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Ashley & Dumville Publishing Ltd  
Caledonian House, Tatton Street,  
Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 9AB 6AG

Tel: +44 (0)1565 653283  
mail@andpublishing.co.uk

Advertising  
Sales director: Jonathan Hibbert  
Media pack on request [jonathan@oilinstaller.co.uk](mailto:jonathan@oilinstaller.co.uk)

News Desk  
Editor: Jane Hughes [jane@oilinstaller.co.uk](mailto:jane@oilinstaller.co.uk)  
Deputy editor: Peter Clayton [peter@oilinstaller.co.uk](mailto:peter@oilinstaller.co.uk)

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Printed by Eastland Character, Manchester Tel: 0161 273 3434

Spring 2016 Volume 10 No 1

ISSN 1755 – 3490

# Never a better time to renew your oil boiler and tank

You will all have read about the amazing cost savings your customers are enjoying due to the low price of heating oil. The price is now around 28p (.44€) per litre compared to up to 60p per litre three years ago.



Those people who invested in the 'renewable heat option' a few years ago will not only have incurred high up-front installation costs, but will also be seeing their monthly heating bills being much higher. The Sutherland Tables published to the end of January put the cost of oil at £731p.a.; air source heat pumps at £1,453; and mains gas at £1,027.

What does that mean for OFTEC registrants? I suggest there will never be a better time for your customers to invest in a new condensing oil boiler. It is both inexpensive to install compared to other forms of heating, and will consume about 20% less oil than their current standard efficiency boiler.

You should also target customers who are on LPG. It is clear from our article on page 9 that somebody now running on a LPG standard efficiency boiler should switch to an oil condensing boiler because the installation and running costs are so much lower.

Tanks also need replacing. On page 17 we announce that OFTEC and FPS will soon be launching a campaign to encourage customers to look at their oil tanks, and replace those that are aged or have obvious signs of deterioration. We estimate that in Great Britain alone there could be over 400,000 single skin oil tanks that are over 20 years old and these really should be replaced by a new bunded tank within the next year.

I hope 2016 proves a very good trading year for all OFTEC registrants and *Oil Installer* readers.

## Jeremy Hawksley

Director general  
OFTEC

# New logo options for registered technicians

OFTEC has developed a new range of logos to cater for businesses which want to emphasise the heating technologies covered by their registration.

The new logos feature a rectangular design, containing the familiar OFTEC triangle and text that specifies the technology covered. They have been designed with a white border to enable them to work well on any background colour.

OFTEC's marketing manager, Malcolm Farrow, said: "We received feedback from technicians that, because the existing OFTEC logo is so strongly associated with oil, consumers might not realise that registration could also cover other heating technologies.

"This is an important consideration for solid fuel and renewables heating businesses and we hope that the new designs will solve the problem. Feedback so far has been positive and we expect the logos to be popular."

The new logos will not replace the existing design and OFTEC will not be asking existing registered technicians to switch. However, the new designs stand out and OFTEC thinks that many existing registered businesses will want to use them too.

Electronic copies of the logos are available free of charge from OFTEC's marketing team by emailing [marketing@oftec.org](mailto:marketing@oftec.org) or can be downloaded from the registered technician's area of the OFTEC website. Van stickers of the new logos are provided free to new OFTEC registrants and are also available from OFTEC Direct.



## Allan Smith

OFTEC recently received the sad news that former inspector, Allan Smith of Linton, Cambridge, died on the 23rd December 2015 after a battle with illness.

Allan, aged 70, spent most of his career working in the heating industry and joined OFTEC from Shell in 2005 as the inspector covering East Anglia. Allan took to inspecting work with ease, using his vast experience to the benefit of many East Anglian oil technicians.

Due to back problems Allan retired from inspecting in 2011 but within a couple of years was back working again for OFTEC in a role that enabled him to work



from home and again using his vast knowledge and experience in dealing with heating technicians.

A huge supporter and contributor to OFTEC over the years, Allan will be greatly missed by all who worked with him in the oil industry.

# The importance of compliance

## House move put in jeopardy by notification failure

When you're about to complete the sale of your home, the last thing you want is for the transaction to stall – particularly if your sale is part of a chain. But that was the nightmare situation faced by a homeowner just before Christmas, all because the installer of their boiler had failed to notify the work.

With the buyer's solicitor demanding the correct paperwork before the sale could proceed, the homeowner first tried to contact the original installer, only to find that their OFTEC registration had lapsed.

In desperation they then contacted another registered technician with the aim of reinstalling the system. Keen to help, he came to inspect the system but then found his services weren't required because the original installer had got back in contact and dealt with the issue. Fortunately, the sale was eventually able to proceed but, needless to say, the situation was extremely fraught and stressful for all concerned!

### Don't neglect the paperwork!

Situations like this are easily avoided if technicians complete the paperwork properly and remember to do the notification. Not doing so means failing the

customer and contravening building regulations – in other words, breaking the law.

It's clear that awareness of this problem is growing and OFTEC is receiving an increasing number of calls from concerned homeowners. This only underlines the need for technicians to fulfil their responsibilities by doing the paperwork on time.

OFTEC's registration director, Adrian Lightwood, said: "Completing the paperwork correctly is just as important as any other part of a technician's job and there is really no excuse for failing to do this. OFTEC's online notification system is quick and easy to use and I'd encourage all installers to use it.

"If you find you're not sure about anything, just call our registration team on 01473 626298 and we'll be happy to talk you through the process or take notification over the phone."

## Getting tough on misrepresentation

Thanks to the assistance of registered technicians, OFTEC is increasingly able to take the fight to businesses that falsely claim to be registered. For example, as a result of information received, during the final quarter of 2015 OFTEC was able to investigate 40 cases. Of these, nine were passed to Trading Standards for further action and 25 were resolved successfully.

OFTEC takes issues of this kind very seriously and will always follow up any cases received. By strengthening ties with Trading Standards OFTEC has also become more successful at turning up the heat on businesses that misrepresent themselves as OFTEC registered.

### Help us to take action

This kind of offence risks damaging the OFTEC 'brand' together with the reputations of all genuine registered technicians. Please help to stop it. If you spot something that needs investigation, please contact OFTEC's compliance team on 01473 626298 or email [compliance@oftec.org](mailto:compliance@oftec.org). Alternatively, use the reporting form in the registered technician section of the OFTEC website.



OFTEC's registration director, Adrian Lightwood

## On-site reference guide published

OFTEC has published a new edition of its popular domestic oil heating pocket guide which answers all the most frequently asked questions received by OFTEC's technical helpline.



The guide has been fully updated in line with BS 5410 Part 1 2014 and the new expanded edition includes a comprehensive risk identification section to help classify immediate and potential risks and respond accordingly – taking the guesswork out of risk assessment.

### What's covered?

- Oil storage tanks – environmental protection, fire protection and bases
- Oil supply – general installation requirements, layouts, pipe sizing, pressure testing procedures and fire valve positioning
- Appliances – condensate disposal,

flue termination, pre-calculated air supply requirements, nozzle sizing/selection information and basic fault finding procedures

- Systems – minimum controls packages, expansion vessel sizing for sealed systems and minimum F&E cistern capacity and associated pipe size requirements
- Procedures and useful information – safe electrical isolation, oil spill response, documentation/notification flowchart, unit conversion table and essential fuel characteristics.

The guide is available for £4.50 (€5.85) from [www.oftecdirect.com](http://www.oftecdirect.com).

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# Urgent overhaul of UK heat policy required says OFTEC

**With the price of heating oil at an unprecedented low, and the sale of new oil boilers up 9% in 2015, it's easy to think that the government's heat policy is of little concern. However, since last year's general election there have been few constructive policy initiatives and even more evidence that their inadequate and fragmented policies are failing to help the majority of consumers improve their energy efficiency or, importantly, cut the nation's carbon emissions.**

OFTEC is fully committed to working towards a low carbon future for heating but says the government needs to completely re-think its current strategy and replace it with a "joined up" energy efficiency and carbon reduction policy that will encourage far greater buy-in.

This approach is urgent because there are an estimated 4.5 million UK households still living in fuel poverty, which means they spend more than the UK average on energy bills and this expenditure pushes them below the poverty line.

The appalling impact of this cannot be overstated. Last winter (2014/15) in England and Wales there were an estimated 43,900 excess deaths, the highest number since 1999. According to the World Health Organisation, some 30% of these excess deaths were due to vulnerable people living in cold homes which they couldn't afford to adequately heat. Over the last five years this equates to around 47,660 needless early deaths.

With fuel poverty more prevalent in rural areas due to the higher proportion of older, poorly insulated properties, lower incomes and an aging population, OFTEC says oil users, and indeed all off grid consumers, urgently need realistic, viable assistance to help them cut both energy bills and carbon emissions.

## Recommendations for change

At the end of last year, OFTEC submitted recommendations to the energy and climate change select committee outlining solutions to simultaneously improve energy efficiency in UK homes and reduce carbon emissions.

OFTEC agrees that the 100% renewable heating solutions currently promoted by government via the Renewable Heat Incentive can, in some situations, provide a very real and workable solution and these technologies will undoubtedly be important in the UK's future heating mix. However, with upfront installation costs of £7,000 to £19,000, they are currently too expensive and impractical for the vast majority of UK households to consider, especially

those in fuel poverty. OFTEC recommended that the focus should be on solutions that are simple, affordable to install and run, and impose limited disruption on the home owner.

With oil heating currently cheaper to run than the renewable alternatives, and much cheaper to install, OFTEC proposed the introduction of a universal boiler scrappage scheme to encourage the estimated 600,000 plus households in Great Britain still using standard efficiency boilers to upgrade to high efficiency, modern condensing models.

For an average four bedroom home, the move could reduce annual fuel consumption by up to 24% (- 784 litres p.a.) and cut CO2 emissions by 33% (- 2418 kg p.a.). So the potential for carbon reduction via this simple, cost effective route is huge.

DECC has already stated that its challenge is to 'reduce CO2 emissions in the most cost effective way' with a priority to 'keep bills as low as possible for hardworking families and businesses'. This is the stance OFTEC has championed from the outset.

OFTEC's recommendations would have a much needed, immediate impact on carbon reduction and energy efficiency in the UK. It may not accomplish the dramatic switch to 100% renewable heating technologies which the government has been pursuing, but it is an approach that would appeal to the majority rather than the minority. And by achieving mass consumer involvement, the results will be far further reaching.



## Keeping warm this winter

OFTEC has republished a booklet, in partnership with Age UK, for older people, to help them keep warm and well during the winter. Visit <http://www.oilsave.org.uk/OilSmart> to download a PDF of 'Keeping Warm This Winter'.



# Would you be crazy to switch?

**Oil is currently the cheapest heating fuel, but is that enough to persuade homeowners to switch to oil from other types of heating? Malcolm Farrow, OFTEC's marketing and communications manager, has been crunching the numbers...**

We currently live in a period where the conventional wisdom about fuel prices has been turned on its head. It wasn't all that long ago that oil was a comparatively expensive way to heat your home but, since the summer of 2013, all that has changed. Instead of looking with envy at homeowners who have mains gas, oil heating users are enjoying a new era of super low prices, one where kerosene is the cheapest major fuel of all.

According to energy analysts The Sutherland Tables, the average annual cost of heating a typical three bedroom semi in the United Kingdom with an oil condensing boiler is now just £785 per year. That's 24% less expensive than mains gas, the second cheapest option which costs £1,028 per annum. LPG costs an eye-watering £1,593, even with a condensing boiler, while electric night storage heaters cost on average £1,602 a year.

*But are these differences enough to persuade owners of LPG or electric*

*heating to switch to oil? Perhaps surprisingly, the answer might be yes.*

## **A much quicker return**

OFTEC calculates that if you switched from a standard efficiency LPG boiler to a new oil condensing boiler it could take only around three and a half years to pay for itself, even allowing for the cost of a new oil tank. That's a much quicker return than sticking with LPG and upgrading to a condensing boiler, and the ongoing savings would be much higher too. After five years the LPG user would have only just paid for their new boiler while, by switching to oil, they would be £1,750 better off!

Owners switching from electric storage heaters would face higher initial costs because they would need to install a complete heating system. However, even allowing for this they would see their decision rewarded after about seven years. This is still within the likely lifespan of the new boiler and, in the meantime, they would gain a much more convenient and flexible heating system.

But what happens if the price of oil goes up? Even before the recent dramatic price fall, oil heating was significantly cheaper than LPG, while the price of electricity has been creeping up significantly in recent

years. Consequently, those switching to oil are unlikely to have regrets as there is little risk, even if the price of oil rises. But all current evidence suggests the price will remain low for some time to come.

Would they all be better off switching to renewables? This is harder to answer because a renewable system may be eligible for Renewable Heat Incentive payments and the installation costs will depend on a range of factors, including whether additional renovation work is required to improve the thermal efficiency of the property.

Taking the same three bedroom semi as an example, The Sutherland Tables suggest that heating costs around £1,467 per annum with an air source heat pump, and £1,294 with a biomass boiler. Respectively, that's £682 and £509 more per annum than oil. Given the relatively high installation costs of renewable systems, the RHI payments would need to be very generous to justify the investment.

With low oil prices now once again a fact of life, OFTEC recommends that businesses looking to grow their customer base should consider targeting LPG users and encourage them to switch.

Table 1. Comparison of space heating costs and pay back periods by switching to oil condensing boiler

Annual space and water heating costs for a 3 bedroom house – United Kingdom average October 2015. (from Sutherland tables)					
Heating system	Electricity (Economy 7)	Gas (Standard)	LPG (Standard)	LPG (condensing)	Oil (condensing)
UK average annual heating cost	£1602	£1235	£1935	£1593	£785
Annual heating cost difference compared to condensing oil	+£817	+£450	+£1150	+£808	N/A
Payback period (years)	7.3	8.9	3.5	5.0	N/A
Based on installation costs of	£4000 (oil condensing boiler and oil tank)				
Based on installation costs of	£6000 (oil condensing boiler, oil tank and radiator system)				

Table 2: Switching from LPG standard efficiency boiler to condensing boiler comparison

Comparison of upgrading from an LPG standard efficiency boiler to an LPG or oil condensing boiler						
	LPG		LPG (condensing)		Oil (condensing)	
	Annual	Cumulative	Annual	Cumulative	Annual	Cumulative
Estimated installation cost	N/A		£1800		£4000	
Running cost year 1	£1935	£1935	£1593	£3393	£785	£4785
Running cost year 2	£1935	£3870	£1593	£4986	£785	£5570
Running cost year 3	£1935	£5805	£1593	£6579	£785	£6355
Running cost year 4	£1935	£7740	£1593	£8172	£785	£7140
Running cost year 5	£1935	£9675	£1593	£9765	£785	£7925

After three years the switch to oil would result in savings compared to the LPG upgrade, even allowing for the higher installation costs. After 3.5 years the investment would have paid for itself (see also table 1)

By year 5 the LPG home owner would have saved £1,750 by switching to oil. By comparison they would not have quite covered their costs by upgrading to an LPG condensing boiler.

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## Visit **JoinOFTEC** to extend your registration

Are you expanding the heating technologies you work on or reviewing your non-oil competent person registration? If so, visit the new *JoinOFTEC.com* website where you will find details of OFTEC's full range of registration services.

These include solid fuel, renewables and Part P electrical as well as oil, and registration can be easily extended by completing a simple online form.

For existing OFTEC registered technicians, expanding registration with OFTEC is likely to be much cheaper than registering with other providers and, if technicians already have competent person registration with another provider, switching to OFTEC could save them a considerable amount of money.

The new *JoinOFTEC* website has full details of all registration services offered by OFTEC, together with entry requirements and training information. Alternatively, the registration team can be called on tel: 01473 626298.

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## Website design service – at a discounted price

OFTEC has joined forces with *SoleTrader.com* to offer registrants a professional website design service at a special discounted price.

Many small businesses underestimate the benefit of having a well-designed website, says OFTEC.

As well as being a shop window it can back up a business's reputation because, even if recommended, potential customers will normally double check online.

A website is also an ideal way to showcase your work, adds OFTEC, and, with the internet now the main way that people find local services, having one makes it easy for people to find and contact you. It also helps past customers to re-connect – sometimes years later – which can be particularly important for installers. However, a badly designed website can often put off potential customers.

OFTEC registrants interested in having a professional website designed specifically for their business, with a special discount negotiated by OFTEC, should visit: *www.SoleTrader.com* or call them direct on tel: 0203 411 0812.

OFTEC statement February 2016:

## Which plastic oil tank should I install?

Due to the need to avoid pollution incidents and protect the environment, OFTEC insists that oil heating technicians only install plastic oil storage tanks that have been tested and confirmed to meet European Standard EN13341 2005 +A1 2011.

Since June 2013, under the Construction Product Regulations (CPR), it has been a legal requirement in all European member states (including the UK and the Republic of Ireland) for every new plastic oil tank to have its own "Declaration of Performance", which is evidence that the tank meets with required standards.

Installers are reminded that the CPR places legal obligations on everyone within the supply chain to ensure that information is passed on so as to allow the person making the specification to confirm that the product is fit for its intended use.

In 2014 OFTEC verified compliance with these regulations amongst its own plastic tank manufacturing members, and were satisfied that the legal requirements were met. These members are: Carbery Plastics Ltd, Clarehill Plastics Ltd (T/A Harlequin), and Kingspan Environmental Ltd (T/A Atlas; Deso; PC Roto Moulding; and Titan).

Subsequently OFTEC made enquires with tank manufacturers not in its membership about compliance with CPR. Tuffa UK Ltd have assured OFTEC that they do comply although their Declarations of Performance have not been verified.

Despite repeated requests, the following companies have not provided any evidence that their tanks comply with the CPR:

Drayton Tank and Accessories Ltd  
Envirostore UK Ltd  
Etils Ltd (also T/A Ecosure)  
Platinum Tanks Ltd  
Polytank Group Ltd  
Rototek Ltd (T/A 3 C Trading Ltd).

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## A blueprint for better building...

A reduction in the energy demand of buildings can make a major contribution to achieving national and international carbon reduction goals, in addition to addressing the issues of sustainable development, fuel poverty and fuel security.

This is the argument put forward by a new book entitled "Building Futures: Managing energy in the built environment" written by Jane Powell, Jennifer Monahan and Chris Foulds and published by Routledge. It has been described as a "blueprint for better building" in the future.

Despite improvements in thermal efficiency, says the book, the energy demand of buildings remains mainly unchanged, due to the challenges posed by growing populations, the expectations of larger and better equipped living spaces, and an expanding commercial sector.

*Building Futures* explores this lack of progress, combining technical and social insights into the challenges of designing, constructing and operating new low energy buildings, as well as improving the existing, inefficient, building stock.

*www.routledge.com*



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# Highlighting low oil prices

As Irish consumers enjoy the lowest oil prices for several years, and prices look set to fall further, *Oil Installer* asks what are businesses doing to highlight this?

## Manufacturers rally to the cause

In the run up to Christmas, an *Oil is Cheaper – Save Money – Stay with Oil* advertisement produced in association with OFTEC appeared in the media.

Oil boiler manufacturer, Firebird was one of the advertisement's sponsors.

"Given all the advertising promoting low electricity and gas prices of late, Firebird considered it was important for those involved in the oil business to promote its product," said Eilish Costantino.

"Oil is cheaper and Firebird, along with the other manufacturers who supported the advertisement, wanted to make people across the country aware of this."

Tank manufacturers Clarehill Plastics, Kingspan Environmental and oil burner manufacturer Riello also backed the advertisement.

"It's not often that the oil industry raises its head and shouts about the benefits of oil as a home or business energy source," said Cheryl Graham, head of marketing at Kingspan Environmental which has seen increased investment and upgrades in oil storage and related products during the last year.

"With prices at a five-year low it really is time to drive home the cost saving benefit of oil heating to both home and business owners. As the winter sets in – a time when fuel poverty is often a headline topic – oil as an energy source is an excellent choice."

At Riello, commercial and industrial sales and marketing director, Paul Sharp, said the company participated because of the positive impact that low oil prices had on oil boiler sales in 2015, bringing these sales to a five-year high.

"The low price of oil, coupled with uncertainty about renewable heating subsidies, has resulted in consumers purchasing new, high-efficiency oil condensing boilers. This positive trend for the oil boiler market is one that we expect to continue into 2016."

Clarehill Plastics' managing director Laurance Coey said the company wanted to show solidarity and to fight against the aggressive advertising of gas companies and suppliers in Northern Ireland.

"Unfortunately I'm not in a position to know if there's been a greater loyalty to oil, but I do suspect that people who'd been thinking of changing to gas may have had a rethink..."

"now's a great time to buy oil"

Fuel distributors have also recognised the advantage of highlighting low prices.

Tom Walsh, managing director of DCC Oil Ireland, says the company runs regular initiatives to ensure customers are informed of lower prices and sends weekly emails featuring price comparisons with the same date in previous years.

Meanwhile, Top Oil's head of sales and marketing, Martin Daly, says that while the company uses every channel available to communicate low oil prices to its customer base, customers are well aware of the great value for money that oil offers at the moment.

"This time last year - in January 2015 - customers were paying up to €600 for 1,000 litres of our Quality Assured home heating oil, a saving of €250 on January 2014, since when the Irish economy continues to recover and oil prices continue to fall." In the middle of February 2016, the company's website showed a cost of around €455 for 1,000 litres.

At O'Keeffe Oil at Rathmore in Kerry, Kieran O'Keeffe says that although the company hasn't promoted the price of oil, business is steady and people

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- stay with oil.

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Firebird Warmflow Harlequin Riello Kingspan OFTEC Ireland

With oil prices at their lowest for several years, boiler manufacturers Firebird, Grant and Warmflow, together with tank manufacturers Harlequin and Kingspan and burner manufacturer Riello, have worked together to promote a pro oil message to consumers reminding them that 'oil is cheaper'

seem to be burning and buying more oil than previously.

"The low price is definitely something that the industry should consider pushing more as it will reap rewards for every oil related business into the future."

David Blevings executive director of the Northern Ireland Oil Federation feels more needs to be done to capitalise on crude oil's 12-year low and the fact that home heating oil is 56% cheaper than it was in March 2012.

"There appears to be no sign of the oil distribution sector binding together in 2016 to promote a joint pro-oil message to customers... some distributors have promoted a positive message to their own customers and some have even advertised in local press. However, a joined up, pro-oil message across the whole trade is sadly still missing."

## OFTEC pushes for tighter control on solid fuel installation

Thousands of solid fuel stoves have been installed in Ireland during the past five years, and while there is a requirement in Ireland to comply with the building regulations, there is no requirement to notify a new or replacement installation.

This presents a conundrum. With no-one inspecting these installations how does the homeowner know it has been installed correctly?

OFTEC now has a registration scope for solid fuel installers and recently inspected a stove in Cork on behalf of a home owner who was worried about smoke entering the house. The inspection showed that the stove had not been installed correctly and had flueing problems. The installation did not meet current building regulations.

According to the department of environment, "the Building Control Act 1990 designated the local authorities as the building control authority and they were given the powers of inspection and enforcement under this Act. A home owner may request the building control authority to give an opinion on whether the works comply with the building regulations or not."

The home owner affected did contact their local authority and, rather than visit, they informed her by letter not to use the stove until it was inspected by a competent person. They suggested that the householder contact the stove company for advice. OFTEC was disappointed by the local council's response.

"The current situation is simply not tenable," says OFTEC. "The homeowner is no better off following her request to the council asking for advice. She is left with a stove that is not useable and the installer has not been informed by the council that his work is non-compliant. We suspect that the council officials would welcome powers to intervene/advise on these matters."

While this may be the current stance of local authorities on building control issues, in replacement situations OFTEC has asked for clarification on:

- Who is deemed competent to install a solid fuel stove in ROI currently?
- Why the local authority cannot inform the installer that the work he has carried out is non-compliant?
- Why the local authority cannot take action/force the installer to make good the installation to comply with the regulations?

OFTEC is seeking a change in the legislation and/or guidance from the department of environment to allow local building control officers to follow up poorly installed stoves (and oil boilers) and permit contact and follow up action with installers who do not comply with the regulations.

**If you have been affected by a poor installation or have met resistance from a local council to follow up on a compliant/poor installation please contact: [dblevings@oftec.org](mailto:dblevings@oftec.org)**

## Councils specify OFTEC registration

OFTEC's inspector, Sean McBride, has been busy meeting county councils in Ireland, demonstrating the benefits of using competent persons and showing them the positive use of control documents.

Cork council has recently tendered for oil servicing works stating that technicians must be OFTEC registered to tender. OFTEC proposes to use this as an exemplar and target other councils in ROI to repeat this across the island using Cork's template.

Wicklow Council recently updated its oil information provided to consumers via their website: <http://www.wicklow.ie/oil-boiler-servicing-2015-2016> and states that "Wicklow Council is an OFTEC registered organisation and has its own OFTEC registered technicians who will carry out some of this work."



Sean McBride, OFTEC's Ireland representative and regional inspector

This is good news and will be used to promote OFTEC registration to other Councils.

## SEAI change fuel price indicator

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) publish a quarterly domestic fuel price indicator in the Republic of Ireland, similar to Sutherland Tables. OFTEC recently queried the apparent high price of kerosene and, on investigation, it appears SEAI have been quoting 'scheduled prices' instead of 'retail prices' for kerosene for almost twenty years.

OFTEC wrote to the chief executive officer and board members of SEAI and voiced concern on this issue and demanded that the compilation of data was changed immediately. SEAI have responded and

acknowledged that they were wrong. The January 2016 featured retail pricing.

This is an important victory for OFTEC as this information is used by architects, specifiers and energy advisers and the price has been against oil by as much as 20 cents per litre for the last number of years. The reality is that oil is at a ten year low and, according to October 2015 Sutherland Tables, is the cheapest form of home heating on the island. Technicians should remind consumers of this and encourage consumers to upgrade to a condensing boiler and bunded tank for the complete heating package!



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# New tank to celebrate 30th anniversary

Carbery Plastics is celebrating its 30th anniversary with the launch of a brand new oil tank.

Over the last three decades, the company has embraced new design technology, developed a new generation of fuel tanks and welcomed the next generation of the McCarthy family to the business. Carbery's 40-strong workforce is led by a team with a passion for rotational moulding. Offering innovative fuel storage solutions and robust mobile fuel pumps, Carbery Plastics produces oil tanks to European Standard EN13341. All tanks in the range are also fully OFTEC registered.

Since the initial hand drawn designs of the company's first oil tank, design techniques and technology have rapidly progressed. CAD has improved the design process allowing Carbery to simulate and modify designs more efficiently and more effectively, whilst "finite element analysis" tools enable the company to simulate the strain tanks must endure once in real world use.

Carbery Plastics has a strong presence in the agricultural and construction sectors across Ireland, the UK and Europe. Backed by design improvements and increasing knowledge of customer requirements, the company was quick to develop both single skin and banded oil tanks – the latter now required for all commercial, industrial and institutional installations in Ireland and the UK.

To mark its 30th anniversary, Carbery Plastics has launched a new low capacity oil tank. The ultra-compact Carbery 650 Litre Combi R is aimed at customers seeking a smaller tank for security and/or cash flow reasons. It also works well for households with renewable technologies where oil demand is less.

[www.carberyplastics.com](http://www.carberyplastics.com)



(l-r) Jim Hunt and Kevin Kelleher who were involved in the production of Carbery Plastics' first tank – a 1550L – 30 years ago, with Cal and Michael McCarthy beside the 650L Combi R – Carbery's newest design

## Manufacturer of the Year for Tuffa

Staffordshire-based Tuffa Tanks, which recently supplied an oil tank to the country's National Memorial Arboretum, has been awarded the title of manufacturer of the year.

The award, which was in recognition of 'the ever-growing manufacturing sector in Burton, South Derbyshire and Uttoxeter', was given by the Burton Mail.

Looking for companies that had excelled in the manufacturing sector since July 2012, the judges considered all aspects of the manufacturing process including product design, testing, development, production, marketing, sales and overall business performance.

"This was one proud moment in the history of Tuffa," said Charlie Goring.

"The years 2013-2015 saw some tremendous changes which were only possible through the hard work and dedication given by all the Tuffa team."

Illustrating the diverse list of Tuffa's customers, a 1350SLB banded oil tank was recently delivered to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire. The tank will supply a giant heater which warms a large outdoor marquee used for various events throughout the year.

[www.tuffa.co.uk](http://www.tuffa.co.uk)

## OFTEC and FPS to champion tank campaign

OFTEC has announced that it is to join forces with the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers (FPS) to develop a new campaign, aimed at raising awareness of the potential problems posed by old, single skinned oil storage tanks.

With many thousands of old tanks still in use, there is increasing concern that homeowners are unaware that these tanks could suddenly fail, potentially leaving them with a very large clean-up bill. The campaign will particularly focus on single skinned tanks that are 20+ years old, as these pose the greatest risk of failure.

The campaign will focus on helping homeowners to understand the risks associated with older tanks, explaining what kind of warning signs to look out for and who to contact for advice and help. Information leaflets and other resources will be developed to support the campaign and it is hoped that these will be distributed by FPS members and OFTEC registered technicians.

With the oil price so low, it's clear that there has never been a better time to persuade homeowners to replace their old tank.

OFTEC believes there is a good business opportunity for tank installers and hopes that many will wish to get involved.

The campaign is planned to begin in the spring, so look out for updates in the OFTEC E-news and the next issue of *Oil Installer*.



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## Tools of the trade – a special report

# Choosing, using and maintaining the contents of your tool box

by Clive King

**All engineers and construction workers require tools to carry out their day to day duties. An obvious statement perhaps, but one which makes us consider what tools do, which ones are essential and, most importantly, how to use and maintain them.**

The author first became interested in hand tools at about eight years old when his father, who was very artistic but totally non-practical, knocked a steel nail into the lounge wall to hold a picture. The result was a wobbly nail which fell out every time the picture was hung on it, together with a pile of dust and plaster on his mother's best carpet!

At this early age the author realised that there must be a better way. It started with an indentured apprenticeship in mechanical engineering, the first six months of which were spent learning all about the tools of the trade, and how and why they were made and maintained.

It is important that those who use tools to make a living should use the correct tool for the job, know how it works and how to maintain it. A screwdriver, for instance, was not designed as a chisel or for opening tins of paint!

A trainee should be taught the difference between the quality of tools. Their future livelihoods will very much depend upon their choices.

It is interesting to note how the use of tools can be employed in two ways to determine the potential of a new recruit or to gauge the knowledge and skill of an older technician. With the new trainee certain questions can be asked to ascertain his/her appreciation of tool usage and knowledge. The older and possibly more experienced technician is easily assessed by his actual work with his tools, the type of tools he has in his tool box, how they are arranged, their quality and also the type of tool box he actually employs. For instance, a good quality

fabric tool box on an aluminium frame is preferable when an oil engineer is working in domestic premises, especially in a kitchen where there may be some delicate ornaments or kitchen fittings!

We have now established that tools are important to the operative and that good quality equipment should be well maintained.

We now come to the most difficult question: "What tools do I need to carry out my work?" This can be a very personal decision.

### Basic requirements...

Anyone in construction or engineering must start with a basic tool kit which would probably include a ball-peen hammer, a set of various sized screwdrivers, metric spanners, a set of Allen keys, a small socket set, and good quality adjustable wrenches.

A high grade set of pliers for various tasks are essential and, although the mechanical engineer is not supposed to work with electricity, a pair of wire strippers are extremely useful. In previous times if electricity was involved in the work of the mechanical fitter then he was trained to deal with it. Nowadays there are some very obscure rules for the engagement of electrical work which are not part of this treatise.

Now that we are in the 21st century there are tools for every imaginable purpose, a basic unit being the cordless electric drill. Several types of saw, especially hack saws are a must, bearing in mind the correct teeth per inch so that copper and thin steel may be cut without causing undue distress to the material.

The above is a very basic list for nearly every trade, but the oil industry plumbing/heating engineer needs several specialist tools. Here is a list of basic but essential equipment that the modern oil heating technician should carry with him in his van: an oil line pressure test kit; mini pipe

cutter; mini pipe bender; flaring tool; PVC pipe cutter; flow measure and mains water pressure gauge; standard hand-held 15/22mm pipe bender; flue gas test kit; and a remote acting fire valve tester. If involved with the servicing and commissioning of vaporising burners, a servicing and commissioning kit is required.

Also required is an oil suction pump, a priming pump and, most importantly, a good quality vacuum cleaner incorporating an induction motor. Vacuum cleaners incorporating brushed motors are not acceptable to the oil industry as the brushes in the motor cause sparks which could cause a fire in the vacuum cleaner and thence increase the risk of fire at the boiler or supply pipe lines.

It is not possible within the parameters of this treatise to expand further on the specialist tools and equipment available and essential for an oil technician, save to point the interested reader in the direction of the OFTEC Direct catalogue. This publication is updated on a regular basis and contains all the tools and equipment that the conscientious heating engineer requires to carry out his daily tasks to the satisfaction of himself and his customers.

---

Clive King has been involved in the oil heating industry since leaving school in 1958. Since then he has owned his own company – Energy Systems (Exeter) – and carried out consultancy work for OFTEC. In 2007 Clive became an OFTEC inspector, a position he held until May 2014. Although now semi-retired, Clive continues to carry out consultancy work and still takes a keen interest in the oil industry.

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\*all current models excluding CTS Gem.

# Apprenticeships are key to upskilling industry, says OFTEC

In the wake of recent criticism over the value of some apprenticeships, OFTEC continues to champion the on-the-job training scheme saying that apprenticeships can provide school leavers with an excellent career start and help to combat the UK's growing skills shortage.

In a report published in October, Ofsted branded Britain's apprenticeship system "little short of a disaster", citing the fact that just 5% of 16 year olds become apprentices – a figure which has hardly changed for over a decade. Ofsted claimed too many employers and providers are misusing the system by providing poor quality, low level apprenticeships which fail to provide the skills and knowledge employers need.

The report also said too few apprenticeships were being created in sectors where the UK's skills shortage was most acute, such as construction

and engineering, while apprenticeships in business, administration and law had almost doubled in the past five years.

Whilst OFTEC firmly agrees that any concerns over the quality of apprenticeships should be raised, the trade association says it is important to view these negative headlines in context.

OFTEC registrations director, Adrian Lightwood, said: "OFTEC has always backed vocational qualifications and apprenticeships as highly credible routes to further education and future

employment for young people – they should not be viewed as second class. Whilst there are undoubtedly some substandard schemes operating across the UK, there are also many highly credible training centres and businesses offering quality apprenticeships which give young people a real opportunity to start a rewarding and secure career.

"Small businesses, in particular, often overlook the option of taking on an apprentice, so it's good to report on a success story that demonstrates the value of apprenticeships, both to the trainee and the business."



Dan North and Tia Allen

Tia Allen, aged 19, is in her third year at Brockenhurst College, Hampshire, which she attends one day each week working towards an NVQ Level 3 Diploma in plumbing and heating. For the rest of the week, Tia works as an apprentice alongside Dan North, owner of OFTEC registered heating business Dan North Limited in Cirencester, gaining invaluable on-the-job training and experience.

Tia says: "I've always liked doing practical things and used to help my dad when I was young. Having completed a construction GCSE at school I knew I wasn't an office person so I decided to go to college and work

## Tia proves to be the perfect recruitment solution

towards the qualifications needed to become a heating and plumbing engineer.

"It was while I was at college that Dan offered me an apprenticeship with his business and I snapped up the chance!

"Working in the real world and going into people's houses to actually do the job is the best training you can get. Although the classroom theory is important, actually putting what you learn into practice gives you so much more knowledge and experience.

"I'm not sure what the future holds but when I finish my studies in summer 2016 I hope to work full time with Dan.

"If anyone is considering an apprenticeship I would say 100% do it. It's given me an amazing opportunity to do what I love doing as my career."

Tia is also proving a great asset to Dan North's business which he started in 2009, specialising in oil and gas boiler installation and maintenance.

Dan says: "I started as an apprentice myself when I left school in 2003 and know what an important opportunity it was for me – as well as the benefits

taking on an apprentice can bring to a business.

"When I approached Tia through the college, my business was at the stage where I had more than enough work for me to do but not enough to warrant the high cost of employing another full time, qualified engineer.

"I'd always wanted to employ a female as firstly, there is absolutely no reason why not, and secondly, some people feel more comfortable letting a woman into their home. So Tia seemed the perfect candidate!

"With an apprentice you can train the person to do the job your way so I'm confident that when I send Tia out, she will complete work in the same way and to the same standard as I would. There is always that question mark when you employ an engineer who has trained somewhere else.

"Going forward I envisage there will be just Tia and I working in the business as by keeping it small I know we will be able to offer the same fantastic service which customers expect.

"Apprenticeships are definitely the way to go and it's proved the perfect recruitment solution for my business."

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# Solid fuel training from METAC



METAC's training rooms feature the most up-to-date equipment and materials

METAC Training, based in Mountrath, Co. Laois, Ireland, is now offering dry and wet solid fuel stove installer courses in addition to its solid fuel awareness training.

The five-day dry solid fuel stove installer course is for construction professionals and aims to provide participants with the knowledge and understanding to enable them to install dry stoves to meet requirements of customers, building regulations and standards. On successful completion candidates receive an OFTEC 18-108-IRL (Dry) certificate.

The wet solid fuel stove installer course is a further three days for plumbers with an OFT15-108 IRL certificate. It includes open heating systems and interlinking heating systems, and on successful completion candidates receive an OFTEC 15-108-IRI (Wet) certificate.

The solid fuel awareness course is a one day training programme to provide participants with the knowledge to enable them to assist customers in choosing the correct solid fuel appliance and to determine installation and fuel requirements.

[www.metac.ie](http://www.metac.ie)

## Solid fuel courses prove popular

The OFTEC solid fuel courses have proved extremely popular since their introduction at the end of 2015.

Two courses are available:

- OFT15-108D: Installation, commissioning and servicing of solid fuel burning appliances (dry space heating)
- OFT15-108W: Installation, commissioning and servicing of solid fuel burning appliances with space heating and hot water heating

The courses have been developed with the assistance of experts from various areas within the solid fuel heating industry and, although currently there are few centres delivering the courses, many are in the pipeline or have expressed an interest in this area.

Successful completion of the courses enables technicians to register under OFTEC's competent person's scheme, with special prices for technicians currently registered for oil work.

A technical publication to accompany the courses, the OFTEC Guide to Solid Fuel Heating Installation, Commissioning & Servicing Work, is currently available from OFTEC Direct.

For information on any of these topics, visit: [www.joinoftec.com](http://www.joinoftec.com) or contact OFTEC's training manager David Knipe, email: [dknipe@oftec.org](mailto:dknipe@oftec.org)

## UKAS recognises OFT10-201

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) has accepted OFTEC's OFT10-201 as meeting the requirements of ISO/IEC 17024. As a result, assessments can now be certified to 17024 standards, subject to certification bodies gaining approval from UKAS.

UKAS is the national accreditation body, and operates under a memorandum of understanding with the government through the secretary of state for business, innovation and skills.

The course covers the servicing and commissioning of two and three stage burners, as fitted to many light commercial appliances such as boilers and warm air heaters. The technology will be familiar to most technicians working on single stage domestic pressure jet appliances, and the additional knowledge that comes from this course will allow them to service and commission these larger types of burner.

## City and Guilds link

OFTEC have been working with City and Guilds to help in the development of an oil pathway for the 6189 Level 3 domestic plumbing and heating NVQ.

By choosing to take the oil modules, this qualification will cover all the essential knowledge and skills needed for a successful career in domestic plumbing and oil-fired heating. It is hoped that by aligning the City and Guilds units with existing OFTEC qualifications, those choosing oil-related units at Level 3 will be able to register with OFTEC on successful completion of the qualification.



## ASK OLLIE!

I'm a service technician operating in Northern Ireland and I have advised a customer that their existing non-domestic oil tank requires secondary containment under the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010. Are they at risk of committing an offence if they do not comply?

Yes. Owners of tanks in scope of the regulations which do not comply could face a term of imprisonment, be fined up to £20,000, or both.

As a service technician I come across aging installations which are in poor condition or simply have features about them which do not comply with regulations. Does OFTEC provide any

guidance to help me categorise safety and environmental risks?

Yes. You'll find a non-exhaustive list of potential and immediate safety and environmental risks in the new 2015 edition OFTEC pocket guide, available to registered technicians for £4.50 (€5.85) from OFTEC Direct: [www.oftecdirect.com](http://www.oftecdirect.com).

I have been asked to install a new oil tank near to where an air source heat pump is installed. What should I consider as part of this work?

Whilst BS 5410 does not stipulate a fire separation distance to such equipment, consideration should be given to allowing access around the tank and not impeding air flow around the heat pump. The heat pump manufacturer's installation instructions should be consulted.

I have been asked by an oil user occupying a rented property in England whether it is law for a carbon monoxide detector to be fitted. Can you advise?

For oil fired appliances in let properties it is not a requirement at this time. However, whilst the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015, which came into force 1st October 2015,

covers solid fuel appliances in let properties, for peace of mind OFTEC would recommend that a carbon monoxide detector is installed with any fossil fuelled appliance.

I'm a newly registered business with OFTEC and I'm looking for some useful information on contracts of work. Does OFTEC have any guidance on the subject that might be of help?

Yes. OFTEC has published a technical notice on contracts of work which is available in the registered technician area of the OFTEC website: [www.oftec.org](http://www.oftec.org). Here you'll find a host of useful notices on all manner of topics.

I am an OFTEC registered business looking to expand into solid fuel. I have seen that OFTEC now offers a solid fuel scope of registration and I would like to know what the fees are.

The cost for an existing OFTEC registered business to extend their scope of registration into solid fuel is as little as £50 (or €65 in the Republic of Ireland) for one year, or pro-rata to align with your existing registration. Please contact OFTEC registration services for more details on 01473 626 298 if calling from the UK or 01 864 5771 for the Rol.

## Yes – you can have a non-condensing boiler!



Jim Wright, managing director of Mistral Boilers

**Jim Wright, managing director of Mistral Boilers, dispels some myths surrounding non-condensing boilers and their installation.**

There has been a great deal of confusion over the rules around non-condensing boilers in recent years. This reveals itself very quickly when you do an internet

search looking for the answers.

Plenty of people who claim to have the definitive answer are getting it badly wrong – even senior managers from multinational corporations.

Many householders still want or need a non-condensing boiler and the simple truth is that often they can still have one! There are some criteria to meet, but it is not as onerous to justify as you might imagine if a non-condensing product is the suitable one for you.

### Efficiency

A fairly straightforward points-based system can be used by installers (or even property owners themselves) to work out if a non-condensing solution would be permitted.

The next argument you tend to come up against is

efficiency, which in the case of our uniquely designed products is not an issue, because they cross that regulatory hurdle with ease in independent tests.

The fact is that information on non-condensing products, since the change in building regulations in 2005, has led to many people, who could and should have benefitted from one, missing out. They had to add flues but could have avoided both the cost and visual impact if they had been properly informed about the options.

It is true that you need to meet strict requirements to permit a non-condensing boiler installation, but it's far from true that they are now "illegal" as many people would have you think, or that the case for them being permitted is "very rare", which you also hear regularly.

Perhaps some of that stems from the fact that other manufacturers no longer have a non-condensing version in their product lines... We at Mistral are here to help sweep away any misconceptions and can advise anyone fairly and accurately on what the regulations say and whether one of our non-condensing models would be appropriate. You might be surprised by the truth!

Mistral Boilers is based in Telford, Shropshire, and has more than 40 years of experience in the manufacture of oil fired boilers. Independent testing shows a typical 93% efficiency on condensing boilers, and up to 87% on non-condensing boilers, which, says Mistral, are still required for up to 10% of the whole UK market.

[www.mistralboilers.com](http://www.mistralboilers.com)



# Innovation and low costs ensure popularity of oil-fired boilers

Thanks to low fuel prices and advances in heating technology, the oil market remains buoyant, explains Anna Wakefield, marketing and corporate communications manager for Grant UK.

There is little doubt that oil-fired boilers continue to be a popular heating solution for homeowners in off gas areas of the UK. There are several reasons for this, not least the low fuel prices we are currently experiencing, which makes the installation of an oil appliance, such as the Grant Vortex, an easy decision for many end users.

For the majority of homes, upgrading to a modern oil condensing boiler from a standard efficiency model, is a good solution which would vastly reduce fuel consumption and lower carbon emissions. Given that most installations are boiler replacements for older inefficient products and are often distress purchases, in our opinion the oil market is likely to remain strong for the foreseeable future.

As the demand for oil remains, manufacturers such as Grant continue to innovate to ensure that maximum efficiencies are achieved and the appliances become easier to install than ever before. It's fair to say that many changes to our products, which aid installers, come from valuable feedback from our engineers.

## Customer feedback

As a privately owned family business, we actively encourage customer feedback, and this valuable source of information is regularly reviewed when developing new models, or when we are incorporating some new element into an existing appliance. For instance, following constructive comments from our G-One installer network and training academy, we made some innovative upgrades to the combi models within the Vortex range.

Most oil-fired combination boilers are supplied with a 12 litre expansion vessel and it is the installer's responsibility to provide any additional expansion for the system. However, recent product updates to the Vortex Combi and Pro Combi mean that they now include a 24 litre expansion vessel, as well as a plug and socket connection for the Riello RDB burner, as standard.

This upgrade to the combi models ultimately reduces installation time and cost, as in most cases a 24 litre vessel should more than cope with expansion for both the boiler and heating system.

The plug and socket was requested by service engineers to aid the removal of the burner during annual maintenance, making the job both quicker and easier. Grant Vortex combi models also feature internal frost protection, neon diagnostic indicators and a factory fitted internal condensate trap, all designed to make installation and servicing easier.



Our installer network also suggested decreasing the physical size of our combi to further enhance the range, so we launched the Vortex Pro Combi XS, the slimmest 26kW oil-fired condensing combi boiler on the market. At only 515mm wide, the XS is designed as a replacement for older inefficient standard efficiency oil-fired combis, which tend to be smaller in dimension. Whisper quiet when operating, the Vortex Pro Combi XS is extremely energy efficient and user friendly, with neon diagnostic indicators and an ErP energy rating of A for heating and B for hot water.

## New oil products

For over two years, Grant's R&D team has been busy developing and trialling a new generation of clean burning, low emission and high efficiency boilers to meet EU emission changes planned to come into force in 2018. The result is the all new 'VortexBlue' range of oil fired condensing boilers, incorporating a new blue flame Riello compact burner.

Outputs from 21-36kW will be available across a variety of models and, although the technology is very advanced, the boiler and burner combination is easy to install and set up.

Boiler size was a particular area of concern and we are pleased to confirm that all dimensions on the new models are the same as the existing ranges, making replacement of older

products very easy. What's more, the new VortexBlue boilers are compatible with all of Grant's EZ-Fit flue systems.

The introduction of the Grant VortexBlue epitomises how modern oil-fired burner technologies can deliver and sustain cleaner, reliable heating. Our products, including the Vortex oil-fired boilers and renewable technologies, have been market leaders in efficiency, and the VortexBlue is another product which we believe will quickly set the standards in the marketplace.

We are also helping installers unlock the benefits of renewable energy for their off-gas customers with the new Grant VortexAir. Renewable technologies can sometimes prove difficult for homeowners to install into their homes, especially when in a distress purchase situation. The VortexAir solves this with an inverter driven heat pump joined to a high efficiency oil boiler. This greener alternative to boiler replacements means minimal disruption to the home.

[www.grantuk.com](http://www.grantuk.com)



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# Oil: no longer a dirty word

Kathryn Lowe, marketing manager at Rayburn, discusses why oil heating systems are still a great choice for rural properties

For years, homeowners with oil-fired heating systems have been inundated with negative news, but today, the situation is very different indeed. Instead, the fuel is gaining in popularity, with the oil heating industry experiencing an all-time high in November 2015 as sales from January to October finished 9% up on the same period in 2014.

But is it simply the depressed oil prices that have caused the upturn in demand, or is it a bit more complicated than that?

The decision to upgrade a boiler is a much considered purchase – and one homeowners have to plan carefully. There are also several wider issues to consider. Firstly, for rural properties, there are very few alternatives other than staying with oil, as it is unlikely that the gas network will be extended to many more communities over the coming decades.

## Excellent efficiencies

But putting geographical restrictions aside, it is important to recognise that oil is still a relevant option for households, especially with the latest condensing oil boilers offering excellent efficiencies all year round. And completely switching a property to renewables is often too expensive and/or impractical to undertake, so a different approach to heating and hot water is often required.

So, if we acknowledge that oil heating systems are here to stay, where does the future lie for the technology and what are the best recommendations for installers to offer their clients? One option is to supplement a building's heat load by utilising renewable technology, providing an efficient 'hybrid' system.

Central heating range cookers, such as Rayburn's 780KCD, can also prove to be the perfect foundation for a



sustainable and cost effective heating arrangement – while also providing exceptional cooking capabilities.

These types of cookers have been used in rural properties for decades and are often supplemented by renewables or wood burning stoves to boost temperatures, with the added benefit of reducing overall oil usage.

If recent industry figures are to be taken at face value, rural homeowners reliant on oil are continuing to embrace the fuel and see it as a long term solution. This fact alone is evidence enough for both manufacturers and installers alike that oil-fired heating systems are here to stay.

## EOGB engineer achieves top industry qualification

Martin Cooke, technical manager at burner solutions provider EOGB Energy Products Ltd, has become one of only a handful of engineers in the UK to have received a specialist Master's degree in industrial and commercial combustion engineering.

The three-year degree programme, which was created to address concerns of a lack of competent combustion engineers worldwide, is the first of its kind in the UK and covers all industrial and commercial processes at a highly advanced level.

Martin said: "I'm really proud to have achieved my Master's degree. There is not currently a formal qualification route for industrial combustion engineers and I'm enjoying putting the advanced knowledge and skills I've gained into practice in my role at EOGB.

"My next challenge is to complete a PhD in combustion engineering,



Martin Cooke of EOGB becomes a Master of his trade

specialising in NOx reduction methods in oil fired combustion. Hopefully some of our current projects at EOGB will help towards oil fired heating retaining its deserved presence in the heating industry."

Martin has worked in the heating industry for more than 20 years and joined EOGB in 2008. In addition to heading up the technical, research and development team he also leads the EOGB training department which delivers a range of oil, gas and associated courses in St Neots, Cambridgeshire.

[www.eogb.co.uk](http://www.eogb.co.uk)

## Free app for heating engineers

EOGB has relaunched its free app with added features to provide extra information and support to engineers and installers.

EOGB Plus, which is free to download and compatible with most mobile devices, provides essential technical information such as oil burner control box blink fault codes and allows installers to view and download installation manuals, spare part manuals and wiring diagrams for the entire EOGB domestic and commercial burner ranges.

Additional features include a booking form for training courses, a notepad and a discussion forum where users can interact, share information and request support.

All the app functions can be made available offline.

The EOGB Plus app is available to download now from the Google Play store and Apple App Store.

[www.eogb.co.uk](http://www.eogb.co.uk)

# 25 years old and still “the oil pump of the future”

Danfoss recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of the introduction of its BFP range of pumps – the early 90s saw the first BFP pumps run off the company’s production line in Nordborg, Denmark.

“The oil pump of the future” was the bold and ambitious headline when it was first introduced to the market and since then many thousands of the pumps have been produced. Danfoss always prides itself on producing high quality and highly reliable products and the BFP pump is no exception, says the company, setting the standards for modern oil pumps.

This year also sees the introduction of T85 coils on Danfoss service pumps which can withstand higher temperatures to satisfy the increasing rise of ambient temperatures within burner chambers.

Mark McElroy from Danfoss commented: “We are always looking to improve our products where we can so upgrading the coil was a natural step for us to take. The coils will also be available as a spare part from Danfoss suppliers.”

[www.danfoss.com](http://www.danfoss.com)



The Danfoss production line in Nordborg, Denmark

## New Greenstar system filter from Worcester

Worcester, Bosch Group has unveiled a new Greenstar System Filter, designed to make installation and servicing simpler than ever before.

Available in 22mm and 28mm variants, Worcester’s new accessory has been engineered to allow a bi-directional flow, enabling it to be installed anywhere along the return circulation pipework between the last radiator and the boiler. The filter’s isolation valves can be activated using a single 90° turn, with red and green indicators showing when the filter is in operation. The 28mm variant is compatible with oil boilers.

The design of the new Greenstar System Filter includes a wide top opening which allows over 500ml of inhibitor fluid to be added without the need for injection.

The removable lid has been designed to prevent over-tightening and damage to the O-ring seal, while a bottom drain valve and detachable body means the filter can be cleaned

thoroughly during a service.

For the long term protection of the heating system, a larger powerful internal magnet safeguards the boiler and wider system components by capturing the contaminants often found within dirty system water, such as iron oxide and magnetite. Meanwhile, a separate internal mechanism harnesses non-magnetic contaminants such as flux and solder.

Martyn Bridges, director of marketing and technical support at Worcester, Bosch Group, commented: “The launch of our new Greenstar System Filter means we can now offer an accessory which is as attractive from an installation point of view as it is to the discerning homeowner. The market for system filters is growing rapidly, which is largely thanks to increasing awareness of the impact they can have on system performance, longevity and overall fuel efficiency.”

[www.worcester-bosch.co.uk/filter](http://www.worcester-bosch.co.uk/filter)

## New thermometer kit from ETI

Electronic Temperature Instruments Ltd has launched a new budget Differential thermometer kit, to meet the needs of plumbers and HVAC engineers.

The ETI Differential thermometer measures temperatures over the range of -99.9 to 299.9 °C with a 0.1 °C resolution or 300 to 1372 °C with a 1 °C resolution. The thermometer features a custom, LCD display with °C/°F, T1, T2, diff, hold, open circuit, low battery indication and a user selectable backlight.

The thermometer allows the user to use two type K thermocouple probes simultaneously. The unit’s two thermocouple inputs make the thermometer ideal for HVAC applications including flow and return temperature measurements, and radiator output checks. In addition the thermometer can be used to establish hot water and air conditioning temperature utilising an optional liquid or air probe.

The Differential thermometer is supplied as a kit, with two pipe clamp probes in a protective zip wallet and priced at £87.50 + VAT. It is available directly from: [www.etilt.com](http://www.etilt.com).

## Installer wins dream trip to Sin City!

The entertainment capital of the world, Las Vegas is ready to welcome the winner of a competition held by Grant UK and plumbing and heating supplies merchant Williams & Co Ltd.

Installers who purchased a Grant Vortex oil-fired boiler from Williams & Co between 1st September and 18th December 2015 were invited to enter a draw to be in with a chance of winning some great prizes, including a once-in-a-lifetime trip for two people.

The winners were recently drawn and Lee Owen from Aqua Plumbing Services in Hamstreet, Kent, was announced as the winner of the Las Vegas trip. Lee will be heading to "Sin City" where he and his guest will be staying in a hotel on the main Vegas strip, with \$1,000 to spend and a limousine to transport them around.

Grant UK and Williams & Co decided to join forces to reward hard working engineers who purchase and fit Vortex boilers. As well as the Las Vegas star prize, the competition also had an iPad Air for the installer drawn as the runner-up. A further ten installers each won a Grant Vortex Mag One magnetic filter.

Vortex oil-fired boilers have some of the highest efficiencies, far exceeding UK and European standards, says Grant. "And 2016 will see some exciting new additions joining the Vortex range reaffirming Grant's position as a leading innovator and manufacturer of heating appliances," adds the company.

Grant UK and Williams & Co have congratulated all of the competition winners and have assured Lee Owen that "what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas!"

[www.grantuk.com](http://www.grantuk.com).



Grant UK sales manager Nick Underwood, with competition winner Lee Owen

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# Worcester hunts for the nation's best installer vans

Worcester, Bosch Group, is asking installers and tradesmen to take to social media to help them showcase the UK's best vans.

In a monthly competition run by Worcester, installers are asked to nominate a set of wheels using the hashtag #VanOfTheMonth. From the entries, a weekly winner is selected to take home a coveted Worcester jacket.

At the end of the month, all four motors are put forward to a public vote for the title of "Van of the Month" and the prize of Worcester's flagship smart internet-connected control, the Wave.

To enter installers simply have to take a picture of their van – or a colleague's – and Tweet it using the hashtag #VanOfTheMonth.

Martyn Bridges, director of marketing and technical support at Worcester, Bosch Group, commented: "In launching our specialist Twitter account for installers under the handle of @WorcesterBosch, we found a lot of heating engineers are very proud of both their work and their vehicles – and rightly so. Each day we receive tweets and pictures of new installations as well as engineers' vans, so we thought that by launching our #VanOfTheMonth competition we could recognise their dedication.

"Since September we've already ready crowned three #VanOfTheMonth winners, so I would encourage anyone who either is an installer, or knows a worthy contender, to enter and share their van with the plumbing and heating community."

[www.worcester-bosch.co.uk](http://www.worcester-bosch.co.uk)



Does your van turn heads? If so, Worcester wants to know!

## Business opportunity for installers

Firebird are actively seeking to create an approved installer network for their oil fired range cookers and are offering experienced installers the opportunity to be in at the beginning of the company's plans to become an established brand in this specialist sector.

As a specialist oil boiler manufacturer, Firebird brought their oil expertise to bear on developing a high efficiency oil fired range cooker which comes in various options. Top of the offering is a combined

range cooker and condensing central heating and hot water model for space and fuel saving heating efficiency. There is also a multifuel version and cooking only options for both oil and multifuel models.

As demand continues to grow nationally, Firebird are looking to create an accredited installer network across the country, especially in the traditional areas where oil is the preferred fuel for heating and cooking.

The company is also making a special offer with attractive discounts to any reader of *Oil Installer* wanting a range cooker for themselves.

Installers wishing to be considered for accredited installer status, and to register for installation and servicing training, should contact Firebird Range Cookers Division on Freephone 0800 093 1030 or by email at [info@firebirdrangecookers.com](mailto:info@firebirdrangecookers.com)



## SOS upgrades Ultimate Suction Pump

Specific Oil Solutions has upgraded its "Ultimate Suction Pump" after seven successful years on the market. The upgrade includes a new purpose-made and highly durable suction hose assembly.

The full-bore hose for the version of the pump developed for the oil-fired heating and cooking industry is future proof, claims the company, and suitable for all fuel-oils including biofuels with up to 100% concentration. A new product accessories pack, together with full-colour packaging are also planned.

Testimony to the quality of the product comes in a comment from customer Mark Green, technical manager at Rix Heating, who says: "We have used the Ultimate Suction Pump for years now and wouldn't be without them. We have in the past used other types of oil suction pumps but none of them are as reliable and clean as the 'Ultimate' and our engineers say it's

one of the best tools in the van."

Specific Oil Solutions, based in Bridgnorth, Shropshire, is operated by Stuart Bratt who is particularly proud to support fellow UK businesses by sourcing as much of his raw materials as possible from within the UK.

Stuart can be contacted at: [mail@sos-oil.co.uk](mailto:mail@sos-oil.co.uk)



# The future is Blu...

## Riello develops ErP compliant burner

**In advance of new European flue gas emission legislation which come into force in September 2018, Riello has further developed its RDB oil burner, making it compliant to the ErP NOx emission requirements that must not exceed 120mg/kWh.**

In order to achieve the lower emission levels ready for ErP, Riello has developed a range of RDB BX burners to cover its existing range.

One of the key benefits is the retention of standard RDB components i.e. oil pump, motor, control box and photocell. The main difference is that the combustion head is noticeably longer than its typical yellow flame counterpart as it allows for recirculation of combustion gases within the flame tube creating lowered NOx and CO levels.

The style of combustion head is of proven Riello design – re-engineered to integrate into the RDB family that is able to fit into existing kitchen boiler combustion chambers, making the burner a very simple fit for HE boilers.

### Further reduction...

In addition to this, and in anticipation of the next round of ErP regulation 2022 where a further reduction in NOx emissions is expected, Riello has also developed the RDB BLU. Still based around the proven RDB structure, the new RDB BLU blue flame burner features several new components.

As the name suggests, the flame is now blue so the photocell is replaced with ultra violet flame detection and the control box is the very latest design of digital technology. The intelligent control box includes such features as post-purge, fault diagnostics and status indications.

The combustion head design is made from high quality INOX steel, and is of a fixed design with no adjustments required.

Both RDB BX and RDB BLU have been designed to fit into the current production of HE kitchen model boilers. The fan structure has the same overall dimensions as the current RDB 2.2 or RDB 3.2 yellow flame burner.

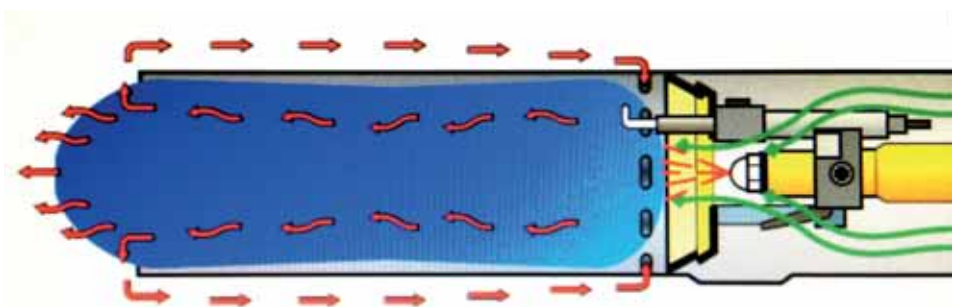
When it comes to set up of the new RDB BLU burner, very little has changed – the burners are simple

to commission and service with little additional adjustments required over the existing yellow flame burners.



“It was very important from the outset of the projects for Riello to ensure that, despite the burner having to incorporate new combustion technology, it was still recognisable to installers and engineers as the market leading Riello RDB that installers and service technicians have trusted over the years,” says Brett Hale, residential product manager.

“We have worked to ensure that the new series of burners Blu/Yellow flame and totally Blu flame burners could both be incorporated with little disruption to the considerations of each boiler design.”



### Riello in control...

For many years the RDB oil burner was supplied only with the standard analogue control box – Riello Part number 3008652 which is familiar to the vast majority of installers and service technicians. These days, however, there are more variations in control options including digital versions (DCB) as used by some oil boiler manufacturers.

Digital burner management controllers work in a very similar way to the analogue box but there are also some important differences, features and benefits to be aware of.

In addition to the standard electrical supply, motor, photocell and coil connections there is an extra terminal. Depending on the application Riello Part Number 20037830 box has a remote lock out reset (marked RESET), and Riello Part Number 30035388 box incorporates a post purge facility (marked HEAT DEMAND).

The remote reset requires the addition of a remote momentary switch normally as part of the boiler control to activate the function. If no connection is made to the terminal, all other functions are still active.

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

With the advent of the RDB BLU blue flame burner there will be other versions of DCB that will incorporate additional features such as UV flame detection.

Burner training, including digital control, can be provided by Riello Limited and relevant boiler manufacturers.

[www.rielloburners.co.uk](http://www.rielloburners.co.uk)

# Kevin condemns "very dangerous" workmanship during routine plumbing visit

When Kevin Church of KJC Plumbing & Heating of Newtown, Newbury, visited a house to fix a WC with flushing issues, he didn't realise what he had let himself in for. As soon as he stepped out of his van, he realised that this was no routine visit.

"Whilst I was there, the owner asked me to look at a hot bath tap, so I went to

turn off the hot water... and that's when I came across the hot water cylinder, etc.," Kevin told *Oil Installer*. As he delved further into the heating and plumbing systems of the house, the more appalled he was with what he discovered...

So horrified at what he found, Kevin decided to produce a full report for the owner in which he recommended that OFTEC should investigate the unacceptable workmanship involved in the oil boiler and cylinder installations. "I'm not quite clear when the work was carried out but the customer was clearly under the impression they could use the system although they have received zero paperwork," said Kevin.

In his report on the shoddy and dangerous installation, Kevin did not hold back on his professional opinions. He wrote:

*"Following my brief inspection of your new boiler and cylinder please find below my observations.*

## **Boiler**

*"Presumably the pipework to the boiler is routed through the old boiler flue hole. This should be re-bricked and the flow and return pipes sleeved and insulated through the masonry. The expanding foam is unsightly and may be the flammable type. I view this as very lazy workmanship.*

*"The fire valve must be at least 1m away from the boiler. Regulation.*

*"The condensate pipe must be upsized or insulated.*

*"Really, I just can't comprehend this one!"*

*Regulation. I would increase the overflow pipe (21.5mm) to waste pipe (40mm) and insulate. The condensate is mildly acidic and when it freezes and backs up into the boiler it can very quickly corrode unsuitable materials.*

*"The condensate is taken to the gutter down-pipe which may or may not soak away. Given the installer has put an open tee in the condensate pipe suggests to me he is not sure either. Why not take it to the utility drain gully? 40mm waste pipe, exterior insulation.*

## **Cylinder**

*"I understand that the cylinder thermostat is known not to work correctly.*

*"No ifs, no buts, the cylinder should NOT be heated via the boiler. The cylinder thermostat is a crucial safety feature to ensure the cylinder does not overheat. Very dangerous.*

*"Next to the cylinder on the central heating pipework (i.e. 60-80C water) you have two open ended red lever valves. We use these valves because they are full bore (maximum flow) and easy to turn. They should never be left open ended on active/hot pipework. The risk of*



*someone getting seriously scalded is very high. These valves MUST be capped off until needed. Really I just can't comprehend this one!*

*"The cold water combination valve and expansion vessel, both integral safety features, are hidden away up in the attic. The expansion vessel is not supported on its bracket but just lies on its side.*







“The risk of someone getting seriously scalded is very high”

“The T&P relief valve is a crucial safety feature and can vent water at 95C plus at high pressure if things go wrong. The installer has vented the T&P to a pump sat on top of the wiring centre.



“Following on from the T&P pump the small plastic tube is taken up to the attic where it is ‘taped’ into 15mm copper which finds its way into the old overflow pipe. Both wrong and dangerous.

“Leaks were found on the cylinder cold feed valve and the combination valve hidden up in the attic.



“Fully resolved to the satisfaction of the homeowner”

“There are also unnecessary ‘dead-legs’ of pipework. One reason people fit unvented cylinders is to reduce the possibility of freezing tanks and pipes, so the combination valve and expansion vessel should all have been fitted in the airing cupboard.

“To my mind at best this is lazy and at worse shows a lack of understanding in fitting an unvented cylinder. Potentially dangerous.

“Abandoned cold water storage tank listing at 45 degrees, complete with a couple of buckets of water in the bottom. Lazy.”

Kevin ended his report by saying: “Sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but better you know now. I strongly advise you to ask OFTEC to send their inspector out to look, in case I have missed any points as my time was limited.”

**OFTEC statement**

In a statement made to *Oil Installer*, OFTEC said: “OFTEC takes the kind of concerns raised by Kevin very seriously and commend him for bringing them to the attention of the householder.



“It’s this commitment to provide the customer with the best possible service, and a knowledge of how things should be done, that sets OFTEC registered technicians apart from the ‘cowboys’. We hope that this example will encourage more technicians to take action if they find dangerous or incompetent work.

“OFTEC doesn’t normally comment on individual cases, but we understand that this particular situation has been fully resolved to the satisfaction of the homeowner.

“We are always ready to help anyone who has concerns about their heating equipment.

“As well as our formal complaints process we can offer advice and, if necessary, carry out an independent inspection as a way of resolving disputes or to gather evidence as a basis for further legal action.

“Although a charge is made for independent inspections, many homeowners feel this is a small price to pay for achieving a satisfactory outcome.”





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## Government announces smaller than expected cuts to Feed-in Tariff

The government appears to have reacted to the huge wave of national support for the renewable energy industry and has backed down from proposals to implement massive cuts to the Feed-in Tariff.

In the Feed-in Tariff (FiT) review consultation officials at the Department of Energy and Climate Change proposed updated tariffs for solar, wind and hydro power, and asked for industry and public feedback.

As a result of that feedback, and the unprecedented support for solar power, the government has cut domestic tariffs by 64% to 4.39p/kWh instead of the original proposal of cuts of up to 87% to 1.63p/kWh. The new tariffs came into force from 8 February.

The decision came after a prolonged campaign by the Solar Trade Association and many supporting organisations, including the Church of England and the CBI.

Paul Barwell, CEO of the Solar Trade Association said: "Government has partially listened. It's not what we needed, but it's better than the original proposals, and we will continue to push for a better deal for what will inevitably be a more consolidated industry with fewer companies.

"The new tariff levels are challenging, but solar power will still remain a great investment for forward-thinking home owners who want to protect themselves from volatile energy prices and do their bit to reduce global carbon emissions.

"Our initial analysis shows solar is still worth considering if you consider the wider benefits such as the increased value to your home. Homeowners can also benefit by changing the way they use their generated electricity through higher day-time usage or via storage which is now a rapidly developing market."

## Video case studies put biomass heating in the spotlight

Grant UK has created a series of videos focusing on the installation of a Spira biomass boiler from both the perspectives of the homeowner and the installer. The videos intend to show the ease with which a biomass heating system can be installed and how it is a viable alternative to traditional heating methods for both the homeowner and installer.

"These videos are a 'must watch' for any installers looking to diversify their business," says Anna Wakefield, marketing manager for Grant UK. "They really do emphasise that turning to biomass should not be a daunting process for installers who normally fit oil or gas appliances.

"Not only have we followed the installer as he fits the Grant Spira wood pellet boiler, but the homeowner too, who details the factors that influenced their decision to choose biomass.

In the films, engineer Scott Lemon of SHS Building Supplies helps the Price family upgrade their existing heating appliances to a more practical, effective system. Mr Price favoured biomass technology and the accompanying Renewable Heat Incentive which offers householders a return on their investment.

To view the videos, visit the Grant UK YouTube channel. [www.grantuk.com](http://www.grantuk.com)



Installer Scott Lemon fits the biomass system's hopper

## Elmhurst Energy acquires energy assessment scheme

Energy performance assessment specialists, Elmhurst Energy, has announced the acquisition of Northgate Public Services' Energy Performance in Buildings Directive (EPBD) assessment scheme.

The acquisition includes the operation of Northgate's energy assessor accreditation schemes for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, operating an energy assessor protocol agreement in Scotland, and delivering lodgment of energy certificates to the appropriate central registers.

"We are absolutely delighted to announce the acquisition of Northgate's EPBD business. It is a perfect fit with our strategy for growth and capture of market share," explains Stephen O'Hara, managing director of Elmhurst Energy. "Our high level of service and market leading software products, such as RdSAP and Streamline, specifically for the social housing sector, will add significant value to many of our new customers."

[www.elmhurstenergy.co.uk](http://www.elmhurstenergy.co.uk)



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# More calamities captured on camera!

Our regular collection of disturbing, amusing and downright shocking photographs of oil-fired heating installations continues to capture the imagination of our readers, with more and more shots arriving in the editor's in-box! In this edition of *Oil Installer* we feature everything from makeshift wheelie bin oil tanks to disastrous pipework – all of which have one thing in common...the ability to make an OFTEC-registered technician cry!

If you come across an installation which leaves a little to be desired, take a photograph and send it to *Oil Installer* so that we can share it with all our readers! Send your photographs to: [jane@oilinstaller.co.uk](mailto:jane@oilinstaller.co.uk)



Send your photographs to [jane@oilinstaller.co.uk](mailto:jane@oilinstaller.co.uk)

"I'm not sure I would want to be around for that barbeque!" This was the initial reaction of Graham Daniel of Daniel Heating Limited in Battle, East Sussex.

For more than 28 years, OFTEC registered Daniel Heating has specialised in all aspects of plumbing and heating work, including oil installations, gas and LPG, in the East Sussex and Kent areas.

"The tank is in the back garden of the property," Graham told *Oil Installer*. "The combustible boundary fence to the left is too close; the wattle screen fence on the right is also too close; the tank bearers are not continuous across the base and it has a site gauge."

Graham discovered dodgy installation during a visit to a house near Horsmonden in Kent, and thinks that it is about 8/10 years old. "We always provide our customers with an excellent level of service and are also happy to offer professional advice," adds Graham.

Let's hope the homeowner heeded his advice...



Necessity is the mother of invention, so they say. So if you put one wheelie bin inside another, does this mean you have a bunded tank? These photographs were passed on to *Oil Installer* by regional OFTEC inspector for Northern Ireland, Norman Armstrong, who explained that OFTEC registered technician, Damian Finnegan of Finnegan & O'Neill Limited was asked by County Cavan Council to check out some heating equipment at premises in Castleblayney in County Monaghan, where he came across the shocking make-shift oil tank. But why wheelie bins? The logical answer was that they were used because they can be topped up without any spillage because of the larger fill point! Enough said...

Steve Lovell has more than 20 years' experience in the plumbing and heating industry, but even that did not prepare him for what he discovered at a rented property recently. Steve, who runs Lovell Plumbing and Heating in Oxfordshire, came across some potentially disastrous pipework which he immediately reported to the letting agency – who asked him to carry out the necessary repair work!



When engineer Mike Hancox from the Montrose office of Rix Heating Services was called out to a routine service recently, he made a frightening discovery – a boiler and flue totally covered by charred wooden decking!



Josef Robinson and his colleagues at Robinsons Heating & Plumbing in Lincoln were in for a festive surprise when collecting a Christmas tree from a local industrial estate. They pulled into the car park and were confronted by a shocking sight – an oil tank precariously balanced on top of a pile of wobbly wooden pallets! Needless to say, they moved their van!



An eagle-eyed member of the *Oil Installer* editorial team spotted this "unusual" tank installation down a country lane in Cheshire. Sited behind a series of wooden outbuildings and at the top of a steep slope, the tanks are completely hidden by undergrowth for the majority of the year, making the tanker driver's job particularly challenging! Not only difficult to fill, but also hard to find in the first place!



Andrew Challenor of Royale Boiler Services of Barlston, Stoke-on-Trent, was called out to a "funny smelling" boiler recently at commercial premises in Stafford. He soon discovered that the boiler had not been serviced for a long, long time, and when he stripped it out he found that seven of the boiler's eight baffles had burnt out and were at the bottom of the combustion chamber. He made a safe repair and recommended that major repair works were in order!



Martyn, a heating engineer in the south east of England, came across this cracked oil tank in Rye in East Sussex whilst undertaking a boiler service. The tank, at the rear of the property, had recently been filled but, as Martyn told *Oil Installer*, "the tanker driver must have been in a hurry or very short sighted!"



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