should be encouraged to keep an eye out for oil opportunities

direction arrow on the valve body is pointing towards the radiator, the valve should get hot before the valve on the opposite end of the radiator. If it does not, then the valve is fitted the wrong way around. If there isn't an arrow on the valve body or a double arrow, this type of valve is able to be fitted either way round. When installing thermostatic radiator valves, it is good practice to fit an automatic bypass between the central

heating flow and return pipes, allow around a 3 metre run of pipe from the boiler flow to the boiler return through the auto bypass. If an auto bypass is not fitted, this may cause the valve to vibrate when the water flows through it, resulting in the humming noise. The automatic bypass valve must be set up for the system and – as always – follow the manufacturer's instructions to set up the valve.

I have a Bentone B9A burner and I suspect the solenoid coil or valve may be faulty. What should I check?

The solenoid on all Worcester boilers using a Bentone burner are the same. Before testing the solenoid and oil pump, ensure you have a good oil supply to the boiler and make sure the oil pressure is set as per manufacturer's instructions. The solenoid coil operates at 230 volts AC so be careful when testing the components.

First check whether you have between 2000 to 2400 ohms on the two parallel spade connectors in the coil. If not, then replace the coil. If the coil resistance is satisfactory, then insert your multimeter test probes into the two parallel connector holes on the lead from the control box and restart the burner. You should get 230 volts AC after 10 to 20 seconds.

If your reading is 230 volts AC, then replace

the oil pump (you can replace just the stem, but it is sometimes the pump which is causing the problem). If you do not return 230 volts AC then check the lead for continuity. If the lead is adequate then replace the control box. Do not forget to isolate the burner before replacing the control box.

Before carrying out fault-finding you should be competent to do so. OFTEC qualified technicians fall into this category. Always carry out a polarity check, including live to neutral, live to earth, neutral to earth, which would require 240 volts live to neutral, 240 volts live to earth and 0 volts neutral to earth. You should also carry out an earth continuity check before carrying out further fault finding checks. Before working on any electrical components carry out the nine steps to safe electrical isolation procedure.

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High efficiency boiler range launched in the UK

The specialist manufacturer of HVAC products, Domusa, has recently launched its range of oil-fired condensing boilers on to the British market.

The company, located in the Basque Country, an industrial region of northern Spain, is a market-leader in the production and sales of high efficiency oil boilers, and has built a reputation as one of Europe's most important manufacturers of floor standing boilers.

The Domusa range is available with outputs of

20kW, 30kW and 40kW. The combustion chamber is constructed in a choice of cast iron or steel, and their low exhaust gas temperatures makes them suitable for both balanced and polypropylene flues.

Since 1976, Domusa – which has recently become an OFTEC member – has designed and produced oil and gas central heating boilers, together with biomass boilers, hot water exchangers, and a range of solar systems for the generation of domestic hot water.

Domusa's designs are renowned for using high quality materials to ensure long life for the final products (up to 12 years guarantee), and innovative production systems enable the company to market them at an accessible price level.

Domusa has been part of Corporación Mondragón since 1998, with offices and production subsidiaries in 41 countries and sales representation in more than 150. Corporación Mondragón is one of the most important business groups in the Basque

Country in terms of employees (80.000 people) and turnover, and is the tenth biggest company in Spain.

In the UK, Domusa has offices at Stanlaw Abbey Business Centre in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, tel: 07941 530840. www.domusatechnik.co.uk



Danfoss filter for oil pumps

The original red Danfoss cartridge filter is the only filter approved and released for use in Danfoss BFP oil pumps.

Manufactured from carefully selected and tested materials, the Danfoss oil filter is extremely strong and is specifically designed for use with

heating oil and kerosene. Danfoss guarantees that the filter will keep its shape and stay in place, and the filter can be changed in just 45 seconds.

For reliability, the company recommends that technicians should choose the Danfoss oil filter and

replace it on an annual basis to avoid reduced burner efficiency.

Technicians are invited to play The Filter Game introduced by Danfoss, for a chance to win a €250 Amazon voucher in a monthly draw. To enter, go to: www.redoilfilter.com



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Step four... The Grant EZ-Fit low level balanced flue is fitted and insulation is added around it.



The new 'VortexBlue' range of oil fired condensing boilers incorporate the latest Riello blue flame compact burner. With outputs from 21-36kW available across a variety of models, this advanced

technology is easy to install and set up, as shown in the photographic step-by-step guide below.

Dimensions of the new VortexBlue models are the same as the existing ranges,

simplifying replacement of older products.

The new Blue boilers are also compatible with Grant's EZ-Fit flue systems.

www.grantuk.com.

Oil Installer joined G-One installers, RSK, while they are fitting the popular 26kW kitchen/utility boiler.

Step two... RSK powerflush the system, dig the soakaway and cut a hole in the brickwork for the condensate pipe.



Step five... Plumbing and electrical connections are made and the baffles are checked.



Step six... The boiler is commissioned – pump pressure is tested, and an analyser is used to check CO2 levels. The RSK team make good, including cementing the flue in and fitting the guard.



Step three... A Grant MagOne filter is fitted and a system inhibitor is added.



Step seven... The VortexBlue is ready to fire!



10 year warranty on VortexBlue oil boiler range

Grant UK is now offering a 10-year parts and labour warranty on its all-new VortexBlue blue flame oil-fired boiler range.

The warranty offer was introduced in the middle of April and is available for 12 months, subject to terms and conditions.

The VortexBlue range

incorporates the latest Riello blue flame compact burner and is available in outputs from 21-36kW.

Although the technology is very advanced, the boiler and burner combination is easy to install and set up, says the company. The new VortexBlue boilers are compatible with all of Grant's EZ-Fit flue systems.

"The 10 year warranty is five times longer than standard Grant boiler warranties and demonstrates our belief in the VortexBlue range," explains Anna Wakefield, marketing and corporate communications manager for Grant UK.

"As an environmentally aware business, we actively promote the benefits of

our sustainable heating technologies. By offering a longer warranty period on the new blue flame oil boiler models, we not only reinforce the quality of Grant products, but can also hopefully encourage customers to consider a low NOx green alternative to our standard Vortex range."

www.grantuk.com

From market forces to installing filters – an expert's guide to oil

The past year and a half has shown to the doubters that oil is no longer the poor relation of natural gas. Martyn Bridges, director of marketing and technical support at Worcester, Bosch Group, explains why the future looks bright for those using and installing oil systems and discusses the opportunities within the market.

The recent fall in oil prices – by around 50% since June 2014 – is hugely significant for the heating and hot water industry. Today the price of oil sits at around 30-31p per litre, whereas 18 months ago the cost of a litre could be as high as 55p. This news has been welcomed by installers of oil boilers and homeowners who rely on the fuel to heat their homes with the industry having seen a year-on-year growth of 8-10% in sales of oil boilers in 2015.

The latest Sutherland Associates table – which compares the cost of the most common fuels – demonstrates that oil is the cheapest heating fuel available. The announcement that oil is now cheaper as a fuel than even natural gas is a huge boost to the status of oil heating and means we can expect oil to be a fuel source for some time to come.

Flue flashing from Grant

To complement its popular EZ-Fit flue systems, Grant also supplies a range of roof flashings to suit the different types of roofs that installers regularly come across.

For Grant's vertical balanced flue (white) system, three types of flashing are available to suit flat and pitched roofs. Each flashing is designed to be durable and long-lasting to meet the demands of its purpose, while also offering flexibility to installers making installation easier.

Grant's range of flue flashings provides installers with a variety of options to aid the installation of flue systems while also serving its function for many years.

www.grantuk.com

Tried and trusted

The simultaneous drop in popularity of renewable technology is also helping to create a steady market for the oil boiler at the moment. With the government having shelved the Green Deal and scaled back funding for the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), installers are reporting a lack of uptake for renewables, turning instead to more reliable technology, tried and trusted and not in receipt of "here today, gone tomorrow" payments.

It remains to be seen whether homeowners will see an increase in oil prices further down the line, some analysts believe the price could drop to \$20 per barrel. However, this being the case, installers should be open to the idea of a "best of both" approach by installing heating systems which incorporate an element of renewable technology alongside a boiler in order to reduce the reliance on a single fuel source.

Although there will always be technical challenges to tackle when installing and servicing oil boilers, this side of the market offers opportunities for installers beyond servicing current systems and fitting new appliances. For example, when an oil boiler is changed, it is not uncommon to see a new tank put in as well, throwing up the potential for further business.

Worcester has been keen to gain the feedback of installers over the years, in an effort to make the day-to-day lives of installers easier through the design of our appliances. Efficiency and space are among the key considerations we have made, leading to the development of primary heat exchangers and component layouts, rendering servicing as straightforward as possible by giving easier access to the inside of the boiler.

Similarly, installers are under increasing pressure to keep on top of training and accreditation, but consistency throughout a product



Martyn Bridges, director of marketing and technical support at Worcester, Bosch Group

range can help to alleviate some of this. Once installers have mastered a certain type of installation, it should not be too difficult for them to apply the same principles across a range of products, so manufacturers looking to enhance the design of their products can do so without a major shift away from the designs and features installers have become familiar with.

Quality of supply

The replacement of an oil boiler will quite often see the new appliance connected to an existing oil tank and line which have been in place for a number of years. With this comes the risk that the boiler is being installed in an environment whereby the oil pump could get contaminated by issues with the oil line or tank, which can have serious consequences for the operation and reliability of the boiler. Ensuring a domestic oil supply remains free from contaminants will make the most of the comparatively low fuel cost and ensure that it will be even more cost-effective to run the boiler. In order to do achieve this, we would remind installers of the need to check, and if necessary replace, the oil filter(s) within a system at the point of an annual service.

The favourable conditions of the oil market continue to present homeowners in off-mains gas areas with a hugely appealing alternative. Not only does this give good reason for heating engineers to keep oil central to their business, but what's more, the added installation and servicing opportunities commonly brought by oil installations can ensure that this remains the case for years to come.

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ASK OLLIE!

During a routine service visit, I noticed that the oil storage tank was installed directly on to gravel. Is this classed as a suitable non-combustible base material?

No. The base should either be constructed of concrete at least 100mm thick, paving stones at least 50mm thick or stonework with at least 50mm thickness.

I have been asked to complete a CD/10 form and a work notification for the installation of a new oil supply pipe that has been laid in the ground

by a builder. Is this permissible? OFTEC's advice to registered technicians is to only complete documentation and notify work that you have personally completed and wish to take responsibility for. Further information on this subject is covered in OFTEC Technical Notice 006, which is available to download from the OFTEC website: www.oftec.org.

I am installing a new flue terminal, which will terminate above the oil supply pipework. Is there a minimum separation distance I need to achieve? Whilst industry guidance does not stipulate a minimum separation distance, OFTEC would advise that the flue terminal is situated as far away as practically possible.

I have a customer who has a bunded oil storage tank and would like a sight gauge installed. Can I install a sight gauge on a bunded tank?

No. Where secondary containment is required, the contents monitoring device must be contained within the secondary containment system (i.e. the bund). Therefore, it would not be

physically possible to install a sight gauge inside an integrally bunded tank.

I am installing a fire valve on to an existing oil supply line, which is built in the fabric of the property and is not accessible externally. I am aware that, in this situation, it is permissible to site the fire valve cut-off point where the pipe is first exposed internally, but does it still need to be a certain distance away from the boiler?

No. In this situation, there is not a minimum distance between the fire valve cut-off point and the boiler. Further information can be found in OFTEC technical book 3, section 2.4.3.

I have been asked to install a 21 kW oil fired boiler on the first floor of a two story property, is this permissible? Whilst BS 5410-1:2014 states that it is preferable to install boilers at basement or ground floor level in a boiler room, kitchen or utility area, it is permissible to install boilers in alternative locations. For further guidance, contact the OFTEC technical team on tel: 01473 626298.

Oil storage regulations: legislation and guidance update

From 15th March 2016, the Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Oil Storage) Wales Regulations 2016 came into effect. These require any new or replacement domestic, non-domestic or agricultural oil storage tanks with a capacity exceeding 200 litres, installed above ground, to be provided with secondary containment, i.e. bunding.

Also in March, Guernsey Water published a new version of their 'oil installation guidelines'. This publication advises that domestic tanks with capacities up to 3,500 litres should be provided with secondary containment, be of the top outlet type and incorporate an anti-syphon device inside the bund.

OFTEC has issued updates to technical books 3 and 4, which cover all the applicable requirements of the new legislation/guidance introduced in Wales and Guernsey, as well as information on where and when transitional arrangements apply. These updates can be downloaded from the OFTEC website: www.oftec.org.

In addition to the technical book updates, OFTEC registered technicians can also access the OFTEC technical notice board. The latest technical notices include:

- **Notice no. 017 – Hierarchy of technical requirements**, which clarifies OFTEC's view on the order in which guidance documents should be applied in practice;
- **Notice no. 016 – Reclassification of flammable liquids**, which provides information on how the European Classification, Labelling and Packaging Regulations (CLP) affects the industry and what the responsibilities are for OFTEC registered technicians;
- **Notice no. 015 – Contracts of work**, which provides details on the benefits of providing clients with an agreed contract of work, as well as a comprehensive example of what information could be included on such a document.

For further advice, contact the OFTEC technical team on 01473 626 298 or email: technical@oftec.org.

Clarification on fire valve positioning

Following a number of enquiries received in response to a workmanship article in the spring edition of Oil Installer, OFTEC wishes to clarify requirements regarding the positioning of fire valves on external oil boilers.

The fire valve cut off point should be located on the oil supply line outside the appliance casing. If the installation is in the Republic of Ireland, the valve must be located a minimum of 1m away from the appliance casing.

Joint campaign to raise oil tank awareness – see page 12

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The importance of combustion air supply

The provision of an adequate air supply to combustion appliances is vital for reasons of safety and appliance performance.

This is, of course, taken care of by room sealed balanced flue appliances, which draw their combustion air directly via a dedicated air intake path within the flue system.

However, open flued appliances depend on a dedicated supply of fresh air into the room they are in – something which can be easily compromised when buildings undergo a material change of use or when measures are put in place to improve a building's thermal efficiency.

Taking the combustion process back to basics, good combustion relies on fuel, heat and oxygen.

Take one of them away and combustion ceases – in the case of oxygen, 'incomplete' combustion can occur. A by-product of incomplete combustion is carbon monoxide (CO) – a very dangerous poisonous gas, which is totally odourless. Exposure to CO can be fatal.

Open flued oil-fired appliances with outputs up to 45kW require a combustion air supply into the room containing the appliance. This should be via purpose made non-closable openings that have a total free area not less than 5.5cm² per kW of the appliance's maximum output rating.

Minimum provisions

The minimum recommended combustion air supply provision for

appliances with a vaporising burner is to fit a grille passing air directly from the outside into the area in which the appliance is fitted, with a free area of at least 100cm².

However, there are two further factors which can alter the minimum combustion air supply required: If the appliance is fitted with a draught break or stabiliser, this requires an addition of 5.5cm² per kW of appliance maximum rated output to be added to the combustion air allowance; If the space in which an open flued appliance is installed has an extract ventilation fan, this may require an additional 'make-up' air supply to be provided if the appliance is unable to operate satisfactorily when the fan is running and all doors,

windows and closable vents are shut.

Further information on extract fans and flue draught interference tests, as described above, can be found in OFTEC Technical Book 4, section 1.9.

An easy to use quick reference guide to ventilation sizing can be found in OFTEC's oil heating pocket guide. It enables you to identify the requirements using a simple table and without the need for any calculations. The pocket guide costs £4.50 and is available to purchase via: www.oftecdirect.com.

If you would like advice on meeting compliance in your region, contact the OFTEC technical team on tel: 01473 626 298 or by email: technical@oftec.org.

Make time for a cuppa... and read the manual!

Which non-conformities most frequently scupper technicians during an OFTEC inspection visit? The surprising answer is that the most common problems identified by OFTEC's field inspection team during surveillance visits are not related to non-compliance with regional building regulations, but are due to technicians failing to follow equipment manufacturers' installation instructions (EMI's).

It is common knowledge that most of us rarely read an instruction manual for anything. However, a small amount of time spent familiarising yourself with the EMIs supplied with the appliance you're installing would eradicate many of the most common inspection non-conformities.

Three key areas where EMIs typically vary from one manufacturer to another and *should always be checked* are:

- **Fire valve shut off temperature rating:**

- Don't assume that one size fits all. Whilst a 65°C shut off temperature remains suitable for many appliances, some manufacturers now call for a shut off temperature of 85°C or higher to avoid the possibility of nuisance shut offs.

- **Oil supply system:**

- The provision of an isolation valve(s) for servicing and a fuel filter of 70 µm, or less, close to the boiler. Typically these will be installed externally and immediately before the position

of the remote acting fire valve.

- The minimum head required for a single pipe gravity fed system. This is usually measured from the tank outlet to the burner oil pump.

- The maximum pipe run for a single pipe gravity fed system based on the available head.

- If one or other of the manufacturers' requirements above cannot be met, a double pipe sub-gravity feed system or single pipe suction lift with de-aerator system will need to be installed.

- **Condensate disposal:**

- The acceptable points of discharge for the disposal of condensate. Depending on the discharge point, an external air break may be required to be provided.

- The minimum diameter required for internally and externally installed pipework. Typically this will be 21.5mm and 32mm respectively.

- If external pipework is to be installed, some manufacturers now call for the pipe diameter to be increased to 32mm inside the

property before it passes through the external wall to outside.

- In addition to an increased pipe diameter, some manufacturers also require external pipework to be insulated to prevent freezing.

Whilst failure to follow the above areas of the EMIs will not generally lead to an unsafe or dangerous situation, nuisance shut offs of fire valves, premature failures of burner oil pumps or frozen condensate pipes will certainly inconvenience your customer. And, if the manufacturer's warranty is invalidated due to failure to provide a suitable oil supply system, your customer may look to recover the cost of any repair/remedial works from you.

So next time you're installing an appliance, after taking delivery grab yourself a cup of tea and take five minutes to familiarise yourself with the manufacturer's specific requirements for the key areas of the EMIs detailed above. A bit of hydration never goes amiss and you might do yourself, and your customer, a big favour too!

Sulphur content, lubricity and boiler fuel feed pumps

Since 2013 the UK has seen a noticeable increase in the failure rate of some boiler fuel feed pumps due to fretting and premature wear. It is thought that these failures may even have very specific geographies, suggesting a connection to the fuel source. The problem is ongoing says Neil Ryding of Fuel Additive Science Technologies (FAST).

Some pump manufacturers have been critically affected with a large number of pumps failing well within their 6-8 year life expectancy which has led to pumps being replaced largely through goodwill. As a result major test work has been carried out to ascertain the cause.

The potential problems surrounding lowered fuel sulphur content and a subsequent reduction in fuel lubricity are widely known. The automotive industry dealt with similar problems when the sulphur content of road fuels was systematically reduced. The solution was to introduce a lubricity specification into the diesel and gas oil fuel standards. This utilises the high frequency reciprocating rig (HFRR)

wear scar test where a low number is good. The specification can be met by altering the fuel blends at the refinery stage which almost always involves adding a chemical lubricity improver, although such lubricity improvers can be added at any point in the supply chain.

Because heating oil on continental Europe resembles gas oil and diesel, lubricity requirements are automatically met and pump failures due to premature wear are not a problem.

In the UK and Ireland where kerosene is used, the sulphur specification was reduced in 2008 – but not to anything like the level of gas oil and diesel – and an accompanying lubricity specification was not introduced. There is currently no lubricity specification contained within the kerosene standard.

Whilst not entirely conclusive, test results did show wild variations in the sulphur content of kerosene tested – although all were within specification – and HFRR wear scars that far

exceeded the maximum allowable in gas oil and diesel, for which most pumps are designed.

The recommendations from pump manufacturers are clear. They would like to see a lubricity specification included in the kerosene standard and responsibility for meeting this placed in the hands of the fuel producers/suppliers. Failing this, every new pump now comes with a recommendation to add a lubricity additive to kerosene. However, this is not a universal solution, as not all lubricity improver chemistry is compatible for use in a vaporising burner.

In conclusion, it would appear that some batches of kerosene supplied at various points in the UK have sulphur contents low enough to seriously affect the fuel's lubricity characteristics which, in turn, has a detrimental effect on the fuel feed pump. Where this has been a problem, the lubricity of the fuel has been changed on the recommendations of the pump manufacturers by the judicious use of an appropriate additive.

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Plumb Center to distribute INNASOL range

Plumb Center has signed a partnership deal with renewable heating distributor INNASOL, to distribute ETA biomass boilers and IDM heat pumps across Plumb Center's UK-wide branch network.

Richard Harvey, category director for renewables at Plumb Center, said: "We provide our customers with the best renewables products on the market and INNASOL's extensive range of ETA boilers nicely complements our range. We're always looking for ways to make our customers' lives easier and add value to their businesses."

Silvio Spiess, CEO at INNASOL, commented: "INNASOL is committed to raising awareness of renewable heating through as many channels necessary. We are pleased to have found our match with the renewables team at Plumb Center, and it's great that both companies share the same passion and drive for the renewables industry."

www.plumbcenter.co.uk



Plumb Center has signed a partnership deal with INNASOL



New MD for Elmhurst

Energy performance assessment specialist, Elmhurst Energy, has announced the appointment of Martyn Reed as its new managing director.

The announcement follows the decision by Stephen O'Hara to step down as managing director to serve as chair of the group of companies, taking the lead on a number of related business ventures.

Before taking the post of managing director, Martyn Reed was operations director for Elmhurst Energy and has vast experience in the energy performance and assessment industry.

"I look forward to leading Elmhurst Energy into an exciting and successful future, adding significant value to our products and services and ensuring our members continue to benefit from our work and guidance," says Martyn.

www.elmhurstenergy.co.uk

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Back to the future with wood burning...

Kathryn Lowe, marketing manager at Rayburn, discusses the future of oil fired boilers and renewable technology

In the spring issue of Oil Installer, there was much discussion over the state of the domestic oil industry, and how the low prices had a particularly positive impact on the market. Three months on and the situation has changed very little. Oil prices are still extremely low, while boiler manufacturers and installers continue to enjoy even more upgrades and replacements.

However, history tells us that the situation will eventually change. OPEC and other oil producing nations will resolve their tussle for power, and the supply and demand imbalance will begin to right itself, inevitably resulting in higher prices.

Of course, this is nothing new – it has been the situation in the oil industry for decades and, in essence, differs very little from other utilities. Yet rural homeowners who have been through this before are now more prepared, with oil fired central heating systems often tethered to a source of renewable technology to reduce



overall running costs. And this type of setup is likely to continue to grow.

Wood burning appliances have seen the biggest uptake, with an almost decade-long renaissance throughout the country. A primary driver for the resurgence of wood burning is its versatility. Yes, logs can be placed on a fire to heat a room, but this type of fuel really comes into its own when used in conjunction with stoves (fitted with back

boilers for domestic hot water) and the latest central heating range cookers. These allow wood to be used in a variety of house sizes and in a range of systems – from a standalone room heater, to a fully pumped heating system, or even part of a renewable setup in combination with other technologies.

Central heating range cookers are becoming particularly popular in rural areas, especially with

homes that are off the gas grid. Certain models, such as the 370SFW Heatranger from Rayburn, are specially designed to optimise wood burning and are capable of running a home's radiators, as well as providing plenty of hot water and cooking the evening meal! Plus, with outputs of up to 60,000BTUs (18kW), these all-in-one appliances are ideal for small and medium-sized properties alike.

The wood burning central heating range cooker has also evolved over the years to be far more controllable, with technically crafted inlets to manage the amount of air reaching the fire.

So, wood burning appliances, in the form of central heating cookers and stoves, will remain a popular choice. After all, they are highly efficient, incredibly versatile and allow homes to be completely self-reliant for their heating, hot water and cooking. Plus, they look great! How many other renewable technologies can boast all of those qualities?

www.rayburn-web.co.uk

Grant launches oil and heat pump hybrid

Grant UK is helping installers unlock the benefits of renewable energy for their off-gas customers with the new Grant VortexAir.

The hybrid combines the attributes of a Grant VortexBlue oil boiler with the green advantage of an Aeronas³ inverter driven heat pump, enabling heating installers to offer a green alternative to boiler replacements, with minimal disruption to the home.

Renewable technologies can sometimes prove difficult for homeowners to install into their properties, especially when in a distress purchase situation. However, the VortexAir has a 16kW inverter driven heat pump combined with a high efficiency blue flame oil boiler.

This hybrid is a greener alternative to boiler replacements, says the company, which helps to futureproof against unknown energy costs

"Grant's products, including the Vortex oil-fired boilers and their renewable technologies, have been market leaders in efficiency, striving to generate greener energy with low carbon emissions," explains Anna Wakefield, marketing and corporate communications manager for Grant UK.

"The launch of the VortexAir is the latest move from Grant that epitomises how green, sustainable technologies can deliver reliable, efficient heating." www.grantuk.com



The new Grant VortexAir

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BLUE IS THE NEW GREEN

Grant has been developing and trialling a new generation of clean burning, low emission and high efficiency oil condensing boilers. The all new 'VortexBlue' features a compact Riello blue flame burner and is available in outputs from 21-36kW across a variety of models.

The boiler and burner combination is easy to install and set up, and what's more, the VortexBlue is compatible with all of Grant's EZ-Fit flue systems.

Think green. Install blue.



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Grant Engineering.**

Shaming the work of cowboys...

Apart from downright laziness and a total contempt for professionalism, what would make any so-called technician leave an installation in the dangerous state shown on our Gallery pages? We have to assume that most of these calamities were created by cowboys who couldn't get away from the crime scene fast enough! Laziness surely comes into it, but certainly not proficiency, ability or any degree of self-esteem!

Many thanks to our eagle-eyed OFTEC-registered technicians for sending in their horrifying discoveries – do please keep them coming so we can share them with our readers!

Send your photographs, together with a brief description of your business and where you found the calamity, to: jane@oilinstaller.co.uk



Send your photographs to jane@oilinstaller.co.uk



Spotted by a technician in the Republic of Ireland, these particular installations have certainly raised a few eyebrows! OFTEC's Ireland manager, David Blevings, commented: "With no requirement for notification of works in ROI, our technicians meet some strange sights on their travels. There is clearly a need for a competent persons' scheme throughout Ireland for oil installations."



Regular Gallery contributor, David Whidden of Oiltec, was appalled when he spotted this tank sitting on a rather unusual – and precarious – base! Oiltec is an independent oil service company covering Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset for domestic, commercial and industrial boiler maintenance services. The company also specialises in Aga and Rayburn service, repairs, breakdowns and commissioning.



"Once again, when you think you have seen it all, then up pops another one. This I came across last week in Whixall, Shropshire," says technician Shaun Fee of Whitchurch Plumbing & Heating Services Ltd.

"The external tigerloop has been fitted inside the boiler cabinet along with an oil filter," explains Shaun, who, after talking to the homeowner and explaining the problems with the installation, put a "rectifiable" sticker on the boiler. The homeowner mentioned to Shaun that another technician had been out last year and had refused to service the boiler due to the installation.

Whitchurch Plumbing & Heating Services specialise in the service, repair and installation of oil boilers and heating systems, with engineers covering the Cheshire, Shropshire, North Wales, Wirral, Merseyside and Manchester areas.



Ironically, this tank on its dodgy base was spotted by a company which specialises in professional oil tank installation! Matt, of A&M Boiler Services in Stoke on Trent, was asked to commission a boiler fed by the tank. No prizes for his response! A&M specialises in oil boiler servicing and maintenance, oil tank installation and general plumbing and heating in Staffordshire.



As a sole trader, specialising in the service and installation of oil and gas boilers and oil tanks, Peter Gunn discovered this tank at a haulage depot in Potto, North Yorkshire. It serves three warm air units and a boiler which Peter services on an annual basis when he always makes a note of the installation and advises on the various issues! The oil tank sits on the roof of a paint store, above the fire exit of a commercial unit.

"It always makes me cringe, especially as not only is it over a fire exit, the container is actually used for the storage and mixing of highly flammable paints! A real industrial powder keg! Don't think I'd fancy their chances if there was a fire..." says Peter.

Pricing page

Fuel price commentary

The latest figures comparing the average annual cost of home heating show another welcome fall for homeowners using oil. The data, which is released each quarter by the Sutherland Tables, shows that in each of the last twelve quarters, the annual average cost of heating with oil has fallen – that's three years of continuously falling costs! Not surprisingly, the falling oil price has contributed to an increase in consumer confidence in oil heating, reflected in rising boiler sales and a generally more positive outlook for the oil heating industry.

From a high point in April 2013 when the cost for a typical three bedroomed

home in Great Britain using an oil condensing boiler reached £1,431 per annum, the average cost has fallen to just £676. Not surprisingly oil heating remains the cheapest fuel for home heating, around £317 per annum cheaper than mains gas and £758 cheaper than LPG, assuming all three use a condensing boiler. It is also substantially cheaper than any renewable option.

How long will the low oil prices last?

An OPEC meeting in April ended without any agreement to reduce production and, with Iran keen to regain its former market share, there

seem some grounds for believing that the current world crude oil over-supply will continue. However, the low price has had some impact on production from fracking in the US and the recent forest fires in Canada are likely to hit production there too. Add in increasing demand from China and there could be enough pressure to set crude oil prices rising, though probably not to anything like the kind of levels we have seen in the recent past. The sustained fall in kerosene prices may be about to end and, since late-January, prices have risen slightly to just over 30ppl. However, there is good evidence to suggest that the heating oil price will remain low for the rest of 2016 at least, and quite possibly beyond.

Comparative space and water heating costs for a three bedroom house

GREAT BRITAIN

	Apr-13	Apr-16	Price change	% Difference
Anthracite Grains	1094	1162	68	6.22%
Electricity	1456	1588	132	9.07%
Gas (British Gas)	1079	1007	-72	-6.67%
LPG	2461	1755	-706	-28.69%
LPG (Condensing)	2020	1448	-572	-28.32%
Oil	1751	838	-913	-52.14%
Oil (Condensing)	1431	690	-741	-51.78%
Wood Pellets	1246	1388	142	11.39%
Air Source Heat Pump	1360	1447	87	6.40%

NORTHERN IRELAND

	Apr-13	Apr-16	Price change	% Difference
Anthracite Grains	1033	1015	-18	-1.74%
Electricity	1498	1551	53	3.54%
Gas (Phoenix)	1036	885	-151	-14.58%
LPG	2542	1975	-567	-22.31%
LPG (Condensing)	2085	1624	-461	-22.11%
Oil	1668	733	-935	-56.06%
Oil (Condensing)	1364	605	-759	-55.65%
Wood Pellets	1038	1105	67	6.45%
Air Source Heat Pump	1390	1486	96	6.91%

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	Apr-13	Apr-16	Price change	% Difference
Anthracite Grains	1297	1510	213	16.42%
Electricity	2086	2048	-38	-1.82%
Gas	1346	1320	-26	-1.93%
LPG	3479	2448	-1031	-29.63%
LPG (Condensing)	2853	2018	-835	-29.27%
Oil	2211	1046	-1165	-52.69%
Oil (Condensing)	1804	861	-943	-52.27%
Wood Pellets	1165	1345	180	15.45%
Air Source Heat Pump	1766	1797	31	1.76%

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. Data from the Sutherland Tables.

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